

Complete Works of Seneca the Younger

Seneca the Younger

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Seneca the Younger

Complete Works

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The Complete Works of
SENECA THE YOUNGER

(4 BC – AD 65)



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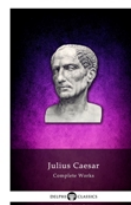
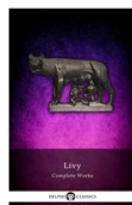
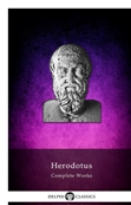


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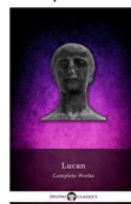
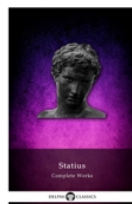
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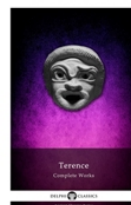
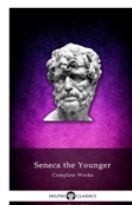
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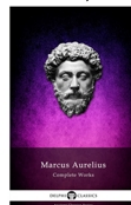
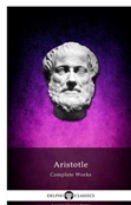
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The Complete Works of
LUCIUS ANNAEUS SENECA



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The Tragedies



Córdoba, Andalusia, Spain. In 4 BC Seneca the Younger was born in Cordoba in Hispania. He was the second son of Helvia and Lucius Annaeus Seneca, the wealthy rhetorician known as Seneca the Elder.



Roman ruins in Cordoba — archaeological site of Cercadilla including the remains of one of Maximian's palaces

THE MADNESS OF HERCULES



Translated by Frank Justus Miller

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

HERCULES, son of Jupiter and Alcmena, but the reputed son of Amphitryon.

JUNO, sister and wife of Jupiter, and queen of Heaven.

AMPHITRYON, husband of Alcmena.

THESEUS, king of Athens and friend of Hercules.

LYCUS, the usurping king of Thebes, who has, prior to the opening of the play, slain King Creon in battle.

MEGARA, wife of Hercules and daughter of Creon.

CHORUS of Thebans.

ARGUMENT

The jealous wrath of Juno, working through Eurystheus, has imposed twelve mighty and destructive tasks on Hercules, her hated stepson. But these, even to the last and worst, the bringing of Cerberus to the upper world, he has triumphantly accomplished. Abandoning her plan of crushing him by toils like these, she will turn his hand against himself, and so accomplish his destruction. Upon the day of his return from hell she brings a madness on him, and so precipitates the tragedy which forms the action of the play.

HERCULES FURENS

JUNO

[1] The sister of the Thunderer (for this name only is left to me), I have abandoned Jove, always another's lover; widowed, have left the spaces of high heaven and, banished from the sky, have given up my place to harlots; I must dwell on earth, for harlots hold the sky. Yonder the Bear, high up in the icy North, a lofty constellation, guides the Argive ships; yonder, where in the warm springtime the days grow long, he shines who bore the Tyrian Europa across the waves; there the Atlantides, far wandering, put forth their band dreadful to ships and sea alike. Here Orion with threatening sword terrifies the gods, and golden Perseus has his stars; the bright constellation of the twin Tyndaridae shines yonder, and they at whose birth the unsteady land stood firm. And not alone has Bacchus himself or the mother of Bacchus attained the skies; that no place might be free from outrage, the heavens wear the crown of the Cretan maid.

[19] But I lament ancient wrongs; one land, the baneful and savage land of Thebes, scattered thick with shameless mistresses, how oft has it made me stepdame! Yet, though Alcmena be exalted and in triumph hold my place; though her son, likewise, obtain his promised star (for whose begetting the world lost a day, and Phoebus with tardy light shone forth from the Eastern sea, bidden to keep his bright car sunk beneath Ocean's waves), not in such fashion shall my hatred have its end; my angry soul shall keep up a long-living wrath, and my raging smart, banishing peace, shall wage unending wars.

[30] What wars? Whatever fearsome creature the hostile earth produces, whatever the sea or the air has borne, terrific, dreadful, noxious, savage, wild, has been broken and subdued. He rises anew and has thrives on trouble; he enjoys my wrath; to his own credit he turns my hate; imposing too cruel tasks, I have but proved his sire, but give room for glory. Where the Sun, as he brings back, and where, as he dismisses day, colours both Ethiop races with

neighbouring torch, his unconquered valour is adored, and in all the world he is storied as a god. Now I have no monsters left, and 'tis less labour for Hercules to fulfil my orders than for me to order; with joy he welcomes my commands. What cruel biddings of his tyrant could harm this impetuous youth? Why, he bears as weapons what he once fought and overcame; he goes armed by lion and by hydra.

[46] Nor is earth vast enough for him; behold, he has broken down the doors of infernal Jove, and brings back to the upper world the spoils of a conquered king. I myself saw, yes, saw him, the shadows of nether night dispersed and Dis overthrown, proudly displaying to his father a brother's spoils. Why does he not drag forth, bound and loaded down with fetters, Pluto himself, who drew a lot equal to Jove's? Why does he not lord it over conquered Erebus and lay bare the Styx? It is not enough merely to return; the law of the shades has been annulled, a way back has been opened from the lowest ghosts, and the mysteries of dread Death lie bared. But he, exultant at having burst the prison of the shades, triumphs over me, and with arrogant hand leads through the cities of Greece that dusky hound. I saw the daylight shrink at sight of Cerberus, and the sun pale with fear; upon me, too, terror came, and as I gazed upon the three necks of the conquered monster I trembled at my own command.

[63] But I lament too much o'er trivial wrongs. 'Tis for heaven we must fear, lest he seize the highest realms who has overcome the lowest – he will snatch the sceptre from his father. Nor will he come to the stars by a peaceful journey as Bacchus did; he will seek a path through ruin, and will desire to rule in an empty universe. He swells with pride of tested might, and has learned by bearing them that the heavens can be conquered by his strength; he set his head beneath the sky, nor did the burden of that immeasurable mass bend his shoulders, and the firmament rested better on the neck of Hercules. Unshaken, his back upbore the stars and the sky and me down-pressing. He seeks a way to the gods above.

[75] Then on, my wrath, on, and crush this plotter of big things; close with him, thyself rend him in pieces with thine own hands. Why to

another entrust such hate? Let the wild beasts go their ways, let Eurystheus rest, himself weary with imposing tasks. Set free the Titans who dared to invade the majesty of Jove; unbar Sicily's mountain cave, and let the Dorian land, which trembles whenever the giant struggles, set free the buried frame of that dread monster; let Luna in the sky produce still other monstrous creatures. But he has conquered such as these. Dost then seek Alcides' match? None is there save himself; now with himself let him war. Rouse the Eumenides from the lowest abyss of Tartarus; let them be here, let their flaming locks drop fire, and let their savage hands brandish snaky whips.

[89] Go now, proud one, seek the abodes of the immortals and despise man's estate. Dost think that now thou hast escaped the Styx and the cruel ghosts? Here will I show thee infernal shapes. One in deep darkness buried, far down below the place of banishment of guilty souls, will I call up – the goddess Discord, whom a huge cavern, barred by a mountain, guards; I will bring her forth, and drag out from the deepest realm of Dis whatever thou hast left; hateful Crime shall come and reckless Impiety, stained with kindred blood, Error, and Madness, armed ever against itself – this, this be the minister of my smarting wrath!

[100] Begin, handmaids of Dis, make haste to brandish the burning pine; let Megaera lead on her band bristling with serpents and with baleful hand snatch a huge faggot from the blazing pyre. To work! claim vengeance for outraged Styx. Shatter his heart; let a fiercer flame scorch his spirit than rages in Aetna's furnaces. That Alcides may be driven on, robbed of all sense, by mighty fury smitten, mine must be the frenzy first – Juno, why rav'st thou not? Me, ye sisters, me first, bereft of reason, drive to madness, if I am to plan some deed worthy a stepdame's doing. Let my request be changed; may he come back and find his sons unharmed, that is my prayer, and strong of hand may he return. I have found the day when Hercules' hated valour is to be my joy. Me has he overcome; now may he overcome himself and long to die, though late returned from the world of death. Herein may it profit me that he is the son of Jove, I will stand by him

and, that his shafts may fly from string unerring, I'll poise them with my hand, guide the madman's weapons, and so at last be on the side of Hercules in the fray. When he has done this crime, then let his father admit those hands to heaven!

[123] Now must my war be set in motion; the sky is brightening and the shining sun steals up in saffron dawn.

CHORUS

[125] Now stars shine few and faint in the sinking sky; vanquished night draws in her wandering fires as the new day is born, and Phosphor brings up the rear of the shining host; the icy sign high in the north, the Bears of Arcas, with their seven stars, with wheeling pole summons the dawn. Now, upborne by his azure steeds, Titan peeps forth from Oeta's crest; now the rough brakes, made famous by Theban Bacchants, touched by the dawn, flush red, and Phoebus' sister flees away, to return again. Hard toil arises, sets all cares astir, opens all doors.

[139] The shepherd, turning out his flock, plucks pasturage still white with frosty rime. In the open mead the young bullock sports at will, his forehead not yet broken with young horns; the kine at leisure fill again their udders; the sportive kid with unsteady, aimless course wanders on the soft turf; perched on the topmost bough, shrill-voiced, amid her complaining young, the Thracian paramour is eager to spread her wings to the morning sun; and all around a mingled throng sounds forth, proclaiming the dawn of day with varied notes. The sailor, life ever at risk, commits his canvas to the winds, while the breeze fills its flapping folds. Here the fisher, perched on the wave-worn rocks, either rebaits his cheated hooks or, with firm grip, watches anxiously for his prize; meantime, his line feels the quivering fish.

[159] Such are the tasks of those whose is the peaceful calm of harmless lives, whose home rejoices in the tiny store that is its own; overweening hopes stalk abroad in cities, and trembling fears. One, sleepless, haunts the haughty vestibules and unfeeling doors of his

rich patrons; another endlessly heaps up abundant wealth, gloats over his treasures, and is still poor amid piled-up bold. Yonder dazed wretch, with empty wind puffed up, popular applause and the mob more shifting than the sea uplift; this, trafficking in the mad wrangles of the noisy court, shamelessly lets out for hire his passions and his speech. Known to but few is untroubled calm, and they, mindful of time's swift flight, hold fast the days that never will return. While the fates permit, live happily; life speeds on with hurried step, and with winged days the wheel of the headlong year is turned. The harsh sisters ply their tasks, yet do they not spin backward the threads of life. But men are driven, each one uncertain of his own, to meet the speeding fates; we seek the Stygian waves of our own accord. With heart too brave, Alcides, thou dost haste to visit the grieving ghosts; at the appointed time the Parcae come. No one may linger when they command, no one may postpone the allotted day; the urn receives the nations hurried to their doom.

[192] Let glory laud another to many lands, and let babbling fame sing his praise through every city and lift him to a level with the stars of heaven; let another fare towering in his car; but me let my own land, beside my lonely, sheltered hearth, protect. The inactive reach hoary age, and in a lowly estate but secure stands the mean lot of a humble home; from a lofty height ambitious courage falls.

[202] But sad Megara comes hither with streaming hair, her flock of children round her, and, slow with age, the father of Alcides moves.

[Enter from the palace MEGARA with her children, and AMPHITRYON. They take their stand at the altar.]

AMPHITRYON

[204] O mighty ruler of Olympus, judge of all the world, set now at length a limit to our crushing cares, an end to our disasters. No day has ever dawned for me untroubled; no reward from my son's toil is ever given; the end of one ill is but the step to one beyond. Straightway on his return a new foe is ready for him; before he can reach his happy home, bidden to another struggle he sets forth; there

is no chance to rest, no time left free, save while fresh commands are being given. From his very birth relentless Juno has pursued him; was even his infancy exempt? He conquered monsters before he could know that they were monsters. Serpents twain with crested heads advanced their fangs against him; the infant crawled to meet them, gazing at the snakes' fiery eyes with mild and gentle look; with serene face he raised their close-coiled folds and, crushing their swollen throats with his baby hands, he practised for the hydra.

[222] The nimble hind of Maenalus, raising her head bounteously adorned with gold, was caught by his long pursuit; the lion, mightiest dread of Nemea, crushed by the arms of Hercules roared his last. Why should I tell of the horrid stalls of the Bistonian herd and the king given as food to his own herds? of the shaggy boar of Maenalus, whose wont it was on the thick-wooded heights of Erymanthus to harry the groves of Arcady? or of the bull, the crushing terror of a hundred towns? Among his herds in the distant land of Spain the three-shaped shepherd of the Tartesian shore was killed and his cattle driven as spoil from the farthest west; Cithaeron has fed the herd once to Ocean known. When bidden to enter the regions of the summer sun, those scorched realms which midday burns, he clove the mountains on either hand and, rending the barrier, made a wide path for Ocean's rushing stream. Next he essayed the rich grove's dwellings and bore off the watchful dragon's golden spoil. Lerna's fell monster, pest manifold, did he not quell at last by fire and teach to die? And the Stymphalian birds, wont to hide the day with veiling wings, did he not bring down from the very clouds? Thermodon's unwed queen of ever virgin couch could not prevail against him, nor did his hands, bold to attempt all glorious deeds, shirk the foul labour of the Augean stalls.

[249] But what avails all this? He is banished from the world which he defended. All the earth has felt that the giver of its peace is lost to it. Once again prosperous and successful crime goes by the name of virtue; good men obey the bad, might is right and fear oppresses law. Before my eyes I saw the sons, defenders of their father's kingdom, fall dead by the murderer's hand, and the king himself fall, last scion

of Cadmus' famous line; I saw the royal crown that decked his head torn from him, head and all. Who could lament Thebes enough? O land, fertile in gods, before what lord dost thou tremble now? The city from whose fields and fecund bosom a band of youth stood forth with swords ready drawn, whose walls Jove's son, Amphion, built, drawing its stones by his tuneful melodies – to which not once alone came the father of the gods, quitting the sky – this city, which has welcomed gods and has created gods and (may the word be lawful) perchance will yet create them, is oppressed by a shameful yoke. O seed of Cadmus and Ophion's race, to what depths have you fallen! You tremble before a dastard exile, of his own land deprived, to ours a burden. But he who avenges crime on land and sea, who with righteous hand breaks cruel sceptres, now far away endures a master and brooks what he elsewhere forbids – and Lycus, the exile, rules the Thebes of Hercules! But not for long; he will be present with us and exact punishment, and suddenly to the sight of the stars will he come forth. He will find a way – or make one. Oh, be present and return in safety, I pray, and come at last victorious to thy vanquished home!

MEGARA

[279] Come forth, my husband, burst through the darkness shivered by thy hand; if there is no backward way, and the road is closed, rend earth asunder and return; and whatever lies hid in the hold of murky night, let forth with thee. Even as once, rending the hills asunder, seeking for the rushing stream a headlong path, thou stoodst, what time Tempe, cleft by that mighty shock, opened wide – before the thrust of thy breast, this way and that the mountain yielded and through the broken mass the Thessalian torrent raced in its new bed – even so, seeking thy parents, children, fatherland, burst through, bearing away with thee the bounds of things; and all that greedy time through all the march of years has hidden away, restore; and drive out before thee the self-forgetting dead, peoples that fear the light. Unworthy of thee is the spoil, if thou bringst back only what was commanded. But I speak too frowardly, all ignorant of the fate in store for us. Oh, whence shall come that day for me when I shall clasp thee and thy right hand and lament thy long-delayed returns

that have no thought of me? To thee, O leader of the gods, a hundred bulls never broken to the yoke shall yield their necks; to thee, goddess of fruits, will I perform thy secret rites; to thee in speechless faith silent Eleusis shall toss long trains of torches. Then shall I deem their lives restored unto my brothers, my father himself governing his own realm and flourishing. But if some greater power is holding thee in durance, we follow thee. Either defend us all by thy safe return, or drag us all with thee – thou wilt drag us down, nor will any god lift up our broken house.

AMPHITRYON

[309] O ally of my blood, preserving with chaste faith the couch and children of the great-souled Hercules, have better thought and rouse thy courage. Surely he will come home, as is his wont from every task the greater.

MEGARA

[313] What the wretched overmuch desire, they easily believe.

AMPHITRYON

[314] Nay, what they fear overmuch they think can never be set aside or done away. Fear's trust inclineth ever to the worse.

MEGARA

[317] Submerged, deep-buried, crushed beneath all the world, what way has he to upper air?

AMPHITRYON

[319] The same he had when across the parched desert and the sands, billowing like the stormy sea, he made his way, and across the strait with twice-receding, twice-returning waves; and when, his barque abandoned, he was stranded, a prisoner on Syrtes' shoals, and, though his vessel was held fast, he crossed o'er seas on foot.

MEGARA

[325] Unrighteous fortune seldom spares the highest worth; no one with safety can long front so frequent perils. Whom calamity oft passes by she finds at last.

[Enter *LYCUS*.]

[329] But see, ferocious and with threats upon his brow, the same in gait and spirit, Lycus comes, brandishing another's sceptre in his hand.

LYCUS

[332] Ruling the rich domains of Thebes and all that sloping Phocis encompasses with its rich soil, whatever Ismenus waters, whatever Cithaeron views from his high peak, and slender Isthmus, keeping asunder its twin straits, no ancient rights of an ancestral home do I possess, a slothful heir; not mine are noble ancestors, nor a race illustrious with lofty titles, but valour glorious. Who vaunts his race, lauds what belongs to others. But usurped sceptres are held in anxious hand; all safety is in arms; what thou knowest thou holdest against the will of citizens, the drawn sword must guard. One alien soil kingship stands not sure; but one there is who can get my power on firm foundations, if joined to me in royal wedlock by torch and couch – Megara. From her noble line my newness shall gain richer hue. Nor do I think she will refuse and scorn my bed; but if stubbornly and with headstrong will she shall decline, it is my resolve to give to utter ruin the whole house of Hercules. Shall hatred and the common people's talk restrain my hand? 'Tis the first art of kings, the power to suffer hate. Let us make trial, therefore; chance has given us occasion; for Megara herself, her head close-veiled in mourning vestments, stands by the altar of her protecting gods, and close by her side keeps the true sire of Hercules.

MEGARA

[358] What new thing plans that fellow, that destruction and pestilence of our race? What does he attempt?

LYCUS

[359] O thou whose illustrious name is drawn from royal stock, graciously listen to my words a little while with patient ear. If mortals should cherish everlasting hate and if mad rage, once felt, should never drop from our hearts, but if the victor should keep and

the vanquished prepare arms, nothing will wars leave us; then on the wasted farms the fields will lie untilled, the torch will be set to homes, and deep ashes will overwhelm the buried nations. 'Tis expedient for the victor to with for peace restored; for the vanquished 'tis necessity. – Come, share my throne; let us be joined in purpose; accept this pledge of faith – touch hands with me. Why in grim-faced silence dost thou stand?

MEGARA

[372] I touch a hand stained with my father's blood and with my brothers' double murder? Sooner shall the East extinguish, the West bring back, the day; sooner shall snow and flame be in lasting harmony and Scylla join the Sicilian and Ausonian shores; and sooner far shall swift Euripus with his alternating tides rest sluggish upon Euboea's strand! My father hast thou taken from me, my kingdom, brothers, my ancestral home – what is there else? There is one thing left to me, dearer than brother and father, kingdom and home – my hate of thee, which it is my grief that I must share with all the populace. How small a part of it is mine! Rule on, swollen with pride, lift thy spirits high; an avenging god pursues the proud. I know the Theban realm; why mention the crimes which mothers have endured and dared? Why speak of the double infamy and the confused names of husband, son and sire? Why speak of the brothers' twofold camps? the two funeral-pyres? The daughter of Tantalus, presumptuous mother, stiffens with grief and, mournful on Phrygian Sipylus, drips tears – a stone. Nay, Cadmus himself reared a head fierce with its crest and, traversing Illyria's realm in flight, left the long trail of his dragging body. Thee do such precedents of doom await. Lord it as thou wilt, only the accustomed destinies of our realm summon thee.

LYCUS

[397] Come, mad woman, have done with this wild talk, and learn from Alcides to endure the commands of kings. Although I wield a sceptre seized by my victorious hand, though I rule all things without fear of laws which arms o'ermaster, still will I say a few words in mine own cause. 'Twas in a cruel war thy father fell, sayest thou? thy

brothers, too? Arms observe no bounds; nor can the wrath of the sword, once drawn, be easily checked or stayed; war delights in blood. But he fought for his realm, sayest thou; we, impelled by insatiable ambition? Of war men ask the outcome, not the cause. But now let all the past be forgotten; when the victor has laid down his arms, it is meet that the vanquished, too, lay down his hate. That thou on bended knee shouldst pray to me as thy sovereign I do not ask; this of itself is pleasing to me, that thou dost take thy overthrow with a high spirit. Worthy art thou to be a king's mate; then let us wed.

MEGARA

[414] Cold horror creeps through my bloodless limbs. What outrage has struck my ears? No terror felt I when peace was broken and war's loud crash rang around our walls; dauntlessly I bore it all; but marriage – I shudder at it; now do I indeed seem captive. Let chains load down my body, and let me die a lingering death by slow starvation; still shall no power o'ercome my loyalty. Alcides, I shall die thine own.

LYCUS

[422] Does a husband buried in the depths produce such spirit?

MEGARA

[423] He reached the depths that he might gain the heights.

LYCUS

[424] The weight of the boundless earth crushes him.

MEGARA

[425] By no weight will he be crushed who upbore the heavens.

LYCUS

[426] Thou shalt be forced.

MEGARA

[426] Who can be forced has not learned how to die.

LYCUS

[427] Say rather, what royal gift I shall prepare for my new bride.

MEGARA

[428] Thy death or mine.

LYCUS

[429] Fool, thou shalt die.

MEGARA

[429] So shall I meet my husband.

LYCUS

[430] Is a slave more to thee than I, a king?

MEGARA

[431] How many kings has that slave given to death!

LYCUS

[432] Why, then, does he serve a king and endure the yoke?

MEGARA

[433] Do away with harsh commands – what then will valour be?

LYCUS

[434] To oppose oneself to beast and monsters think'st thou valour?

MEGARA

[435] 'Tis valour's part to subdue what all men fear.

LYCUS

[436] The shades of Tartarus bury the braggart deep.

MEGARA

[437] There is no easy way to the stars from earth.

LYCUS

[438] Who is his father that he hopes for a home in heaven?

AMPHITRYON

[439] Unhappy wife of great Hercules, be still; 'tis my place to restore to Alcides his father and true lineage. [*To LYCUS.*] After all the great hero's memorable deeds, after peace has been gained by his hand for all that he sun, rising and setting, sees, after so many monsters tamed, after Phlegra stained with impious blood, after his protection of the gods, is not his fathering yet clear? Claim we Jove falsely? Then believe Juno's hate.

LYCUS

[447] Why blaspheme Jove? The race of mortals cannot mate with heaven.

AMPHITRYON

[449] That is the common origin of many gods.

LYCUS

[450] But were they slaves ere they became divine?

AMPHITRYON

[451] The Delian as a shepherd tended flocks at Pherae –

LYCUS

[452] But he did not in exile roam o'er all the world.

AMPHITRYON

[452] What? He whom an exiled mother brought forth on a roaming isle?

LYCUS

[453] Did Phoebus encounter savage monsters or wild beasts?

AMPHITRYON

[454] A dragon was the first to stain Phoebus' shafts.

LYCUS

[455] Knowest thou not what heavy ills he bore in infancy?

AMPHITRYON

[456] Ripped by a thunderbolt from his mother's womb, a boy in after-time stood next his sire, the Thunderer. What? he who rules the stars, who shakes the clouds, did he not lie hid in infancy in a cave of rocky Ida? Such lofty birth must pay its price of care, and ever has its cost dear to be born a god.

LYCUS

[463] Whome'er thou shalt see wretched, known him man

AMPHITRYON

[464] Whome'er thou shalt see brave, call him not wretched.

LYCUS

[465] Are we to call him brave from whose shoulders fell the lion's skin and club, made present for a girl, and whose side shone resplendent, decked out in Tyrian robes? Call him brave, whose bristling locks dripped with nard, who busied those famous hands with unmanly strummings on the tambourine, whose warlike brow a barbaric turban crowned?

AMPHITRYON

[472] But dainty Bacchus does not blush to sprinkle with perfume his flowing locks, nor in his soft hand to brandish the slender thrysus, when with mincing gait he trails his robe gay with barbaric gold. After much toil, valour still seeks relief.

LYCUS

[477] The fact the ruined house of Eurytus confesses, and the flocks of maidens harried like so many sheep; no Juno, no Eurystheus ordered this; these works are his very own.

AMPHITRYON

[480] Thou knowest not all; his own work it is that Eryx was crushed by his own gauntlets and that Libyan Antaeus shared Eryx' fate; that the altars which dripped the blood of strangers drank, and justly, too, Busiris' blood; his own work is Cynus, though proof against wound and sword, forced to suffer death untouched by wounds; and threefold Geryon by one hand overcome. Thou shalt share the fate of

these – and yet they never defiled with lust the marriage-bed.

LYCUS

[489] What is Jove's right is a king's right, too. Thou gavest thy wife to Jove, to a king shall he give his; and taught by thy example thy daughter shall learn this old-time lesson – when the husband also gives consent, to take the better man. But should she stubbornly refuse to wed me by the torches' rite, even by force will I get me a noble stock from her.

MEGARA

[495] Ye shades of Creon, ye household gods of Labdacus, ye nuptial torches of incestuous Oedipus, now to our union grant its accustomed doom. Now, now, ye bloody daughters of King Aegyptus, be present here, your hands deep-stained in blood. One Danaïd is lacking from the tale – I will complete the crime.

LYCUS

[501] Since my suit thou dost stubbornly refuse and threatenest thy king, now shalt thou know what royal power can do. Embrace the altar – no god shall snatch thee from me, not though earth's mass could be pushed aside and Alcides brought back in triumph to the upper world. [*To attendants.*] Heap high the logs; let the temple fall blazing on its suppliants; apply the torch and let one pyre consume the wife and all her brood.

AMPHITRYON

[509] This boon as father of Alcides I ask of thee, which becomes me well to ask, that I be first to fall.

LYCUS

[511] He who inflicts on all the penalty of death knows not how to be a king. Impose contrasting penalties: forbid the wretched, command the happy man to die. Now while the pyre feeds on the burning beams, with promised gifts will I worship him who rules the sea. [*Exit.*]

AMPHITRYON

[516] O mightiest of gods, O ruler and sire of the immortals, at whose hurtling bolts mortals tremble, check thou the impious hand of this mad king – why make vain prayers unto the gods? Where'er thou art, hear thou, my son. But why with sudden motion does the rocking temple totter? Why does earth rumble? Infernal crashing has sounded from the lowest pit. Our prayer is heard; it is, it is the resounding tread of Hercules!

CHORUS

[524] O Fortune, jealous of the brave, in allotting thy favours how unjust art thou unto the good! "Let Eurystheus lord it in untroubled ease; let Alcmena's son in endless wars employ on monsters the hand that bore the heavens; let him cut off the hydra's teeming necks; let him bring back the apples from the cheated sisters when the dragon, set to watch over the precious fruit, has given his ever-waking eyes to sleep."

[533] He invaded the wandering homes of Scythia and nations strangers to their ancestral haunts; he trod the sea's frozen ridge, a still ocean with silent shores. There the frozen waters are without waves, and where but now ships had spread full sail, a path is worn by the long-haired Sarmatae. There lies the sea, changing as the seasons change, ready to hear now ship, now horseman. There she who rules o'er tribes unwed, with a golden girdle about her loins, stripped the glorious spoil from her body, her shield and the bands of her snow-white breast, on bended knee looking up to her victor.

[547] With what hope, driven headlong to the depths, bold to tread ways irretraceable, dost thou see Sicilian Proserpina's realms? There beneath no southern, no western wind do the seas rise with swollen waves; there the stars of the twin Tyndaridae come not to the aid of timorous ships; sluggish stands the mere with black abyss, and, when Death, pale-visaged with greedy teeth, has brought countless tribes to the world of shades, one ferryman transports those many peoples.

[558] Oh, that thou mayest o'ercome the laws of cruel Styx, and the relentless distaffs of the Fates. He who as king lords it o'er countless

peoples, what time thou wast making war on Pylos, Nestor's land, brought to combat with thee his plague-dealing hands, brandishing his three-forked spear, yet fled away, with but a slight wound smitten, and, though lord of death, feared he would die. Fate's bars burst thou with thy hands; to the sad nether regions open a view of light, and let the trackless path now give easy passage to the upper world!

[569] Orpheus had power to bend the ruthless lords of the shades by song and suppliant prayer, when he sought back his Eurydice. The art which had drawn the trees and birds and rocks, which had stayed the course of rivers, at whose sound the beasts had stopped to listen, soothes the underworld with unaccustomed strains, and rings out clearer in those unhearing realms. Eurydice the Thracian brides bewail; even the gods, whom no tears can move, bewail her; and they who with awful brows investigate men's crimes and sift out ancient wrongs, as they sit in judgment bewail Eurydice. At length death's lord exclaims: "We own defeat; go forth to the upper world, yet by this appointed doom – fare thou as comrade behind thy husband, and thou, look not back upon thy wife until bright day shall have revealed the gods of heaven, and the opening of Spartan Taenarus shall be at hand." True love hates delay and brooks it not; while he hastes to look upon his prize, 'tis lost.

[590] The realm which could be overcome by song, that realm shall strength have power to overcome.

[Enter HERCULES just returned from the lower world, accompanied by THESEUS; apparently, also, he is leading the dog, CERBERUS, though this point seems less clear as the play develops.]

HERCULES

[592] O lord of kindly light, glory of heaven, who in thy flame-bearing car dost circle both spaces of the sky, and dost show thy shining face to the broad lands, pardon, O Phoebus, if any unlawful sight thine eyes have seen; at another's bidding have I brought to light the hidden things of earth. And thou, O judge and sire of heavenly

beings, hide thy face behind thy thunderbolt; and thou who, next in power, dost control the seas, flee to thy lowest waters. Whoever from on high looks down on things of earth, and would not be defiled by a strange, new sight, let him turn away his gaze, lift his eyes to heaven, and shun the portent. Let only two look on this monster – him who brought and her who ordered it. To appoint me penalties and tasks earth is not broad enough for Juno's hate. I have seen places unapproached by any, unknown to Phoebus, those gloomy spaces which the baser pole hath yielded to infernal Jove; and if the regions of the third estate pleased me, I might have reigned. The chaos of everlasting night, and something worse than night, and the grim gods and the fates – all these I saw and, having flouted death, I have come back. What else remains? I have seen and revealed the lower world. If aught is left to do, give it to me, O Juno; too long already dost thou let my hands lie idle. What dost thou bid me conquer?

[616] But why do hostile soldiers guard the shrine and dreadful arms beset the sacred portal?

AMPHITRYON

[618] Can it be that my hopes deceive my sight, or has that world-subduer, the pride of Greece, come back from the silent halls of mournful gloom? Is that my son? My limbs are numb with joy. O son, sure, though late, deliverance of Thebes, do I really clasp thee risen to upper air, or am I mocked, enjoying but an empty shade? Is it thou indeed? Aye, now I recognize the bulging thews, the shoulders, the hand famed for its huge club.

HERCULES

[626] Whence this squalid garb, father? Why is my wife clad in mourning weeds? Why are my sons covered with loathsome rags? What disaster overwhelms my house?

AMPHITRYON

[629] The father of thy wife is slain; Lycus has seized the throne; thy sons, thy father, thy wife he claims for death.

HERCULES

[631] O ungrateful land, was there none to aid the house of Hercules? Did it see this monstrous wrong, the world I succoured? – but why waste the day in idle complaints? Let the victim be offered up, let my manhood bear this brand of shame, and let the final foe of Hercules be – Lycus. I haste me, Theseus, to drain his detested blood; remain thou here, lest some unexpected force assail. War summons me; delay thy embraces, father; wife, delay them. Let Lycus take the news to Dis that now I have returned.

[*Exit HERCULES.*]

THESEUS

[640] Banish that tearful look from thine eyes, O queen, and do thou, since thy son is safe, check thy falling tears. If I know Hercules, Lycus shall pay the penalty he owes to Creon. “Shall pay” is slow – he pays; that, too, is slow – he has paid.

AMPHITRYON

[645] May the god who can, fulfil our desire and favour our fallen estate. And do thou, great-hearted companion of our great son, unfold his heroic deeds in order; tell how long a way leads to the gloomy shades, and how the Tartarean dog bore his galling bonds.

THESEUS

[650] Thou dost force me to recall deeds which strike terror to my soul even in security. Scarcely yet do I trust assuredly to breathe the vital air; the sight of my eyes is dimmed, and my dull vision can scarce bear the unaccustomed light.

AMPHITRYON

[654] But, Theseus, master whate’er of dread yet dwells deep in thy heart and rob not thyself of toils’ best fruit; things ’twas hard to bear ’tis pleasant to recall. Tell thou the awful tale.

THESEUS

[658] All the world’s holy powers, and thou who rulest the all-holding realm, and thou whom, stolen from Enna, thy mother sought in vain,

may it be right, I pray, boldly to speak of powers hidden away and buried beneath the earth.

[662] The Spartan land a famous ridge uplifts where Taenarus with its dense forests invades the sea. Here the home of hateful Pluto unbars its mouth; a high cliff cracks asunder, and a huge chasm, a bottomless abyss, spreads its vast jaws wide and opens for all peoples a broad path. Not in utter darkness does the way first begin; a slender gleam of the light left behind and a doubtful glow as of the sun in eclipse falls there and cheats the vision. Such light the day mingled with night is wont to give, at early dawn or at late twilight. From here ample spaces spread out, void regions, whereto the entire human race turns and hastens. It is no toil to go; the road itself draws them down. As oft-times the waves sweep on unwilling ships, so does the downward breeze drive, and the greedy void, and never do the clutching shades permit a backward step. Within the abyss, Lethe, measureless in sweep, glides smoothly on with placid stream, and takes away our cares; and, that there may be no power to retrace the path, with windings manifold it takes its sluggish way, even as the vagrant Maeander with its inconstant waters plays along, now retreats upon itself, now presses on, in doubt whether to seek the seashore or its source. The foul pool of Cocytus' sluggish stream lies here; here the vulture, there the dole-bringing owl utters its cry, and the sad omen of the gruesome screech-owl sounds. The leaves shudder, black with gloomy foliage where sluggish Sleep clings to the overhanging yew, where sad Hunger lies with wasted jaws, and Shame, too late, hides her guilt-burdened face. Dread stalks there, gloomy Fear and gnashing Pain, sable Grief, tottering Disease and iron-girt War; and last of all slow Age supports his steps upon a staff.

AMPHITRYON

[697] Is any land there fruitful of corn or wine?

THESEUS

[698] No meadows bud, joyous with verdant view, no ripened corn waves in the gentle breeze; not any grove has fruit-producing boughs; the barren desert of the abysmal fields lies all untilled, and

the foul land lies torpid in endless sloth – sad end of things, the world's last estate. The air hangs motionless and black night broods over a sluggish world. All things are with grief dishevelled, and worse than death itself is the abode of death.

AMPHITRYON

[707] What of him who holds sway over the dark realm? Where sits he, governing his flitting tribes?

THESEUS

[709] There is a place in dark recess of Tartarus, which with a heavy pall dense mists enshroud. Hence flow from a single source two streams, unlike: one, a placid river (by this do the gods sear), with silent current bears on the sacred Styx; the other with mighty roar rushes fiercely on, rolling down rocks in its flood, Acheron, that cannot be recrossed. The royal hall of Dis stands opposite, girt by a double moat, and the huge house is hid by an o'ershadowing grove. Here in a spacious cavern the tyrant's doors overhang; this is the road for spirits, this is the kingdom's gate. A plain lies round about this where sits the god, where with haughty mien his awful majesty assorts the new-arriving souls. Lowering is his brow, yet such as wears the aspect of his brothers and his high race; his countenance is that of Jove, but Jove the thunderer; chief part of that realm's grimness is its own lord, whose aspect whate'er is dreaded dreads.

AMPHITRYON

[731] Is the report true that in the underworld justice, though tardy, is meted out, and that guilty souls who have forgot their crimes suffer due punishment? Who is that lord of truth, that arbiter of justice?

THESEUS

[731] Not one inquisitor alone sits on the high judgment-seat and allots his tardy sentences to trembling culprits. In yonder court they pass to Cretan Minos' presence, in that to Rhadamanthus', here the father of Thetis' spouse gives audience. What each has done, he suffers; upon its author the crime comes back, and the guilty soul is crushed by its own form of guilt. I have seen bloody chiefs immured in prison; the

insolent tyrant's back torn by plebeian hands. He who reigns mildly and, though lord of life, keeps guiltless hands, who mercifully and without bloodshed rules his realm, checking his own spirit, he shall traverse long stretches of happy life and at last gain the skies, or else in bliss reach Elysium's joyful land and sit in judgment there. Abstain from human blood, all ye who rule: with heavier punishment your sins are judged.

AMPHITRYON

[747] Does any certain place enclose the guilty? and, as rumour has it, do sinners suffer cruel punishment in bonds unending?

THESEUS

[750] Ixion whirls, racked on a flying wheel; a huge stone rests on the neck of Sisyphus; in mid-stream an old man with parched lips catches at the waves; the water bathes his chin and, when at last it has given him, though oft deceived, a pledge of faith, the wave perishes at his lips; fruits mock his hunger. To the vulture Tityos gives never-ending feasts; the Danaïdes bear their brimming urns in vain; the impious Cadmeïds roam in their madness, and the ravenous bird torments Phineus at his board.

AMPHITRYON

[760] Now tell my son's famous struggle. Is it his willing uncle's gift, or his spoil, he brings?

THESEUS

[762] A rock funereal o'erhangs the slothful shoals, where the waves are sluggish and the dull mere is numbed. This stream an old man tends, clad in foul garb and to the sight abhorrent, and ferries over the quaking shades. His beard hangs down unkempt; a knot ties his robe's misshapen folds; haggard his sunken cheeks; himself his own boatman, with a long pole he directs his craft. Now, having discharged his load, he is turning his boat towards the bank, seeking the ghosts again; Alcides demands passage, while the crowd draws back. Fierce Charon cries: "Whither in such haste, bold man? Halt there thy hastening steps." Brooking no delay, Alcmena's son

o'erpowers the ferryman with his own pole and climbs aboard. The craft, ample for whole nations, sinks low beneath one man; as he takes his seat the o'erweighted boat with rocking sides drinks in Lethe on either hand. Then the monsters he had conquered are in a panic, the fierce Centaurs and the Lapithae whom too much wine had inflamed to war; and, seeking the farthest fens of the Stygian swamp, Lerna's labour plunges deep his fertile heads.

[782] Next after this there appears the palace of greedy Dis. Here the savage Stygian dog frightens the shades; tossing back and forth his triple heads, with huge bayings he guards the realm. Around his head, foul with corruption, serpents lap, his shaggy man bristles with vipers, and in his twisted tail a long snake hisses. His rage matches his shape. Soon as he feels the stir of feet he raises his head, rough with darting snakes, and with ears erect catches at the onsped sound, wont as he is to hear even the shades. When the son of Jove stood closer, within his cave the dog crouches hesitant and feels a touch of fear. Then suddenly, with deep bayings, he terrifies the silent places; the snakes hiss threateningly along all his shoulders. The clamour of his dreadful voice, issuing from triple throats, fills even the blessed shades with dread. Then from his left arm the hero looses the fierce-grinning jaws, thrusts out before him the Cleonaeon head and, beneath that huge shield crouching, plies his mighty club with victorious right hand. Now here, now there, with unremitting blows he whirls it, redoubling the strokes. At last the dog, vanquished ceases his threatenings and, spent with struggle, lowers all his heads and yields all wardship of his cavern. Both rulers shiver on their throne, and bid lead the dog away. Me also they give as boon to Alcides' prayer.

[807] Then, stroking the monster's sullen necks, he binds him with chains of adamant. Forgetful of himself, the watchful guardian of the dusky realm droops his ears, trembling and willing to be led, owns his master, and with muzzle lowered follows after, beating both his sides with snaky tail. But when he came to the Taenarian borders, and the strange gleam of unknown light smote on his eyes, though conquered he regained his courage and in frenzy shook his

ponderous chains. Almost he bore his conqueror away, back dragging him, forward bent, and forced him to give ground. Then even to my aid Alcides looked, and with our twofold strength we drew the dog along, mad with rage and attempting fruitless war, and brought him out to earth. But when he saw the bright light of day and viewed the clear spaces of the shining sky, black night rose over him and he turned his gaze to ground, closed tight his eyes and shut out the hated light; backward he turned his face and with all his necks sought the earth; then in the shadow of Hercules he hid his head. – But see, a dense throng comes on, glad shouting, with laurel wreaths upon their brows and chanting the well-won praises of great Hercules.

CHORUS

[830] Eurystheus, brought to the light by birth untimely, had bidden thee explore the world's foundations; this only was lacking to thy tale of labours, to despoil the king of the third estate. Thou wast bold to enter blind approach, where a way leads to the far-off shades, a gloomy way and fearsome with dark woods, but crowded with vast accompanying throngs.

[838] Great as the host that moves through citystreets, eager to see the spectacle in some new theatre; great as that which pours to the Elean Thunderer, when the fifth summer has brought back the sacred games; great as the throng which (when the time comes again for night to lengthen and the balanced Scales, yearning for quiet slumber, check Phoebus' car) surges to Ceres' secret rites, and the initiates of Attica, quitting their homes, swiftly hasten to celebrate their night – so great is the throng that is led through the silent plains. Some go slow with age, sad and sated with long life; some still can run, being of happier age – maidens, not yet in wedlock joined, youths with locks still unshorn, and babes that have but lately learned the name of "mother." To these last alone, that they be not afraid, 'tis given to lessen night's gloom by torches borne ahead; the rest move sadly through the dark. O ye dead, what thoughts are yours when, light now banished, each has sorrowing felt his head o'erwhelmed 'neath all the earth? There are thick chaos, loathsome murk, night's

baleful hue, the lethargy of a silent world and empty clouds.

[864] Late may old age bear us thither! None comes too late unto that land, whence never, when once come, can he return. Why does it please us to hasten cruel fate? For all this throng which wanders up and down the earth's vast spaces shall go to the world of shades and shall set sail on Cocytus' lifeless stream. For thee, O Death, all things are growing; all that the setting sun, all that the rising, sees – oh, spare thou those who are sure to come – for thee are we all preparing. Though thou be slow, we hasten of ourselves; the hour which first gave life is plucking it away.

[875] Thebes' joyful day is here. Lay hold on the altars, ye suppliants; slay the fat victims; let husbands and wives together start up the festal dance; let the tillers of the fertile field lay by the yoke and rest.

[882] Peace reigns by the hand of Hercules from the land of dawn to the evening star, and where the sun, holding mid-heaven, gives to shapes no shadows. Whatever land is washed by Tethys' far-reaching circuit Alcides' toil has conquered. He has crossed the streams of Tartarus, subdued the gods of the underworld, and has returned. And now no fear remains; naught lies beyond the underworld.

[893] Now, priest, bedeck thy bristling hair with his well-loved poplar.

[*Enter HERCULES, fresh from the slaying of LYCUS.*]

HERCULES

[895] Felled by my conquering hand, Lycus face down has smitten the earth. Next, whoever had been the tyrant's comrade lies low, the comrade also of his punishment. And now as victor will I bring offerings to my father and to the heavenly gods, slay victims, and honour the altars with due sacrifice.

[900] Thee, thee, O ally and helper of my toils, I pray, O warlike Pallas, on whose left arm the targe with its petrifying face sends forth fierce threats; may he, too, be near, the tamer of Lycurgus and the ruddy sea, who bears a spear-point hidden beneath his vine-wreathed

staff; and ye, twin deities, Phoebus and Phoebus' sister, the sister more ready with her arrows, Phoebus with his lyre; and whatever brother of mine dwells in the sky – but not a brother from my stepdame born.

[908] [*To his attendants.*] Hither drive fat herds; whatever the fields of Indians produce, whatever fragrant thing the Arabs gather from their trees, heap on the altars; let the rich smoke roll on high. Let wreaths of poplar bedeck our hair; but thee, O Theseus, an olive-branch, with thy own race's leaves, shall crown. The Thunderer shall my hand adore; do thou invoke the founders of our city, the wooded caves of savage Zethus, Dirce of far-famed water, and the Tyrian house-gods of our pilgrim king. Heap incense on the flames.

AMPHITRYON

[918] O son, first purify thy hands, dripping with thy slaughtered foeman's blood.

HERCULES

[920] Would that I could pour out to the gods the blood of the man I hate; no more pleasing stream had stained the altars; no greater, richer victim can be sacrificed to Jove than an unrighteous king.

AMPHITRYON

[924] Pray that thy father end thy toils, that at least rest and repose be given to the weary.

HERCULES

[926] Myself will I frame prayers worthy of Jupiter and me: May heaven abide in its own place, and earth and sea; may the eternal stars hold on their way unhindered; may deep peace brood upon the nations; may the harmless country's toil employ all iron, and may swords lie hid; may no raging tempest stir up the sea, no fires leap forth from angered Jove, no river, fed by winter's snows, sweep away the upturn fields. Let poisons cease to be. Let no destructive herb swell with harmful juice. May savage and cruel tyrants rule no more. If earth is still to produce any wickedness, let her make haste,

and if she is preparing any monster, let it be mine.

[*The madness planned by JUNO beings to come upon him.*]

[939] But what is this? Shadows have begirt midday. Phoebus fares with darkened face though there be no cloud. Who puts the day to flight and drives it back to dawn? Whence does an unfamiliar night rear its black head? Whence do so many stars fill the sky though it is day? See where the lion, my first toil, glows in no small part of heaven, is all hot with rage, and makes ready his fangs. Forthwith he will seize some star; threatening he stands with gaping jaws, and breathes forth fires, and shakes the mane upon his flaming neck; whatever stars sickly autumn and cold winter with its frozen tracts bring back, with one bound will he o'erleap, and attack and crush the neck of the vernal Bull.

AMPHITRYON

[952] What sudden ill is this? Why, my son, dost turn thy keen eyes now here, now there, and look upon an unreal sky with troubled gaze?

HERCULES

[955] The earth has been subdued, the swollen seas are at rest, the infernal realms have felt my onset; heaven is as yet untried, a task worthy of Alcides. To the lofty regions of the universe on high let me make my way, let me seek the skies; the stars are my father's promise. And what if he should not keep his word? Earth has not room for Hercules, and at length restores him unto heaven. See, the whole company of the gods of their own will summons me, and opens wide the door of heaven, with one alone forbidding. And wilt thou unbar the sky and take me in? Or shall I carry off the doors of stubborn heaven? Dost even doubt my power? I'll free Saturn from his bonds, and against my unfilial father's lawless sway I'll loose my grandsire. Let the Titans prepare war, with me to lead their rage; rocks, woods and all, will I bring, and with my right hand I'll snatch up ridges full of Centaurs. Now with twin mountains I'll construct a pathway to the realms above; Chiron shall see his own Pelion 'neath Ossa, and Olympus, set as third in order, shall reach clean to heaven

– or else I'll hurl it there!

AMPHITRYON

[973] Have done with these horrible imaginings: Repress the mad fury of thy proud heart, no longer sane.

HERCULES

[976] What's this? The baleful Giants are taking arms. Tityos has escaped the shades and, with breast all torn and empty, has almost reached the sky. Cithaeron is tottering, lofty Pellene quakes, and Tempe's beauty fades. Here one Giant has seized Pindus' peak, there one has seized Oete, while horribly Mimas rages. Fiery Erinys cracks her brandished scourge, and closer, closer yet, holds out before my face brands burnt on funeral pyres. Cruel Tisiphone, her head with snakes encircled, since the dog was stolen away has blocked the empty gate with her outstretched torch.

[He catches sight of his children.]

[987] But look! here lurk the children of the king, my enemy, the abominable spawn of Lycus; to your detested father this hand forthwith shall send you. Let my bowstring discharge swift arrows – so it is meet that the shafts of Hercules should fly.

AMPHITRYON

[991] To what deed is his blind fury driven? He has bent his huge bow, the tips drawn close together; he has opened his quiver; shrilly sings the shaft, discharged with force – it has struck the neck full in the middle and sped out past the wound.

HERCULES

[995] The rest of the brood will I rout out and all their hiding-places. Why delay? A greater struggle awaits me at Mycenae, that there, by these hands overthrown, the Cyclopean rocks may fall.

[He begins to tear at the doors of the shrine in which his remaining sons have taken refuge.]

[999] Let the doors fly, one here, one there, the barriers cast down and burst the posts asunder; let the smitten roof reel. The whole palace is

alight; I see hiding there the son of a cursed sire.

[He seizes the child and drags him from the scene.]

AMPHITRYON

[Standing where he can see what is going on within the palace.]

[1002] See how he stretches out coaxing hands to his father's knees, and with piteous voice begs – oh impious crime, grim and horrid sight! With his right hand he has caught the pleading child, and, madly whirling him again and yet again, has hurled him; his head crashed loudly against the stones; the room is drenched with scattered brains. But Megara, poor woman, sheltering her little son within her bosom, flees like a mad creature from her hiding-place.

HERCULES

[Behind the scene to MEGARA, also behind the scene.]

[1010] Though thou run and hide in the Thunderer's bosom, everywhence shall this hand seek thee and hale thee forth.

AMPHITRYON

[1012] *[To MEGARA.]* Wither dost thou flee, poor child? What flight of what hiding-place dost thou seek? There is no place safe from Hercules enraged. Embrace him, rather, and essay to calm him with soothing prayers.

THE VOICE OF MEGARA

[1014] Husband, spare me now, I beg. See, I am Megara. This is thy son, with thine own looks and bearing. See, how he stretches out his hands.

THE VOICE OF HERCULES

[1017] I have caught my stepdame. Come, pay me thy debt, and free o'ermastered Jove from a degrading yoke. But before the mother let this little monster perish.

THE VOICE OF MEGARA

[1021] What wouldst thou, madman? Thine own blood wilt thou shed?

AMPHITRYON

[1022] Stricken with terror of his sire's blazing eyes, the child died ere he felt the blow; fear snatched his life away. Against his wife now he poises his heavy club – her bones are crushed, her head is gone from her mangled body, gone utterly.

[1026] [*To himself.*] Darest thou abide this sight, O too stubborn age? If thou art weary of grief, death thou hast ready; expose thy breast to those shafts, or turn against it that club smeared with our children's gore. [*Calling to HERCULES.*] Make away with thy pretended sire, this blot upon thy name, lest he make discord midst thy praise.

CHORUS

[1032] Why, old man, dost wantonly challenge death? Whither wouldst go, senseless? Flee and securely hide thee, and save the hands of Hercules from the crime left.

[*Re-enter HERCULES.*]

HERCULES

[1035] 'Tis well; the shameless king's house is utterly destroyed. To thee, wife of almighty Jove, have I slaughtered this devoted flock; vows worthy of thee have I paid right joyfully, and Argos shall give still other victims.

AMPHITRYON

[1039] Not yet hast thou made full atonement, son; complete the sacrifice. See, a victim stands before the altar; with bent neck he awaits the stroke. I offer myself to death, I run to meet it, I follow after it; smite – but what is this? The glance of his eyes wanders, and faintness dulls his vision. Do I see the hands of Hercules a-tremble? His eyelids fall in slumber, and his tired neck sinks beneath his drooping head; now his knees give way and his whole body goes crashing to the ground, like an ash-tree felled in the woods, or a falling mass of rock that will give a breakwater to the sea.

[1048] [*To HERCULES.*] Livest thou still, or has that same madness given thee to death which sent thy kindred to their doom? [*He*

examines the prostrate body.] He sleeps; his chest heaves with measured breathing. Let him have time for rest, that deep slumber may break the force of his madness and relive his troubled heart. Ye slaves, remove his weapons, lest in rage he seek them yet again.

CHORUS

[1054] Let heaven mourn, and the great father of high heaven, and fertile earth, and wandering waves of the restless main; and thou above all, who ever the lands and stretches of the sea dost shed thy rays, and dispellest night with comely face, O glowing Sun; equally with thee hath Alcides seen the lands of thy setting and thy rising, and hath known both thy dwellings.

[1063] O free his soul from such monstrous ills, free him, ye gods, and turn to better things his darkened spirit. And do thou, O Sleep, vanquisher of woes, rest of the soul, the better part of human life, thou winged son of thy mother Astraea, sluggish brother of cruel Death, thou who dost mingle false with true, sure yet gloomy guide to what shall be; O thou, who art peace after wanderings, haven of life, day's respite and night's comrade, who comest alike to king and slave, who doest compel the human race, trembling at death, to prepare for unending night – sweetly and gently soothe his weary spirit; hold him fast bound in heavy stupor; let slumber chain his untamed limbs, and leave not his savage breast until his former mind regain its course.

[1082] See, prone on the ground, he revolves in his fierce heart his savage dreams; not yet has the baleful power of so great woe been overcome; wont to recline his weary head on his heavy club, he feels for its ponderous trunk with empty hand, tossing his arms in fruitless movement. Not yet has he dispelled all his surging madness, but as the waves, stirred up by a mighty wind, still keep their long, tumultuous roll, and still are swollen though the wind has ceased, [*so does his former rage still rack the hero.*] Banish the mad passions of thy soul; let the hero's piety and manly courage come again. Or rather, let his mind still be stirred by uncontrolled emotion; let his blind error go on the way it has begun; madness alone can now make

thee innocent. Next best to guiltless hands is ignorance of guilt.

[1100] Now let Hercules' breast resound beneath the blows of his palms; let those arms that were wont to upbear the universe be smitten by his victorious hands; let the heavens hear his mighty groans, let the queen of the dark world hear, and fierce Cerberus, crouching in his lowest cave, his necks still bound with chains; let Chaos re-echo the outcries of his grief, and the spreading waves of the broad deep, and mid-air which no less had felt thy shafts; the breast beset by so great ills must by no light blow be smitten; with one lamentation three kingdoms must resound. And thou, brave reed, which hung so long as ornament and weapon from his neck, and thou, heavy quiver, lay savage blows on his untamed back; let the stout oak club mangle his strong shoulders with its hard knots bruise his breast; let his weapons make lament for his mighty woes.

[1135] Go ye, ill-fated brood, ye boys, along the gloomy way of your father's famous task, not destined to be partakers of his praise by taking bloody vengeance on savage kings; never taught in Argive wrestling school to ply the limbs, brave with boxing-glove and brave with hand, never yet taught to wound the maned lion with well-hurled javelin, but yet already bold to poise and throw with steady hand the slender Scythian dart, and shoot the deer that seek safety in flight – go to the haven of the Styx, go, harmless shades whom on the very threshold of life your sire's mad crime o'ercame; go, go to the presence of the angered kings.

HERCULES

[Waking up in his right mind.]

[1138] What place is this? What region, what quarter of the world?

Where am I? Beneath the sun's rising or beneath the wheeling course of the frozen Bear? Is this the boundary set to Ocean's stream by that farthest land on the western sea? What air is this I breathe? What soil lies beneath my weary frame? Surely I have returned to earth –

[His eyes fall on his murdered children.]

[1143] How is it that I see bloody corpses lying before my house? Is

my mind not yet free from infernal phantoms? Even after my return do troops of ghastly things still throng before my eyes? With shame I confess it – I am afraid; something, some great calamity my heart forebodes. Where art thou, father? Where is my wife, so proud of her brood of sons? Why is my left shoulder bare of the lion's spoil? Whither has it gone, that shield of mine, at once a soft couch, too, for the sleep of Hercules? Where are my shafts? my bow? Who ahs been able to steal away my arms while I still live? Who has gained so great spoils of me, and has not shuddered at even a sleeping Hercules? Glad would I be to see my conqueror, glad. Come forth, thou brave hero, whom my sire, leaving heaven, has begotten, a later son, at whose begetting night stood still, longer than at mine –

[He recognizes his dead wife and children.]

[1159] What horror do I see? My sons, with bloody murder destroyed, lie here, my wife lies slain. What Lycus holds sway now? Who ahs dared perpetrate such outrages in Thebes, though Hercules has returned? Whoever dwellest by Ismenus' stream, on Attic plains, in the kingdom of Dardanian Pelops, lapped by two seas, come to my aid, tell me the doer of this cruel murder. On all let mine anger sweep; my foeman is he who points not out the foe. Vanquisher of Alcides, hidest thou? Come out; whether thou dost seek vengeance for the savage horses of the bloody Thracian or for Geryon's flock, or the Libyan heroes, I am ready for the fray. Here I stand defenceless, e'en though with my own arms thou shouldst assail me armourless.

[1173] Why does Theseus avoid my eyes, why does my father? Why do they hide their faces? Postpone your tears. Who ahs given my loved ones to death, all of them at once, tell me – why, father art thou silent? But do thou tell, Theseus! Nay, Theseus, tell me by thy loyalty! – They both in silence turn away and hide their faces as if in shame, while tears steal down their cheeks. In woes so great what room is there for shame? Has the ruthless lord of Argos, has the hostile band of dying Lycus, in ruin so vast overwhelmed me? O father, by the glory of my deeds, I pray thee, and by thy sacred name always next hallowed in my sight, speak out! who has overthrown my house? To whom have I fallen prey?

AMPHITRYON

[1186] In silence, as they may, let troubles pass.

HERCULES

[1187] And I be unavenged?

AMPHITRYON

[1187] Oft vengeance has brought bane.

HERCULES

[1188] Has any e'er borne such woes supinely?

AMPHITRYON

[1189] Yes, he who greater woes has feared.

HERCULES

[1189] But than these, father, can aught still greater of heavier be feared?

AMPHITRYON

[1191] How small the part of thy calamity is that thou knowest!

HERCULES

[1192] Have pity, father; see, I stretch out suppliant hands. What? from my hands he started back – here lurks the sin. Whence this blood? What of that shaft, still dripping with the blood of boys? It has been dipped in Hydra's gore – ah, now my own weapons do I recognize. No need to ask the hand that used them! Who could have bent the bow or what hand drawn the string which scarce yields to me? I turn to you again; father, is this my deed? Silent still – 'tis mine.

AMPHITRYON

[1200] Truly the woe is thine; the crime thy stepdame's. This mischance is free from sin.

HERCULES

[1202] Now from every quarter of the sky, O father, thunder in thy wrath; though thou hast forgotten me, with tardy hand at least avenge

thy grandsons. Let the starry heavens resound, and the skies dart lightnings from pole to pole; let the Caspian crags claim my fettered body, and let the ravenous bird – Why are Prometheus' crags unoccupied? Why, the bare, steep side of Caucasus which, on its lofty summit, feeds beasts and birds of prey? Let those clashing rocks which confine the Scythian sea stretch my fettered hands apart this way and that o'er the deep, and, when with recurrent change they come together and when, as the crags rush from either side, the rocks force up to heaven the interposing flood, may I lie there the mountains' tortured curb. Nay, I will build me a huge pile of logs and burn my body spattered with impious gore. Thus, thus must I do – to the nether gods will I give back Hercules.

AMPHITRYON

[1219] His heart, not yet eased of frenzy's tumult, ahs shifted its wrath's aim and now, sure sign of madness, he rages against himself.

HERCULES

[1221] Ye dire abodes of fiends, prison-house of the dead, ye regions set apart for the guilty throng, if any place of banishment lies hidden away beneath hell itself, unknown to Cerberus and me, hide me there, O earth; to the remotest bounds of Tartarus will I go and there abide. O heart too fierce! Who can weep worthily for you, my children, scattered through all my house? This face, hardened with woe, has forgotten how to weep. Give my bow here, give me my arrows, here give me my huge club.

[He bends the corpses and addresses each in turn.]

[1231] For thee will I break my shafts, for thee, poor boy, will I rend my bow; but to thy shades my heavy club shall burn; my quiver itself, full of Lerna's darts, shall go with thee to the pyre. So let my arms pay the penalty. You, too, with my weapons will I burn, O cursed, O stepdame's hands.

AMPHITRYON

[1237] What man anywhere hath laid on error the name of guilt?

HERCULES

[1238] Oft hath great error held the place of guilt.

AMPHITRYON

[1239] Now must thou be Hercules; bear thou this weight of trouble.

HERCULES

[1240] Shame, quenched by madness, has not so far gone from me that with unhallowed presence I should scare all peoples. Arms, Theseus, my arms! I pray you quickly give back what you have stolen. If my mind is sane give back to my hands their weapons; if madness still remains, fly, O my father; I shall find a path to death.

AMPHITRYON

[1247] By the holy ties of birth, by the right of both my names, whether thou dost call me foster-father or true sire, by these grey hairs, which pious sons revere, spare thyself, I pray, to my lonely age and to my weary years. Sole prop of my fallen house, sole light of my woe-darkened life, save thyself for me. No enjoyment of thee, no fruit of thy toils has fallen to my lot; but always have I had to fear either the stormy seas or monsters; every cruel king that rages in all the world with guilt on his hands or altars is cause of dread to me; always do I, thy father, yearn for the joy of touch and sight of thee, my ever-absent son.

HERCULES

[1258] Why I should longer stay my soul in the light of day, and linger here, there is no cause; all that was dear to me I've lost: reason, arms, honour, wife, children, strength – and madness too! No power could purge a tainted spirit; by death must sin be healed.

AMPHITRYON

[1263] Thou'lt slay thy father.

HERCULES

[1263] Lest I do so, I'll die.

AMPHITRYON

[1264] Before thy father's eyes?

HERCULES

[1264] I have taught him to look on impious deeds.

AMPHITRYON

[1265] Nay, rather think upon thy deeds glorious to all, and seek from thyself pardon for one sin.

HERCULES

[1267] Shall he give remission to himself who to none other gave it? As for my glorious deeds, at others' hest I did them; this alone is mine. Help me, father; whether love move thee, or my sad fate, or the tarnished glory of my manhood. Bring me my weapons; by my right hand let fate be vanquished.

THESEUS

[1272] Enough thy father's prayers have power to move, but let my weeping move thee, too. Up! and with thy wonted force break through adversity. Now get back thy courage which was ne'er unequal to any hardship; now must thou greatly play the man – forbid Hercules to rage!

HERCULES

[1278] If I keep to life, I have wrought wrong; if I die, have borne it. I am in haste to purge the earth. Long since a monstrous form, impious, savage, inexorable, wild, has stalked before my eyes; come, hand, grapple with this task greater than the last of all thy labours. Coward, dost thou shrink, brave against boys alone and trembling mothers? My arms, I say! Unless they are given me, either I will cut down all the woods of Thracian Pindus and Bacchus' groves and Cithaeron's ridges, and along with my own body I will burn them up; or else all the dwellings of Thebes with their households and their masters, the temples with all their gods, I will pull down upon myself and lie buried 'neath a city's wreck; and if, hurled on my shoulders, the walls shall fall with too light a weight, and if, buried beneath the seven gates, I be not crushed enough, then all the mass which lies at

the centre of the universe and separates gods from men will I overthrow upon my head.

AMPHITRYON

[1295] I return thine arms.

HERCULES

[1295] The words are worthy the sire of Hercules. See, slain by this shaft fell my boy.

AMPHITRYON

[1297] 'Twas Juno shot the arrow by thy hand.

HERCULES

[1298] 'Tis I who shall use it now.

AMPHITRYON

[1298] Oh, how my woeful heart trembles with fear and smites on my anxious breast!

HERCULES

[1300] The shaft is notched.

AMPHITRYON

[1300] Ah, now wilt thou sin of thine own will and knowledge.

HERCULES

[1301] Speak out; what wouldst have me do?

AMPHITRYON

[1302] I make no prayer; for me woe is assured – thou alone canst preserve my son to me, but not even thou canst snatch him from me. I have passed my greatest fear; wretched thou canst not make me, but blest, thou canst. Decide, then, as thou wilt decide, but know that in so doing thy cause and fame stand at hazard and doubtful issue; either thou livest or slayest me. This flitting soul, weary with age and no less with woe weary, I hold upon my very lips. So grudgingly does any man grant his father life? [*He seizes a sword and sets its*

point to his breast.] I will brook no more delay; with the fatal steel thrust home will I pierce my breast; here, here shall lie the crime of a sane Hercules.

HERCULES

[1314] Now hold, father, hold, recall thy hand! Strong soul of mine, yield, do a father's will; add this task also to Hercules' toils – and live! Theseus, lift thou from the ground my father's fainting limbs. My hands defiled shrink from that pious touch.

AMPHITRYON

[1319] But this hand I clasp joyfully; by its help I'll walk and, holding it close to my aching heart, banish my griefs.

HERCULES

[1321] Whither shall I flee? Where shall I hide me, or in what land bury me? What Tanaïs, what Nile, what Tigris, raging with Persian torrents, what warlike Rhine, or Tagus, turbid with the golden sands of Spain, can cleanse this hand? Though cold Maeotis should pour its northern sea upon me, though the whole ocean should stream along my hands, still will the deep stains cling. To what countries, man of sin, wilt thou betake thee? The rising or the setting sun wilt seek? Know in every land, I have lost place for exile. The world shrinks from my presence, the stars, moving askance, turn away their courses; Titan himself looked upon Cerberus with kindlier face. O faithful friend, Theseus, seek a hiding-place for me, remote, obscure; since, though witness of others' sins, thou dost ever love the sinners, grant me now grace and recompense for favours past. Take me back, I pray thee, and restore me to the nether shades; put me in thy stead, loaded with thy chains; that place will hide me – but it, too, knows me!

THESEUS

[1341] My land awaits thee. There Gradivus once cleansed his hands from blood and gave them back to war; thee, Alcides, does that land call, land which can free the immortals from their stains.

THE TROJAN WOMEN



Translated by Frank Justus Miller

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THE SCENE is laid on the seashore, with the smouldering ruins of Troy in the background.

THE TIME is the day before the embarkation of the Greeks on their homeward journey.

ARGUMENT

The long and toilsome siege of Troy is done. Her stately palaces and massive walls have been overthrown and lie darkening the sky with their still smouldering ruins. Her heroic defenders are either slain or scattered, seeking other homes in distant lands. The victorious Greeks have gathered the rich spoils of Troy upon the shore, among these the Trojan women, who have suffered the usual fate of women when a city is sacked. They await the lot which shall assign them to their Grecian lords and scatter them among the cities of their foes. All things are ready for the start.

But now the ghost of Achilles has risen from the tomb, and demanded that Polyxena be sacrificed to him before the Greeks shall be allowed to sail away. And Calchas, also, bids that Astyanax be slain, for only thus can Greece be safe from any future Trojan war. And thus the Trojan captives, who have so long endured the pains of war, must suffer still this double tragedy.

TROADES

HECUBA

[1] Whoever trusts in sovereignty and strongly lords it in his princely hall, who fears not the fickle gods and has given up his trustful soul to joy, on me let him look and on thee, O Troy. Never did fortune give larger proof on how frail ground stand the proud. O'erthrown and fallen is mighty Asia's prop, famous work of gods; she to whose assistance came he who drinks chill Tanaïs, spreading its sevenfold mouths, he who first greets the new-born day, where mingle the warm waters of Tigris with the ruddy sea, and she who sees o'er her borders the wandering Scythians and with her virgin hordes scourges the Pontic shore – e'en she by the sword is razed, Pergamum upon herself has fallen. See! The towering glories of her high-piled wall lie low, her dwellings consumed by fire; the flames lick round her palace, and all the house of Assaracus smokes on every side. The flames check not the victor's greedy hands; Troy is plundered even while she burns; the face of day, obscured as by an impenetrable cloud, is black and foul with the ashes of Ilium. With wrath still unglutted the victor stands, eyeing long-lingering Ilium, and at last, spite of his savage hate, forgives the ten long years; he quakes even at her ruins and, though he sees her overthrown, yet trusts not his own witness that she could have been overthrown. The plunderer hurries away the Dardan spoils, booty which a thousand ships cannot contain.

[28] I call to witness the divinity of the gods, hostile to me, the ashes of my country, thee, ruler of Phrygia, whom, buried beneath thy whole realm, Troy covers, and the shades of thee with whose standing Ilium stood, and you, great troops of children mine, ye lesser shades: whatever disaster has befallen us, whatever evils Phoebus' bride, raving with frenzied lips, foretold, though the god forbade that she should be believed, I, Hecuba, big with child, saw first, nor did I keep my fears unuttered, and I before Cassandra was a prophetess unheeded. 'Tis not the crafty Ithacan, nor the night-prowling comrade of the Ithacan, who has scattered firebrands

‘mongst you, nor the lying Sinon – mine is that fire, by my brands are you burning.

[41] But why lamentest thou the downfall of a city overthrown, old age that clingest too long to life? Think thou, ill-fated, on these recent griefs; Troy’s fall is now an ancient woe. I saw the accursed murder of the king and at the very altar (crime past belief) the arms of Aeacides, when he, with left hand clutching the old man’s hair, bent back the royal head and into the deep wound savagely thrust the impious steel; and when with right good will he had plucked away the deep-driven sword, it came unwetted from the old man’s throat. Ah, whose rage might not have been stayed from savage slaughter by one close drawing to the last period of mortal life, by the gods who beheld the crime, and by what was once the sanctuary of a fallen realm? Priam, that father of so many princes, lies unentombed and lacks a funeral torch, though Troy is burning. And yet the gods are not satisfied; behold, the urn by lot is choosing lords for the matrons and maids of Priam’s house, and I, a spoil unprized, shall follow some new lord. One promises himself the wife of Hector, one prays that Helenus’ wife be his, and one, Antenor’s; nor is one wanting who seeks thy couch, Cassandra; my lot is dreaded, I only am a terror to the Greeks.

[63] Do your wailings falter? O throng of mine, captives as ye are, smite breasts with palms, make loud laments, due rites for Troy perform. Long since ‘twere time for fatal Ida to resound, home of the ill-omened judge.

CHORUS

[68] No untrained company, stranger to tears, dost thou bid mourn; this have we done for years unceasing, from when the Phrygian guest touched at Grecian Amyclae, and the waves were cleft by the pine sacred to mother Cybele. Ten times has Ida whitened with her snows, ten times been stripped for our funeral pyres, and in the Sigeian fields ten harvests has the trembling reaper cut, since when no day has been without its grief. But now we have new cause for weeping. On with your lamentation, and do thou, O queen, lift high thy wretched hand.

We, the common throng, will follow our mistress; well trained in mourning are we.

HECUBA

[83] Trusty comrades of my fate, unbind your locks; over your sorrowing shoulders let them flow, defiled with Troy's warm dust. Fill your hands – so much may we take from Troy. Let the band their bared arms make ready; let down your robes and bind their folds; down to the waist let your forms be bared. For what husband dost veil thy breast, O captive modesty? Let our mantles gird up the loose-flowing tunics, let mad hands be free for raining the blows of woe – 'tis well, this attire is well; now do I recognize my Trojan band. Repeat once more your old lamentations; exceed your wonted manner of weeping; 'tis for Hector we weep.

CHORUS

[99] We have all loosed our locks at many a funeral torn; our hair has fall'n free from its knot, and hot ashes have sprinkled our faces. From our bared shoulders our garments fall and cover only our loins with their folds. Now naked breasts invite our hands; now, now, O Grief, put forth thy strength. Let the Rhoetean shores resound with our mourning, and let Echo, who dwells in the caves of the mountains, not, after her wont, curtly repeat our final words alone, but give back our full mourning for Troy. Let ever sea hear us, and sky. Smite, hands, bruised breasts with mighty beating; I am not content with the accustomed sound – 'tis for Hector we weep.

HECUBA

[117] For thee my right hand smites my arms, and bleeding shoulders it smites for thee; for thee my hand beats on my head, for thee my breasts with a mother's palms are mangled. Let flow and stream with blood, bleeding afresh, whatever wound I made at thy funeral. O prop of thy country, hindrance of fate, thou bulwark for weary Phrygians, thou wast our country's wall; propped on thy shoulders, ten years she stood; with thee she fell, and Hector's last day was his country's, too.

[130] Turn now your mourning; for Priam shed your tears; Hector has enough.

CHORUS

[132] Receive our mourning, O ruler of Phrygia; receive our tears, twice-captured old man. Naught has Troy suffered once in thy reign; nay, twice she endured the battering of her Dardanian walls by Grecian steel and twice felt the arrows of Hercules. After Hecuba's sons were borne out to burial, after that troop of princes, thou, father, dost close the long funeral train and, slaughtered as a victim to mighty Jove, on Sigeum's strand headless thou liest.

HECUBA

[142] Otherwhere turn ye your tears; not to be pitied is my Priam's death, ye Trojans. Cry ye all, "Happy Priam!" Free fares he to the deep land of spirits, nor ever will bear on his conquered neck the yoke of the Grecians; he does not look upon the two sons of Atreus, nor behold crafty Ulysses; he will not, as booty of Argolic triumph, bend neck 'neath their trophies; he will not yield hands to be bound which have wielded the sceptre, nor, following the car of Agamemnon, wearing gold fetters, will he make show for wide-spreading Mycenae.

CHORUS

[157] "Happy Priam," say we all. With him, in departing, he has taken his kingdom; now in the peaceful shades of Elysium's grove he wanders, and happy midst pious souls he seeks for his Hector. Happy Priam, happy whoe'er, dying in battle, has with his death made an end of all.

[Enter TALTHYBIUS.]

TALTHYBIUS

[164] O delay, ever long for Greeks in harbour, whether they would seek war or seek fatherland!

CHORUS

[166] Tell thou what cause delays the Grecian fleet, what god blocks

the homeward paths.

TALTHYBIUS

[168] My spirit is afraid; shivering horror makes my limbs to quake. Portents transcending truth scarce gain belief – but I saw it, with my own eyes I saw. The sun was just grazing the hill-tops with his morning rays and day had vanquished night, when suddenly the earth with hidden rumblings rocked convulsive and brought to light her innermost recesses; the woods tossed their tops and the lofty forest and sacred grove resounded with huge crashing; and rocks came falling from the shivered heights of Ida. Nor did the earth only tremble; the sea, too, felt its own Achilles near and stilled its waters. Then was the valley rent asunder, revealing caverns measureless, and yawning Erebus gave passage-way through the cleft earth to the world above and opened up the tomb. Forth leaped the mighty shade of the Thessalian chief, such shape as when practising for thy fate, O Troy, he laid low the Thracian arms, or smote the son of Neptune with white plumes gleaming; or when, amidst the ranks raging in furious battle, he choked rivers with corpses, and Xanthus, seeking his way, wandered slowly along with bloody stream; or when he stood in his proud car victorious, plying the reins and dragging Hector – and Troy.

[190] The shout of the enraged hero filled all the shore: “Go, go, ye cowards, bear off the honours due to my spirit; loose your ungrateful ships to sail away over my seas. At no small price did Greece avert the wrath of Achilles, and the great cost shall she avert it. Let Polyxena, once pledged to me, be sacrificed to my dust by the hand of Pyrrhus and bedew my tomb.” So speaking with deep voice, he bade farewell to day and, plunging down to Dis once more, closed the huge chasm as the earth was again united. The tranquil waters lie motionless, the wind has given up its threats, the calm sea murmurs with gentle waves, from the deep the band of Tritons has sounded the wedding hymn.

[*Enter PYRRHUS and AGAMEMNON.*]

PYRRHUS

[203] When thou wast spreading joyful sails for thy return over the sea, Achilles was quite forgot, who by his sole hand made Troy to totter, so that – whate’er delay was added after his death – she but stood wavering which way to fall. Though thou shouldst wish and haste to give him what he seeks, thou wouldst give too late; already have all the chiefs made choice of their spoils. What meaner prize can be given to his great worth? Or was his desert but slight who, bidden to shun the war and idly spend a long old age, surpassing the years of the ancient Pylian, put off his mother’s wiles and those disguising garments, confessing himself a man by his choice of arms? When Telephus, unbridled ruler of inhospitable realm, refused him passage through warlike Mysia, he with his royal blood first dyed that inexperienced hand, and found that same hand brave and merciful. Thebes fell and conquered Eëtion saw his kingdom taken; by a like disaster little Lyrnesos, perched on a high hill, was overthrown, and the land famous for Briseïs’ capture; Chyrse, too, lies low, cause of strife for kings, and Tenedos, well known in fame, and fertile Scyros, which on its rich pasturage feeds the Thracian flocks, and Lesbos, cleaving in twain the Aegean sea, and Cilla, sacred to Phoebus; and what of the lands which the Caÿcus washes, his waters swollen by the floods of spring?

[229] This great overthrow of nations, this widespread terror, all these cities wrecked as by a tornado’s blast, to another could have been glory and the height of fame; to Achilles they were but deeds upon the way. ’Twas thus my father came, and so great wars he waged while but preparing war. Though I speak not of other merits, would not Hector alone have been enough? My father conquered Ilium; you have plundered it. Proud am I to rehearse my great sire’s illustrious praises and glorious deeds: Hector lies low, slain before his father’s eyes, and Memnon before his uncle’s, in sorrow for whose death his mother with wan face ushered in a mournful day, while the victor shuddered at the lesson of his own work, and Achilles learned that even sons of goddesses can die. Then fell the fierce Amazon, our latest dread. Thou art Achilles’ debtor, if rightly thou estimate his worth, even if he should ask a maiden from Mycenae and from

Argos. Dost hesitate and now of a sudden deem wrong what has already been approved, and count it cruel to sacrifice Priam's daughter to Peleus's son? And yet thine own daughter for Helen's sake thou, her sire, didst immolate. I claim but what is already use and precedent.

AGAMEMNON

[250] Ungoverned violence is a fault of youth; in the case of others 'tis the first fervour of their years that sweeps them on, but with Pyrrhus 'tis his father's heat. The blustering airs and threats of arrogant Aeacides I once bore unmoved. The greater the might, the more should be the patience to endure.

[255] Why with cruel bloodshed dost thou besmire the noble shade of an illustrious chief? This 'twere fitting first to learn, what the victor ought to do, the vanquished, suffer. Ungoverned power no one can long retain; controlled, it lasts; and the higher Fortune has raised and exalted the might of man, the more does it become him to be modest in prosperity, to tremble at shifting circumstance, and to fear the gods when they are overkind. That greatness can be in a moment overthrown I have learned by conquering. Does Troy make us too arrogant and bold? We Greeks are standing in the place whence she has fallen. In the past, I grant, I have been headstrong in government and borne myself too haughtily; but such pride has been broken by that cause which could have produced it in another, e'en Fortune's favour. Thou, Priam, mak'st me proud – and fearful, too.

[271] Should I count sovereignty anything but a name bedecked with empty glamour, a brow adorned with a lying coronet? Brief chance will plunder these, mayhap without the aid of a thousand ships or ten long years: Fate hangs not over all so long. For my part, I will confess – thy pardon for saying it, O Argive land! – I wished to see the Phrygians beaten down and conquered; but overthrown and razed to the ground – would that I could have spared them that. But wrath, the fiery foeman, victory given to night's charge, these cannot be kept in hand. All that any might have deemed unworthy in me or brutal, this resentment wrought and darkness, whereby fury is

spurred to greater fury, and the victorious sword, whose blood-lust, when once stained with blood, is madness. All that can survive of ruined Troy let it survive; enough and more of punishment has been exacted. That a royal maid should fall, be offered to a tomb, should water the ashes of the dead, and that men should call foul murder marriage, I will not permit. The blame of all comes back on me; he who, when he may, forbids not sin, commands it.

PYRRHUS

[292] And shall Achilles' ghost gain no reward?

AGAMEMNON

[293] It shall; all shall sing his praises and unknown lands shall hear his mighty name. But if his dust can be appeased only by on-poured blood, let Phrygian cattle, rich spoil, be slain, and let blood flow which will cause no mother's tears. What custom this? When was a human victim offered up in honour of human dead? Save thy father from scorn and hate, whom thou art bidding us honour by a maiden's death.

PYRRHUS

[301] O thou swollen with pride so long as prosperity exalts thy soul, but faint of heart when the alarms of war resound, tyrant of kings! Is now thy heart inflamed with sudden love and of a new mistress? Art thou alone so often to bear off our spoils? With this right hand will I give to Achilles the victim due. If thou dost refuse and keep her from me, a greater will I give, worthy the gift of Pyrrhus; too long has my hand refrained from killing kings, and Priam claims his peer.

AGAMEMNON

[310] Nay, I deny not that 'tis Pyrrhus' most glorious deed of war that Priam lies slain by thy brutal sword, and he thy father's suppliant.

PYRRHUS

[313] Yea, I know my father's suppliants – and enemies, too. And yet in my father's presence Priam prayed; thou, quaking with o'ermastering fear, not brave enough to make thy own plea, didst

delegate thy prayers to Ajax and the Ithacan, staying hid in thy tend
and trembling at thy foe.

AGAMEMNON

[318] But no fear then, I grant it, had thy father, and mid Grecian
carnage and their blazing ships idly he lay, thoughtless of war and
arms, strumming with dainty quill on tuneful lyre.

PYRRHUS

[322] Then mighty Hector, though he scorned thy arms, still feared
Achilles' songs, and midst so great general dread deep peace lay on
the ship-camp of Thessaly.

AGAMEMNON

[325] Yea, and in that same ship-camp of Thessaly deep peace, again,
did Hector's father find.

PYRRHUS

[327] 'Tis a high, a kingly act to give life to a king.

AGAMEMNON

[328] Why then from a king did thy right hand take life?

PYRRHUS

[329] The merciful will oft give death instead of life.

AGAMEMNON

[330] And is it now in mercy thou seekest a maiden for the tomb?

PYRRHUS

[331] So now thou deemst the sacrifice of maids a crime?

AGAMEMNON

[332] To put country before children befits a king.

PYRRHUS

[333] No law spares the captive or stays the penalty.

AGAMEMNON

[334] What law forbids not, shame forbids be done.

PYRRHUS

[335] Whate'er he will, 'tis the victor's right to do.

AGAMEMNON

[336] Least should he will who has much right.

PYRRHUS

[337] Darest fling such words to those whom, overwhelmed beneath thy heavy sway for ten long years, Pyrrhus freed from the yoke?

AGAMEMNON

[339] Does Scyrus give such airs?

PYRRHUS

[339] 'Tis free from the crime of brothers.

AGAMEMNON

[340] Hemmed by the waves –

PYRRHUS

[340] Yes, of a kindred sea. Atreus and Thyestes – well do I know their noble house.

AGAMEMNON

[342] Thou son of a maiden's secret shame and of Achilles, but scarce yet a man –

PYRRHUS

[344] Of that Achilles who by right of lineage extends throughout the realm of the immortals and claims the universe: the sea through Thetis, through Aeacus the shades, the heavens through Jove.

AGAMEMNON

[347] Of that Achilles who lies slain by Paris' hand.

PYRRHUS

[348] Whom e'en a god would not contend with face to face.

AGAMEMNON

[349] I could check thy words and curb thy recklessness by punishment; but my sword knows how to spare e'en captives. Rather, let Calchas, the interpreter of the gods, be called. If the fates demand, I will give her up.

[*Enter CALCHAS.*]

[353] Thou who didst free the Pelasgian fleet from bonds, and didst end the wars' delays, who by thy art doest unlock the sky, to whom the entrails' secrets, to whom the crashing heavens and the star with its long, flaming trail disclose the fates, thou whose utterances ever cost me dear: what is God's will, declare, O Calchas, and by thy wisdom guide us.

CALCHAS

[360] 'Tis at the accustomed price fate grants the Danaï their voyage. A maiden must be sacrificed on the Thessalian chieftain's tomb; but in the barb in which Thessalian brides are wed, or Ionian or Mycenaean, let Pyrrhus lead his father's bride to him. 'Tis so she shall be given duly. But it is not this cause alone which delays our ships; blood nobler than thy blood, Polyxena, is due. Whom the fates seek, from the high watch-tower let him fall, Priam's grandson, Hector's son, and let him perish there. Then with its thousand sails may the fleet fill the seas.

CHORUS

[371] Is it true, or does the tale cheat timid souls, that spirits live on when bodies have been buried, when the wife has closed her husband's eyes, when the last day has blotted out the sun, when the mournful urn holds fast our dust? Profits it not to give up the soul to death, but remains it for wretched mortals to live still longer? Or do we wholly die and does no part of us remain, when with the fleeting breath the spirit, mingling with vapours, has passed into the air, and the lighted fire has touched the naked body?

[382] All that the rising sun and all that the setting knows, all that the ocean laves with its blue waters, twice ebbing and twice flowing, time with the pace of Pegasus shall gather in. With such whirlwind speed as the twelve signs fly along, with such swift course as the lord of stars hurries on the centuries, and in such wise as Hecate hastens along her slanting ways, so do we all seek fate, and nevermore does he exist at all who has reached the pool whereby the high gods swear. As smoke from burning fires vanishes, staining the air for once brief moment; as clouds, which but now we saw lowering, are scattered by the cold blasts of Boreas, so shall this spirit which rules our bodies flow away. There is nothing after death, and death itself is nothing, the final goal of a course full swiftly run. Let the eager give up their hopes; their fears, the anxious; greedy time and chaos engulf us altogether. Death is a something that admits no cleavage, destructive to the body and unsparing of the soul. Taenarus and the cruel tyrant's kingdom and Cerberus, guarding the portal of no easy passage – all are but idle rumours, empty words, a tale light as a troubled dream. Dost ask where thou shalt lie when death has claimed thee? Where they lie who were never born.

[Enter ANDROMACHE, leading her little son, ASTYANAX, and accompanied by an aged man-servant.]

ANDROMACHE

[409] Ye Phrygian woman, mournful band, why do you tear your hair, beat on your wretched breasts, and water your cheeks with weeping unrestrained? Trivial woes have we endured if our sufferings can be told by tears. Ilium has fallen but now for you; for me she fell long since, when the cruel foeman behind the swift car dragged his limbs – my own, and his axle-tree, on Pelion hewed, groaned loud, straining beneath Hector's weight. On that day overwhelmed and ruined, whatever has happened since I bear, benumbed with woe, stony, insensible. And now, escaping the Greeks, I should follow my husband, if this child held me not. He tames my spirit and prevents my death; he forces me still to ask something of the gods, has prolonged my suffering. He has robbed me of the richest fruit of sorrows, the scorn of fear. All chance of happiness has been snatched

away from me; calamity has still a door of entrance. Most wretched 'tis to fear when you can hope for naught.

OLD MAN

[426] What sudden terror has stirred thy stricken soul?

ANDROMACHE

[427] Some greater woe from woe already great arises. The fate of falling Ilium is not yet stayed.

OLD MAN

[429] What new disasters, though he wish, will the god discover?

ANDROMACHE

[430] The bars of deep Styx and its darksome caves are opened and, lest terror be wanting to our overthrow, our buried foemen come forth from lowest Dis. To the Greeks only is a backward passage given? Death surely is impartial. That terror disturbs and alarms all Phrygians alike; but this vision of dread night doth terrify my soul alone.

OLD MAN

[437] What vision hast thou to tell? Speak out thy fears before us all.

ANROMACHE

[438] Two portions of her course had kindly night well-nigh passed, and the seven stars had turned their shining car; at last long unfamiliar calm came to my troubled heart, and a brief slumber stole o'er my weary cheeks – if, indeed, the stupor of a mind all dazed be slumber – when suddenly Hector stood before my eyes, not in such guise as when, forcing the fight against the Argives, he attacked the Grecian ships with torches from Ida's pines, not as when he raged in copious slaughter against he Danaï and bore off true spoils from a feigned Achilles; not such his face, blazing with battle light, but weary, downcast, heavy with weeping, like my own, covered with matted locks. Even so, 'twas joy to have looked upon him. Then, shaking his head, he said: "Rouse thee from slumber and save our son, O faithful wife! hide him; 'tis the only hope of safety. Away

with tears! Dost grieve because Troy has fallen? Would she were fallen utterly! Make haste, remove to any place soever the little scion of our house.” Cold horror and trembling banished sleep; quaking with terror, I turned my eyes now here, now there, taking no thought of my son, and piteously seeking Hector; but from my very arms his cheating ghost was gone.

[461] O son, true offspring of a mighty sire, sole hope of Phrygians, sole comfort of our stricken house, child of an ancient, too illustrious line, too like thy father, thou; such features my Hector had, such was he in gait, such in bearing; so carried he his brave hands, so bore he his shoulders high, such august, commanding look had he as with head thrown proudly back he tossed his flowing locks. O son, born too late for the Phrygians, too soon for thy mother, will that time ever come and that happy day when, as defender and avenger of the Trojan land, thou shalt establish Pergama restored, bring back its scattered citizens from flight, and give again their name to fatherland and Phrygians? But, remembering my own lot, I shrink from such proud prayers; this is enough for captives – may we but live!

[476] Ah me, what place will be faithful to my fears? where shall I hide thee? That citadel, once rich in treasure and its god-built walls, amongst all nations famed and envied, is now deep dust, wasted utterly by fire; an of that huge city not even enough is left wherein a child may hide. What place shall I choose to cheat them? There is my dear lord’s great tomb, hallowed, awe-inspiring to the foe, which of huge bulk and at mighty cost his father reared, a prince not niggardly in his grief. To his sire shall I best entrust the child. Cold sweat streams down all my limbs. Ah me! I shudder at the omen of the place of death.

OLD MAN

[497] In wretchedness, seize any refuge; in safety, choose.

ANDROMACHE

[496] What that he cannot hide without great danger of betrayal?

OLD MAN

[492] Have none to see thy guile.

ANDROMACHE

[493] If the foe inquire?

OLD MAN

[498] He perished in the city's downfall; this cause alone has saved many from destruction – the belief that they have perished.

ANDROMACHE

[490] Scant hope is left; the crushing weight of his noble birth lies heavy on him. What will it profit him to have hidden, when he must fall into their hands?

OLD MAN

[495] The victor's first onslaughts are the deadliest.

ANDROMACHE

[498] [*To ASTYANAX.*] What place, what spot, remote and inaccessible, will keep thee safe? Who will bring help in our sore need? Who will protect? O Hector, who didst always shield thine own, shield them even now; guard thou a wife's pious theft and to thy faithful ashes take him to live again. Enter the tomb, my son – why dost thou shrink back and reject this safe hiding-place? I recognize thy breeding; thou art ashamed of fear. But put away thy high spirit and old-time courage; put on such spirit as misfortune grants. See how small a company of us remains – a tomb, a child, a captive woman; we must yield to ills. Come, boldly enter the sacred home of thy buried father. If the fates befriend the wretched, thou hast a safe retreat; if the fates deny thee life, thou hast a tomb.

[*ASTYANAX enters the tomb and the gates are closed and barred behind him.*]

OLD MAN

[512] The bars protect their charge; and, that thy fear may not hale him forth, retire thou far from here and withdraw thyself apart.

ANDROMACHE

[515] Who fears from near at hand, fears often less; but if thou thinkest well, we will betake us elsewhere.

[*ULYSSES is seen approaching.*]

OLD MAN

[517] Be still a little while, utter no word or cry; the leader of the Cephallenians hither bends his accursed steps.

ANDROMACHE

[*With a final appealing look towards the tomb.*]

[519] Yawn deep, O earth, and thou, my husband, rive the rent earth to its lowest caves and hide the charge I give thee in the deep bosom of the Styx. Ulysses is here, with step and look of one in hesitation; in his heart he weaves some crafty stratagem.

[*Enter ULYSSES.*]

ULYSSES

[524] As the minister of harsh fate I beg this first, that, although the words are uttered by my lips, thou count them not my words; it is the voice of all the Grecian chiefs, whom Hector's son is keeping from their late home-coming; 'tis the fates demand him. A fretting mistrust of uncertain peace will ever possess the Danaï, and fear ever will force them to look behind and not let them lay down their arms, so long as thy son, Andromache, and Hector's shall give heart to the conquered Phrygians. Calchas, the augur, gives this response; and if Calchas, the augur, were silent upon this, yet Hector used to say it, and I dread even a son of his; the generous scion grows to its parent's likeness. So that little companion of the mighty herd, his first horns not yet sprouting through the skin, suddenly, with high-borne neck and proudly lifted brow, leads his father's herd and rules the drove; the slender shoot which has sprung up from a lopped-off trunk in a little while rises to match the parent tree, gives back shade to the earth and a sacred grove to heaven; so do the embers of a great fire, carelessly left behind, regain their strength. I know that grief is no impartial judge; still, if thou weigh the matter with thyself, thou wilt

forgive a soldier if, after ten winters and as many harvest seasons, now veteran he fears war, fears still other bloody battles and Troy never wholly o'erthrown. A great matter moves the forebodings of the Danaï – another Hector. Free the Greeks from fear. This one cause holds our ships, already launched; this cause stays the fleet. And think me not cruel because, at the bidding of the lot, I seek Hector's son; I would have sought Orestes. Bear thou what thy conqueror has borne.

ANDROMACHE

[556] Oh, that thou wert within thy mother's reach, my son, and that I knew what hap holds thee now snatched from my arms, or what place – not though my breast were pierced with hostile spears, and my hands bound with cutting chains, not though scorching flames hemmed me on either side, would I ever put off a mother's loyalty. O son, what place, what fate, hath gotten thee now? On some pathless way dost thou roam the fields? Has the vast burning of thy fatherland consumed thy frame? or has some rude conqueror revelled in thy blood? Slain by some wild beast's fangs, dost feed the birds of Ida?

ULYSSES

[568] Have done with lies; 'tis not easy for thee to deceive Ulysses; we have out-matched the wiles of mothers and even of goddesses. Away with vain designs; where is thy son?

ANDROMACHE

[571] Where is Hector? Where all the Phrygians? Where is Priam? Thou seekest one; I seek for all.

ULYSSES

[573] Thou shalt be forced to tell what of thyself thou wilt not.

ANDROMACHE

[574] She is safe who is able, who ought, who longs to die.

ULYSSES

[575] When death draws near it drives out boastful words.

ANDROMACHE

[576] If thou desirest, Ulysses, to force Andromache through fear, threaten her with life; for 'tis my prayer to die.

ULYSSES

[578] Stripes, fire, and every form of torture shall force thee against thy will, through pain, to speak out what thou concealest, and from thy heart shall tear its inmost secrets; necessity is oft a greater force than love.

ANDROMACHE

[582] Bring on thy flames, wounds, devilish arts of cruel pain, and starvation and raging thirst, plagues of all sorts from every source, and the sword thrust deep within these vitals, the dungeon's pestilential gloom yea, all a victor dares in rage – and fear.

ULYSSES

[587] 'Tis foolish confidence to hide what thou must at once betray.

ANDROMACHE

[588] My dauntless mother-love admits no fears.

ULYSSES

[589] This very love, in which thou now dost stubbornly withstand us, warns the Danaï to take thought for their little sons. After a war so distant, after ten years of strife, I should feel less the fears which Calchas rouses, if 'twas for myself I feared. Thou art preparing war against Telemachus.

ANDROMACHE

[594] Unwillingly, Ulysses, will I give to the Danaï cause for joy, but I must give it; confess, O grief, the woes which thou wouldst conceal. Rejoice, ye sons of Atreus, and do thou bear joyful tidings to the Pelasgians as is thy wont – Hector's son is dead.

ULYSSES

[598] What surety givest thou the Danaï that this is true?

ANDROMACHE

[599] So may the conqueror's worst threat befall, may fate set me free by an early and easy passing, may I be buried in my own soil, may his native earth rest light on Hector, according as my son, deprived of light, lies amongst the dead and, given to the tomb, has received the due of those who live no more.

ULYSSES

[605] That the fates have been fulfilled by the removal of Hector's stock, and that peace is secure, this news will I joyfully bear to the Danaï – [*Aside.*] What doest thou, Ulysses? The Danaï will believe thy word, but whose word, thou? A mother's – or would any mother feign her offspring's death, and not shrink from the omen of the abhorrent word? Yet omens they fear who have naught worse to fear. She has confirmed her truth by oath; if the oath is false, what is the worse thing she can be fearing? Now, my heart, summon up thy craft, thy tricks, thy wiles, now all Ulysses; truth is never lost. Watch the mother. She grieves, she weeps, she groans; now here, now there she wanders restlessly, straining her ears to catch each uttered word; this woman's fear is greater than her grief. Now have I need of skill.

[619] [*To ANDROMACHE.*] Other parents 'twere fitting to console in sorrow; but thou art to be congratulated, poor soul, that thou hast lost thy son, for a cruel death awaited him, cast headlong from the tower which still stands solitary midst the fallen walls.

ANDROMACHE

[623] [*Aside.*] Life deserts my limbs, they quake, they fail; my blood stands still, congealed with icy cold.

ULYSSES

[625] [*Aside.*] She trembles; by this, yes, by this means must I test her. Her fear has betrayed the mother; this fear will I redouble.

[627] [*To his attendants.*] Go, go quickly! This enemy, hidden away by his mother's guile, this last plague of the Pelasgian name, wherever he is hiding, hunt him out and bring him hither.

[*Pretending that the boy is discovered, and then speaking as if to the man who has found him.*] Good! He is caught! Come, make haste and bring him in! [*To ANDROMACHE.*] Why dost thou look around and tremble? Surely he is already dead.

ANDROMACHE

[632] Oh, that I were afraid. 'Tis but my wonted fear, sprung use from long use. The mind unlearns but slowly what it has learned for long.

ULYSSES

[634] Since the boy has forestalled the lustral rites we owed the walls and cannot fulfil the priest's command, snatched from us by a better fate, the word of Calchas is that only thus can a peaceful homecoming be granted to our ships, if the waves be appeased by the scattering of Hector's ashes and his tomb be utterly levelled with the ground. Now, since the boy has escaped the death he owed, needs must hands be laid upon his hallowed resting-place.

ANDROMACHE

[642] [*Aside.*] What shall I do? My mind is distracted by a double fear: here, for my son; there, for my husband's sacred dust. Which shall prevail? I call the unpitied deities to witness, and that true deity, my husband's shade, that in my son naught else endears him to me, Hector, than thyself. May he live, that so he may recall thy face. – But shall thy ashes, torn from the tomb, be sunk beneath the sea? Shall I permit thy scattered bones to be flung upon the vasty deep? Sooner let the boy meet death. – But canst thou, his mother, see him given up to murder infamous? Canst see him sent whirling over the lofty battlements? I can, I will endure it, will suffer it, so but my Hector after death be not scattered by the victor's hand. – But he can still feel suffering, while death has placed the other beyond its reach. Why dost thou waver? decide whom thou wilt snatch from vengeance. Ungrateful woman, dost thou hesitate? On that side is thy Hector – nay, herein thou errest – Hector is in both; but the boy can still feel pain, and is destined perchance to avenge his father's death – both cannot be saved. What then? Save of the two, my soul, him whom the Danaï dread.

ULYSSES

[663] I will fulfil the oracle; the tomb will I raze to its foundations.

ANDROMACHE

[664] The tomb ye sold?

ULYSSES

[664] I'll keep right on, and from the mound's top I'll drag the sepulchre.

ANDROMACHE

[665] To heaven's faith I appeal, and Achilles' faith; Pyrrhus, protect thy father's gift.

ULYSSES

[667] This mound shall at once lie level with the plain.

ANDROMACHE

[668] Such sacrilege, truly, the Greeks had left undared. Temples you have profaned, even of your favouring gods; but our tombs your mad rage had spared. I will resist, will oppose my unarmed hands against you, armed; passion will give strength. Like the fierce Amazon who scattered the Argive squadrons, or like some god-smit Maenad who, armed with the thyrsus only, with frenzied march frightens the forest glades and, beside herself, has given wounds, nor felt them, so will I rush against you and fall in the tomb's defence, an ally of its dust.

ULYSSES

[678] [*To his men.*] Do you hold back, and does a woman's tearful outcry and futile rage move you? My orders – be quick and do them.

ANDROMACHE

[680] [*Struggling with the men.*] Me, me destroy here with the sword sooner. Ah me, I am thrust back. O Hector, burst the bars of death, heave up the earth, that thou mayst quell Ulysses. Even as a shade thou art enough – he has brandished his arms in his hand, he is hurling firebrands – ye Danaï, do you see Hector? or do I alone see him?

ULYSSES

[685] I'll pull it down to its foundations, all of it.

ANDROMACHE

[686] [*Aside, while the men begin to demolish the tomb.*] What art thou doing? dost thou lay low together in common ruin both son and husband? Perhaps thou wilt be able to appease the Danaï by prayer. – But even now the huge weight of the bomb will crush the hidden boy – poor lad! let him perish no matter where, so but sire o'erwhelm not son, and son harm not sire.

[*She casts herself at the knees of ULYSSES.*]

[691] At thy knees I fall, a suppliant, Ulysses, and this hand, which no man's feet have known, I lay upon thy feet. Pity a mother, calmly and patiently listen to her pious prayers, and the higher the gods have exalted thee, the more gently bear down upon the fallen. What is given to misery is a gift to Fortune. So may thy chaste wife's couch see thee again; so may Laertes prolong his years till he welcome thee home once more; so may thy son succeed thee, and, by his nature's happy gifts, surpassing all your prayers, transcend his grandsire's years, his father's gifts: pity a mother. This one only comfort is left in my affliction.

ULYSSES

[704] Produce thy son – and pray.

ANDROMACHE

[*Going to the tomb, calls ASTYANAX.*]

[706] Hither from thy hiding-place come out, sad object of a wretched mother's theft.

[*ASTYANAX appears from the tomb.*]

[708] Here he is, Ulysses, here is the terror of a thousand ships! [*To ASTYANAX.*] Lower thy hands and, prone at thy master's feet, pray thou with appealing touch; and deem naught base which fortune imposes on the wretched. Forget thy royal ancestry, the illustrious sway of thy noble grandsire o'er all lands, forget Hector, too; play

the captive and on bended knee, if thou feelst not yet thine own doom, copy thy mother's tears.

[*She turns to ULYSSES.*]

[718] Troy aforetime also saw the tears of a boy-king, and little Priam averted the threats of fierce Alcides. He, yes he, fierce warrior, to whose vast strength all savage creatures yielded, who burst through the doors of Dis and made the dark retraceable, conquered by his small enemy's tears, exclaimed: "Take the reins and rule thy state, sitting high on thy father's throne; but wield the sceptre with better faith." This it was to be taken by such a conqueror; learn ye the merciful wrath of Hercules. Or is it the arms alone of Hercules that please thee? See, there lies at thy feet a suppliant, no less than that other suppliant, and pleads for life—as for Troy's throne, let Fortune bear that whitherso'er she will.

ULYSSES

[736] The grief of a stricken mother moves me, true, and yet the Pelasgian mothers move me more, to whose great sorrow that boy of thine is growing.

ANDROMACHE

[739] These ruins, these ruins of a city brought to dust, shall he wake to life? Shall these hands raise Troy again? Troy has no hopes if she has but such as these. Not such our overthrow that we Trojans can be a fear to any. Does thought of his father rouse pride in him? 'Twas a father dragged in the dust. That father himself after Troy's fall would have given up courage, which great misfortunes break. If revenge be sought, what greater revenge couldst thou seek? Let the yoke of bondage be placed upon his high-born neck, let a slave's lot be granted him. Does any refuse this to a prince?

ULYSSES

[749] 'Tis not Ulysses, but Calchas refuses this to thee.

ANDROMACHE

[750] O thou contriver of fraud, cunning master in crime, by whose

warlike prowess none has ever fallen, by whose tricks and by cunning of whose vicious mind even Pelasgians are undone, dost seek to hide behind seer and blameless gods? This is the deed of thine own heart. Thou nocturnal soldier, brave to do a mere boy to death, at last thou darrest some deed alone and in the open day.

ULYSSES

[757] Ulysses' courage the Danaï know full well, and all too well the Phrygians. But leisure we lack to waste the day in empty words; the fleet is weighing anchor.

ANDROMACHE

[760] Generously grant a brief delay while I, his mother, do the last service to my son, and with a farewell embrace satisfy my yearning grief.

ULYSSES

[762] Would that I might have compassion on thee; but what alone I may, I will give thee time and respite. Weep thy fill; weeping lightens woe.

ANDROMACHE

[766] [*To ASTYANAX.*] O sweet pledge of love, O glory of our fallen house, last loss of Troy, thou terror of the Danaï, thy mother's vain hope, for whom in my madness I used so oft to pray thy sire's war-earned praises, thy grandsire's years; God has denied my prayers. Thou shalt not with kingly might wield Ilium's sceptre in thy royal hall, shalt not give laws unto the nations, nor send conquered tribes beneath thy yoke; thou shalt not smite fleeing Greeks nor drag Pyrrhus at thy chariot-wheels. Thy slender hand shall wield no boyish weapons, nor shalt thou boldly chase the wild beasts scattered through broad forest-glades, nor on the appointed lustral day, celebrating the sacred festival of the Trojan Game, shalt thou, a princely boy, lead on thy charging squadrons; nor among the altars, with swift and nimble feet, while the curved horn blares out stirring measures, shalt thou at Phrygian shrines celebrate the ancient dance. O mode of death sadder than cruel war! A sight more tearful than

great Hector's death shall the walls behold.

ULYSSES

[785] Break off now thy tears, thou mother; great grief sets no limit to itself.

ANDROMACHE

[787] For my tears, Ulysses, the respite I ask is small; grant me a few tears yet, that with my own hand I may close his eyes while he still lives. [*To ASTYANAX.*] Thou diest, little indeed, but already to be feared. Thy Troy awaits thee; go, depart in freedom; go, look on Trojans who are free.

ASTYANAX

[792] Pity me, mother.

ANDROMACHE

[792] Why clingest thou to my breast, and graspest the vain protection of thy mother's hands? As, when the lion's roar is heard, the young bull draws close to its mother's trembling flank, but see! the savage lion thrusts the dam away and, with huge jaws grasping the lesser booty, crushes and bears it off, so shall thy enemy snatch thee from my breast. Now, son, take my kisses and tears, take my torn locks and, full of me, hasten to thy sire. Yet bear, too, some few words of a mother's plaint: "If spirits still feel their former cares, and if love perishes not in the funeral flames, dost thou permit Andromache to serve a Greek lord, O cruel Hector? Indifferent and sluggish dost thou lie? Achilles has come back." Take now once again these locks, and take these tears, all that is left from my poor husband's funeral, take kisses to deliver to thy sire. This cloak leave as comfort for thy mother; my tomb has touched it, and my beloved shades. If any of his dust is hidden here, I'll hunt it with my lips.

ULYSSES

[812] [*To his attendants.*] There is no limit to her weeping – away with this hindrance to the Argive fleet.

[*Exeunt ULYSSES and his attendants, the former leading the little*

ASTYANAX.]

CHORUS

[814] What place of dwelling calls to our captive band? Thessalian mountains and Tempe's shady vale, or Phthia, land more fitted to produce warriors, and rocky Trachin, famous for its breed of brave herds, or Iochos, the vast sea's mistress? Crete, spacious with her hundred towns, little Gortynis and barren Tricce, or Mothone, abounding in tiny rills, the land of caves beneath Oeta's wooded heights which sent not once only to Troy's fall the deadly bow? Olenos, land of scattered homes, Pleuron, which the virgin goddess hates, or Troezen, on the broad sea's curving shore? Pelion, proud kingdom of Prothoüs, third step to heaven? (Here, reclining at full length within his hollowed mountain cave, Chiron, tutor of a youth already pitiless, with his quill striking out tinkling chords, even then whetted the boy's mighty passions by songs of war.) Or Carystos, rich in many-hued marble, or Chalcis, hard by the shore of the restless sea, where Euripus' racing tides ever flow? Calydnæ, easy of approach in any wind, or Gonoëssa, never free from winds, and Enispe, which shivers before the northern blast? Peparethos, lying close to the Attic shore, or Eleusin, rejoicing in her sacred mysteries? Shall we to the true Salamis, home of Ajax, or to Calydon, famed for the wild boar, or to those lands which the Titaressos bathes, destined to flow with its sluggish waters beneath the sea? or to Bessa, and Scarphe, or Pylos, the old man's home? to Pharis or Pisae, sacred to Jupiter, and Elis, famed for victor's crowns?

[851] Let the mournful blasts bear our misery where'er they list and give us to any land if only Sparta, which brought such woe on Troy and the Greeks alike, be far away, and far away be Argos, and Mycenæ, home of savage Pelops, and Neritos, smaller than small Zacynthos, and baleful Ithaca with her crafty crags.

[858] What fate, what lord waits for thee, Hecuba, or to what land will he lead thee to be a public show? In whose kingdom shalt thou die?

[Enter HELEN.]

HELEN

[861] [*Aside.*] Whatever wedlock, calamitous, joyless, has mourning, murder, blood, and lamentations, is worthy of Helen's auspices. Even in their ruin am I driven to be the Phrygians' bane. It is my task to tell a false tale of marriage with Pyrrhus; mine, to dress the bride in Grecian fashion; by my craft she will be snared and by my treachery will the sister of Paris fall. Let her be deceived; for her I deem this the easier lot; 'tis a death desirable, to die without the fear of death. Why dost hesitate to execute thy orders? To its author returns the blame of a crime compelled.

[871] [*To POLYXENA.*] Thou noble maid of the house of Dardanus, in more kindly wise doth heaven begin to regard the afflicted, and makes ready to dower thee with a happy bridal; such a match neither Troy herself while still secure, nor Priam, could make for thee. For the greatest ornament of the Pelasgian race, whose realm stretches wide over the plains of Thessaly, seeks thee in holy bonds of lawful wedlock. Thee will great Tethys call her own, thee, all the goddesses of the deep, and Thetis, calm deity of the swelling sea; wedded to Pyrrhus, Peleus as thy father-in-law shall call thee daughter, and Nereus shall call thee daughter. Put off thy mournful garb, don festal array, forget thou art a captive; smooth thy unkempt locks, and suffer my skilled hand to part thy hair. This fall, perchance, will restore thee to a more exalted throne. Many have profited by captivity.

ANROMACHE

[888] This one woe was lacking to the ruined Phrygians – to rejoice. Pergama's ruins lie blazing around – fit time for marriage! Would any dare refuse? Would any hesitate to go to a bridal when Helen invites? Thou plague, destruction, pest of both peoples, seest thou these tombs of chieftains, the bare bones which everywhere lie unentombed o'er all the plain? These has thy marriage scattered. For thee has flowed Asia's, has flowed Europe's blood, whilst thou gleefully didst look out upon thy warring husbands with wavering prayer. Go on, make ready thy marriages! What need of pine-brands, what of the solemn nuptial torch, what need of fire? For this strange marriage Troy furnishes the torch. Ye Trojan dames, celebrate

Pyrrhus' nuptials, celebrate them worthily: let blows and groans resound.

HELEN

[903] Although great grief lacks reason and will not be turned aside, and sometimes hates the very comrades of its suffering, still could I maintain my cause even before a hostile judge, having borne worse things than you. Andromache mourns for her Hector, and Hecuba for her Priam; for Paris alone must Helen mourn in secret. Is it a hard, a hateful, and a galling thing to endure servitude? This yoke have I long endured, for ten years captive. Is Ilium laid low, are your household gods overthrown? It is hard to lose one's native country, harder to fear it. You are comforted by companionship in so great misfortune; against me victor and vanquished rage alike. Which one of you each lord should drag away as his slave, has long hung on uncertain chance; me has my master dragged away at once, without waiting for the lot. Have I been the cause of wars and all this ruin to the Teucrians? Count that the truth if 'twas a Spartan ship that clove your seas; but if, swept along by Phrygian oarsmen, I was a helpless prey, if a triumphant goddess gave me as a reward to her judge, pity the helpless prey. 'Tis an angry judge my cause will have; the decision of that case waits on Menelaüs. But now forget your own woes a little while, Andromache, and prevail on her – I can scarce keep from weeping.

ANDROMACHE

[926] How great must be the woe for which Helen weeps! But why weep? Tell us what tricks, what crimes the Ithacan is devising. Must the maiden be cast down from Ida's crags or thrown from the lofty citadel's high rock? Must she be hurled into the vasty deep over these cliffs which lofty Sigeum with sheer sides raises, looking out on his shallow bay? Speak, speak, whatever it is thou hidest beneath thy lying looks. All woes are easier to bear than that Pyrrhus be son-in-law to Hecuba and Priam. Tell us, explain what suffering thou hast in hand, and subtract this one from our calamities – ignorance of our fate. Thou seest us ready to suffer death.

HELEN

[938] Would that the prophet of the gods bade me, too, end with the sword this lingering, hateful life, or fall before Achilles' tomb by the mad hand of Pyrrhus, a companion of thy fate, poor Polyxena, whom Achilles bids be given to him, and be sacrificed in presence of his ashes, that in the Elysian fields he may wed with thee.

ANDROMACHE

[945] See with what joy her mighty soul has heard her doom! The becoming attire of royal robes she seeks, and allows Helen's hand to approach her locks. Death she deemed that other, this, her bridal. But, hearing the woeful news, her wretched mother is in a daze; her tottering reason has given way. Arise, lift up thy courage, poor queen, strengthen thy fainting spirit.

[*HECUBA falls in a faint.*]

[952] On how slender a thread her frail life hangs! But very little lacks to bring – happiness to Hecuba. She breathes, she lives again. 'Tis the wretched that death first flees.

HECUBA

[955] Does Achilles still live for vengeance on the Phrygians? Does he still war against them? O hand of Paris, too light! His very ashes and his tomb thirst for our blood. But late a happy throng of children girt me round, and I grew weary of sharing a mother's love among so many kisses and so large a flock; but now this daughter alone is left, object of my prayer, my companion, comfort in affliction, my resting-place; she is Hecuba's entire offspring, hers is the only voice that now calls me mother. O obstinate, unhappy soul, come, slip away, and spare me the sight of this one death at least. Tears overflow my cheeks and from my vanquished eyes a sudden shower falls.

ANDROMACHE

[969] 'Tis we, Hecuba, we, we, Hecuba, who should be mourned, whom the fleet, once started on its way, will scatter to every land; but her the dear soil of her native land will cover.

HELEN

[972] Still more wilt thou envy her when thine own lot thou knowest.

ANDROMACHE

[973] Is any part of my suffering still unknown to me?

HELEN

[974] The urn has whirled and to the captives given lords.

ANDROMACHE

[975] To whom am I given as slave? Speak! Whom do I call master?

HELEN

[976] Thee, by the first lot, the youth of Scyros gained.

ANDROMACHE

[977] Fortunate Cassandra, whom madness and Phoebus from the lot exempt.

HELEN

[978] Her the most mighty king of kings receives.

HECUBA

[967] [*To POLYXENA.*] Rejoice and be glad, my daughter! How would Cassandra, how would Andromache long for thy marriage!

[979] [*To HELEN.*] Is there anyone who would have Hecuba called his?

HELEN

[980] To the Ithacan, against his will, hast thou fallen, a short-lived prize.

HECUBA

[981] Who so reckless and unfeeling, who so cruelly drawing lots from an unjust urn hath given royalty to royalty? What god so perverse apportions the captives? What arbiter, heartless and hard to the unfortunate, so blindly chooses our lords, and unites Hector's mother to Achilles' arms? To Ulysses am I summoned; now indeed do I

seem vanquished, now captive, now beset by all disasters – 'tis the master shames me, not the servitude. That barren land, hemmed in by stormy seas, does not contain my tomb – lead, lead on, Ulysses, I hold not back, I follow my master; but me my fates shall follow: upon the deep no calm peace shall come; the sea shall rage with the winds and engulf thy comrades; and thee, e'en when safe home again, shall wars and fires, my own and Priam's evil fortunes, o'erwhelm. And till those shall come, meanwhile this serves in place of vengeance on thee – I have usurped thy lot, I have stolen from thee thy prizes.

[999] But see, Pyrrhus approaches with hurried step and grim countenance. Pyrrhus, why dost thou hesitate? Come, plunge thy sword into my breast, and so unite the parents of thy Achilles' bride. Proceed, thou murderer of old men, this blood of mine also becomes thee. [*Pointing to POLYXENA.*] Seize! drag her hence! Defile, ye Greeks, the gods above with deadly slaughter, defile the shades below – nay, why pray to you? I pray for seas that befit such rites as these; may such doom befall the whole fleet and the Pelasgians, may such befall their thousand ships, as I shall call down on my own when I set sail.

CHORUS

[1009] Sweet to the mourner is a host of mourners, sweet to hear multitudes in lamentation; lighter is the sting of wailing and of tears which a like throng accompanies. Ever, ah, ever is grief malicious; glad is it that its own fate comes on many, and that it alone is not appointed unto suffering. To bear the lot which all endure none can refuse.

[1018] Remove the fortunate: unfortunate though he be, none will so think himself. Remove those blest with heaps of gold, remove those who plough rich fields with a hundred oxen: the downcast spirits of the poor will rise again. No one is unfortunate save as compared with others. 'Tis sweet to one set in widespread desolation to see no one with joyful countenance; but he deplores and complains of his hard fortune who, while he cleaves the waves in solitary vessel, has been

flung naked into the harbour he had sought. More calmly has he endured the tempest and disaster who has seen a thousand vessels engulfed by the selfsame billows and who comes back, borne on a piece of wreckage, to safety, while Corus, controlling the waves, forbids their onslaught on the land. Phrixus mourned because Helle fell, when the flock's leader, resplendent with golden fleece, bore brother and sister on his back together, and in mid-sea lost half his burden; but both Pyrrha and her husband checked their mourning, though they saw the sea, and saw nothing else than sea, left as they were sole remnants of the human race on earth.

[1042] But he fleet driven this way and that will separate these our laments and scatter our tears, when once the sailors, by the trumpet bidden to spread sail, shall gain the deep, by winds and speeding oarage, and the shore shall flee away. What will be the wretched captives' feelings when all the land shall dwindle and the sea loom large, and lofty Ida shall vanish in the distance? Then son to mother, mother to her son, pointing to the place where Troy lies prostrate, will mark it afar with pointing finger, saying: "Yonder is Ilium where the smoke curls high to heaven, where the foul vapours hang." The Trojans by that sign only will see their fatherland.

[*Enter MESSENGER.*]

MESSENGER

[1056] O cruel fate, harsh, pitiable, horrible! What crime so savage, so grievous, has Mars seen in ten long years? Which first shall I tell amidst my lamentations, thy woes, Andromache, or thine, thou aged woman?

HECUBA

[1060] Whosoever woes thou weapest, thou wilt weep mine. Each feels the weight of his own disaster only, but I the disasters of them all; for me do all things perish. Whoever is unfortunate is Hecuba's.

MESSENGER

[1063] The maiden is slain; thrown from the walls the boy. But each

met doom with noble spirit.

ANDROMACHE

[1065] Expound their deaths in order and relate the twofold crime; great grief hath joy to dwell on all its woes. Out with it, tell us all the tale.

MESSENGER

[1068] There is one high tower left of Troy, much used by Priam; upon its battlements and lofty pinnacles he would sit watching the war and directing the embattled lines. On this tower, nestling his grandson in his fond arms, when Hector with sword and torch pursued the Danaï fleeing in abject fear, the old man would point out to the lad his father's battles. Around this tower, once famous, the glory of the walls, but now a solitary ruin, on all sides pours a throng of chiefs and commons, assembles here. For some, a far-off hill gives a clear view of the open space; for others, a high cliff, on whose top the eager crowd stands on tiptoe balanced. A pine-tree holds one, a laurel-tree, another, a beech-tree one; and the whole forest sways with clinging people. One climbs to the highest peak of a steep mountain, another seeks a smouldering roof or stands on an overhanging stone of a crumbling wall, and one (oh, shame!) sits heartlessly to view the show from Hector's tomb.

[1088] Now along the plain, on every hand thronged with people, with stately step the Ithacan makes his way, leading by the hand the little grandson of Priam; and with no lagging step does the boy approach the lofty walls. When he stood on the tower's summit, he turned his keen gaze now here, now there, undaunted in spirit. As the cub of some great beast, tiny and young, not yet strong enough to do injury with its fangs, still bristles, bites harmlessly, and swells with rage; so the boy, though in his enemy's grasp, was proudly bold. He had moved the crowd to tears, and the chieftains, and even Ulysses. Of all the throng he alone, for whom they wept, wept not; and while Ulysses rehearsed the words and prayers appointed by the fate-revealing priest, and summoned the cruel gods to the sacrifice, of his own will leaped the boy down into the midst of Priam's kingdom –

ANDROMACHE

[1104] What Colchian, what Scythian of shifting home e'er committed crime like this, or what tribe to law unknown by the Caspian sea has dared it? No blood of children stained the altars of Busiris, cruel though he was, nor did Diomedes set limbs of babes for his herds to feast on. Who will take up thy limbs and consign them to the tomb.

MESSENGER

[1110] What limbs has that steep place left? His bones were crushed and scattered by the heavy fall; the familiar marks of his noble form, his face, the illustrious likeness of his sire, have been disfigured by his body's weight plunging to earth below; his neck was broken by the crash upon the rock, his skull was crushed, his brains dashed out – he lies a shapeless corpse.

ANDROMACHE

[1117] So also is he like his sire.

MESSENGER

[1118] After the boy fell headlong from the lofty tower, and the throng of Greeks wept for the crime it wrought, that same host turned to a second crime and to Achilles' tomb. Its further side is gently lapped by Rhoeteum's waters; its front is surrounded by a plain, while a valley, sloping gently up, hems in the middle space. The surging mass increases as if thronging to a theatre and has filled all the shore. Some think that by this death the fleet's delay is ended; some joy that the foeman's stock is cut away; the greater part of the heedless mob detest the crime – and gaze. Nor any less do the Trojans throng their own funeral and, quaking with fear, look on at the last act of the fall of Troy; when suddenly, as at a wedding, the torches come, leading the way, and the daughter of Tyndareus as bride's attendant, with sad and drooping head. "So may Hermione be wed," the Phrygians pray; "in such wise may base Helen to her husband be given back." Terror holds both peoples awe-struck. The maid herself comes on with eyes in modesty cast down, but yet her face is radiant and the dying splendour of her beauty shines beyond its wont; as Phoebus' light is wont to appear more glorious at the moment of his setting, when the

stars come back to their stations and the uncertain daylight is dimmed by the approach of night. Astonished gazes the whole multitude, for all ever admire the more what must soon pass from them. Some, her beauty moves; some, her tender youth; some, the shifting changes of her fortune; but one and all, her courage, dauntless and death-confronting. On she comes and Pyrrhus follows; the hearts of all are filled with terror, wonder, pity.

[1149] Soon as the young man reached the summit of the steep mound, and stood upon the high-raised top of his father's tomb, the dauntless maid did not shrink back, but, facing the stroke, stood there with stern look and courageous. A spirit so bold strikes the hearts of all and – strange prodigy – Pyrrhus is slow to kill. When his hand, thrust forth, had buried deep the sword, with the death-stroke her blood leaped out in a sudden stream through the gaping wound. Yet, though in the very act of death, she put not by her spirit; she fell, as if thus to make the earth heavy on Achilles, prone and with angry thud. The throng of both peoples wept; but the Phrygians mourned her with timid lamentation, while the victors wailed aloud. Thus was the rite performed. The shed blood stayed not nor flowed off on the surface of the ground; instantly the savage mound sucked it down and drank the whole draught of gore.

HECUBA

[1164] Go, go, ye Danaï, seek now your homes in safety; let your fleet now spread its sails and at ease plough the longed-for sea. A maiden and a boy have fallen; the war is done. But I, whither shall I betake my tears? Where in my old age shall I spew out this lingering life? Daughter or grandson, husband or country – which shall I lament? Shall I mourn all or, in my loneliness, myself alone? O death, object of my prayer, to boys and girls everywhere thou com'st with speed and savage violence; me alone dost thou fear and shun; sought midst swords and spears and firebrands the livelong night, thou dost evade my eager search. No foe, no falling wall, no fire has consumed my limbs; and yet how near to Priam did I stand!

MESSENGER

[1177] Haste to the sea, ye captives; already the vessels are spreading sail and the fleet is off.

THE PHOENICIAN WOMEN



Translated by Frank Justus Miller

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MESSENGER.

THE SCENE is laid, first in the wild country to which Oedipus, accompanied by Antigone, has betaken himself; then in Thebes; and lastly in the plain before Thebes.

THE TIME is three years after the downfall of Oedipus.

ARGUMENT

The stroke of fate, that has been threatening Oedipus since long before his birth, has fallen at last, and he has done the thing he feared to do. And now, self-blinded and self-exiled from his land, he has for three years wandered in rough and trackless places, attended by Antigone, his daughter, who, alone of all his friends, has condoned his fated sins and remained attached to him.

Meanwhile his sons, though they agreed to reign alternate years, are soon to meet in deadly strife; for Eteocles, although his year of royal power is at an end, refuses to give up the throne; and now Polynices, who ahs in exile wed the daughter of Adrastus, king of Argos, is marching against the gates of Thebes, with seven great armies to enforce his rights.

[By a different version from the “Oedipus,” Jocasta did not slay herself at once as in that tale, but still is living on in grief and shame, and strives to reconcile her sons.]

PHOENISSAE

OEDIPUS

[*To ANTIGONE, who ahs followed him into exile.*]

[1] Thou guide of thy blind father's steps, his weary side's sole stay, daughter, whose getting, even so, was worth the cost to me, quit thou thy heaven-cursed sire. Why into right paths wouldst turn aside my wandering feet? Let me stumble on; better alone shall I find the way I seek, the way which from this life shall deliver me and free heaven and earth from sight of this impious head. How little did I accomplish with this hand! I do not see the light, witness of my crime, but I am seen. Therefore, now unclasp thy clinging hand and let my sightless feet wander where they will. I'll go, I'll go where my own Cithaeron lifts his rugged crags; where, speeding over the mountain's rocky ways, Actaeon lay at last, strange quarry for his own hounds; where, through the dim grove and woods of the dusky glade, a mother led her sisters, by the god impelled, and, rejoicing in the crime, bore in advance the head fixed on a quivering thyrsus; or where Zethus' bull rushed along, dragging a mangled corpse, while through the thorny brambles the mad creature's flight was traceable in blood; or where Ino's cliff juts out into the deep sea with towering peak, where, fleeting strange crime and yet strange crime committing, a mother leaped into the strait to sink both son and self. Oh, happy they whose better fortune has given such kindly mothers!

[27] There is another place within these woods, my own place, which calls for me; I would fain hasten to it; my steps will falter not; thither will I go bereft of every guide. Why keep my own place waiting? Death, O Cithaeron, give me back; restore me that resting-place of mine, that I may die in age where I should have died in infancy. Claim now that penalty of old. O ever bloody, savage, cruel, fierce, both when thou slayest and when thou sparest, this carcass of mine long since belonged to thee; fulfil my father's behest – aye, and now my mother's too. My soul yearns to suffer the penalty of long ago. Why, daughter, dost hold me bound by thy baleful love? Why dost thou hold me? My father calls. I come, I come; at last let me go –

Laius rages yonder, wearing the blood-stained badge of his ravished kingdom; see! behold! there he assails and seeks to tear at my sightless countenance with his threatening hands. Daughter, dost see my father? I surely see him. [*He soliloquizes.*] At length spew out thy hateful breath, O traitor soul, brave 'gainst but a portion of thyself. Away with the slow delays of thy long-due punishment; receive death wholly. Why do I sluggishly drag on this life? Now can I do no crime. I can, wretch that I am, this I forebode – away from thy father, away, while still a maid. After my mother I fear all happenings.

ANTIGONE

[51] No force, my father, shall loose my hold of thee; no one shall ever tear me from thy side. The sovereignty of Labdacus' noble house and all its riches – let my brothers fight over these; the best part of my father's mighty kingdom is my own, my father's self. Him no brother shall take from me, not he who holds the Theban sceptre by stolen right, not he who is leading he Argive hosts; no, though Jove should rend the universe with his thunders, and his bolt fall 'twixt our embrace, I will not let go my hands. Thou mayst forbid me, father; I'll guide thee against thy will, I'll direct thine unwilling feet. Wouldst go to the level plain? I go. Wouldst seek the craggy mountains? I oppose not, but I go before. Whither thou wilt, use me as guide; by two will all paths be chosen. Without me thou canst not perish; with me thou canst. Here rises a cliff, lofty, precipitous, and looks out upon the long reaches of the underlying sea; wouldst have us seek it? Here is a bare rock overhanging, here the riven earth yawns with gaping jaws; shall we go here? Here a raging torrent falls and rolls along worn fragments of fallen mountains; shall we plunge to this? Where'er thou wilt, I go, so it be first. I neither oppose nor urge. Art eager to be destroyed, and is death, father, thy highest wish? If thou diest, I go before thee; if thou livest, I follow. But change thy purpose; summon up thine old-time courage; conquer thy sorrows and with all thy might be master of them, resist them; amidst such woes, to be conquered is to die.

OEDIPUS

[80] Whence this rare type in a house so impious? Whence this maid so

unlike her race? Is it fortune, thinkst thou? Has any dutiful child sprung from me? Never would it be so, for well I know my fate, save for harmful ends. Nature herself has reversed her laws; now will the river turn and bear its swift waters backward to their source, Phoebus' torch will bring in the night, and Hesperus herald the day; and, that something be added to my woes, I, too, shall become holy. For Oedipus the only salvation is not to be saved. Let me avenge my father, till now unavenged; why, sluggish hand, dost thou hesitate to exact penalty? All thou hast as yet exacted, to my mother hast thou given. Let go thy father's hand, courageous girl; thou dost but protract my burying, and prolong the funeral rites of a living sire. Bury in the earth at last this hateful body; thou wrongst me, though with kind intent, and thou deemst it piety to drag along an unburied father. 'Tis all one – to force him who shrinks from death, and stay him who seeks to die; 'tis the same as killing to forbid death to him who wants it; and yet 'tis not all one; the second course I count the worse. Rather would I have death enforced that snatched from me. Desist, girl, from thine attempt; the right to live or die is in my own hands. The sovereignty over my realm have I yielded gladly; the sovereignty over myself I keep. If thou art true comrade, hand thy sire a sword, but be it the sword made famous by his father's slaughter. Dost give it? or hold my sons that, too, together with my kingdom? Wherever is need of crime, there let it be – I relinquish it; let my son have it – nay, both my sons.

[110] Flames, if thou prefer, and a huge mound prepare; myself, will I fling me on the lofty pyre, embrace the flames, and hide in the funeral pile. There will I set free this stubborn soul and give up to ashes this – all that is left of me alive. Where is the raging sea? Lead me where some beetling crag juts out with its high, rocky cliff, or where swift Ismenus rolls his wild waters. If thou art my guide, thither would I go to die where on a high cliff the Sphinx once sat and wove crafty speech with her half-bestial lips. Guide my feet thither, there set thy father. Let not that dreadful seat be empty, but place thereon a greater monster. On that dark rock will I sit and propound the dark riddle of my fate which none may answer. All ye who till the fields once ruled by the Assyrian king, who suppliant

worship in the grove of Cadmus for the serpent famed, where sacred Dirce lies; all ye who drink of Eurotas, who dwell in Sparta for its twin brethren famous; yet farmers who reap Elis and Parnassus and Boeotia's fertile fields, give ear. That dire pest of Thebes, who wrapped death-dealing words in puzzling measures, what riddle like this did she ever propound? What maze so bewildering? He was his grandfather's son-in-law and his father's rival, brother of his children and father of his brothers; at one birth the grandmother bore children to her husband and grandchildren to herself. Who can unfold a coil so monstrous? Even I, who gained spoils from the conquered Sphinx, shall prove but slow in unriddling mine own doom.

A speech of Antigone may have dropped out at this point, or Oedipus may hark back to the earlier speech of Antigone after a dramatic pause. Leo holds that the hiatus is, as Swoboda thinks, left by the poet himself.

[140] Why dost thou waste further words? Why dost try to soften my hard heart with prayers? My will is fixed to pour forth this life which has long been struggling with death, and to seek the nether darkness; for this deep night is not deep enough for my crime; in Tartarus would I be buried, or if there be aught deeper than Tartarus; 'tis pleasing to do at last what long ago I should have done. I cannot be kept from death. Wilt withhold the sword? Wilt bar paths where I might fall to death? Wilt keep my neck from the choking noose? Wilt remove death-bringing herbs? What, pray, will that care of thine accomplish? Death is everywhere. This hath God with wisdom excellent provided: of life anyone can rob a man, but of death no one; to this a thousand doors lie open. I ask for naught. This right hand, though bare, my soul hath practice to use well – O hand of mine, come now with all thy force, with all thy smarting rage, with all thy might. Not one spot only do I mark out for the wound – I am all sin; inflict death where thou wilt. Break through my breast and tear out my heart, which ahs room for so many crimes; lay bare my vitals, every nook; rain resounding blows upon my neck until it break, and let my veins flow, torn by my gouging fingers. Or aim thy mad attack at the accustomed place; these wounds reopen; bathe

them in streams of blood and gore; through this passage drag out my stubborn life, impregnable. And do thou, my father, where'er thou standst as arbiter of my sufferings – I have never deemed that this grievous crime of mine was sufficiently atoned by any suffering, nor have I been content with such death as this, nor have I bought my pardon with a portion of myself; limb by limb have I desired to die for thee – at length exact the debt. Now am I paying my penalty; before, I did but offer sacrifices to thy ghost. Come to my aid, help me to plunge my nerveless hand deep down and deeper; timidly, aforetime, and with but a meagre outpouring did it sprinkle my head, when it scarce drew forth the eyes that yearned to follow. Even now this soul of mine halts, yes halts, when my face has bent downward to my shrinking hands. Thou shalt hear the truth, Oedipus: less boldly didst thou pluck out thine eyes than thou didst undertake to do. Thrust now thy hand e'en to the brain; through that door whereby I began to die fulfil my death.

ANTIGONE

[182] Father, great-souled, I beseech thee that with calm mind thou listen to some few words of thy wretched daughter. I seek not to lead thee back again to the splendours of thine ancient home, and to thy royal estate, flourishing in power and fame; nor do I ask that thou bear with calm and peaceful soul that tempest of passion which ahs not been allayed even by lapse of time; and yet 'twere fitting that one so stalwart should not yield to pain nor turn in flight, by disaster overcome. It is not manhood, father, as thou deemst it, to shrink from life, but to make stand against mighty ills and neither turn nor yield. He who has trodden destiny under foot, who has torn off and thrown away life's blessings, and himself piled up the burden of his woes, who ahs no need of God, wherefore should he desire death, or wherefore seek it? Each is a coward's act; no one despises death who yet yearns for it. He whose misfortunes can no further go, is safely lodged.

[200] Who now of the gods, granting he wills it so, can add aught to thy misfortunes? Now not even canst thou add aught save this, to deem thyself worthy of death. thou art not worthy, nor had any taint

of guilt touched thy heart. And for this all the more, father, call thyself guiltless; for thou art guiltless, though even the gods willed otherwise. What is it which has so maddened thee, which has goaded thy grief afresh? What drives thee to the infernal regions? What forces thee out of these? That thou mayst avoid the light of day? Thou dost avoid it. That thou mayst flee thy noble palace with its high walls, and thy native land? Thy native land, though thou still livest, is dead to thee. Dost flee from thy sons and mother? From the sight of all men fate has removed thee, and whatever death can take away from any man, this had life taken from thee. Wouldst avoid the tumult around a throne? They who once in prosperity thronged around thee, at thy command have left thee. Whom dost thou flee, my father?

OEDIPUS

[216] Myself I flee; I flee my heart conscious of all crimes; I flee this hand, this sky, the gods; I flee the dread crimes which I committed, though in innocence. Do I tread this earth from which wholesome grain springs up? This air do I inhale with pestilential lips? Does water quench my thirst, or do I enjoy any gift of kindly mother earth? Do I, impious, incestuous, accursed, touch thy pure hand? Do my ears take in sound by which I may still hear the name of parent or of son? I would indeed that I might destroy these paths and might with my hands driven deep pluck out every part where voices enter and where a narrow passage gives access to the words of men; then, daughter, thy wretched father would have escaped all consciousness of thee, who art part and parcel of my crimes.

[231] My guilt sticks fast within me, threatens each moment to break out afresh, and my ears pour in upon me all that you, my eyes, have bestowed. Why do I not plunge this life, weighted with gloom, down to the everlasting shades of Dis? Why here do I detain my ghost? Why do I burden the earth and wander amongst the living? What evil is left for me? My kingdom, parents, children, my manhood, too, and the illustrious fame of my cunning wit – all these have perished, all have been stripped from me by hostile chance. Tears were still left me – of these, too, have I robbed myself.

[241] Stand off! My soul will not listen to any prayers and seeks some new punishment to match its crimes. And what match can there be? Even in my infancy I was doomed to death. Who ever drew lot so sad? I had not yet seen the light, was still imprisoned in the womb, and already I was held in fear. Some there are whom straightway at birth night hath seized upon and snatched from their first dawn; but on me death came ere birth. Some, while still within the mother's womb, have suffered untimely death; but have they sinned also? Hidden away, confined, my very being in doubt, the god made me guilty of a charge unspeakable. On that charge my sire condemned me, spitted my slender ankles on hot iron, and sent me to the deep forest as prey for wild beasts and savage birds which baleful Cithaeron, oft stained with royal blood, doth breed. Yet him whom God condemned, whom his sire cast away, hath death also shunned. I kept faith with Delphi; I assailed my father and with impious death-stroke slew him. For this another act of piety will atone; I killed my father, true, but my mother – I loved. Oh, 'tis shame to speak of wedlock and my marriage torches. But this punishment also force thyself to bear through against thy will; proclaim thy crime, unheard of, bestial, unexampled, at which nations would shudder, which no age would believe ever befell, which would put even a parricide to shame: into my father's bed I bore hands smeared with my father's blood, and there, as the reward of my crime, I did worse crime.

[270] A trivial sin is my father's murder; my mother, brought to my marriage chamber, that my guilt might be complete, conceived – no greater crime than this can nature brook. And yet, if there is even now worse crime, we have given the world those who can commit it. I have flung away the sceptre, price of my father's murder, and this, again, has armed other hands. I myself best know my kingdom's destiny; no one unstained by sacred blood shall bear sway there. Dire misfortunes my father-soul presages. Already are sown the seeds of calamity to come; the plighted pact is scorned. The one will not retire from the throne he has usurped; the other proclaims his right, calls on the gods to witness the broken bond, and, wandering in exile, is rousing Argos and the cities of Greece to arms. 'Tis no light destruction that is coming on weary Thebes; weapons, flames,

wounds press round her and a greater ill than these, if greater there be, – that all may know I have begotten sons.

ANTIGONE

[288] If, my father, thou hast no other cause for living, this one is more than enough, that as father thou mayst restrain thy sons from their fatal frenzy. Thou alone canst avert the threats of impious war, canst check these mad youths, give peace to our citizens, rest to our land, faith to the broken pact. If life to thyself thou dost deny, to many dost thou deny it.

OEDIPUS

[295] Have they any love for father or for right, they who lust for blood, power, arms, treachery, they the cruel, the accursed, – in brief, my sons? They vie one with the other in every crime, and have no scruple where passion drives them headlong; impiously born, they count nothing impious. No feeling for their stricken father, none for their fatherland, moves them; their hearts are mad with lust of empire. I know well whither they tend, what monstrous deeds they are planning, and for this cause I seek an early path to destruction, rush on my death, while still there is none in my house more guilty than myself. Daughter, why dost thou fall weeping at my knees? Why seekst with prayer to conquer my unconquerable resolve? This is the one means by which fortune can take me captive, invincible in all else; thou only canst soften my hard heart, thou only canst teach piety in our house. Nothing is heavy or grievous to me which I know thou hast desired. Do thou but command; I, Oedipus, at thy bidding will swim the Aegean sea, will drink the flames which earth from the Sicilian mountains belches forth, pouring down falls of fire, will beard the dragon still savagely raging in the grove at the theft of Hercules; at thy bidding will offer my liver to the birds – at thy bidding e'en will live.

The first episode seems to be complete here, except for the commenting chorus which would naturally follow. OEDIPUS has temporarily yielded to his daughter's will.

The following passage, fittingly opens the second episode. Although some editors would assign it to ANTIGONE, it seems more properly to belong to a messenger who has just arrived, for the double reason that it gives fresher information from Thebes than ANTIGONE would naturally possess; and that OEDIPUS, after the speech to his daughter with which the previous episode ended, would hardly address to her as rough a reply as he uses in his next speech.

MESSENGER

[320] Thee, sprung from regal ancestry to be our great exemplar, Thebes calls to her aid, trembling at fratricidal strife, and prays that thou fend off from thy country's homes the brands of war. These are no mere threats; already is destruction at our gates; for the brother demands his turn to rule according to the bond, and is marshalling to war all the peoples of Greece. Seven bands are encamped against the walls of Thebes. Haste to our aid; prevent in one act both war and crime.

OEDIPUS

[328] Am I one to forbid crime and teach hands to refrain from the blood of loved ones? Am I a teacher of righteousness and love of kin? 'Tis from my crimes they seek their pattern, 'tis my example they follow now. I praise them and gladly acknowledge them as sons; I urge them on to do something worthy of such a father. Go on, dear offspring, prove your noble breeding by your deeds; surpass my fame and praises and do some deed whereat your father may rejoice that he has lived till now. You will do it, I know: of such mind were you born; no trivial, no common crime can such high birth perform. Forward your arms! With torches have at your household gods; reap with fire the ripened grain of your native land; confound all things, hurry all to destruction; on all sides throw down the walls, raze them to the ground; bury the gods beneath their own temples; the defiled deities of your hearths melt in the fire, and let our whole house from its foundations fall; let the city be consumed – and be my marriage chamber the first to feel the flames.

ANTIGONE

[347] Give o'er this raging storm of grief; let the public calamities prevail with thee; go to thy sons as the adviser of calm peace.

OEDIPUS

[350] Seest thou an old man given to gentle thoughts? dost summon me as lover of calm peace to take her part? My heart swells with rage, my smarting grief burns measureless, and I long for some crime more dreadful than what the casual madness of young men attempts. Not enough for me is war that as yet is between citizens; let brother rush on brother. Nor is that enough; that, as is due, a horror may be wrought after my fashion, one that may befit my marriage-couch, arm ye your mother. Let no one drag me from the woods! I'll lurk in the cliffs' wave-worn caves or hide away in the thick underbrush. Here will I catch at vague rumour's words and the dire strife of brothers, as I can, will hear.

It is possible that the following fragments belong to another play. The presence of ANTIGONE in Thebes, notwithstanding her resolve to remain with her father, would strengthen this view.

JOCASTA

[363] Fortunate Agave! she carried her ghastly crime in the hand that wrought it, and as a bloody maenad bore spoil of her dismembered son. She wrought a crime, but not wantonly did the wretched woman god to meet her crime. 'Tis but a trivial thing that I am guilty; I have made others guilty. This, too, bad as it is, is trivial; I have borne guilty sons. 'Twas as yet lacking to my woes that I should love even my enemy. Thrice have the snows of winter fallen, three harvests now have yielded to the sickle, while my son in exile wanders, expatriate, and as an outcast begs aid from the Greek kings. And now he is son-in-law of Adrastus, whose sway is over the waters which Isthmus cleaves, and who brings with him his own tribes and seven kingdoms to the aid of his son-in-law. What I should pray for, or which side espouse, I know not. He demands back the kingdom; to reseek it is an honest plea, but ill to seek it thus. What should be a mother's prayer? On either side I see a son; I can do nothing piously that is not impious. Whatever blessing I shall ask for one, to the other

will prove a curse. But, though I love both equally, whither the better cause and the worse fortune draw, my heart inclines, which always takes the weaker side. Misfortune knits the wretched closer to their kin.

[Enter MESSENGER in haste.]

MESSENGER

[387] O queen, whilst thou art uttering tearful complaints and wasting time, the fierce battle-line with bared swords is at hand; the trumpets' blare sounds to war, the standard-bearer with eagle advanced signals for contest; the kings, each in his place, are setting their sevenfold battle in array, while with equal courage Cadmus' race advances; at the double-quick the soldiers on either side rush on. Dost see them? A dark cloud of dust hides the day; the plain lifts heavenward dense, smoke-like billows which the earth, beaten by horses' hoofs, sends up; and, if terror-stricken eyes see aught aright, hostile standards are gleaming there; the front rank, with lifted spears, is close at hand, and the battle-flags have the leaders' names clearly limned in golden characters. Go, restore love to brothers, peace to us all, and let a mother be the barrier to stay unholy arms.

ANTIGONE

[403] Hasten, mother, hasten on flying feet! hold back their weapons, strike the steel from my brothers' hands, set thy bared breast between their hostile swords! Either stop the war, mother, or be the first to feel it.

JOCASTA

[407] I go, I go, and my own life will I set against their arms; I'll stand between their arms; and he who shall wish to attack his brother must attack his mother first. Let the more filial lay down his arms at a mother's prayer; let the unfilial begin with me. These fiery youths, old though I be, will I restrain; there shall be no impious crime committed in my sight; or, if e'en in my sight one crime can be committed, it shall not be only one.

ANTIGONE

[414] The opposing standards gleam face to face, the hostile battle-cry is sounding, the crime is near at hand; forestall it, mother, with thy prayers! And see, you might deem them moved by tears of mine, so sluggishly moves the line with weapons held at rest.

MESSENGER

[419] The line advances slowly, but the leaders haste.

JOCASTA

[420] What swift wind with the storm-blast's mad whirl will carry me though the air of heaven? What Sphinx, what Stymphalian bird, with its dark cloud veiling day, will speed me headlong on eager wings? Or what Harpy, hovering over the barbarian king's famished board, will hurry me along the highways of the air, hurry and fling me 'twixt the two battlelines? [*Exit.*]

MESSENGER

[427] [*Looking after her.*] She goes like a mad thing, or is mad indeed. Swift as a dart hurled by some Parthian's hand, or as a vessel driven on by wild, raging winds, or as a star, dislodged from the firmament, when, sweeping o'er the heavens, with swift fire it cleaves its unswerving way, so has the frenzied queen sped on and at once has parted the two battle-lines. Stayed by a mother's prayer the battle hangs; and now the bands, eager to join from both sides in mutual slaughter, hold their swords poised in lifted hands. They incline to peace, the swords of all are lowered, or idly sheathed; but they still quiver in the brothers' hands. The mother shows them her hoary hair, tearing it, beseeching them as they stubbornly refuse, and floods her cheeks with weeping. Who wavers long may say his mother "No!"

[*The scene shifts to the field before Thebes, between the battle-lines.*]

JOCASTA

[*Kneeling between her two hostile sons.*]

[443] Against me turn your arms and torches; against me only let every warrior charge, both those who come with high courage from the city

of Inachus, and those who from the Theban citadel descend thirsting for the fray. Townsman and enemy, together attack this womb which bore my husband brothers. Rend these limbs asunder and scatter them everywhere. I bore you both – lay you not down your arms with speed? Or shall I tell from what father, too? Your right hands – to your mother give them, give while they are still filial. Ignorance till now against our will hath made us guilty; the whole crime was Fortune's, who sinned against us; this is the first crime wrought between those who know. It is yours to choose which thing you will: if holy affection please you, grant to your mother peace; if crime has pleased, a greater is to hand – your mother sets herself between you. Therefore rid ye of strife or of this stay of strife.

[459] To which of you now shall your anxious mother with alternate prayers address her words? Whom shall I in my wretchedness first embrace? To both sides am I drawn with equal love. This son has been absent from me; but if the brothers keep their pact, now will the other be away. And shall I never see you both, save thus?

[464] [*Turning to POLYNICES.*] Come thou first to thy mother's arms, thou who hast endured so many toils, so many misfortunes, and, worn with long exile, sees thy mother at last. Come nearer, sheathe thine impious sword, and thy spear, which is even now quivering and eager to be thrown, thrust it in the ground. Thy shield keeps thee from coming close to thy mother, breast to breast; put that by, too. Unbind thy brow, take the grim helmet from thy warlike head, and let thy mother see thy face. Why dost thou look away, and with fearful glance watch thy brother's hand? I will cover thy whole body with my protecting embrace and allow way to thy blood only through my own. Why dost thou still halt in doubt? Dost fear thy mother's pledge?

POLYNICES

[478] I am in fear; no longer do nature's laws avail. Since this example of a brother's faithlessness, even a mother's pledge may not be trusted.

JOCASTA

[480] Put now hand to hilt again, bind on thy helmet, let thy left hand clasp its shield; and while thy brother unarms, remain thou armed.

[483] [*She turns to ETEOCLES.*] Do thou put by the sword, who art the sword's first cause. If thou hatest peace, if 'tis thy pleasure to rage in war, thy mother begs brief truce of thee, that to her son returned from exile she may give a kiss – the first, perchance the last. While I beg for peace, hearken ye, unarmed. Doth he fear thee; thou, him? I fear you both, but for the sake of both. Why dost refuse to sheathe thy drawn sword? Be glad of any delay; ye both seek to wage a war wherein 'twere best to be o'ercome. Dost thou fear thy hostile brother's wiles? When one must either cheat or be cheated by one's own, do thou thyself suffer rather than commit the crime. But do not fear; thy mother will shield thee from snares on either hand. Do I prevail? or must I envy your father? Have I come to prevent crime? or to see it done before my eyes? [*ETEOCLES yields to her.*] He has sheathed his sword, his spear droops, his arms are laid aside.

[500] [*She turns back to POLYNICES.*] Now to thee, son, thy mother will bring her prayers, but her tears first. After a weary time I hold the face I prayed to see. Thee, an outcast from thy native soil, the gods of a foreign king protect; thee many seas far distant, many fates have driven wandering. Thy mother, at thy side, did not lead thee to thy first bridal chamber, nor with her own hand deck the festal hall, nor with sacred fillets wreath the glad torches. As wedding gifts no rich golden treasure, no fields, no cities did thy father-in-law bestow: war is thy bridal gift. Thou hast become thine enemy's son, far from thy land, guest of an alien house, seeking another's, driven from thine own, exiled for no fault. That thou mightst lack nothing of thy father's fates, this also thou hast of them. That thou hast erred in marriage.

[515] O son, returned to me after so many years, son, fear and hope of thy anxious mother, for sight of whom I have ever prayed the gods, though thy return was destined to take as much from me as by thy coming it could give: "When shall I cease to fear for thee?" I cried;

and the god, mocking me, answered: "'Tis himself thou shalt fear." Surely if there were no war, I should be without thee; surely if thou wert not here, I should be free from war. Oh, bitter price and hard, to pay for a sight of thee; but thy mother pays it willingly. Only let thy hostile hosts fall back while as yet savage Mars dares no impious crime. Even this is an outrageous crime, that they have come so near. I am appalled; pale am I and I tremble to see two brothers stand, one here, one there, 'neath guilt's o'erhanging stroke. My limbs quake with fear: how near did I, thy mother, come to seeing greater infamy than that which thy wretched father could not bear to see. Though I am free from fear of so great a crime, and now see no such thing, still I am unhappy because I almost saw it.

[535] By the womb that bore thee for ten weary months, by the devotion of thy noble sister, by thy self-hating father's eyes which he, though innocent, yet, seeking to inflict on himself dire punishment for his mistake, tore from their sockets – save thy country's walls from eh accursed torch; turn back again the standards of this warring host. Though thou shouldst retire, still is the great part of your sin already done; thy country has seen its plains o'errun by hostile hordes, has seen armed squadrons gleaming from afar, the Cadmean meadows trampled by flying hoofs, princes in their chariots careering high, the smoke and flames of blazing torches which seek to burn our homes, and brothers (a crime new even to Thebes) rushing upon each other. This crime the whole army say, this, all the people, this, both thy sisters saw and I, thy mother, saw – for thy father owest it to his own act that he beheld not such deeds. Let Oedipus stand before thee now, in whose judgment even for error is penalty demanded.

[555] Do not, I beg of thee, with the sword destroy thy country and thy household gods, nor overthrow Thebes, which thou seekst to rule. What madness holds thee? By seeking thy land wouldst wreck it? to make it thine, wouldst have it no land at all? Nay, thou harmst thine own cause in this very act of harrying the land with hostile arms, trampling the full-grown crops, and spreading terror through the whole country-side. No one works such havoc on his own; what thou

bidst be plundered with fire and reaped with sword thou deemst another's. Question whether of you be king, but let the kingdom stand. These homes dost thou seek with sword and fire? Wilt have the heart to batter these walls which Amphion built, whose stones no hand set in place, moving the slow weight with creaking crane, but, marshalled by sound of singing and of lyre, each stone of its own accord came to the turrets' top – wilt batter down these stones? Wilt thou bear spoils hence as victor, and shall conquered chieftains, thy father's friends, and matrons torn from their husbands' very arms, be led off in chains by thy rough soldiery? Shall Thebes' grown maidens, mingled with the captive herd, go as gifts to the dames of Argos? Or shall I myself, with hands bound behind my back, thy mother, be borne as prize in thy triumph o'er a brother? Canst thou bear to see thy countrymen given to death and destruction on every hand? Against these dear walls canst thou lead the enemy, canst fill Thebes with blood and fire? Art thou so wild, is thy heart so hard, so full of savage rage? And thou art not yet a king – what will the sceptre do? Oh, I beseech thee, allay the mad ferment of thy soul, and come back to duty's ways.

POLYNICES

[586] That I may wander outcast? That I may be for ever shut out from my country and as a stranger look to the bounty of an alien race? What worse should I suffer if I had broken faith, if I had forsworn myself? Am I to pay the penalty of another's sin, while he enjoys the profit of his crimes? Thou bidst me go; I bend to my mother's will. Show me whither I shall get me back. Let my haughty brother dwell in my palace, let a little hut hide me away; this grant to the banished brother, let it be mine to match a kingdom with a paltry hearth. A wife's mere chattel, shall I bear the harsh sway of a rich bride and, like a humble camp-follower, attend upon her domineering father? To fall from a king's estate to slavery is hard.

JOCASTA

[599] If thou seekst a king's estate, and the harsh sceptre thy hand cannot forego, any land in the whole world will offer many kingdoms to be won. Here Tmolus lifts his ridges, the Wine-god's haunts,

where stretch broad plains of grain-producing lands, and where Pactolus, rolling his rich waves, o'erflows the fields with gold; nor does Meander through meadows less joyful bend his wandering waters, and swift Hermus cleaves the fertile plains. Here is Gargara, beloved of Ceres, and the soil which rich Xanthus compasses, swollen by Ida's snows; here the land where the Ionian sea gives up its name, and Sestos, over against Abydos, hugs the narrow strait; or where, now nearer to the east, it curves and sees Lycia secure with its many harbours. These kingdoms seek thou with the sword; against these peoples let thy brave father-in-law bear arms; these tribes let him acquire and deliver to thy sway. As for this kingdom, deem that thy father still holds it fast. Better is exile for thee than such return as this. Through another's sin thou livest in exile, through thine own wilt thou return. With yonder forces, 'twere better to seek new realms, stained by now crime. Nay, thy brother's self, accompanying thine arms, will fight for thee.

[622] Go thou, then, and wage such warfare that, as thou fightest, thy father and thy mother may pray for thy success. Kingdoms won by crime are heavier than any exile. Now picture to thyself war's mishaps, the wavering chances of uncertain Mars: though thou bring with thee the whole strength of Greece, though thy armed soldiery spread far and wide, the fortune of war hangs ever in doubtful scale, according as Mars determines. The sword makes two warriors equal through they be ill-matched; both hope and fear are in blind Fortune's hand. The prize thou seekst is uncertain; certain the crime. Grant that all the gods have been favourable to thy prayers; grant that the citizens have given way, that they have turned and fled, that soldiers, lying in bloody heaps, cover the fields – though thou shouldst triumph and as victor bear off the spoils of thy conquered brother, broken must be the victor's palm. What manner of war deemst thou that, wherein the conqueror takes on him the curse of guilt if he rejoices? Him whom, unhappy man, thou art so eager to o'ercome, when thou hast o'ercome thou wilt lament. Oh, then, forgo this unhallowed strife, free thy country from fear, from agony thy parents.

POLYNICES

[643] That my cursed brother may receive no penalty for his crime and treachery?

JOCASTA

[645] Have no fear. Penalty, yes, heavy penalty shall he pay: he shall reign. That is the penalty. If thou dost doubt it, believe thy grandsire and thy sire; Cadmus will tell thee this, and the race of Cadmus. No Theban hath e'er borne sceptre without penalty, nor will any hold it who has broken faith. Now mayst thou count thy brother amongst these.

ETEOCLES

[651] So let him count me; 'tis worth the price, methinks, to lie with kings. [*To POLYNICES.*] Thee I enrol amongst the exiled throng.

JOCASTA

[653] Reign, then, but hated by thy people.

ETEOCLES

[654] To reign he hath no will who feareth to be hated; the god who made the world set those two things together, hatred and sovereignty. This is the part of a great sovereign, I think, to tread e'en hatred under foot. A people's love forbids a ruler many things; against their rage he has more rights. Who would be loved reigns with a nerveless hand.

JOCASTA

[660] But hated sovereignty is never long retrained.

ETEOCLES

[661] The rules for sovereignty kings will better give; do thou make rules for exiles. For sovereignty I would fain –

JOCASTA

[663] Give country, home, wife to the flames?

ETEOCLES

[664] Sovereignty is well brought at any price.

PHAEDRA



Translated by Frank Justus Miller

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

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THE SCENE is laid throughout the court in front of the royal palace at Athens, and the action is confined to the space of one day.

ARGUMENT

Theseus had wed Antiope, the Amazons, and of their union had been born Hippolytus. This youth grew up to love the chase, austere and beautiful, shunning the haunts of men and scorning the love of women. Theseus had meanwhile slain Antiope, and married Phaedra, Cretan Minos' child.

And now, for four years past, the king has not been seen upon the earth, for, following the mad adventure of his bosom friend, Pirithoüs, he has descended into Tartarus to help him steal away its queen, and thence, men think, he will never return.

Deserted by her lord, the hapless Phaedra has conceived a hopeless passion for Hippolytus; for Venus mindful of her old armour with Mars, which Phaedra's ancestor, Apollo [Phoebus or Sol the Sun], had exposed, has sent this madness on her, even as Pasiphaë, her mother, had been cursed with a most mad and fatal malady.

PHAEDRA

HIPPOLYTUS

[In the early morning, in the palace court at Athens. Enter HIPPOLYTUS with a large company of huntsmen armed with the various weapons of the hunt, and leading numerous dogs in leash. HIPPOLYTUS proceeds to assign the various tasks of the day to his followers.]

[1] Go, girdle the shadowy woods and the topmost ridges of the mount, ye sons of Cecrops! With nimble feet wide wandering, scour the coverts that lie 'neath rocky Parnes and in the vale of Thria, whose swift-flowing stream lashes its banks; climb the hills ever white with Rhipsean snow. Here, here let others hie, where the all alder-thickets fringe the grove, where meadows lie which Zephyr soothes with his dew-laden breath and calls forth the herbage of the spring, where scant Ilissos flows sluggishly along through meagre fields and with ungenerous stream creeps o'er unfruitful sands.

[17] Go ye by the left path where Marathon opens out her forest glades, where with their small following the suckling mothers seek nightly forage; and ye, where rugged Acharneus tempers his frosts beneath the warm south-wind.

[23] Let one tread sweet Hymettus' cliff, another, small Aphidnae; too long unharried is that spot where Sunium thrusts out the shores of the curving sea. If any feels the lure of the forest, Phlye calls for him; there is the haunt of the boar, terror of husbandmen, famed by now for many a wound.

[31] But do you cast off the leashes from the dogs that hunt in silence; still let thongs hold the keen Molossians fast, and let the savage Cretans tug on the stout bonds with well-worn necks. But the Spartans (for their breed is bold and eager for the prey) hold in carefully with a tighter knot. The time will come when the hollow rocks will re-echo with their bayings; now, with heads low-hung, let them snuff the air with keen nostrils, and with muzzles to earth quest

through the forest haunts, while the light is still dim, while the dewy ground still retains the well-marked trail.

[44] Let some of you make speed to load your necks with the heavy, wide-meshed nets, and others, with the smooth-wrought snares. Let a line decked out with crimson feathers hedge the deer with empty terror. Thou shalt brandish the dart, thou with right and left hand together hurl the heavy oak-shaft with broad iron head; do thou lie in hiding and with shouts drive the game on the headlong rush; and thou, when victory is won, shalt free flesh from hide with thy curved hunting-knife.

[54] And do thou be with thy follower, O manlike goddess, for whose sovereignty earth's secret places are reserved, whose darts with unerring aim seek out the prey which drinks the cool Araxes or sports on Ister's frozen streams. Thy hand aims at Gaetulian lions, thine at Cretan deer; and now with lighter stroke dost thou pierce swift-fleeing does. The striped tigers face thee, but the shaggy-backed bisons flee, and the wild ox with wide-spreading horns. All things that feed in the lonely fields, whether the Arabian knows them in his rich forests, or the needy Garamantian and the wandering Sarmatian on his desert plains, whatever the heights of the rough Pyrenees or the Hyrcanian glades conceal, all fear thy bow, Diana. If, his offerings paid, thy worshipper takes thy favour with him to the glades, his nets hold the tangled prey, no feet break through his snares; his game is brought in on groaning wains, his hounds have their muzzles red with blood, and all the rustic throng come home in long triumphant line.

[81] Lo, goddess, thou dost hear me: the shrill-tongued hounds have given the sign. I am summoned to the woods. Here, here I'll hasten by the shortest way.

[*Exuent.*]

[*Enter PHAEDRA, from the palace.*]

PHAEDRA

[85] O mighty Crete, the vast sea's mistress, whose countless vessels along every coast have held the deep, yea, whatever, lands, e'en to Assyria, making path for the prows of ships, old Nereus cleaves – why dost thou force me here, given o'er to an enemy's house as hostage, wife to my foe, to spend my days in wretchedness and weeping? Behold, fled is my lord afar and keeps his bridal oath as is the wont of Theseus. Through the deep shades of the pool which none recrosses is he faring, this brave recruit of a madcap suitor, that from the very throne of the infernal king he may rob and bear away his wife. He hurries on, a partner in mad folly; him nor fear nor shame held back. And there in the depths of Acheron he seeks adultery and an unlawful bed, this father of Hippolytus.

[99] But another, greater smart burdens my woeful breast. No rest by night, no deep slumber frees me from care. A malady feeds and grows within my heart, and it burns there hot as the stream that wells from Aetna's caverns. Pallas' loom stands idle and my task slips from my listless hands; no longer it pleases me to deck the temples with votive offerings, nor at the altars, midst bands of Athenian dames, to wave torches in witness of the silent rites, nor with pure prayers and pious worship to approach the goddess who guards the land once granted to her! My joy is to follow in pursuit of the startled beasts and with soft hand to hurl stiff javelins.

[112] Whither, my soul, art tending? Why this mad love of forest glades? I recognize my wretched mother's fatal curse; her love and mine know how to sin in forest depths. Mother, my heart aches for thee; swept away by ill unspeakable, thou didst boldly love the wild leader of the savage herd. Fierce was he and impatient of the yoke, lawless in love, leader of an untamed herd; yet he did love something. But as for me, what god, what Daedalus could ease my wretched passion? Though he himself should return, mighty in Attic cunning, who shut our monster in the dark labyrinth, he could afford no help to my calamity. Venus, detesting the offspring of the hated Sun, is avenging through us the chains that bound her to her loved Mars, and loads the whole race of Phoebus with shame unspeakable. No daughter of Minos' house hath found love's bondage light; ever

'tis linked with guilt.

NURSE

[129] O wife of Theseus, illustrious child of Jove, quickly drive guilty thoughts from thy pure breast, put out these fires, nor show thyself obedient to this dread hope of love. Whoever at the outset has resisted and routed love, has been safe and conqueror; but whoso by dalliance has fed the sweet torment, too late refuses to bear the accepted yoke.

[136] I know how the stubborn pride of princes, ill brooking truth, refuses to be bent to righteousness; but whatever outcome fate shall give I am ready to endure; freedom near at hand makes the aged brave.

[140] Best is the upright purpose and the unswerving path; next is the shame, that knows some measure in transgressing. To what end art thou hasting, wretched woman? Why heap fresh infamy upon thy house and outsin thy mother? Impious sin is worse than monstrous passion; for monstrous love thou mayst impute to fate, but crime, to character. If, because thy husband sees not the realms of earth, thou dost believe thy guilt safe and devoid of fear, thou errest. Suppose that Theseus is indeed held fast, hidden away in Lethean depths, and must suffer the Styx eternally; what of him, thy father, who holds the seas under his wide dominion and gives law to a hundred peoples? Will he permit so great a crime to lie concealed? Shrewd is the care of fathers. Yet suppose that by craft and guile we do hide this great wickedness from him; what of him who sheds his light on all things, thy mother's sire? What of him who makes the heavens rocks, brandishing Aetnean bolts in his glittering hand, the father of the gods? Dost believe thou canst so sin as to escape the all-seeing eyes of both thy grandsires?

[159] But grant that heaven's kindly grace conceals this impious intercourse; grant that to incest be shown the loyalty which great crimes never find; what of the ever-present penalty, the soul's conscious dread, and the heart filled with crime and fearful of itself?

Some women have sinned with safety, but none with peace of soul. Then quench the fires of impious love, I pray, and shun a deed which no barbaric land has ever done, neither the Getae, wandering on their plains, nor the inhospitable Taurians, nor scattered Scythians. Drive this hideous purpose from thy chaste mind, and, remembering thy mother, shun strange matings. Dost purpose to share thy bed with father and with son, and receive in an incestuous womb a blended progeny? Then go thou on and overturn all nature with thy unhallowed fires. Why do monsters cease? Why does thy brother's labyrinth stand empty? Shall the world hear of strange prodigies, shall nature's laws give way, whenever a Cretan woman loves?

PHAEDRA

[177] I know, nurse, that what thou sayest is true; but passion forces me to take the worser path. With full knowledge my soul moves on to the abyss and vainly seeks the backward way in quest of counsels sane. Even so, when the mariner urges his laden vessel against opposing seas, his toil goes for naught and the ship, vanquished, is swept away by the swift-moving tide. What can reason do? Passion has conquered and now rules supreme, and, a mighty god, lords it o'er all my soul. This winged god rules ruthlessly throughout the earth and inflames Jove himself, wounded with unquenched fires. Gradivus, the warrior god, has felt those flames; that god has felt them who fashions the three-forked thunderbolts, yea, he who tends the hot furnaces ever raging 'neath Aetna's peaks is inflamed by so small a fire as this. Nay, Phoebus, himself, who guides with sure aim his arrows from the bowstring, a boy of more sure aim pierces with his flying shaft, and flits about, baneful alike to heaven and to earth.

NURSE

[195] 'Tis base and sin-mad lust that has made love into a god and, to enjoy more liberty, as given to passion the title of an unreal divinity. The goddess of Eryx sends her son, forsooth, wandering through all lands, and he, flying through heaven's void, wields wanton weapons in his boyish hands, and, though least of gods, still holds such mighty empire! 'Tis love-mad souls that have adopted these vain conceits and have feigned Venus' divinity and a god's archery. Whoever

rejoices in overmuch prosperity and abounds in luxury is ever seeking unaccustomed joys. Then that dire comrade of high estate, inordinate desire, steals in; wonted feasts no longer please, nor houses of simple fashion or modest cups. Why steals this deadly pest more rarely into humble homes, choosing rather the homes of daintiness? Why doth hallowed love dwell 'neath lowly roofs and the general throng have wholesome impulses? Why hath modest fortune self-control? Why, on the other hand, do rich men, propped on empire, ever grasp at more than heaven allows? He who is too powerful seeks power beyond his power. What becomes one endowed with high estate, thou knowest well; then fear and respect the sceptre of thy returning lord.

PHAEDRA

[218] Love's is, I think, the mightiest sovereignty over me, and I fear no lord's return. Nevermore has he reached sight of the vaulted skies who, once plunged in perpetual night, has gone to the silent home.

NURSE

[222] Trust not in Dis. Though he bar his realm, and though the Stygian dog keep guard o'er the grim doors, Theseus alone finds out forbidden ways.

PHAEDRA

[225] He will give indulgence to my love, perchance.

NURSE

[226] Harsh was he even to a virtuous wife; foreign Antiope found his hand severe. But suppose thou canst bend thy angry husband; who can bend this youth's stubborn soul? Hating the very name of woman, he flees them all, sternly devotes his years to single life and shuns the marriage tie. Thou wouldst know him of Amazonian breed.

PHAEDRA

[233] Though he keep him to the peaks of snowy hills, though he course swiftly 'mongst the ragged rocks, still through the deep forests, over the mountains, 'tis my resolve to follow him.

NURSE

[236] Will he stop for thee and yield himself to thy caresses? Will he lay aside his pure practices for impure love? Will he give up his hate for thee, when 'tis for hate of thee, perchance, he repels all women? By no prayers can he be overcome.

PHAEDRA

[240] Wild is he; but wild things, we have learned, can be o'ercome by love.

NURSE

[241] He will flee away.

PHAEDRA

[241] Though he flee through the very seas, still will I follow.

NURSE

[242] Remember thy father.

PHAEDRA

[242] My mother I remember too.

NURSE

[243] He shuns the whole race of women.

PHAEDRA

[243] Then need I fear no rival.

NURSE

[244] My husband will be here.

PHAEDRA

[244] Yes, comrade of Pirithoüs!

NURSE

[245] And thy father will be here.

PHAEDRA

[245] He will be kind, Ariadne's father.

NURSE

[246] By these gleaming locks of age, by this heart, worn with care, by these dear breasts, I beg thee check this made love and come to thy own relief. The wish for healing has ever been the half of health.

PHAEDRA

[250] Now wholly has shame fled my noble soul. I yield, dear nurse. Let the love which will not be controlled by overcome. Fair fame, I will not suffer thee to be defiled. This is the only way, the one sole escape from evil: let me follow my husband; by death will I forestall my sin.

NURSE

[255] Check, O my child, the rush of thine unbridled spirit; control thy passion. For this cause do I deem thee worthy life, since thou declarest thyself worthy death.

PHAEDRA

[258] I am resolved on death; I seek but the manner of my fate. With the noose shall I end my life, or fall upon the sword? or shall I leap headlong from Pallas' citadel?

NURSE

[262] Can my old age permit thee thus to go headlong to thy death? Resist this mad impulse. No one can easily be recalled to life.

PHAEDRA

[265] No argument can stay from perishing one who has resolves to die and ought to die. Wherefore in protection of my honour let me arm my hand.

NURSE

[267] O mistress, sole comfort of my weary years, if so unruly a passion weighs on thy soul, scorn thou this fame; scarcely doth fame favour truth, being better to the worse deserving, worse to the good. Let us test that grim and stubborn soul. Mine is the task to approach

the savage youth and bend the cruel man's relentless will.

[*Exeunt into the palace.*]

CHORUS

[274] Thou goddess, born of the cruel sea, who art called mother of both Loves, that wanton, smiling boy of thine, reckless alike with torches and with arrows, with how sure bow doth he aim his shafts! His madness steals to the inmost marrow, while with creeping fire he ravages the veins. The wound he deals has no broad front, but it eats its way deep into the hidden marrow. There is no open peace with that boy of thine; throughout the world nimbly he scatters his flying shafts. The shore that beholds the new-born sun and the shore that lies at this far western goal, the land lying beneath the burning Crab and the cold region of the Arcadian Bear, which sustains its ever-wandering husbandmen, all know these fires of his. He kindles the fierce flames of youth and in worn-out age he wakes again the extinguished fires; he smites maids' breasts with unknown heat, and bids the very gods leave heaven and dwell on earth in borrowed forms.

[296] Phoebus as keeper of the Thessalian herd drove his cattle along and, laying quill aside, called together his bulls on the unequal reeds. How often did he put on lower forms, even he who made heaven and the clouds: now as a bird he fluttered his white wings with note sweeter than the dying swan; now with savage front as a wanton bull he lowered his back for the sport of maidens and through the strange kingdom of his brother's waves, using his hoofs in place of pliant oars, he breasted the deep sea and overcame it, a ferryman trembling for the prize he bore. The radiant goddess of the darksome sky burned with love and, forsaking the night, gave her gleaming chariot to her brother to guide in fashion other than his own. He learned to drive the team of night and to wheel in narrower circuit, while the axle groaned beneath the car's heavier weight; nor did the nights keep their accustomed length, and with belated dawning came the day. The son of Alcmena laid by his quiver and the threatening skin of the huge lion, letting emeralds be fitted on his fingers and law be enforced on his rough locks; he bound his legs with cross-garterings

of gold and within yellow sandals confined his feet; and in that hand, with which he but now bore the club, he spun out threads with flying spindle.

[325] Persia and the rich, fertile realm of Lydia saw the fierce lion's skin laid aside, and on those shoulders, on which the royal structure of the lofty sky had rested, a gauzy cloak of Tyrian web. 'Tis an accursed fire (believe those who have suffered) and all too powerful. Where the land is encircled by the briny deep, where the bright stars course through heaven itself, over these realms the pitiless boy holds sovereignty, whose shafts are felt in the lowest depths by the sea-blue throng of Nereids, nor can they ease their heat by ocean's waters. These fires the race of winged creatures feel. Goaded on by love, the bold bull undertakes battle for the whole herd; if they feel that their mates are in danger, timid stags challenge to war. At such a time swart India holds striped tigers in especial fear; at such a time the boar whets his death-dealing tusks and his jaws are covered all with foam; African lions toss their manes and by their roarings give token of their engendered passion. When Love has roused them, then the forest groans with their grim uproar. Love sways the monsters of the raging sea, sways Lucanian bulls, claims as his own all nature; nothing is exempt, and hate perishes at the command of Love. Old grudges yield unto his fires. Why tell of more? Love's cares o'erwhelm harsh stepmothers.

[*Enter NURSE from the inner palace.*]

[358] Nurse, tell the news thou bearest. How stands it with the queen? Hath her fierce flame any bound?

NURSE

[360] No hope is there that such suffering can be relieved, and no end will there be to her mad fires. She is parched by a silent fever, and e'en though 'tis hidden away, shut in her heart, her passion is betrayed in her face; fire darts from her yes; again, her weary gaze shrinks from the light; nothing long pleases her unbalanced soul, and her limbs by ever-shifting pangs are tossed in changeful wise. Now with failing steps she sinks down as if dying, and can hardly hold up

her head on her fainting neck; now she lies down to rest and, headless of slumber, spends the night in lamentations; she bids them to lift her up and again to lay her down, to loose her hair and again to bid it up; her raiment, with itself dissatisfied, is ever changed. She has now no care for food or health. She walks with aimless feet, wasted now in strength. Her old-time sprightliness is gone, and the ruddy glow of health no longer shines on her bright face; care feeds upon her limbs, her steps totter and the tender grace of her once beautiful form is fallen away; her eyes, which once shone like Phoebus' torch, no longer gleam with their ancestral fire. Tears fall down her face and her cheeks are wet with constant drops, as when on the top of Taurus the snows melt away, pierced by a warm shower.

[384] But see, the palace doors are opening, and she herself, lying on golden couch, all sick of soul, rejects her wonted garments.

PHAEDRA

[387] Away, ye slaves, with robes bedecked with purple and with gold; away, scarlet of the Tyrian shell, the webs which the far-off Seres gather from the trees. Let a narrow girdle hold in my garments' unencumbering folds, let there be no necklace at my throat, let no snowy pearls, the gift of India's ocean, weight down my ears, and let my hair hang loose, unscented by Assyrian nard. So, tossed at random, let my locks fall down upon my neck and shoulders and, moved by swift running, stream upon the wind. My left hand shall be busied with the quiver and my right wield a Thessalian spear. In such guise as the dweller by Tanaïs or Maeotis, leaving cold Pontus' tract behind, led her hordes, treading Athenian soil, and, binding her locks in a knot, let them flow free, her side protected by a crescent shield; so will I betake me to the woods.

CHORUS

[404] Cease thy complainings; grieving helps not the wretched. Appease the rustic divinity of our virgin goddess.

NURSE

[406] O queen of the groves, thou who in solitude lovest thy mountain-haunts, and who upon the solitary mountains art alone held holy, change for the better these dark, ill-omened threats. O great goddess of the woods and groves, bright orb of heaven, glory of the night, by whose changing beams the universe shines clear, O three-formed Hecate, lo, thou art at hand, favouring our undertaking. Conquer the unbending soul of stern Hippolytus; may he, compliant, give ear unto our prayer. Soften his fierce heart; may he learn to love, may he feel answering flames. Ensnare his mind; grim, hostile, fierce, may he turn him back unto the fealty of love. To this end direct thy powers; so mayst thou wear a shining face and, the clouds all scattered, fare on with undimmed horns; so, when thou drivest thy car through the nightly skies, may no witcheries of Thessaly prevail to drag thee down and may no shepherd make boast o'er thee. Be near, goddess, in answer to our call; hear now our prayers.

[*HIPPOLYTUS is seen approaching.*]

[424] The man himself I see, coming to perform thy sacred rites, no comrade at his side. [*To herself.*] Why dost thou hesitate? Chance has given thee both time and place. Thou must employ thy arts. Why do I tremble? 'Tis no easy task to dare a crime bidden by another, but whoso fears a sovereign's behests must lay aside and banish from his heart all thought of honour; shame is but an ill servant of a sovereign's commands.

HIPPOLYTUS

[431] Why dost hither wend wearily thy aged steps, O faithful nurse, with troubled brow and face dejected? Surely my sire is safe, Phaedra is safe, and their two sons?

NURSE

[435] Banish thy fear. The realm is in prosperous state, thy house is strong, flourishing under the smile of Heaven. But in this happy lot do thou show thyself less harsh; for distress for thee harasses my anxious heart, seeing that thou in thine own despite dost break thyself with heavy penances. If fate compels, 'tis pardonable to be wretched; but whoso of his own accord surrenders himself to misery

and causes his own torment, he deserves to lose the happiness he knows not how to use. Nay, remember thy youth and relax thy spirit; go out o' nights, raising the festal torch; let Bacchus unburden thy weighty cares.

[446] Enjoy thy life; 'tis speeding swift away. Now hearts are light, now love to youth is pleasing. Let thy heart rejoice. Why dost lie on a lonely couch? Free thy youth from gloom; lay hold on pleasures; loosen the reins; let not life's best days escape thee. God has portioned out its proper duties to each time of life and led this span of ours through its own stages; joy befits the young, a serious face the old. Why dost hold thyself in check and strangle thy true nature? That crop will give to the farmer the best return which in the tender blade runs riot with joyous growth, and that tree with lofty head will overtop the grove which no grudging hand cuts down or prunes away. So will right minds be reared unto a richer fruit of praise, if sprightly freedom nourish the high-born soul.

[461] Wilt thou, as a harsh wood-dweller, ignorant of life, spend thy youth in gloom and let Venus be forgot? Is it man's allotted task, thinkst thou, to endure hardship, curb horses in their swift course, and wage savage wars in bloody battles? How various are the forms of death that seize and feed no mortal throngs! the sea, the steel and treachery! But suppose these lacking: by thy path we make wantonly for murky death. The unwedded life let barren youth applaud; then will all that thou beholdest be the throng of one generation only and will fall in ruins on itself. In his providence did yonder almighty father of the universe, when he saw how greedy were the hands of Fate, give heed ever by fresh progeny to make losses good. Come now, let love but be banished from human life, love, which supplies and renews the impoverished race: the whole globe will lie foul in vile neglect; the sea will stand empty of its fish; birds will be lacking to the heaven, wild bests to the woods, and the paths of air will be traversed only by the winds. Follow, then, nature as life's guide; frequent the city; seek out the haunts of men.

HIPPOLYTUS

[482] There is no life so free and innocent, none which better cherishes the ancient ways, than that which, forsaking cities, loves the woods. His heart is inflamed by no mad greed of gain who has devoted himself to harmless ranging on the mountain-tops; here is no shouting populace, no mob, faithless to good men, no poisonous hate, no brittle favour. No slave is he of kings, nor in quest of kingship does he chase empty honours or elusive wealth, free alike from hope and fear; him venomous spite assails not with the bite of base-born tooth; those criems that spawn midst the city's teeming throngs he does not know, nor in guilty consciousness does he quake at every sound, or frame lying words. He seeks not in pride of wealth to be sheltered by a roof reared on a thousand pillars, no in insolence plates he with much gold his rafter-beams. No streams of blood drench his pious altars, no hecatombs of snow-white bullocks, sprinkled with the sacred meal, bend low their necks; but his lordship is over the empty fields, and beneath the open sky he wanders blameless.

[502] His only craft is to set cunning snares for the wild beasts, and, when weary with hard toil, he refreshes his body in Ilissos' stream, chilled by the snows. Now he fares along the bank of swift-flowing Alpheus, now traverses the lofty grove's deep places, where cool Lerna is transparent with its crystal shoals, and the silent forest-depths, wherein the complaining birds make music, and the ash-trees and ancient beeches quiver, moving gently in the breeze. Sweet it is to lie on the bank of some vagrant stream, or on the bare sward to quaff light-stealing slumbers, be it where some copious spring pours down its hurrying waters, or through budding flowers some brook murmurs sweetly as it glides along.

[515] Fruit shaken from the forest trees stays his hunger, and berries plucked from the low bushes afford an easy meal. It is his passion to flee far from royal luxury. 'Tis from anxious cups of gold that the proud drink! how sweet to catch up with the bare hand the water of the spring! Here slumber more surely soothes as he lays him down, care-free, on his hard bed. He guiltily plots no stealthy deeds in secret chamber and on a hidden couch, nor hides fearfully away in

his labyrinthine palace; 'tis the air and light he seeks, and his life has heaven for its witness.

[525] 'Twas in such wise, methinks, they lived whom the primal age produced, in friendly intercourse with gods. They had no blind love of gold; no sacred boundary-stone, judging betwixt peoples, separated fields on the spreading plain; not yet did rash vessels plough the sea; each man knew only his native waters. Then cities were not surrounded with massive walls, set with many towers; no soldier applied his fierce hand to arms, nor did hurling engines burst through closed gates with heavy stones. Not yet did earth, suffering a master's rule, fruitful of themselves, fed nations who asked nothing more; the woods gave men their natural wealth, and shady caves afforded natural homes.

[540] Unholy passion for gain broke up this peaceful life, headlong wrath, and lust which sets men's hearts aflame. Next came cruel thirst for power; the weaker was made the stronger's prey, and might took the place of right. At first men fought with naked fists [next they began to lay hand to deadly weapons] and turned stones and rough clubs to the use of arms. As yet there was no light cornel-shaft, tipped with tapering iron; no long, sharp-pointed sword hung at the side; no helmets crested with plumes gleamed from afar; rage furnished arms. Warlike Mars invented new modes of strife and a thousand forms of death. From this source streams of blood stained all lands and the sea grew red. Then crime stalked unchecked through every home and no impious deed lacked precedent. Brother was slain by brother, father by the hand of son, husband lay dead by the sword of wife, and unnatural mothers destroyed their own offspring. I say naught of stepmothers; they are no whit more merciful than the beasts. But the leader of all wickedness is woman; 'tis she, cunning mistress of crime, besets our minds; 'tis by her foul adulteries so many cities smoke, so many nations war, so many peoples lie crushed beneath the ruins of their kingdoms, utterly o'erthrown. Let others be unnamed; Aegeus' wife alone, Medea, will prove that women are an accursed race.

NURSE

[564] Why make the crime of few the blame of all?

HIPPOLYTUS

[565] I abominate them all, I dread, shun, curse them all. Be it reason, be it instinct, be it wild rage: 'tis my joy to hate them. Sooner shall you mate fire and water, sooner shall the dangerous Syrtes offer to ships a friendly passage, sooner shall Tethys from her far western shore bring in bright dawn, and wolves gaze on does with eyes caressing, than I, my hate o'ercome, have kindly thought for woman.

NURSE

[574] Oft-times does Love put curb on stubborn hearts and change their hate. Look at thy mother's kingdom; those warlike women feel the yoke of Venus. Thou bearest witness to this, of her race the only son.

HIPPOLYTUS

[578] I count it the one solace for my lost mother, that now I may hate all womankind.

NURSE

[580] [*Aside.*] As some hard crag, on all sides unassailable, resists the waves, and flings far back the flood importunate, so does he spurn my words.

[583] But Phaedra is hurrying towards us, impatient of delay. Whither will fortune go? Whither will madness tend?

[*PHAEDRA enters and falls as in a swoon.*]

[585] Her fainting body has fallen suddenly to earth and death-like pallor has overspread her face.

[*HIPPOLYTUS hastens to raise her in his arms.*]

[587] Lift thy face, break silence. See, my daughter, thine own Hippolytus embraces thee.

PHAEDRA

[589] [*Recovering.*] Who gives me back to grief and again sets in my soul this fever dire? How blest was my unconsciousness of self!

HIPPOLYTUS

[591] Why dost thou shun the sweet boon of life restored?

PHAEDRA

[592] [*Aside.*] Courage! my soul, essay, fulfil thine own behest. Fearless be thy words, and firm; who makes timid request, invites denial. The chief part of my guilt is long since accomplished; too late for me is modesty – I have loved basely. If I follow up what I have begun, perchance I may hide my sin behind the marriage torch. Success makes some sins honest. Come now, my soul, begin! [*To HIPPOLYTUS.*] Lend ear to me privately a little while, I pray. If any comrade of thine is here, let him withdraw.

HIPPOYTUS

[601] Behold, the place is free from all witnesses.

PHAEDRA

[602] But my lips refuse passage to the words I seek to frame; some strong power urges me to speak, and a stronger holds me back. I call you all to witness, you heavenly powers, that what I wish –

HIPPOLYTUS

[606] Thy heart desires somewhat and cannot tell it out?

PHAEDRA

[607] Light troubles speak; the weighty are struck dumb.

HIPPOLYTUS

[608] Entrust thy troubles to my ears, mother.

PHAEDRA

[609] Mother – that name is too proud and high; a humbler name better suits my feelings. Call me sister, Hippolytus, or slave – yes, slave is better; I will endure servitude. Shouldst thou bid me walk through deep-drifted snows, I would not shrink from faring along the cold

peaks of Pindus; shouldst thou send me through fire and midst deadly battle ranks, I would not hesitate to offer my breast to naked swords. Take thou in my stead the sceptre committed to my care, accept me for thy slave; it becomes thee to bear sway, me, to obey thine orders. It is no woman's task to watch o'er royal cities. Do thou, in the vigour of thy youth's first bloom, rule o'er the citizens, strong in thy father's power; take to thine arms thy suppliant, and protect thy slave. Pity my widowhood –

HIPPOLYTUS

[623] The most high God avert that omen! In safety will my father soon return.

PHAEDRA

[625] The overlord of the fast-holding realm and of the silent Styx has made no way to the upper world once quitted; and will he let the robber of his couch go back? Unless, perchance, even Pluto sits smiling upon love!

HIPPOLYTUS

[629] Him surely the kindly deities will bring again. But while God still holds our prayers in doubt, with due affection will I care for my dear brothers, and so deserve of thee that thou shalt not deem thee widowed, and myself will fill for thee my father's place.

PHAEDRA

[634] [*Aside.*] O credulous hope of lovers, O deceitful one! Has he not said enough? I'll bring my prayers to bear upon him and attack.

[636] [*To HIPPOLYTUS.*] Have pity! hearken to the prayers my heart may not express. I long – and am ashamed – to speak.

HIPPOLYTUS

[637] What, pray, is this thy trouble?

PHAEDRA

[638] A trouble thou wouldst scarce believe could befall a stepmother.

HIPPOLYTUS

[639] Words of doubtful meaning thou utterest with riddling lips.
Speak out and plainly.

PHAEDRA

[640] 'Tis burning love scorches my maddened heart. A hot fire glows deep in my inmost vitals and hides darkly in my veins, as when nimble flames dart through deep-set timbers.

HIPPOLYTUS

[644] 'Tis with pure love for Theseus thou dost burn?

PHAEDRA

[645] Hippolytus, 'tis thus with me: Theseus' features I love, those former looks of his which once as a youth he had, when his first beard marked his smooth cheeks, when he looked on the dark home of the Cretan monster, and gathered in the long thread o'er the winding way. How glorious was he then! Fillets bound his locks, and his young face glowed with the blush of modesty; strong muscles lay beneath the softness of his arms; and his features were as of thy Phoebe or of my Phoebus – or, rather were thy own. Such, yes, such was he when he won his foeman's valour; just so he bore his head erect. In thee more brightly shines a beauty unadorned; all of thy sire is in thee, and yet some portion of thy mother's sternness blends with an equal charm; on Grecian face shows Scythian austerity. If with thy father thou hadst come to the shores of Crete, for thee and not for him would my sister have spun the thread. Thee, thee, O sister, wherever amidst the starry heavens thou shinest, I call to aid for a cause like to thine own. One house has ruined two sisters: thee, the father, but me, the son.

[*She kneels to HIPPOLYTUS.*]

[666] See, a king's daughter lies fallen at thy knees, a suppliant. Without spot or stain, pure, innocent, I am changed for thee alone. With fixed purpose have I humbled myself to prayer; this day shall bring an end either to my misery or my life. Have pity on her who loves –

HIPPOLYTUS

[671] Great ruler of the gods, dost thou so calmly hear crimes, so calmly look upon them? And when wilt thou send forth thy thunderbolt with angry hand, if now 'tis cloudless? Let all the sky fall in shattered ruin, and in murky clouds the day; let the stars be turned backward and, wrenched aside, go athwart their courses. And thou, star of stars, O radiant Sun, dost thou behold this shame of thy race? Hide thy light and take refuge in darkness. Why is thy right hand empty, O ruler of gods and men? why is not the world in flames by thy forked lightning? Me let thy thunder smite, pierce me, me let thy swift-darting fire consume. I am guilty, I have deserved to die; I have stirred my stepmother to love.

[684] [*To PHAEDRA.*] Look thou! Am I fitted for adulteries? For such crime did I alone see to thee an easy instrument? Hath my austerity earned this? O thou, who hast outshined the whole race of women, who hast dared a greater evil than thy monster-bearing mother, thou worse than she who bore thee! She did but pollute herself with her shameful lust, and yet her offspring by its two-shaped infamy displayed her crime, though long concealed, and by his fierce visage the hybrid child made clear his mother's guilt. That was the womb that bore thee. Oh, thrice and again blest of fate are they whom hatred and treachery have destroyed, consumed, and given unto death! O father, I envy thee; than thy Colchian stepdame this is a curse, greater, greater far!

PHAEDRA

[698] I, too, recognize the fortune of my house: we seek what we should shun; but I am not mistress of myself. Thee even through fire, through the mad sea will I pursue, yes, over crags and rivers, swollen by torrent streams; where'er thou shalt direct thy steps, there will I madly rush. Once more, proud man, I grovel at thy feet.

HIPPOLYTUS

[704] Away with thy impure touch from my chaste body! What? Even rush into my arms! Out, sword, and mete her just punishment. See, with left hand in her twisted hair have I bent back her shameless

head. Never has blood been more justly spilled upon thy altar, O goddess of the bow.

PHAEDRA

[710] Hippolytus, now dost thou grant me fulfilment of my prayer; thou healest me of my madness. This is beyond my prayer, that, with my honour saved, 'tis by thy hands I die.

[She grasps the sword and points it at her breast.]

HIPPOLYTUS

[713] Begone, live, lest thou have thy wish; and let this sword, polluted by thy touch, quit my chaste side.

[He throws his sword from him.]

[715] What Tanaïs will cleanse me, what Maeotis, with its barbaric waves rushing into the Pontic sea? Not great Father Neptune's self, with his whole ocean, could wash away so much of guilt. O woods! O beasts!

[He rushes off into the depths of the forest.]

NURSE

[719] Her sin has been found out. O soul, why dost stand inactive and aghast? We must throw the crime back on him himself, and ourselves charge him with incestuous love. Crime must be concealed by crime. 'Tis safest, when in fear, to force the attack. Whether we first dared the sin or suffered it, since it was done in secret, who of his own knowledge is to testify?

[She raises her voice in loud cry.]

[725] Help, Athens, help! Faithful band of slaves, come to our aid! The ravisher, Hippolytus, with vile, lustful intent, is after us; he is upon us and threatens us with death; with the sword he is terrifying our chaste queen – ah! he has rushed headlong forth and, dazed, in panic flight, has left his sword. We hold the proof of guilt. But the stricken queen, revive her first. Let her dishevelled hair, her torn locks, stay even as they are, the marks of that great guilt. Bear her to the city. Now come back to consciousness, my mistress. Why doest tear

thyself and shun the glances of us all? 'Tis thinking makes impure,
not circumstance.

[*Exuent.*]

CHORUS

[736] He fled like a raging tempest, swifter than cloud-collecting
Corus, swifter than flame which speeds on its way when a star,
driven by the winds, extends its long-trailing fire.

[741] Let fame compare with thee all ancient beauty, fame, admirer of
the olden time; as much fairer does thy beauty shine as gleams more
brightly the full-orbed moon when with meeting horns she has joined
her fires, when at the full with speeding chariot blushing Phoebe
shows her face and the lesser stars fade out of sight. Such as he is the
messenger of night, who brings the first shadows back, Hesperus,
fresh bathed in ocean; and when the shadows have been driven away
again, Lucifer also.

[753] And thou, Bacchus, from thyrsus-bearing India, with unshorn
locks, perpetually young, thou who frightenest tigers with thy vine-
clad spear, and with a turban bindest thy hornèd head – thou wilt not
surpass Hippolytus' crisp locks. Admire not thou thy beauty
overmuch; story has spread through every nation whom the sister of
Phaedra preferred to Bromius.

[761] O beauty, doubtful boon to mortals, brief gift for but a little time,
how swiftly on quick foot thou dost slip away! Not so swift are the
meadows, beauteous with early spring, despoiled by the hot
summer's glow, when with solstitial fire midday rages, and the nights
sweep headlong in their brief course. As lilies wither and their leaves
grow pale, so do our pleasing locks fall from the head, and the bright
glow which shines on youthful cheeks is ravished in a moment and
no day takes not spoilt of our body's beauty. Beauty is a fleeting
thing. Who that is wise would trust so frail a blessing? Enjoy it while
thou mayest. Time is silently undermining thee, and an hour, worse
than the last, is ever creeping on.

[777] Why seek desert places? Beauty is no safer in pathless regions. Hide thee in the woods when Titan has brought midday, and the saucy Naïds, a wanton throng, will encompass thee, wont in their waters to imprison shapely boys, and for thy slumbers the frolicsome goddesses of the groves will lay their snares, the Dryads, who pursue Pans wandering on the mountains. Or else, looking down on thee from the starry heavens, the orb that was born after the old Arcadians will lose control of her white-shining car. And lately she blushed fiery red, though no staining cloud obscured her bright face; but we, anxious for our troubled goddess, thinking her harried by Thessalian charms, made loud jingling sounds: yet 'twas thou hadst been her trouble, thou the cause of her delaying; while gazing on thee the goddess of the night checked her swift course.

[795] This face of thine let frosts more rarely ravage, let this face more seldom woo the sun; 'twill shine more bright than Parian marble. How pleasing is the manly sternness of thy face and the severe dignity of thine old-seeming brow! With Phoebus mayst thou match that gleaming neck. Him locks that will not be confined, streaming o'er his shoulders adorn and robe; but thee a shaggy brow, thee shorter locks, lying in disarray, become. 'Tis thine with manly strength to dare meet the tough and warlike gods and by the spread of thy huge body to overcome them; for even in youth thou dost match the muscles of a Hercules, art broader of chest than war-waging Mars. Shouldst thou be pleased to ride a horn-footed horse, with hand more agile on the rein than Castor's thou couldst guide the Spartan Cyllarus. Stretch thong with thy first fingers and shoot the dart straight with all thy might; still not so far, though skilled to hurl the dart, will Cretans send the slender shaft. Or should it please thee to shoot thy arrows into the sky, in Parthian fashion, none will come down without its bird, but, deep fixed in the warm breast, will bring prey from the very clouds.

[820] To few men hath beauty (scan the ages past) not brought its penalty. May God, more merciful, pass thee by unharmed, and may thy illustrious beauty pass the threshold o'er of shapeless age.

[824] What would the woman's headlong madness leave undared? She is preparing outrageous charges against this guileless youth. Behold her guilty wiles! By her torn hair she seeks to be believed; she disorders all the glory of her locks, bedews her cheeks with tears. She is marshalling her plot by every art that woman knows.

[A man is seen approaching who proves to be THESEUS.]

[829] But who is this, wearing a regal dignity on his face and with head borne high? How like the young Pirithoüs he is in countenance, were his cheeks not so deathly pale and did not unkempt squalor stiffen in his bristling hair. See, it is Theseus himself, restored to the upper world.

THESEUS

[835] At last I escaped the realm of eternal night, the dark world which in vast prison-house o'ershades the dead, and scarcely do my eyes endure the longed-for light. Now for the fourth time is Eleusis harvesting the bounty of Triptolemus, as many times has Libra made day equal unto night, since dubious battling with an unknown fate has kept me between the ills of death and life. Though dead to all things else, one part of life remained to me – my sense of ills. Alcides was the end, who, when he dragged the dog by violence out of Tartarus, brought me, too, along with him to the upper world. But my strength is spent, has lost its old-time vigour, and my steps do falter. Alas, how hard a struggle it was from lowest Phlegethon to attain the far realms of air, at once to flee from death and follow Hercules!

[850] But what is this tearful outcry that strikes my ears? Let someone tell me. Greiving and tears and woe, and on my very threshold sad lamentation? – auspices that well befit a guest from hell.

NURSE

[854] Phaedra holds unbending purpose of self-murder; she scorns our tears and is on the very edge of death.

THESEUS

[856] What cause for death? Why die, now that her husband is come back?

NURSE

[857] That very cause has brought with it speedy death.

THESEUS

[858] Thy riddling words some weighty matter hide. Tell me plainly what grief weighs on her mind.

NURSE

[860] She discloses it to none; though sorrowing, she hides her secret grief and is resolved to take with her the woe whereof she dies. But come now, I pray thee, come; there is need of haste.

THESEUS

[863] Unbar the closed portals of the royal house.

[*The doors are thrown open and THESEUS encounters his wife just within.*]

[854] O partner of my couch, is it thus thou welcomest thy lord's return and the face of thy long-sought husband? Come, put away the sword from thy right hand, give me heart again, and whatever is driving thee out of life, declare it.

PHAEDRA

[868] Alas, O Theseus, great of soul, by the sceptre of thy kingdom, by thy children's lives, by thy return, and by my body already doomed to dust, allow my death.

THESEUS

[871] What cause forces thee to die?

PHAEDRA

[872] If the cause of my death is told, its fruit is lost.

THESEUS

[873] No one else shall hear it, save myself.

PHAEDRA

[874] A chaste woman dreads her husband's ears alone.

THESEUS

[875] Speak out; in my true heart will I hide thy secret.

PHAEDRA

[876] Where thou wouldst have another silence keep, keep silence first thyself.

THESEUS

[877] No means of death shall be granted unto thee.

PHAEDRA

[878] If one wills to die, death can never fail.

THESEUS

[879] Tell me what sin is to be purged by death.

PHAEDRA

[880] That I still live.

THESEUS

[880] Do not my tears move thee?

PHAEDRA

[881] 'Tis best to die a death to be wept by friends.

THESEUS

[882] She persists in silence. Then by scourge and bonds shall her old nurse reveal whatever she will not tell. [*To attendants.*] Bind her with chains. Let the power of the scourge drag forth the secrets of her soul.

PHAEDRA

[885] Hold! I will myself confess.

THESEUS

[886] Why dost turn away thy sorrowing face and hide with veiling robe the tears that suddenly o'er flow thy cheeks?

PHAEDRA

[888] Thee, thee, O sire of the heavenly gods, I call to witness, and thee, bright radiance of celestial light, on whom as founder of this house of ours depends – though sorely tempted, I withstood his prayers; to sword and threats my soul yielded not; yet did my body bear his violence. This stain of shame shall my blood wash away.

THESEUS

[894] Who, tell me, was the destroyer of my honour?

PHAEDRA

[895] Whom thou least thinkest.

THESEUS

[895] Who is he? I demand to hear.

PHAEDRA

[896] This sword will tell, which, in his panic terror, the ravisher left behind, fearing the gathering of the citizens.

THESEUS

[898] Ah me! What villainy do I behold? What monstrous thing do I see? The royal hilt of ivory, embossed with tiny figures, gleams before me, the glory of the Athenian race. But he, whither has he escaped?

PHAEDRA

[901] The slaves, here, saw him speeding swift away in headlong flight.

THESEUS

[903] O holy Piety, O ruler of the heavens, and thou who with thy billows dost sway the second realm, whence came this infection of infamy in our stock? Was that man nurtured by the land of Greece or by the Scythian Taurus and Colchian Phasis? The breed reverts to its

progenitors and debased blood reproduces the primal stock. This, truly, is the madness of that warlike race, to condemn Venus' laws and to prostitute the long-chaste body to the crowd. O abominable race, yielding to no laws of a better land! Even the very beasts do shun incestuous love, and instinctive chastity guards Nature's laws. Where are those features, that feigned austerity of the man, that rough garb, aping old-fashioned and archaic ways? Where thy stern manners and the sour severity of age? O two-faced life, thou keepest thy true thoughts hidden and dost clothe foul purpose with an aspect fair – chaste bearing hides unchastity; meekness, effrontery; piety, sin unspeakable; false men approve truth and the soft affect hardihood.

[922] O thou lover of the woods, the boasted wild man, continent, rough, unstained, is it for me thou keepst thyself in check? With my couch, by such crime as this, was it thy pleasure to make first test of manhood? Now, now I give thanks to the heavenly powers that Antiope fell stricken by my hand, and that, descending to the Stygian pit, I did not leave to thee thy mother. Fugitive, traverse nations remote, unknown; though a land on the remotest confines of the world hold thee separated by Ocean's tracts, though thou take up thy dwelling in the world opposite our feet, though thou escape to the shuddering realms of the high north and hide deep in its farthest corner, and though, placed beyond the reach of winter and his hoar snows, thou leave behind thee the threatening rage of cold Boreas, still shalt thou pay penalty for thy crime. Fugitive, through all thy hiding-places untiringly will I pursue thee; regions remote, blocked, hidden away, far separate, trackless, will I traverse, and no place shall stop me – thou knowest whence I am returned. Whither weapons cannot be hurled, thither will I hurl my prayers. My father of the sea granted me thrice to fashion prayers whereto the god would bow, and, calling upon Styx, confirmed the boon.

[945] [*To NEPTUNE.*] Now fulfil the sad boon, O ruler of the sea! Let Hippolytus see the bright day no more, and in youth pass to the ghosts that are wrathful with his sire. Now bring aid, which my soul abhors, O father, to thy son; never should I squander this last boon of

thine, did not great ills o'erwhelm; in depths of Tartarus, in presence of dread Dis, and imminent menace of hell's lord, I was sparing of this prayer. Keep now thy promised faith. Father, dost thou delay? Why are thy waves yet silent? Now veil the night with dark clouds driven by the winds; snatch stars and sky from sight; pour forth the deep; and, rising high, summon the floods from Ocean's self.

CHORUS

[959] O Nature, mighty mother of the gods, and thou, fire-bearing Olympus' lord, who through the swift firmament whirlest the scattered stars, and the wandering courses of the planets, who makest the heavens on swift axis turn, why dost thou take such care to keep perpetual the pathways of the lofty sky, that now the hoar frosts of winter may strip the woods, now to the plantations their umbrage come again, that now in summer the Lion's fervent heat may ripen the grain and the year regulate its powers? But why, again, dost thou, who holdest so wide sway, and by whose hands the ponderous masses of the vast universe are poised and wheel their appointed courses – why dost thou dwell afar, all too indifferent to men, not anxious to bring blessing to the good, and to the evil, bane?

[978] Fate without order rules the affairs of men, scatters her gifts with unseeing hand, fostering the worse; dire lust prevails against pure men, and crime sits regnant in the lofty palace. The rabble rejoice to give government to the vile, paying high honours even where they hate. Warped are the rewards of uprightness sad virtue gains; wretched poverty dogs the pure, and the adulterer, strong in wickedness, reigns supreme. O decency, honour, how empty and how false!

[989] But why does yon messenger haste hither with rapid pace, his sad countenance wet with grieving tears?

[*Enter MESSENGER.*]

MESSENGER

[991] O lot bitter and hard, O cruel servitude, why calls fate upon me

to bear unutterable tidings?

THESEUS

[993] Fear not to speak out boldly the disaster, cruel though it be; I bear a heart not unprepared for suffering.

MESSENGER

[995] My tongue refuses utterance to the grief-bringing woe.

THESEUS

[996] Tell what mischance weighs down this shattered house.

MESSENGER

[997] Hippolytus, woe is men, lies in lamentable death.

THESEUS

[998] That his son was dead the sire has long since known; now is the ravisher dead. But tell the manner of his end.

MESSENGER

[1000] When with troubled steps he left the city, a fugitive, unfolding his swift way with flying feet, he quickly brought his prancing steeds 'neath the high yoke and curbed their mouths with tight-drawn reins. Then much did he utter, communing with himself, and, cursing his native land, called oft upon his sire, and with loose reins fiercely shook the lash; when suddenly from out the deep the vast sea thundered and starward heaved itself. No wind was blowing on the briny sea, from no quarter of the clam sky came the noise, but a self-born tempest stirred the peaceful deep. Not so violently does the south wind distress Sicilia's straits, nor so madly does the Ionian sea swell beneath the north-west's tyranny, when the cliffs tremble under the shock of waves and the white spray smites Leucate's summit. The mighty deep heaves up into a huge mound, and the sea, swollen with a monstrous birth, rushes to land.

[1017] Nor is that vast destruction piled up for ships; 'tis the land it threatens. With no light sweep the flood rolls forward; some strange thing in its burdened womb the heavy wave is carrying. What new

land shows its head to the stars? Is a new Cyclad rising? The rocks, the sacred seat of the Epidaurian god, were hid, and the cliffs famous for the crime of Sciron, and the land which is hemmed in by two seas.

[1025] While we in dumb amaze are wondering what this means, behold, the whole sea bellows, and the cliffs on every hand echo back the sound; the highest peak is wet with dashed-up spray; it foams, and then in turn spews back the flood, as when a cavernous whale swims through the deep ways of ocean, spouting back streams of water from his mouth. Then the great globe of waters shivered, shook and broke, and brought to the shore a thing more terrible than our fear; the sea rushed landward, following its monster. My lips tremble in the telling. How the thing looked! how huge! A bull it was, towering high with a dark blue neck, and he reared a high mane upon his verdant crest; his shaggy ears stood up; his eyes flashed with changing colour, now such as the lord of the wild herd might have, now such as one born beneath the sea – now his eyes dart flame, now they flash wondrous with cerulean gleam. His brawny neck with great muscles bulges and his wide nostrils roar with his gaping draughts of air. His breast and dewlap are green with clinging moss, and his long flanks with red seaweed are spotted. His hinder parts are joined into monstrous shape, and, all scaly, the huge beast drags his measureless length along. Such is that sea-monster of the outer ocean which swallows or crushes swift-flying ships. The lands quaked with fear; herds fled in frenzy in all directions through the fields, and the herdsman forgot to follow his cattle. All beasts fled from their wooded haunts; all hunters stood trembling, pale with chilling fear. Hippolytus alone, quite unafraid, with tight reins holds fast his horses and, terror-stricken though they are, urges them on with the encouragement of his familiar voice.

[1057] There is a deep passage towards the fields through the broken hills, hard by the neighbouring stretches of the sea below. Here that huge creature sharpens his anger and prepares his wrath. When he has gained his spirit, and with full trail rehearsed his wrath, he darts forth, running swiftly, scarce touching the surface of the ground with flying feet, and stands, in grim menace, before the trembling steeds.

Thy son, rising up, confronts him with fierce, threatening look, nor does he change countenance, but loudly thunders: "This empty terror cannot break my spirit, for 'twas my father's task to conquer bulls." But straightway his horses, disobedient to the reins, seized the chariot and, roaming from the road, wherever frenzied terror carried them in their mad flight, there they plunged along and dashed amid the rocks.

[1072] But he, as a helmsman holds his ship steady on the boisterous sea, lest it give its side to the waves, and skilfully cheats the floods, in like manner guides his swift-moving steeds. Now he drags on their mouths checked by the tight-drawn reins, and now, oft plying the twisted lash, he forces them to his will. His companion holds doggedly in pursuit, now racing alongside the horses, now making detour to face them, from every side filling them with fear.

[1080] But now they could flee no further; for he charged full front upon them, that bristling, horned monster of the deep. Then, truly, the plunging horses, driven by mad fear, broke from control, struggled to wrench their necks from the yoke, and, rearing up, hurled their burden to the ground. Headlong on his face he plunged and, as he fell, entangled his body in the clinging reins; and the more he struggled, the tighter he drew those firm-holding coils. The horses felt their deed, and now, with the light chariot, since none controlled, wherever fear bade on they dashed. Just so, not recognizing their wonted burden, and indignant that the day had been entrusted to a pretended Sun, the horses flung Phaëthon far from his heavenly track. Far and wide the fields are stained with blood, and his head, dashed on the rocks, bounds back from them. The brambles pluck away his hair; the hard stones ravage that lovely face, and his ill-fated beauty is ruined by many a wound. The swift wheels drag his dying limbs; and at last, as he is whirled along, a tree, its trunk charred into a stake, stays him with its stock driven right through the groin and holds him fast, and for a little while the car stands still, held by its impaled master. Awhile that wound stays the team – then equally delay and their master, too, they break. Thereafter the thickets slash his half-dead body, the rough brambles with their sharp

thorns tear him and every tree-trunk has taken its toll of him.

[1105] Now bands of his mourning servants are scouring the fields through the places where Hippolytus was dragged, marked in a long trail by bloody traces, and his whimpering dogs are tracking their master's limbs. But not yet has the painstaking toil of his grieving friends availed to fill out his body. Has his glorious beauty come to this? He who but now as the illustrious partner of his father's throne, who but now, his acknowledged heir, shone like the stars, he is being gathered from every hand for his last burning, and collected for his funeral pyre.

THESEUS

[1114] [*Weeping.*] O nature, all too potent, with how strong ties of blood dost thou hold parents! how we cherish thee, even against our wills! Guilty, I wished him dead; lost, I lament him.

MESSENGER

[1118] Not rightfully may any weep what he has willed.

THESEUS

[1119] Truly I deem this the crowning woe of woes, if fortune makes what we must loathe that we must long for.

MESSENGER

[1121] If thou still keepst thy hate, why are thy cheeks wet with tears?

THESEUS

[1122] Not that I lost, but that I slew, I weep.

CHORUS

[1123] How chance whirls round the affairs of men! Less does fortune rage midst humble folk, and more lightly God smites the more lightly blessed, Unnoticed ease keeps men in peace and a cottage bestows age untroubled.

[1128] The mountain-peaks, lifted to airy heights, catch east, catch south winds, mad Boreas' threats, and the rain-fraught north-west

gale. Seldom does the moist valley suffer the lightning's blast; but Caucasus the huge, and the Phrygian grove of mother Cybele, quake beneath the bolt of high-thundering Jove. For in jealous fear Jove aims at that which neighbours on high heaven; but the low-roofed, common home ne'er feels his mighty blasts. Around thrones he thunders.

[1141] On doubtful wings flies the inconstant hour, nor does swift Fortune pledge loyalty to any. He who with joy beheld the clear, starry skies and bright day, the night now left behind, in grief is lamenting his sorrowful return, and finds his welcome to his father's dwelling more doleful than Avernus' self.

[1149] O Pallas, ever to be revered by the Athenian race, for that thy Theseus looks on sky and upper world and has escaped from the pools of Styx, chaste one, thou owest naught to thine uncle, the all-devouring; unchanged the tale remains for the infernal king.

[1154] What voice of wailing sounds from the high palace? And what would maddened Phaedra with the naked sword?

[Enter PHAEDRA with a drawn sword in her hand.]

THESEUS

[1156] What fury pricks thee on, wild with grief? Why that sword? What mean thine outcries and lamentations over the hated corpse?

PHAEDRA

[1159] Me, me, assault, O savage ruler of ocean's depths; against me send forth the blue sea's monsters, whate'er in his restless waves' embrace Ocean hides in his remotest flood. O Theseus, always harsh, who never without harm unto thy loved ones dost come back, son and father have paid for thy homecomings by their death. Thou art the destroyer of thy home, hurtful ever, whether through love or hatred of thy wives.

[Turning to the mangled corpse.]

[1168] O Hippolytus, is it such I see thy face? such have I made it?

What savage Sinis, what Procrustes, has scattered thy members so, or what Cretan bull, fierce, two-formed monster, filling the labyrinth of Daedalus with his huge bellowings, has torn thee asunder with his horns? Ah, woe is me! whither is thy glorious beauty fled, and thine eyes, my stars? Dost lie low in death? Come back for a little and hearken to my words – no shameful thing I speak – with this hand will I make amends to thee, in my wicked heart will I thrust the sword and set Phaedra equally free from life and crime. Then through waters, through Tartarean pools, through Styx, through rivers of fire will I madly follow thee. Let me appease thy shade; take the spoils of my head, and accept this lock torn from my wounded forehead. It was not ours to be joined in life, but surely 'tis ours to be joined in death.

[1184] [*To herself.*] Now die, if thou art pure, for thy husband's sake; if impure, for thy love. Shall I seek again my husband's couch by so great crime defiled? The one horror lacking was that, as if pure, thou shouldst enjoy his couch claimed as thy right. O death, thou only solace of evil love, O death, thou chiefest grace to damaged honour, I fly to thee; spread wide thy forgiving arms.

[1191] Hear me, O Athens, and thou, his father, worse than baleful stepdame: I have lied to you, and the crime which, crazed with passion, I had conceived I my own mad breast, I falsely charged to him. Thou, father, hast punished to no purpose; an the chaste youth, through charge of the unchaste, lies there, all pure and innocent.

[1196] [*To HIPPOLYTUS.*] Recover now thine honour. My impious breast is bare to the sword of justice, and my blood makes atonement to a guiltless man.

[1199] [*To THESEUS.*] What thou, his father, shouldst do, now that thy son is murdered, learn from his stepdame: hide thee in Acheron.
[*She falls upon her sword and dies.*]

THESEUS

[1201] Ye jaws of wan Avernus, ye Taenarean caves, ye waves of

Lethe, welcome to the wretched, ye sluggish pools, hide ye in my impious self, plunge deep and bury me in unending woes. Come now, savage monsters of the deep, now, vast sea, and whatever Proteus has hidden away in the furthest hollow of his waters, and hurry me off, me who felt triumph in crime so great, to your deep pools. And thou, father, who didst e'er give too quick assent to my angry prayer, I am not worthy of an easy death who have brought unheard-of destruction on my son and scattered his mangled limbs throughout the fields; who, while, as stern avenger, I was punishing an unreal crime, have myself fallen into true guilt. Heaven, hell, and ocean have I filled up by my sin; there remains no further lot; three kingdoms know me.

[1213] For this have I returned? Was the way opened to the light of heaven that I might look on two funerals and a double murder, that, wifeless and childless, I might with one torch light the funeral pyres of son and wife? O giver of light that is but darkness, Alcides, give back his boon to Dis; give me up again to the ghosts whom I escaped. Impiously, I make vain prayers for the death I left behind. Thou bloody man, skilful in deadly arts, who didst contrive unheard-of, barbarous ways of death, now upon thyself inflict fitting punishment. Shall a pine-tree, its top bent down to earth, split me in two, shot back into the air? Shall I be hurled headlong over the Scirionian cliffs? More dreadful things have I seen which Phlegethon bids imprisoned sinners suffer, compassing them about with his stream of fire; what punishment waits for me, and what place, I know.

[1229] Ye guilty shades, make room, and on these shoulders, these, let the rock rest, the endless task of the aged son of Aeolus, and weight down my weary hands; let water, lapping my very lips mock my thirst; let the fell vulture leave Tityus and fly hither, let my liver constantly grow afresh for punishment; and do thou rest awhile, father of my Pirithoüs – let the wheel that never stops its whirling bear these limbs of mine on its swift-turning rim. Yawn, earth; take me, dire Chaos, take me; this way to the shades is more fitting for me – my son I follow. And fear not, thou who rulest the shades; I come

clean-handed; receive me into thy everlasting home, to go forth no more. My prayers move not the gods; but if I asked impious things, how would they bend to answer!

CHORUS

[1244] Theseus, time without end awaits thy lamentations. Now pay the rites due to thy son and bury with speed the scattered limbs mangled so shamefully.

THESEUS

[1247] Hither, thither bring the remains of his dear body and heap together, as they come, the burden of his limbs. Is this Hippolytus? Mine is the sin, I do acknowledge it; 'tis I who have murdered thee, and, lest once only or alone I might by guilty, when I his father would dare crime, my own sire I summoned to my aid. Behold, I enjoy my father's boon. O childlessness, bitter misfortune for broken years! Come, clasp his limbs and all that is left thee of thy son, thou wretched man, and, in thy sad breast fondling, cherish them.

CHORUS

[1256] The scattered parts of his torn body set thou, his sire, in order, and put back in place the random pieces. Here should be his strong right hand, here we must put his left, skilled in managing the reins; traces of his left side I recognize. But how large a part is still lacking to our tears!

THESEUS

[1262] Be firm, my trembling hands, for your sad duty; be dry, my cheeks, stay your flowing tears, while a father is portioning out members to his son and fashioning his body. What is this shapeless, ugly piece, with many a wound torn on every side? What part it is of thee, I know not; but it is a part of thee. Here, here lay it down, not in its own but in an empty place. Is this that face which once gleamed with fire as of the stars, which turned his enemy's eyes aside? Has his beauty fallen to this? O dire fate, O cruel favour of the gods! Thus comes back son to father in answer to his prayer?

[*Placing some ornaments on the torn body.*]

[1273] Lo, these are thy sire's last gifts. Take them, O thou who must oft be borne to burial. Now let the fire consume these limbs.

[1275] [*To attendants.*] Open wide my palace, gloomy and foul with slaughter, and let all Athens with loud laments resound. Do you make ready the flames of the royal pyre; do you seek through the fields for his body's parts still wandering.

[*Pointing to PHAEDRA's corpse.*]

[1279] As for her, let her be buried deep in earth, and heavy may the soil lie on her unholy head!

THYESTES



Translated by Frank Justus Miller

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THE SCENE is laid partly without the city of Argos, and partly within the royal palace.

ARGUMENT

Pelops, the son of Tantalus, had banished his sons for the murder of their half-brother, Chrysippus, with a curse upon them, that they and their posterity might perish by each others' hands. Upon the death of Pelops, Atreus returned and took possession of his father's throne. Thyestes, also, claimed the throne, and sought to gain it by the foulest means. For he seduced his brother's wife, Aërope, and stole by her assistance the magical, gold-fleeced ram from Atreus' flocks, upon the possession of which the right to rule was said to rest. For this act he was banished by the king.

But Atreus has long been meditating a more complete revenge upon his brother; and now in pretended friendship has recalled him from banishment, offering him a place beside himself upon the throne, that thus he may have Thyestes entirely in his power.

THYESTES

THE GHOST OF TANTALUS

[1] Who from the accursed regions of the dead haleth me forth, snatching at food which ever fleeth from my hungry lips? What god for his undoing showeth again to Tantalus the abodes of the living? Hath something worse been found than parching thirst midst water, worse than ever-gaping hunger? Cometh the slippery stone of Sisyphus to be borne upon my shoulders? or the wheel stretching apart my limbs in its swift round? or Tityus' pangs, who, stretched in a huge cavern, with torn out vitals feeds the dusky birds and, by night renewing whate'er he lost by day, lies an undiminished banquet for new monsters? To what new suffering am I shifted? O whoe'er thou art, harsh judge of shades, who doest allot fresh punishments to the dead, if aught can be added to my sufferings whereat e'en the guardian of our dread prison-house would quake, whereat sad Acheron would be seized with dread, with fear whereof I, too, should tremble, seek thou it out. Now from my seed a multitude is coming up which its own race shall out-do, which shall make me seem innocent, and dare things yet undared. Whatever space is still empty in the unholy realm, I shall fill up; never while Pelops' house is standing, will Minos be at rest.

THE FURY

[23] Onward, damned shade, and goad thy sinful house to madness. Let there be rivalry in guilt of every kind; let the sword be drawn on this side and on that; let their passions know no bounds, no shame; let blind fury prick on their souls; heartless be parents' rage, and to children's children let the long trail of sin lead down; let time be given to none to hate old sins – ever let new arise, many in one, and let crime, e'en midst its punishment, increase. From haughty brothers' hands let kingdoms fall, and in turn let them call back the fugitives; let the wavering fortune of a home of violence midst changing kings totter to its fall; from power to wretchedness, from wretchedness to power – may this befall, and may chance with her ever-restless waves bear the kingdom on. For crimes' sake exiled,

when God shall bring them home, to crime may they return and may they be as hateful to all men as to themselves; let there be naught which passion deems unallowed; let brother brother fear, father fear son, and son father; let children vilely perish and be yet more vilely born; let a murderous wife lift hand against her husband, let wars pass over sea, let streaming blood drench every land, and over the mighty chiefs of earth let Lust exult, triumphant. In this sin-stained house let shameful defilement be a trivial thing; let fraternal sanctity and faith and every right be trampled under foot. By our sins let not heaven be untainted – why do the stars glitter in the sky? Why do their fires preserve the glory due the world? Let the face of night be changed, let day fall from heaven. Embroil thy household gods, summon up hatred, slaughter, death, and fill the whole house with Tantalus.

[54] Adorn the lofty pillar and with laurel let the festal doors be green; let torches worthy of thine approach shine forth – then let the Thracian crime be done with greater number. Why is the uncle's hand inactive? Not yet does Thyestes bewail his sons – and when will he lift his hand? Now set o'er the flames let cauldrons foam; let the rent members one by one pass in; let ancestral hearth be stained with blood, let the feast be spread – to no novel feast of crime wilt come as banqueter. To-day have we made thee free, have loosed thy hunger to the banquet yonder; go, feed full thy fasting, and let blood, with wine commingled, be drunk before thine eyes. I have found feast which thou thyself wouldst flee – but stay! Whither dost headlong rush?

GHOST OF TANTALUS

[68] Back to my pools and streams and fleeing waters, back to the laden tree which shuns my very lips. Let me return to the black couch of my prison-house; let it be mine, if I seem too little wretched, to change my stream; in thy bed's midst, O Phlegethon, let me be left, hemmed round with waves of fire.

[74] Whoe'er thou art, by the fates' law bidden to suffer allotted punishment; whoe'er liest quaking beneath the hollowed rocks, and

fearest the downfall of the mountainous mass even now coming on thee; whoe'er shudderest at the fierce gaping of greedy lions, and, entangled in their toils, dost shudder at the dread ranks of furies; whoe'er, half burned, shunnest their threatening torches, hear ye the words of Tantalus now hasting to you: believe me who know, and love your punishments. Oh, when shall it fall to me to escape the upper world?

THE FURY

[83] First throw thy house into confusion dire, bring strife with thee, bring lust for the sword, an evil thing for rulers, and rouse to mad passion the savage breast.

GHOST OF TANTALUS

[96] 'Tis meet for me to suffer punishments, not be a punishment. I am sent as some deadly exhalation from the riven earth, or as a pestilence, spreading grievous plague among the people, that I a grandsire may lead my grandsons into fearful crime. O mighty sire of gods, my father, too, however to thy shame I say it, though to cruel punishment my tattling tongue be doomed, I will not hold my peace; I warn ye, defile not your hands with accursed slaughter, nor stain your altars with a madman's crime. Here will I stand and prevent the evil deed. [*To THE FURY.*] Why with thy scourge dost fright mine eyes, and fiercely threaten with thy writhing snakes? Why deep in my inmost marrow dost rouse hunger pains? My heart is parched with burning thirst, and in my scorched vitals the fire is darting – I follow thee.

THE FURY

[100] This, this very rage of thine distribute throughout thy house! So, e'en as thou, may they be driven on, raging to quench their thirst each in the other's blood. Thy house feels thy near approach, and has shrunk in utter horror from thine accursed touch. Enough! more than enough! Go thou to the infernal caves and well-known stream; now is the grieving earth weary of thy presence. Seest thou how the water, driven far within, deserts the springs, how river banks are empty, how the fiery wind drives away the scattered clouds? Every tree

grows pale, and from the bare branches the fruit has fled; and where this side and that the Isthmus is wont to roar with neighbouring waves, dividing near seas with narrow neck of land, the shore but faintly hears the far off sound. Now Lerna has shrunk back, the Phoronean stream has disappeared, the sacred Alpheus no longer bears his waters on, Cithaeron's heights have lost their snows and nowhere stand hoary now, and the lordly Argos fears its ancient drought. Lo! Titan himself stands doubtful whether to bid day follow on, and, plying the reins, compel it to come forth to its undoing.

CHORUS

[122] If any god loves Achaian Argos and Pisa's homes renowned for chariots; if any loves Corinthian Isthmus' realm, its twin harbours, its dissevered sea; if any, the far-seen snows of Mount Taygetus, snows which, when in winter-time the Sarmatian blasts have laid them on the heights, the summer with its sail-filling Etesian breezes melts away; if any is moved by the cool, clear stream of Alpheus, famed for its Olympic course – let him his kindly godhead hither turn, let him forbid the recurrent waves of crime to come again, forbid that on his grandsire follow a worse grandson, and greater crime please lesser men. Wearied at last, may the impious race of thirsty Tantalus give o'er its lust for savagery. Enough sin has been wrought; nothing has right availed, or general wrong. Himself betrayed, fell Myrtilus, betrayer of his lord, and, dragged down by the faith which he had shown, he made a sea famous by its change of name; to Ionian ships no tale is better known. While the little son ran to his father's kiss, welcomed by sinful sword, he fell, an untimely victim at the hearth, and by the right hand was carved, O Tantalus, that thou mightest spread a banquet for the gods, thy guests. Such food eternal hunger, such eternal thirst pursues; nor for such bestial viands could have been meted penalty more fit.

[152] Weary, with empty throat, stands Tantalus; above his guilty head hangs food in plenty, than Phineus' birds more elusive; on either side, with laden boughs, a tree leans over him and, bending and trembling 'neath its weight of fruit, makes sport with his wide-straining jaws. The prize, though he is eager and impatient of delay,

deceived so oft, he tries no more to touch, turns away his eyes, shuts tight his lips, and behind clenched teeth he bars his hunger. But then the whole grove lets its riches down nearer still, and the mellow fruits above his head mock him with drooping boughs and whet again the hunger, which bids him ply his hands in vain. When he has stretched these forth and gladly has been baffled, the whole ripe harvest of the bending woods is snatched far out of reach. Then comes a raging thirst, harder to bear than hunger; when by this his blood has grown hot and glowed as with fiery torches, the poor wretch stands catching at waves that seem to approach his lips; but these the elusive water turns aside, failing in meagre shallows, and leaves him utterly, striving to pursue; then deep from the whirling stream he drinks – but dust.

ATREUS

[176] [*In soliloquy.*] O undaring, unskilled, unnerved, and (what in high matters I deem a king's worst reproach) yet unavenged, after so many crimes, a brother's treacheries, and all right broken down, in idle complaints dost busy thyself – a mere wrathful Atreus? By now should the whole world be resounding with thy arms, on either side they fleets be harrying both seas; by now should fields and cities be aglow with flames and the drawn sword be gleaming everywhere. Let the whole land of Argolis resound with our horses' tread; let no forests shelter my enemy, nor citadels, built on high mountain tops; let the whole nation leave Mycenae and sound the trump of war; and whoso hides and protects that hateful head, let him die a grievous death. This mighty palace itself, illustrious Pelops' house, may it e'en fall on me, if only on my brother, too, it fall. Up! my soul, do what no coming age shall approve, but none forget. I must dare some crime, atrocious, bloody, such as my brother would more wish were his. Crimes thou dost not avenge, save as thou dost surpass them. And what crime can be so dire as to overtop his sin? Does he lie downcast? Does he in prosperity endure control, rest in defeat? I know the untamable spirit of the man; bent it cannot be – but it can be broken. Therefore, ere he strengthen himself or marshal his powers, we must begin the attack, lest, while we wait, the attack be made on us. Slay or be slain will he; between us lies the crime for

him who first shall do it.

ATTENDANT

[204] Does public disapproval deter thee not?

ATREUS

[205] The greatest advantage this of royal power, that their master's deeds the people are compelled as well to bear as praise.

ATTENDANT

[207] Whom fear compels to praise, them, too, fear makes into foes; but he who seeks the glory of true favour, will wish heart rather than voice to sing his praise.

ATREUS

[211] True praise even to the lowly often comes; false, only to the strong. What men choose not, let them choose.

ATTENDANT

[213] Let a king choose the right; then none will not choose the same.

ATREUS

[214] Where only right to a monarch is allowed, sovereignty is held on sufferance.

ATTENDANT

[215] Where is no shame, no care for right, no honour, virtue, faith, sovereignty is insecure.

ATREUS

[217] Honour, virtue, faith are the goods of common men; let kings go where they please.

ATTENDANT

[219] O count it wrong to harm even a wicked brother.

ATREUS

[220] Whate'er is wrong to do unto a brother is right to do to him. For

what has he left untouched by crime, or where has he failed to sin? My wife has he debauched, my kingdom stolen; the ancient token of our dynasty by fraud he gained, by fraud o'erturned our house. There is within Pelops' lofty folds a lordly flock, and a wondrous ram, the rich flock's leader. O'er all his body a fleece of spun gold hangs, and from his back the new-crowned kings of the house of Tantalus have their sceptres wreathed with gold. His owner rules; him does the fortune of the whole house follow. Hallowed and apart he grazes in safe meadows fenced with stone, that guards the fated pasture with its rocky wall. Him did the perfidious one, daring a monstrous crime, steal away, with the partner of my bed helping the sinful deed. From this source has flowed the whole evil stream of mutual destruction; throughout my kingdom have I wandered, a trembling exile; no part of my family is safe and free from snares; my wife seduced, our pledge of empire broken, my house impaired, my offspring dubious – no one thing certain save my brother's enmity. Why standest inactive? At last begin, put on thy courage; Tantalus and Pelops – look on them; to work like their my hands are summoned. Tell thou, by what means I may bring ruin on his wicked head.

ATTENDANT

[246] Slain by the sword, let him spew forth his hateful soul.

ATREUS

[247] Thou speakest of punishment's completion; I punishment itself desire. Let the mild tyrant slay; in my dominion death is a boon to pray for.

ATTENDANT

[249] Does piety move thee not?

ATREUS

[250] Be gone, O Piety, if ever in our house thou hadst a place. Let the dread band of Furies come, the fiend Discord, and Megaera, brandishing her torches twain; not great enough the frenzy with which my bosom burns; with some greater horror would I be filled.

ATTENDANT

[254] What strange design does thy mad soul intend?

ATREUS

[255] Naught that the measure of accustomed rage can hold; no crime will I leave undone, and no crime is enough.

ATTENDANT

[257] The sword?

ATREUS

[257] 'Tis not enough.

ATTENDANT

[257] Fire, then?

ATREUS

[257] Still not enough.

ATTENDANT

[258] What weapon, pray, will thy great anguish use?

ATREUS

[259] Thyestes' self.

ATTENDANT

[259] This plague is worse than passion.

ATREUS

[260] I do confess it. A frantic tumult shakes and heaves deep my heart. I am hurried I know not wither, but I am hurried on. The ground rumbles from its lowest depths, the clear sky thunders, the whole house crashes as though 'twere rent asunder, and the trembling Lares turn away their faces – let it be done, let a deed of guilt be done whereat, O gods, ye are affrighted.

ATTENDANT

[266] What, pray, wouldst do?

ATREUS

[267] Some greater thing, larger than the common and beyond the bounds of human use is swelling in my soul, and it urges on my sluggish hands – I know not what it is, but 'tis some mighty thing. So let it be. Haste, thou, my soul, and do it. 'Tis a deed worthy of Thyestes and of Atreus worthy; let each perform it. The Odrysian house once saw a feast unspeakable – 'tis a monstrous crime, I grant, but it has been done before; let my smart find something worse than this. Inspire my soul, O Daulian mother, aye and sister, too; my case is like to yours; help me and urge on my hand. Let the father with joyous greed rend his sons, and his own flesh devour. 'Tis well, more than enough. This way of punishment is pleasing.

[280] Meanwhile, where is he? Why does Atreus so long live harmless? Already before mine eyes flits the whole picture of the slaughter; his lost children heaped up before their father's face – O soul, why dost shrink back in fear and halt before the deed? Come! thou must dare it! What is the crowning outrage in this crime he himself shall do.

ATTENDANT

[286] Bu with what wiles caught will he be led to set foot within our snares? He counts us all enemies.

ATREUS

[288] He could not be caught were he not bent on catching. Even now he hopes to gain my kingdom; in this hope he will face Jove as he brandishes his thunder-bolt, in this hope will brave the whirlpool's rage and enter the treacherous waters of the Libyan sands; in this hope (what he deems the greatest curse of all), he will see his brother.

ATTENDANT

[294] Who will give him confidence in peace? Whose word will he so greatly trust?

ATREUS

[295] Base hope is credulous. Still to my sons will I give a message to carry to their uncle: let the exiled wanderer quit strangers' homes, for a throne exchange his wretched state and rule at Argos, a partner of my sway. If too stubbornly Thyestes spurns my prayer, his sons, guileless and spent with hard misfortunes and easy to be entreated, will be moved. On this side, his old mad thirst for power, on that, grim want and unfeeling toil by their many woes will force the man, however stiff, to yield.

ATTENDANT

[305] By now time has made his troubles light.

ATREUS

[306] Not so; a sense of wrongs increases day by day. 'Tis easy to bear misfortune; to keep on bearing it a heavy task.

ATTENDANT

[308] Choose other agents of thy grim design.

ATREUS

[308] To the worse schooling youth lends ready ear.

ATTENDANT

[310] Toward their father they will act as toward their uncle thou instructest them; often upon the teacher have his bad teachings turned.

ATREUS

[312] Though none should teach them the ways of treachery and crime, the throne will teach them. Lest they become evil, fearest thou? They were born evil. What thou callest savage, cruel, thinkest is done ruthlessly, with no regard for heaven's law, perchance even there is being done.

ATTENDANT

[316] Shall thy sons know that this snare is being laid?

ATREUS

[317] Silent discretion is not found in years so inexperienced;
perchance they will disclose the plot; the art of silence is taught by
life's many ills.

ATTENDANT

[320] Even those by whom thou plannest to deceive another, wilt thou
deceive?

ATREUS

[321] That they themselves may be free even from blame of crime.
What need to entangle my sons in guilt? By my own self let my
hatred be wrought out. – Thou doest ill, thou shrinkest back, my soul.
Let Agamemnon be the witting agent of my plan, and Menelaus
wittingly assist his father. By this deed let their uncertain birth be put
to proof: if they refuse the combat, if they will not wage the war of
hate, if they plead he is their uncle, he is their sire. Let them set forth.
– But a troubled countenance oft discloses much; great plans betray
their bearer even against his will; let them not know of how great a
matter they are the ministers. And do thou conceal my plans.

ATTENDANT

[334] No need to admonish me; both fear and loyalty shall shut them
in my heart, but rather loyalty.

CHORUS

[336] At last our noble house, the race of ancient Inachus, hath allayed
the strife of brothers.

[339] What madness pricks you on to shed by turns each others' blood,
and by crime to gain the throne? Ye know not, for high place greedy,
wherein true kingship lies. A king neither riches makes, nor robes of
Tyrian hue, nor crown upon the royal brow, nor doors with gold
bright-gleaming; a king is he who has laid fear aside and the base
longings of an evil heart; whom ambition unrestrained and the fickle
favour of the reckless mob move not, neither all the mined treasures
of the West nor the golden sands which Tagus sweeps along in his
shining bed, nor all the grain trod out on burning Libya's threshing-

floors; whom no hurtling path of the slanting thunderbolt will shake, nor Eurus, harrying the sea, nor wind-swept Adriatic's swell, raging with cruel wave; whom no warrior's lance nor bare steel ever mastered; who, in safety 'stablished, sees all things beneath his feet, goes gladly to meet his fate nor grieves to die.

[369] Though kings should gather themselves together, both they who vex the scattered Scythians and they who dwell upon the Red Sea's marge, who hold wide sway o'er the blood-red main with its gleaming pearls, they who leave unguarded the Caspian heights to the bold Sarmatians; though he strive against him, who dares on foot to tread the Danube's waves and (whersoe'er they dwell,) the Serians for fleeces famous – 'tis the upright mind that holds true sovereignty. He has no need of horses, none of arms and the coward weapons which the Parthian hurls from far when he feigns flight, no need of engines hurling rocks, stationed to batter cities to the ground. A king is he who has no fear; a king is he who shall naught desire. Such kingdom on himself each man bestows.

[391] Let him stand who will, in pride of power, on empire's slippery height; let me be filled with sweet repose; in humble station fixed, let me enjoy untroubled ease, and, to my fellow citizens unknown, let my life's stream flow in silence. So when my days have passed noiselessly away, lowly may I die and full of years. On him does death lie heavily, who, but too well known to all, dies to himself unknown.

[Enter *THYESTES*, returning from banishment, accompanied by his three sons.]

THYESTES

[404] At last I see the welcome dwellings of my fatherland, the wealth of Argolis, and, the greatest and best sights to wretched exiles, a stretch of native soil and my ancestral gods (if after all gods there are), the sacred towers reared by the Cyclopes, in beauty far excelling human effort, the race-course thronged with youth, where more than once, lifted to fame, have I in my father's chariot won the

palm. Argos will come to meet me, and the thronging populace will come – but surely Atreus too! Rather seek again thy retreats in the forest depths, the impenetrable glades, and life shared with beasts and like to theirs; this gleaming splendour of the throne is naught that should blind my eyes with its false tinsel show; when thou lookest on the gift, scan well the giver, too. Of late midst such fortune as all count hard, I was brave and joyous; but now I am returned to fears; my courage falters and, eager to go back, I move unwilling feet along.

TANTALUS

[421] [*Aside.*] My father (what can it mean?) with faltering pace goes as if dazed, keeps turning his face away, and holds uncertain course.

THYESTES

[423] [*In soliloquy.*] Why O soul, dost hesitate, or why doest so long turn o'er and o'er a plan so simple? Dost thou trust to things most unsure, to a brother and to kingship? Dost fear hardships already mastered, already easier to bear, and dost flee from distresses well employed? 'Tis sweet now to be wretched. Turn back, while still thou mayest, and save thyself.

TANTALUS

[429] What cause compels thee, father, to turn thee back from sight of thy native land? Why from so great blessings dost withhold thy bosom? Thy brother returns to thee with wrath given o'er, gives thee back half the realm, unites the members of thy sundered house, and to thyself restores thee.

THYESTES

[434] My cause of fear, which I myself know not, thou demandest of me. Naught to be feared I see, but still I fear. Fain would I go, but my limbs totter with faltering knees, and other-whither than I strive to go am I borne away in thrall. Just so a ship, urged on by oar and sail, the tide, resisting both oar and sail, bears back.

TANTALUS

[440] O'ercome thou whate'er opposes and thwarts thy will, and see how great rewards await thee on thy return. Father, thou canst be king.

THYESTES

[442] Yea, since I can die.

TANTALUS

[443] The height of power is –

THYESTES

[443] Naught, if nothing thou desirest.

TANTALUS

[444] To thy sons wilt thou bequeath it.

THYESTES

[444] The throne admits not two.

TANTALUS

[445] Would he wish wretchedness who can be blest?

THYESTES

[446] False, believe me, are the titles that give greatness charm; idle our fears of hardship. While I stood high in power, never did I cease to dread, yea, to fear the very sword upon my thigh. Oh, how good it is to stand in no man's road, care-free to eat one's bread, on the ground reclining! Crime enters not lowly homes, and in safety is food taken at a slender board; poison is drunk from cups of gold. I speak that I do know: evil fortune is to be preferred to good. The lowly citizen fears no house of mine set high and threatening on a mountain top; my towering roofs flash not with gleaming ivory, no guard watches o'er my slumbers; with no fleet of boats I fish, with no piled break-water do I drive back the sea; I gorge not my vile belly at the world's expense; for me no fields are harvested beyond the Getae and the Parthians; no incense burns for me, nor are my shrines adorned in neglect of Jove; no planted grove waves on my battlements, nor does many a pool heated by art steam for me; my

days are not given to sleep nor are my nights linked with wakeful revelry: but I am not feared, safe without weapons is my house and to my small estate great peace is granted. 'Tis a boundless kingdom, – the power without kingdoms to content.

TANTALUS

[471] Neither is empire to be refused if a god bestows it, nor needst thou seek it; thy brother invites thee to be king.

THYESTES

[473] Invites? Then must I fear. Some trick strays hereabouts.

TANTALUS

[474] Brotherly regard oft-times returns unto the heart whence it was driven, and true love regains the vigour it has lost.

THYESTES

[476] His brother love Thyestes? Sooner shall ocean bathe the heavenly Bears, and the devouring waves of the Sicilian tides stand still; sooner shall ripening grain spring from the Ionian sea, and dark night illumine the world; sooner shall fire with water, life with death commingle, and winds join faith and treaty with the sea.

TANTALUS

[482] And yet what treachery dost thou fear?

THYESTES

[483] All treachery; to my fear what limit shall I set? His power is boundless as his hate.

TANTALUS

[484] What power has he against thee?

THYESTES

[485] For myself I have now no fear; 'tis you, my sons, who make Atreus cause of dread to me.

TANTALUS

[486] Dost fear to be entrapped if on thy guard?

THYESTES

[487] 'Tis too late to guard when in the midst of dangers; but let us on. Yet this one thing your father doth declare: I follow you, not lead.

TANTALUS

[489] God will protect us if we heed well our ways. With assured step haste thou on.

[Enter ATREUS. Seeing THYESTES and his sons, he gloats over the fact that his brother is at last in his power.]

ATREUS

[491] *[Aside.]* The prey is fast caught in the toils I spread; both the sire himself and, together with the sire, the offspring of his hated race I see. Now on safe footing does my hatred fare. At last has Thyestes come into my power; he has come, and the whole of him! Scarce can I control my spirit, scarce does my rage admit restraint. So when the keen Umbrian hound tracks out the prey and, held on a long leash, with lowered muzzle snuffs out the trail, while with faint scent he perceives the boar afar, obediently and with silent tongue he scours the field; but when the game is nearer, with his whole strength of neck he struggles, loudly protests against his master's loitering, and breaks away from his restraint. When rage scents blood, it cannot be concealed; yet let it be concealed. See how his thick hair, all unkempt, covers his woeful face, how foul his beard hangs down. *[In bitter irony.]* Now let me keep my promise. *[To THYESTES.]* 'Tis sweet to see my brother once again. Give me the embrace that I have longed for. Let all our angry feelings pass away; from this day let ties of blood and love be cherished and let accursed hatred vanish from our hearts.

THYESTES

[512] I might excuse all my deeds wert thou not such as this. But I confess, Atreus, I confess that I have done all that thou believedst of me. Most foul has thy love to-day made my case appear. Sinful

indeed is he who has been proved sinful toward so good a brother. My tears must plead for me; thou art he first to see me suppliant. These hands, which have never touched man's feet, beseech thee: put away all thy wrath and let swollen anger pass from thy heart and be forgot. As pledge of my faith, O brother, take these guiltless boys.

ATREUS

[521] From my knees remove thy hand and come rather into my embrace. And you, too, boys, all of you, comforters of age, come cling about my neck. Thy foul garments put off, spare my eyes, and put on royal trappings equal to my own, and with glad heart share a brother's kingdom. Mine is the greater glory, to restore to a brother all unharmed ancestral dignity; wielding power is the work of chance, bestowing of it, virtue's.

THYESTES

[530] May the gods, my brother, fitly repay thee for so great deserts. The kingly crown my wretched state refuses, and the sceptre my ill-omened hand rejects. Let it be mine to hide amidst the throng.

ATREUS

[534] Our throne has room for two.

THYESTES

[535] I count, my brother, all of thine as mine.

ATREUS

[536] Who puts aside inflowing fortune's gifts?

THYESTES

[537] Whose has found how easily they ebb.

ATREUS

[538] Dost forbid thy brother to gain great glory?

THYESTES

[539] Thy glory is won already; mine is still to win: to refuse the throne is my fixed intent.

ATREUS

[541] My glory must I abandon, unless thou accept thy share.

THYESTES

[542] I do accept; the name of king set on me will I wear; but unto thee shall laws and arms along with myself be subject.

ATREUS

[544] [*Placing the crown upon his brother's head.*] This crown, set on thy reverend head, wear thou; but I the destined victims to the gods will play. [*Exit.*]

CHORUS

[546] Such things are past belief. Atreus, there, the fierce and savage, reckless of soul and cruel, at sight of his brother stood as one amazed. There is now power stronger than true love; angry strife 'twixt strangers doth endure, but whom true love has bound 'twill bind for ever. When wreath, by great causes roused, has burst friendship's bonds and sounded alarms of war; when fleet squadrons with ringing bridles come; when the brandished sword gleams now here, now there, which the mad god of war, thirsting for fresh-flowing blood, wields with a rain of blows, – then will Love stay the steel, and lead men, even against their will, to the clasped hands of Peace.

[560] This sudden lull out of so great uproar what god has wrought? But now throughout Mycenae the arms of civil strife resounded; pale mother held fast their sons, the wife feared for her lord full armed, when to his hand came the reluctant sword, foul with the rust of peace; one strove to repair tottering walls, one to strengthen towers, crumbling with long neglect; another strove to shut gates tight with iron bars, while on the battlements the trembling guard kept watch o'er the troubled night – for worse than war is the very fear of war. Now the sword's dire threats have fallen; now still is the deep trumpet-blare; now silent the shrill clarion's blast; deep peace to a glad city is restored. So, when the floods heave up from ocean's depths and Corus lashes the Bruttian waters; when Scylla roars in her

disturbed cavern, and mariners in harbour tremble at the sea which greedy Charybdis drains and vomits forth again; when the wild Cyclops, sitting on burning Aetna's crag, dreads his sire's rage, lest the o'erwhelming waves put out the fires that roar in immemorial furnaces; and when beggared Laërtes thinks, while Ithaca reels beneath the shock, that his kingdom may be submerged – then, if their strength has failed the winds, the sea sinks back more peaceful than a pool; and the deep waters which the ship feared to cleave, now far and wide studded with bellying sails, a beauteous sight, to pleasure-boats spread out their waves; and you may now count the fish swimming far below, where but lately beneath the mighty hurricane the tossed Cyclads trembled at the sea.

[596] No lot endureth long; pain and pleasure, each in turn, give place; more quickly, pleasure. Lowest with highest the fickle hour exchanges. He who wears crown on brow, before whom trembling nations bend the knee, at whose nod the Medes lay down their arms, and the Indians of the nearer sun, and the Dahae who hurl their horse upon the Parthians – he with anxious hand holds the sceptre, and both foresees and fear fickle chance and shifting time that change all things.

[607] O you, to whom the ruler of sea and land has given unbounded right o'er life and death, abate your inflated, swelling pride; all that a lesser subject fears from you, 'gainst you a greater lord shall threaten; all power is subject to a weightier power. Whom the rising sun hath seen high in pride, him the setting sun hath seen laid low. Let none be over-confident when fortune smiles; let none despair of better things when fortune fails. Clotho blends weal and woe, lets no lot stand, keeps ever fate a-turning. No one has found the gods so kind that he may promise to-morrow to himself. God keeps all mortal things in swift whirl turning.

[Enter MESSENGER breathlessly announcing the horror which has just been enacted behind the scenes.]

MESSENGER

[623] What whirlwind will headlong bear me through the air and in murky cloud enfold me, that it may snatch this awful horror from my sight? O house, to Pelops even and to Tantalus a thing of shame!

CHORUS

[626] What news bringst thou?

MESSENGER

[627] What place is this? Is it Argos? Is it Sparta, to which fate gave loving brothers? Corinth, resting on the narrow boundary of two seas? Or the Ister, giving chance of flight to the barbarous Alani? Or the Hyrcanian land 'neath its everlasting snows? Or the wide-wandering Scythians? What place is this that knows such hideous crime?

CHORUS

[633] Speak out and tell this evil, whate'er it is.

MESSENGER

[634] When my spirit is composed, when numbing fear lets go its hold upon my limbs. Oh, but I see it still, the picture of that ghastly deed! Bear me far hence, wild winds, oh, thither bear me whither the vanished day is borne.

CHORUS

[638] More grievously dost thou hold our minds in doubt. Tell thou what is this thing which makes thee shudder, and point out the doer of it. I ask not who it is, but which. Speak out and quickly.

MESSENGER

[641] On the summit of the citadel a part of Pelops' palace faces south; its farthest side rises to mountainous height, and o'erlooks the city, having beneath its menace the people, insolent to their kings. Here gleams the great hall that could contain a multitude, whose gilded architraves columns glorious with varied hues upbear. Behind this general hall, which nations throng, the gorgeous palace stretches out o'er many a space; and, deep withdrawn, there lies a secret spot containing in a deep vale an ancient grove, the kingdom's innermost

retreat. Here no tree ever affords cheerful shade or is pruned by any knife; but the yew-tree and the cypress and woods of gloomy ilex-trees wave obscure, above which, towering high, an oak looks down and overtops the grove. From this spot the sons of Tantalus are wont to enter on their reign, here to seek aid midst calamity and doubt. Here hang their votive gifts; resounding trumpets and broken chariots, spoils of the Myrtoan Sea, and wheels o'ercome by treacherous axle-trees hang there, and memorials of the race's every crime; in this place is Pelops' Phrygian turban hung, here spoil of the enemy, and the embroidered robe, token of triumph o'er barbaric foes.

[665] A dismal spring starts forth beneath the shadow, and sluggish in a black pool creeps along; such are the ugly waters of dread Styx, on which the gods take oath. 'Tis said that from this place in the dark night the gods of death make moan; with clanking chains the grove resounds, and the ghosts howl mournfully. Whatever is dreadful but to hear of, there is seen; throngs of the long-since dead come forth from their ancient tombs and walk abroad, and creatures more monstrous than men have known spring from the place; nay more, through all the wood flames go flickering, and the lofty beams glow without the help of fire. Oft-times the grove re-echoes with three-throated bayings; oft-times the house is affrighted with huge, ghostly shapes. Nor is terror allayed by day; the grove is a night unto itself, and the horror of the underworld reigns even at midday. From this spot sure responses are given to those who seek oracles; with thundering noise the fates are uttered from the shrine, and the cavern roars when the god sends forth his voice.

[682] When to this place maddened Atreus came, dragging his brother's sons, the altars were decked – but who could worthily describe the deed? Behind their back he fetters the youths' princely hands and their sad brows he binds with purple fillets. Nothing is lacking, neither incense, nor sacrificial wine, the knife, the salted meal to sprinkle on the victims. The accustomed ritual is all observed, lest so great a crime be not duly wrought.

CHORUS

[690] Who lays his hand unto the knife?

MESSENGER

[691] Himself is priest; himself with baleful prayer chants the death-song with boisterous utterance; himself stands by the altar; himself handles those doomed to death, sets them in order and lays hand upon the knife; himself attends to all – no part of the sacred rite is left undone. The grove begins to tremble; the whole palace sways with the quaking earth, uncertain whither to fling its ponderous mass, and seems to waver. From the left quarter of the sky rushes a star, dragging a murky trail. The wine, poured upon the fire, changes from wine and flows as flood; from the king's head falls the crown twice and again, and the ivory statues in the temples weep.

[703] These portents moved all, but Atreus alone, true to his purpose, stands, and e'en appals the threatening gods. And now, delay at end, he stands before the altar with lowering, sidelong glance. As in the jungle by the Ganges river a hungry tigress wavers between two bulls, eager for each prey, but doubtful where first to set her fangs (to the one she turns her jaws, then to the other turns, and keeps her hunger waiting), so does cruel Atreus eye the victims doomed by his impious wrath. He hesitates within himself whom first to slay, whom next to sacrifice by the second stroke. It matters not, but still he hesitates, and gloats over the ordering of his savage crime.

CHORUS

[716] Whom, for all that, does he first attack with the steel?

MESSENGER

[717] The place of honour (lest you deem him lacking in reverence) to his grandsire is allotted – Tantalus is the first victim.

CHORUS

[719] With what spirit, with what countenance bore the lad his death?

MESSENGER

[720] Careless of self he stood, nor did he plead, knowing such prayer

were vain; but in his wound the savage buried the sword and, deep thrusting, joined hand with throat. The sword withdrawn, the corpse still stood erect, and when it had wavered long whether here or there to fall, it fell upon the uncle. Then Plisthenes to the altar did that butcher drag and set him near his brother. His head with a blow he severed; down fell the body when the neck was smitten, and the head rolled away, grieving with murmur inarticulate.

CHORUS

[730] What did he then after the double murder? Did he spare one boy, or did he heap crime on crime?

MESSENGER

[732] E'en as a maned lion in the Armenian woods with much slaughter falls victorious on the herd (his jaws reek with gore, and still, though hunger is appeased, he rages on; now here, now there charging the bulls, he threatens the calves, sluggishly now and with weary fangs) – not otherwise Atreus raves and swells with wrath and, still grasping his sword drenched with double slaughter, scarce knowing 'gainst whom he rages, with deadly hand he drives clean through the body; and the sword, entering the boy's breast, straightway stood out upon his back. He falls and, staining the altar with his blood, dies by a double wound.

CHORUS

[743] Oh, savage crime!

MESSENGER

[744] Are you so horror-stricken? If only the crime stops there, 'tis piety.

CHORUS

[745] Does nature admit crime still greater or more dread?

MESSENGER

[746] Crime's limit deemst thou this? 'Tis the first step of crime.

CHORUS

[747] What further could he do? Did he perchance throw the bodies to the beasts to tear, and refuse them fire?

MESSENGER

[749] Would that he had refused! I pray not that earth cover or fire consume the dead! He may give them to the birds to feast upon, may drag them out as a ghastly meal for ravenous beasts – oh, after what befell, one might pray for what is oft held punishment – unburied may the father gaze upon his sons! O crime incredible to any age, which coming generations will deny – torn from the still living breasts the vitals quiver; the lungs still breathe and the fluttering heart still beats. But he handles the organs and enquires the fates, and notes the markings of the still warm entrails.

[759] When with the victims he has satisfied himself, he is now free to prepare his brother's banquet. With his own hands he cuts the body into parts, severs the broad shoulders at the trunk, and the retarding arms, heartlessly strips off the flesh and severs the bones; the heads only he saves, and the hands that had been given to him in pledge of faith. Some of the flesh is fixed on spits and, set before slow fires, hangs dripping; other parts boiling waters tosses in heated kettles. The fire overleaps the feast that is set before it and, twice and again thrown back upon the shuddering hearth and forced to tarry there, burns grudgingly. The liver sputters on the spits; nor could I well say whether the bodies or the flames made more complaint. The fire dies down in pitchy smoke; and the smoke itself, a gloomy and heavy smudge, does not rise straight up and lift itself in air – upon the household gods themselves in disfiguring cloud it settles.

[776] O all-enduring Phoebus, though thou didst shrink afar, and in mid-sky didst bury the darkened day, still thou didst set too late. The father rends his sons and with baleful jaws chews his own flesh; with hair dripping with liquid nard he sits resplendent, heavy with wine; oft-times the food sticks in his choking gullet. In the midst of these thy woes, Thyestes, this only good remains, that thou knowest not thy woes. But even this will perish. Though Titan himself should turn his chariot back, taking the opposite course; through heavy

night, rising at dawn and at another's time, with strange shadows should bury this ghastly deed, still it must out. There is no sin but it shall be revealed.

[Unnatural darkness has settled over the world.]

CHORUS

[789] Whither, O father of the lands and skies, before whose rising thick night with all her glories flees, whither doest turn thy course and why dost blot out the day in mid-Olympus? Why, O Phoebus, dost snatch away thy face? Not yet does Vesper, twilight's messenger, summon the fires of night; not yet does thy wheel, turning its western goal, bid free thy steeds from their completed task; not yet as day fades into night has the third trump sounded; the ploughman with oxen yet unwearied stands amazed at his supper-hour's quick coming. What has driven thee from thy heavenly course? What cause from their fixed track has turned aside thy horses? Is the prison-house of Dis thrown wide and are the conquered Giants again essaying war? Doth sore-wounded Tityos renew in his weary breast his ancient wrath? Has Typhoeus thrown off the mountainous mass and set his body free? Is a highway being built by the Phlegraean foe, and does Thessalian Pelion press on Thracian Ossa?

[813] Heaven's accustomed alternations are no more; no setting, no rising shall there be again. The dewy mother of the early dawn, wont to hand o'er to the god his morning reins, looks in amaze upon the disordered threshold of her kingdom; she is not skilled to bathe his weary chariot, nor to plunge his steeds, reeking with sweat, beneath the sea. Startled himself at such unwonted welcoming, the sinking sun beholds Aurora, and bids the shadows arise, though night is not yet ready. No stars come out; the heavens gleam not with any fires: no moon dispels the darkness' heavy pall.

[827] But whatever this may be, would that night were here! Trembling, trembling are our hearts, sore smit with fear, lest all things fall shattered in fatal ruin and once more gods and men be

o'erwhelmed by formless chaos; lest the lands, the encircling sea, and the stars that wander in the spangled sky, nature blot out once more. No more by the rising of his quenchless torch shall the leader of the stars, guiding the procession of the years, mark off the summer and the winter times; no more shall Luna, reflecting Phoebus' rays, dispel night's terrors, and outstrip her brother's reins, as in scantier space she speeds on her circling path. Into one abyss shall fall the heaped-up throng of gods. The Zodiac, which, making passage through the sacred stars, crosses the zones obliquely, guide and sign-bearer for the slow-moving years, falling itself, shall see the fallen constellations; the Ram, who, ere kindly spring has come, gives back the sails to the warm West-wind, headlong shall plunge into the waves o'er which he had borne the trembling Helle; the Bull, who before him on bright horns bears the Hyades, shall drag the Twins down with him and the Crab's wide-curving claws; Alcides' Lion, with burning heat inflamed, once more shall fall down from the sky; the Virgin shall fall to the earth she once abandoned, and the Scales of justice with their weights shall fall and with them shall drag the fierce Scorpion down; old Chiron, who sets the feathered shafts upon Haemonian chord, shall lose his shafts from the snapped bowstring; the frigid Goat who brings back sluggish winter, shall fall and break thy urn, whoe'er thou art; with thee shall fall the Fish, last of the stars of heaven, and the Wain, which was ne'er bathed by the sea, shall be plunged beneath the all-engulfing waves; the slippery Serpent which, gliding like a river, separates the Bears, shall fall, and icy Cynosura, the Lesser Bear, together with the Dragon vast, congealed with cold; and that slow-moving drive of his wain, Arctophylax, no longer fixed in place, shall fall.

[875] Have we of all mankind been deemed deserving that heaven, its poles upturn, should overwhelm us? In our time has the last day come? Alas for us, by bitter fate begotten, to misery doomed, whether we have lost the sun or banished it! Away with lamentations, begone, O fear! Greedy indeed for life is he who would not die when the world is perishing in his company.

[*Enter ATREUS, exulting.*]

ATREUS

[885] Peer of the stars I move, and, towering over all, touch with proud head the lofty heavens. Now the glory of the realm I hold, now my father's throne. I release the gods, for the utmost of my prayers have I attained. 'Tis well, 'tis more than well, now 'tis enough even for me. But why enough? Nay, I will go forward, e'en though the father is full-fed with his dead sons. That shame might not hold me back, day has departed. On! while heaven is tenantless. O that I might stay the fleeing deities, might force and draw them hither that they all might see the avenging feast! But 'tis enough if but the father see. Even though daylight refuse me aid, I'll dispel the darkness from thee, beneath which thy woes are lurking. Too long thou liest at feast with care-free and cheerful countenance; now enough time has been given to tables, enough to wine; for such monstrous ills there needs Thyestes sober. [*To the slaves.*] Ye menial throng, open the temple doors, let the banquet-hall be disclosed. 'Tis sweet to note, when he sees his children's heads, what hue his cheeks display, what words his first grief pours forth, how his body, breathless with the shock, grows stiff. This is the fruit of all my toil. To see him wretched I care not, but to see the wretchedness come upon him.

[*The doors are thrown open, showing THYESTES at the banquet-table.*]

[908] The open hall with many a torch is gleaming. There he himself reclines at full length on gold and purple, propping his wine-heavy head on his left hand. He belches with content. Oh, most exalted of the gods am I, and king of kings! I have o'ertopped my hopes. His meal is done; from the great silver cup he quaffs the wine – spare not thy drinking; there still remains the blood of all the victims, and this the colour of old wine will well disguise. With this, this goblet let the meal be done. His sons' mingled blood let the father drink; he would have drunk my own. Lo, now he raises his joyous voice in song, nor well controls his spirit.

[*THYESTES sits alone at the banquet-table, half overcome with wine; he tries to sing and be gay, but, in spite of this, some vague premonition of evil weighs upon his spirits.*]

THYESTES

[920] O heart, dulled with long miseries, now put aside anxious cares. Away with grief, away with terror, away with bitter want, the companion of hunted exiles, and shame that weighs heavy on misfortune; more matters it whence thou fallest, than to what. 'Tis a great thing, when fall'n from a lofty pinnacle, to set foot firmly on the plain; great, midst the ruins of huge and crushing woes, with unbending neck to endure a wrecked kingdom's weight, and with soul heroic, by woes unconquered, erect to bear the burden of misfortune. But now, banish the clouds of bitter fate, and remove all marks of those unhappy days; greet present happiness with joyful countenance, and dismiss the old Thyestes from thy thoughts.

[938] But this peculiar failing dogs the wretched, never to believe that happiness is here; though lucky fortune come again, still they who have suffered find it hard to smile. Why dost restrain me and oppose my celebration of this joyful day? Why dost bid me weep, O grief, that rises from no cause? Why dost forbid with beauteous flowers to wreath my hair? It forbids, it does forbid! The spring roses have fallen from my head; my hair, dripping with precious nard, has started up in sudden horror, a rain of tears falls down my unwilling cheeks, and in the midst of speech comes groaning. Grief loves her accustomed tears, and to the wretched comes an ominous desire for weeping. Even so, I long to utter ill-omened lamentation, I long to rend these garments, rich dyed with Tyrian purple, I long to shriek aloud. My mind gives warnings of distress at hand, presaging its own woe; oft does a fierce storm draw nigh to mariners, when without wind the tranquil waters heave. What distresses, what upheavals dost thou imagine for thyself, thou fool? Let thy heart trust thy brother. Already, whate'er it be, either causelessly or too late thou fearest. I would fain not be unhappy, but within me vague terror wanders, sudden tears pour from mine eyes, and all for naught. Is it from grief or fear? Or doth great joy hold tears?

ATREUS

[*Advancing to his brother with show of effusive affection.*]

[970] With mutual accord, brother, let us keep this festal day; this is

the day which shall make strong my sceptre and bind firm the bonds of peace assured.

THYESTES

[*Pushing the remains of the feast from him.*]

[973] I have had my fill of food, and no less of wine. My pleasure by this crowning joy can be increased, if with my sons I may share my happiness.

ATREUS

[976] Be sure that here, in their father's bosom, are thy sons; – here now, and here shall be; no one of thy children shall be taken from thee. The faces thou desirest shall be thine, and wholly with his family will I fill the sire. Thou shalt be satisfied, have no fear of that. Just now, in company with my own, at the children's table, they are sharing the joyful feast; but I will summon them. Take thou this cup, an heirloom, filled with wine.

THYESTES

[983] I accept this bounty of my brother's feast; let wine be poured to our ancestral gods, and then be quaffed. – But what is this? My hands refuse their service, and the cup grows heavy and weighs down my hand; the lifted wine recoils from my very lips; around my gaping jaws, cheating my mouth, it flows, and the very table leaps up from the trembling floor. The lights burn dim; nay, the very heavens, grown heavy, stand in amaze 'twixt day and night, deserted. What next? Now more, still more the vault of the shattered sky is tottering; a thicker gloom with dense shades is gathering, and night has hidden away in a blacker night; every star is in full flight. Whate'er it is, I beg it may spare my brother and my sons, and may the storm break with all its force on this vile head. Give back now my sons to me!

ATREUS

[998] I will give them back, and no day shall tear them from thee.
[*Exit.*]

THYESTES

[999] What is this tumult that disturbs my vitals? What trembles in me? I feel a load that will not suffer me, and my breast groans with a groaning that is not mine. O come, my sons, your unhappy father calls you, come; this pain will pass away at the sight of you – whence come their reproachful voices?

[*Re-enter ATREUS with a covered platter in his hands.*]

ATREUS

[1004] Now, father, spread out thine arms; they are here. [*He uncovers the platter, revealing the severed heads of THYESTES' sons.*] Dost recognize thy sons?

THYESTES

[1006] I recognize my brother. Canst thou endure, O Earth, to bear a crime so monstrous? Why dost not burst asunder and plunge thee down to the infernal Stygian shades and, by a huge opening to void chaos, snatch this kingdom with its king away? Why dost no raze this whole palace to the very ground, and overturn Mycenae? We should both of us long since have been with Tantalus. Rend asunder thy prison-bars on every side, and if there is any place 'neath Tartarus and our grandsires, thither with huge abyss let down thy chasm and hide us buried beneath all Acheron. Let guilty souls wander above our head, and let fiery Phlegethon, with glowing flood downpouring all his sands, flow tempestuous above our place of exile – but the earth lies all unmoved, an insensate mass; the gods have fled away.

ATREUS

[1021] Now, rather, take these with joy, whom thou hast so long desired. Thy brother delays thee not; enjoy them, kiss them, divide thy embraces 'mongst the three.

THYESTES

[1024] Is this thy bond? Is this thy grace, this thy fraternal pledge? Thus putttest thou hate away? I do not ask that I, a father, may have my sons unharmed; what can be granted with crime and hate intact,

this I, a brother, of a brother ask: that I may bury them. Give me back what thou mayst see burned at once. The father asks naught of thee with hopes of having, but of losing it.

ATREUS

[1030] Whatever of thy sons is left, thou hast; whatever is not left, thou hast.

THYESTES

[1032] Do they lie a prey for the wild birds? Are they reserved for monsters? Are they food for beasts?

ATREUS

[1034] Thyself hast feasted on thy sons, an impious meal.

THYESTES

[1035] 'Twas this that shamed the gods; this drove the day back against its dawning. What cries in my misery shall I utter, what complaints? What words will suffice for me? I see the severed heads, the torn-off hands, the feet wrenched from the broken legs – this much the father, for all his greed, could not devour. Their flesh is turning round within me, and my imprisoned crime struggles vainly to come forth and seeks way of escape. Give me thy sword, O brother, the sword reeking with my blood; by the steel let deliverance be given to my sons. Dost refuse the sword? Then let my breast resound, bruised by crushing blows – hold thy hand, unhappy man, let us spare the shades. Who ever beheld such a crime? What Heniochian, dwelling on wild Caucasus' rough rocks, or what Procrustes, terror of the Cecropian land? Lo, I, the father, overwhelm my sons, and by my sons am overwhelmed – of crime is there no limit?

ATREUS

[1052] Crime should have limit, when the crime is wrought, not when repaid. E'en this is not enough for me. Straight from the very wound I should have poured the hot blood down thy throat, that thou mightst drink gore of thy living sons – my wrath was cheated by my haste. With the deep-driven sword I smote them; I slew them at the altars;

with their offered blood I appeased the sacred fires; hewing their lifeless bodies, into small scraps I tore them, and some into boiling cauldrons did I plunge, and some before slow fires I set to drip. Their limbs and sinews I rent asunder while still they lived, and their livers, transfix'd on slender spits and sputtering I saw, and with my own hand I fed the flames. All these things better the father might have done; my grief has fallen fruitless; with impious teeth he tore his sons, but unwittingly, but them unwitting.

THYESTES

[1068] Hear, O ye seas, by shifting shores imprisoned, and ye, too, hear this crime, withersoever you have fled, ye gods; hear, lords of the underworld; hear, lands, and Night, heavy with black, Tartarean fogs, give ear unto my cries; (to thee am I abandoned, thou only lookest on my woe, thou also forsaken of the stars;) no wicked pleas will I make, naught for myself implore – and what now can I ask in my own behalf? For you shall my prayers be offered. O thou, exalted ruler of the sky, who sittest in majesty upon the throne of heaven, enwrap the whole universe in awful clouds, set the winds warring on every hand, and from every quarter of the sky let the loud thunders roll; not with what hand thou seekest houses and undeserving homes, using thy lesser bolts, but with that hand by which the threefold mass of mountains fell, and the Giants, who stood level with the mountains – these arms let loose and hurl thy fires. Make compensation for the banished day, brandish thy flames, and the light that was snatched from heaven with thy lightning's flash supply. Let the cause, lest long thou hesitate, of each one of us be evil; if not, let mine be evil; aim thou at me, through this heart send thy three-forked flaming bolt. If I their father would give his sons to burial and commit them to the funeral flames, I must myself be burned. But if naught moves the gods, and no divinity hurls darts against the impious, may night stay on for ever, and cover with endless darkness boundless crimes. No protest do I make, O sun, if thou continue steadfast.

ATREUS

[1096] Now do I praise my handiwork, now is the true palm won. I had

wasted my crime, didst thou not suffer thus. Now do I believe my children are my own, now may I trust once more that my marriage-bed is pure.

THYESTES

[1100] What was my children's sin?

ATREUS

[1100] That they were thine.

THYESTES

[1101] Sons to the father –

ATREUS

[1101] Yea, and what gives me joy, surely thy sons.

THYESTES

[1102] I call on the gods who guard the innocent.

ATREUS

[1103] Why not the marriage-gods?

THYESTES

[1103] Who punishes crime with crime?

ATREUS

[1104] I know what thou complainest of: thou grievest that I have forestalled thee in the crime, and art distressed, not because thou hast consumed the ghastly feast, but because thou didst not offer it to me. This had been thy purpose, to prepare for thine unwitting brother a like feast, and with their mother's aid to assail his sons and lay them low in like destruction. This one thing stayed thee – thou didst think them thine.

THYESTES

[1110] The gods will be present to avenge; to them for punishment my prayers deliver thee.

ATREUS

[1112] To thy sons for punishment do I deliver thee.

HERCULES ON OETA



Translated by Frank Justus Miller

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THE SCENE is laid, first in Euboea, and later at the home of Hercules in Trachin.

ARGUMENT

The long, heroic life of Hercules has neared its end. His twelve great tasks, assigned him by Eurystheus through Juno's hatred, have been done. His latest victory was over Eurytus, king of Oechalia. Him he slew and overthrew his house, because the monarch would not give him Iole to wife.

And now the hero, having overcome the world, and Pluto's realm beneath the earth, aspires to heaven. He sacrifices to Cnavean Jove, and prays at last to be received into his proper home.

HERCULES OETAÆUS

[In Euboea, near Oechalia, after the overthrow of Eurytus, king of that city.]

HERCULES

[1] O sire of gods, hurled by whose hand both homes of Phoebus feel the thunderbolt, reign thou untroubled; peace have I 'stablished for thee wherever Nereus forbids the land to extend its bounds. Thou needst not thunder now; false kings lie low, and cruel tyrants. I have crushed all who merited thy bolts. But to me, father, is heaven still denied? Of a surety have I everywhere proved worthy Jove; and that thou art sire of mine my stepdame testifies. Yet why dost still contrive delays? Am I cause of fear? Will Atlas not avail to bear up Hercules placed upon him together with the sky? Why, O father, why dost thou deny the stars to me? Verily hath death given me back to thee; and every evil thing which earth, sea, air, the lower world, produced, hath yielded to my might. No lion prowls amidst Arcadia's towns; the Stymphalian bird is smitten; the beast of Maenalus is no more; the dragon, slain, hath sprinkled the golden orchard with his blood; the hydra's strength is gone; the herds, well known to Hebrus, fat with strangers' blood, have I destroyed, and have brought away Thermodon's spoils of war. The lot of the silent throng have I beheld; and not alone have I returned, but shuddering day hath seen black Cerberus, and he the sun. No longer doth the Libyan Antaeus renew his strength; before his own altars hath Busiris fallen; by my sole hand hath Geryon been o'erthrown, and the bull, dread terror of a hundred tribes. Whatever hostile earth hath 'gendered is fallen, by my right hand laid low; the anger of the gods hath been set at naught.

[30] If the earth is done with monsters, if my stepdame is done with wrath, give back now the father to his son, yea, the stars unto the hero. I ask thee not to show the way to me; but grant thy permission, father, and the way I'll find. Or, if thou fearest that earth shall yet give birth to monsters, let the ill make haste, whate'er it be, while yet the earth doth hold and look on Hercules; for who else will attack

evil things, or who, throughout the Argive cities, will be worthy Juno's hate? I have my honours safe bestowed; there is no land but sings my praise. The race that shivers 'neath the Scythian Bear hath known me; the sun-scorched Indian and the tropic African. O glowing Sun, bear witness: I have encountered thee where'er thou shinest, nor could thy beams keep pace with my triumphant course; I have gone beyond the changes of the sun, and day hath halted far within my bounds. Nature hath yielded to me, and earth hath failed my feet; she hath been weary first. Night and utter chaos have assailed me, and thence to this world have I come again whence none e'er returns. I have borne Ocean's threats, and no storm of his has availed to wreck the ship which I have weighted down. How trivial Perseus' deeds compared with mine! How can the empty air no more suffice the hatred of thy wife, and earth fears to produce beasts for me to conquer, nor can she find monsters more. Beasts are at end; 'tis Hercules now begins to hold the place of monster. For how great evils have I crushed, how many crimes, and all unarmed! Whatever monstrous thing opposed me, with but my hands I laid it low; nor was there ever savage thing which as youth or babe I feared. All my commanded toils seem light, and no inactive day has ever dawned for me. Oh, how great monsters have I overthrown, which no king bade me meet! My courage, more relentless than Juno's self, has urged me on.

[63] But what avails it to have freed the race of men from fear? Now have the gods no peace; the freed earth sees in the sky all creatures which she feared; for there hath Juno set them. The crab I slew goes round the torrid zone, is known as Libya's constellation, and matures her grain; the lion to Astraea gives the flying year; but he, his burning mane upon his neck back tossing, dries up the dripping south-wind and devours the clouds. Behold, now has every beast invaded heaven, forestalling me; through victor, I gaze upon my labours from the earth; for to monsters first and to wild beasts has Juno given stars, that to me she might make the sky a place of dread. Yet, though in her rage she scatter them o'er the sky, though she make heaven worse than earth, yea, worse than Styx, to Alcides shall room be given. If after beasts, after wars, after the Stygian dog, I

have not yet earned the stars, let Sicilian Pelorus touch the Hesperian shore, and they both shall become one land; thence will I put seas to flight. If thou bidst seas be joined, let Isthmus give passage to the waves and on their united waters let Attic ships along a new way be borne. Let earth be changed; along new valleys let Ister run and Tanaïs receive new channels. Give, give me, O Jupiter, at least the gods to guard; there mayst thou put aside thy thunderbolts where I shall be on guard. Whether thou bidst me guard the icy pole, whether the torrid zone, there count the gods secure. Cirrha's shrine and a place in heaven did Pean earn by one serpent's slaughter – oh, how many Pythons in the hydra lie o'erthrown! Already have Bacchus and Perseus reached the gods; but how small a tract of earth was the conquered east, or how meagre a spoil was Gorgon! what son of thine and of my stepdame has by his praises merited the stars? I seek the skies which I myself have borne.

[99] [*He turns to LICHAS.*] But do thou, Lichas, comrade of the toils of Hercules, proclaim his triumphs – the conquered house of Eurytus, his kingdom overthrown. [*To the other attendants.*] Do you with speed drive the herds to where the shore, lifting on high the shrine of Cenean Jove, looks out upon the Euboic sea, fearsome with southern gales.

[*Exit HERCULES on his way to the Cenean Promontory, intending there to sacrifice to Jove.*]

CHORUS OF CAPTIVE OECHALIAN MAIDENS IN COMPANY WITH IOLE

[104] Mate of the gods is he whose life and fortune have gone side by side; but when 'tis slowly dragged out midst lamentations, life has the lot of death. Whoe'er has set beneath his feet the greedy fates, and the last river's barque, he will not give his captive arms to bonds nor frae in the victor's train a noble spoil; ne'er is he wretched for whom to die is easy. Should his boat be wrecked far out upon the deep, where South with North-wind strives, and East with West, rending the sea sunder, he does not gather up the wreckage of his broken ship, that in mid-ocean he may hope for land; he who can

straightway render up life, he only from a wreck can suffer naught.

[119] But us, foul wasting claims, and tears, and hair defiled by the dust of fatherland; us nor greedy flame nor crashing wall has overwhelmed. The happy dost thou pursue, O Death, the wretched thou fleest. Here we stand, yet alas! the spot shall no more be given to our country's crops, but to forests wild, and squalid hovels shall our fallen shrines become. Here soon shall the chill Dolopian lead his flocks where the buried ashes, sole remnant of Oechalia's ruins, still are warm. Here in our very city a Thessalian shepherd, on rude pipe going o'er his songs, shall sing of our story with doleful notes; and ere God shall bring a few more generations to an end, men will be asking where our country lay. Once I was blest; not barren the hearth nor hungry the acres of Thessalian soil whereon I dwelt; but not to Trachin am I called, to a rough and stony land, to brambles bristling on her parched hills, to woods which e'en the wandering goats disdain. But if some captives by a milder fate are called, then either swift Inachus will bear them o'er, or within Dircaean walls shall they abide, where flows slow Ismenus with scanty stream, where the mother of haughty Hercules once was wed.

[147] False is the story of the double night, when the stars lingered in the sky o'erlong, when Lucifer changed place with Hesperus, and Delia, too slow, kept back the sun. What Scythian crag, what rocky cliff begot thee? As some fierce Titan, did Rhodope bring thee forth, or Athos rough? Did some wild Caspian beast, some striped tigress give thee suck? By no wounds may his limbs be assailed; iron he feels blunt, steel is too dull; upon his naked body swords are broken, and stones rebound; and so he scorns the fates, and with body all invincible defies mortality. Sharp spear-points could not pierce him, nor Scythian arrows shot from bended bow, nor darts which cold Sarmatians wield, or the Parthians who, in the land of the rising sun, with surer aim than ever Cretan's was, direct their shafts against the neighbouring Arabians. With his bare hands did he o'erthrow Oechalia's walls, and naught can make stand against him; for whate'er he plans to overcome is overcome already. How few the foes who by his wounds have fallen! His angry countenance was

death in open view, and but to have seen the threats of Hercules is enough. What huge Briareus, what Gyas, puffed with pride, when upon Thessalia's mountain-heap they stood and clutched at heaven with snaky hands, had countenance inflexible as his? But mighty ills have mighty recompense. No more is left to suffer – we have seen, oh, woe! the angry Hercules.

IOLE

[173] But I, unhappy one, bewail not temples fallen on their gods, or hearth-fires scattered, or fathers burned in mingled heaps with sons, and gods with men, temples with tombs, – nay, no common misfortune do I mourn; elsewhither doth fortune call my tears, for other ruins the fates bid me weep. What lament shall I make first? What last shall I bewail? Equally all things is it meet to mourn. Oh me, that Mother Earth hath not given me more eyes for tears, more breasts, that blows of my losses might resound.

[185] Me to a weeping rock on Sipylus, ye heavenly gods, transform, or set me on the banks of Po, where the woods give back the grief of Phaëthon's sad sisters; or add me to the rocks of Sicily, where as a Siren I may weep Thessalia's fate; or bear me to Edonia's woods where I may mourn as, beneath Ismarian shade, the Daulian bird ever mourns her son. Give me a form to fit my tears, and let rough Trachin reëcho with my woes. Myrrha, the Cyprian maid, yet guards her tears; the wife of Ceyx mourns his taking off; and Niobe lives on, surviving e'en herself; her human form has Philomel escaped, and still the Attic maid bewails her son. Why not yet do my arms become swift wings? Happy, ha, happy shall I be when the woods shall be called my home, and, in my native meadows resting, with plaintive strains I shall recall my fate, and fame shall tell of winged Iole.

[207] I saw, I saw my father's wretched fate, when, beaten down by the death-dealing club, he lay in scattered fragments throughout the hall. Ah me, if fate had given him burial, how often, father, must thou have been sought! How could I have looked upon thy death, O Toxeus, with thy boyish cheeks as yet unbearded, and thy veins not yet filled with manly vigour? But why do I lament your fates, my

parents, whom kindly death has to a place of safety borne? 'Tis my own fortune that requires my tears. Soon, soon in captive state shall I whirl the distaff and the spindle of my mistress. O cruel beauty, and form doomed to bring death to me, for thee alone is all my house undone, for that my sire refused me to Alcides and feared to have Hercules for son-in-law. And now must I betake me to a mistress' home.

CHORUS

[225] Why dost thou, foolish one, ever look back upon thy sire's illustrious kingdom and thine own misfortunes? Banish from thy face thy former fortune. Happy is he whoever knows how to bear the estate of slave or king and can match his countenance with either lot. For he who bears his ills with even soul has robbed misfortune of its strength and heaviness.

[The scene changes to the space before the palace of Hercules and Deïanira at Trachin. Enter NURSE OF DEÏANIRA.]

NURSE

[233] O how bloody is the rage that goads women on, when to mistress and two wife one house has opened! Scylla and Charybdis, whirling Sicilia's waves, are not more fearful, nor is any wild beast worse. For when her captive rival's beauty was revealed, and Iole shone like the unclouded day or a bright star in the clear night glittering, even as one distraught the wife of Hercules stood there with lowering gaze (as a tigress, lying big with young 'neath some Armenian rock, at sight of an enemy leaps forth; or as a maenad, bidden to toss the thyrsus, what time she bears the god within her breast, in doubt where she shall take her way, stands till a while); then through the house of Hercules she madly dashed and scarce did all the house give space enough. Forward she rushes, wanders aimlessly, stands still. All her passion has come forth into her face; in her heart's depths almost naught is left; tears follow hard on threats. Nor does one posture last, nor can one countenance contain her rage; now do her cheeks flame with wrath, now pallor drives the flush away, and from form to form her smarting anguish wanders; she wails, she begs, she

groans.

[254] The doors have sounded – behold, at headlong pace she comes, with confused words revealing all the secrets of her soul.

[*Enter DEÏANIRA from within the palace.*]

DEÏANIRA

[256] Wife of the Thunderer, whatever portion of thy heavenly home thou treadest, send ‘gainst Alcides a wild beast which shall suffice for me. If any serpent, vaster than all the marsh, rears up its head, to conquest all unknown; if anything is worse than other beasts, monstrous, dire, horrible, from sight of which Hercules would turn away his eyes, let this from its huge den come forth. Or, if beasts be denied, change, I pray thee, this heart of mine into some – any evil thing there is can I with this present mind become. Give me a form to match my smarting grief; my breast cannot contain its rage. Why doest thou search out the folds of farthest earth, and overturn the world? Why dost ask ills of Dis? In such a breast thou’lt find all beasts to cause him dread; take thou this weapon for thy hate – let me be step-dame. Thou canst destroy Alcides; use but these hands for any end thou wilt. Why dost thou hesitate, O goddess? Use me, the mad one – what crime doest bid me do? Decide. Why dost thou falter? Though now thou dost thyself shrink back, this rage of mine suffices.

NURSE

[275] Dear child, thy mad heart’s complaints restrain, quench passion’s fire and curb thy grief. Show thyself wife of Hercules.

DEÏANIRA

[278] Shall captive Iole give brothers to my sons? Shall a slave become daughter-in-law of Jove? Together will flame and torrent never run, and the thirsty Bear from the blue sea ne’er will drink – nor will I go unavenged. Though thou didst bear the heavens up, though the whole world owes its peace to thee, a worse pest than Hydra waits thee – the wrath of an angered wife. What fire as hot as

this rages to heaven from burning Aetna? Whate'er has been conquered by thy might, this passion of mine shall conquer. – And shall a slave seize on my marriage bed? Till now did I fear monsters, but now is no evil more; the pests have vanished and in the place of beasts ahs come the hated harlot. O most high ruler of the gods, O lustrous Sun, I have been wife to Hercules but in his perils; the prayers which to the heavenly ones I raised have been granted to a slave; for a harlot have I been fortunate; for her have ye heard my prayers, O gods, for her is he safe returned. – O grief that can be satisfied with no revenge, seek thee some dreadful punishment, unthought, unspeakable; teach Juno's self what hate can do; she knows not to rage enough. For me didst thou do battle; on my account did Acheloüs dye his wandering waves with his own blood, when now he became a stubborn serpent, now to a fierce bull changed his threats, the serpent form discarded, and thou in that one foe didst conquer a thousand beasts. But now I please thee not; a captive is preferred to me – but she shall not be preferred; for that day which shall end our marriage joys shall end thy life.

[307] But what is this? My passion dies away and abates its threats. Now anger ceases; why dost thou languish, O wretched grief? Thou givest o'er thy madness, makest me again the faithful, uncomplaining wife. – Why dost forbid the feeding of the flames? Why checkest the fire? Keep but this passion in me; hand in hand let us go on – there will be no need of prayers; a step-dame will be near to direct my hands and unbesought.

NURSE

[314] What crime, distraught one, dost thou purpose? Wilt slay thy husband whose praises the evening and the morning know full well, whose fame, towering to the sky, holds all the world beneath? The land of Greece will rise to defend that home, and this thy father's house and the whole Aetolian race will be the first to be o'erthrown; soon rocks and firebrands will be hurled against thee, since every land will rally to its defender. How many penalties wilt thou, one woman, pay! Suppose thou canst escape the world and the race of men – the father of Alcides wields the thunder-bolt. Now, even now

behold his threat'ning fires flashing athwart the sky, and the heavens thundering with the lightning shock. Even death itself, which thou deemest a place of safety, fear; for there the uncle of thine Alcides reigns. Turn where thou wilt, poor woman, there wilt thou see his kindred gods.

DEÏANIRA

[330] That I am doing a fearful crime, e'en I myself confess; but passion bids me do it.

NURSE

[332] Thou'lt die.

DEÏANIRA

[332] Yea, truly, will I die, but the wife of glorious Hercules; neither shall any dawn, banishing night, brand me as widow; nor shall captive creature make capture of my bed. Sooner shall day be born in the western sky, sooner shall Indians grow pale 'neath the icy pole, or Scythians tan 'neath Phoebus' burning car, than shall the dames of Thessaly see me abandoned. With my own blood will I quench her marriage torches. Either let him die or do me to death. To slaughtered beasts let him add wife as well, and let him count me, too, 'mongst the toils of Hercules; to Alcides' couch, aye with my dying body, will I cling. Ah, sweet, 'tis sweet to go to the shades as bride of Hercules, – but not without my vengeance. If Iole from my Hercules has conceived a child, with mine own hands will I tear it forth untimely, and by her very wedding torches' glare will I face the harlot. Let him in wrath slay me as victim on his nuptial day, so I but fall on the corpse of Iole. Happy he lies who crushes those he hates.

NURSE

[351] Why dost thyself feed thy flames and wantonly foster and unmeasured grief? Poor soul, why dost thou cherish a needless fear? He did love Iole; but 'twas while yet her father reigned secure, and 'twas a king's daughter that he sought. The princess has now fallen to the place of slave; love has lost its power, and much from her charm her unhappy lot has stolen. What is forbidden we love; if

granted it falls from our desire.

DEÏANIRA

[358] Nay, but fallen fortunes fan hotter the flames of love; for this very cause he loves her, that she hath lost her father's house, that her hair lies stripped of gold and gems; out of pity, perchance, he loves her very woes; 'tis the wont of Hercules to love captive maids.

NURSE

[363] 'Tis true he loved the captive sister of Dardanian Priam, but he gave her to another; add all the dames, all the maids he loved before. A wanderer on earth, a wanderer in love was he. Why, the Arcadian maid, Auge, while leading Pallas' sacred dance, suffered his lust's violence, but fell from his regard, and Hercules retains no trace of his love for her. Why mention others? The Thespiades are forgotten; for them with but a passing flame Alcides burned. When a guest on Timolus, he caressed the Lydian woman and, daft with love, sat beside her swift distaff, twisting the moistened thread with doughty fingers. His shoulders, indeed, had laid aside the famous lion's-skin, a turban confined his hair, and there he stood like any slave, his shaggy locks dripping with Sabaean myrrh. Everywhere has he burned with love, but burned with feeble flame.

DEÏANIRA

[378] Oft after wandering fires lovers have clung to one.

NURSE

[379] A slave and daughter of his foe shall he prefer to thee?

DEÏANIRA

[380] As a gladsome beauty covers the budding groves when the first warmth of spring clothes the bare forest trees, but, when the North-wind has put the mild South to flight, and savage winter has shaken off all the leaves, thou seest but a shapeless grove of trunks alone; so does my beauty, pursuing a lengthening way, lose something ever, and less brightly gleams, nor is it as of yore. Whate'er in me was sought in former days has vanished or is failing along with me. Old

age with hastening steps hath taken much, and much of it hath motherhood stolen from me. But seest thou how this slave hath not lost her glorious charm? Gone are her adornings and squalor clings close upon her; and yet through her very distresses beauty shines and naught have misfortune and this hard stroke of fate stolen from her save her realm. O nurse, this fear of her racks my heart; this dread doth destroy my slumbers. I was a wife celebrated in every land, and for marriage such as mine all women prayed with envious prayer; or whatever soul asked aught of any god, for the prayers of Grecian dames I was the measure. What father-in-law like to Jove, O Nurse, shall I e'er have? Who beneath these heavens will be given me as husband? Though Eurystheus' self, who rules Alcides, should wed me with his own torches, 'tis not enough. 'Tis a trivial thing to have lost a royal couch; but from a far height has she fallen who loses Hercules.

NURSE

[407] Children oftentimes win back the love of husbands.

DEIANIRA

[408] These children themselves perchance will dissolve the bond.

NURSE

[409] Meanwhile that slave is brought as gift to thee.

DEIANIRA

[410] He whom thou seest going, big with fame, from town to town, wearing the spoil of a tawny lion on his back; who gives kingdoms to the lowly and takes them from the proud, his dread hand laden with a massive club; whose triumphs the far off Seres sing, and whome'er besides dwells in the whole known world, – he is a trifler, nor does the charm of glory urge him on. He goes wandering o'er the earth, not in the hope that he may rival Jove, nor that he may fare illustrious through Grecian cities. Some one to love he seeks; his quest is maidens' chambers. If any is refused him, she is ravished; against nations doth he rage, midst ruins seeks this brides, and unrestrained excess is called heroic. Oechalia, the illustrious, fell;

one sun, one day beheld her stand and fall; and passion was the mother of that strife. As oft as a father shall deny his child to Hercules, as oft as a foeman refuses to be his father-in-law, so oft shall he have cause to fear; if he is not accepted as a son-in-law, he smites. After all this, why do I harmlessly keep back these hands until he feign another fit of madness, with deadly hand bend his bow, and slay me and my son? Thus does Alcides put away his wives; such is his manner of divorce. Yet naught can make him guilty! He has made the world believe his step-dame answerable for his crimes. Why art inactive then, thou sluggish rage? His crime must be forestalled; act while thy hand is hot!

NURSE

[436] Wilt slay thy husband?

DEÏANIRA

[436] Truly, my rival's husband.

NURSE

[437] But the son of Jove?

DEÏANIRA

[437] Yes, but the son of Alcmena, too.

NURSE

[438] With the sword?

DEÏANIRA

[438] The sword.

NURSE

[438] If thou canst not?

DEÏANIRA

[438] I'll slay with guile.

NURSE

[439] What madness that?

DEÏANIRA

[439] That which my husband teaches me.

NURSE

[440] Whom e'en his step-dame could not slay – wilt thou slay him?

DEÏANIRA

[441] Celestial wrath but makes wretched those on whom it falls;
man's wrath makes them naught.

NURSE

[442] Spare him, O wretched one, and fear.

DEÏANIRA

[443] He has scorned all men, who first has scorn of death; 'tis sweet
to go against the sword.

NURSE

[444] Thy smart is too great for the offence, my child, let his fault
claim but equal hate. Why dost so fiercely judge a light offence?
According as thou hast been injured, grieve.

DEÏANIRA

[447] Thinkst thou a mistress is light evil for a wife? Whatever fosters
anguish, count this beyond all bounds.

NURSE

[449] Has thy love for glorious Alcides fled away?

DEÏANIRA

[450] Not fled, dear Nurse; it still remains, believe me, deep-seated and
fixed in my heart's core; but to be angry with one's love brings
mighty madness.

NURSE

[452] By magic arts and prayers commingled do wives oft hold fast
their husbands. I have bidden the trees grow green in the midst of
winter's frost, and the hurtling lightning stand; I have stirred up the

deep, though the winds were still, and have calmed the heaving sea; the parched earth has opened with fresh fountains; rocks have found motion; the gates have I rent asunder and the shades of Dis, and at my prayer's demand the spirits talk, the infernal dog is still; midnight has seen the sun, and day, the night; the sea, land, heaven and Tartarus yield to my will, and naught holds to law against my incantations. Bend him we will; my charms will find the way.

DEÏANIRA

[465] What herbs does Pontus grow, or what does Pindus nourish 'neath the rocks of Thessaly, wherein I may find a bane to conquer him? Though Luna should leave the stars and come down to earth, obedient to magic; though winter should see ripe grain; though the swift bolt should stand still, arrested by thy charm; though times be changed, and midday burn amid the crowding stars: 'twill not bend him.

NURSE

[472] But love has conquered e'en heavenly gods.

DEÏANIRA

[473] By one alone, perchance, will he be conquered and yield his spoils, and Love become Alcides' crowning toil. – But thee by all the deities of heaven I pray, by this my fear: whatever secret thing I am preparing, hide it deep, and in faithful silence hold it fast.

NURSE

[478] What is it that thou seekst to keep in secret?

DEÏANIRA

[479] It is not spears, not arms, not threatening fire.

NURSE

[480] That I can keep faithful silence I confess, if it be free from crime; but silence itself sometimes is criminal.

DEÏANIRA

[482] Come, look about, lest someone grasp my secret, and in all

directions turn thy questful glance.

NURSE

[484] Behold the place is safe and free from all observers.

DEĪANIRA

[485] In a remote corner of the royal dwelling is a recess that silently guards my secret. Neither the first rays of the sun can reach that spot, nor yet his last, when Titan, bringing the day to rest, plunges his weary yoke in the ruddy sea. There lurks the surety of Alcides' love. Nurse, I'll confess to thee: the giver of the baleful thing was Nessus, whom Nephele, heavy with child, to the Thessalian chieftain bore, where lofty Pindus to the stars lifts up his head and Othrys stands stiff, towering above the clouds. For when Achelöus, forced by the club of dread Hercules to shift with ready ease from form to form, his beast-shapes all exhausted, at last stood forth, and bowed his head, marred and with single horn, victorious Hercules, with me, his bride, set out for Argos.

[500] It chanced that Evenus, wandering through the plains, rolling his deep eddies to the sea, was now in flood, almost to the tree-top's level. Nessus, accustomed to ford the whirling stream, offered to take me over for a price; and, bearing me on his back, where the backbone, leaving the equine enters the human form, soon was stemming even the threatening waves of the swollen flood. Now had wild Nessus entirely left the waters and Alcides was still wandering in mid-stream, cleaving the down-sweeping flood with his mighty strides; but when the centaur saw Alcides still afar, "Thou shalt be spoil of mine," he cried, "and wife; he is kept from thee by the waves"; and, clasping me in his arms as he bore me on, was galloping away.

[513] But the waves did not hold Hercules; "O faithless ferryman," he cried, "though Ganges and Hister commingled in united beds should flow, I shall o'ercome them both and with my shaft o'ertake thy flight." His bow was swifter than his words. Then the reedy shaft, wounding from afar, stayed his hampered flight and implanted death.

The Centaur, now groping for light, in his right hand caught the poison flowing from the wound, and this he gave me, pouring it into his hoof, which with mad hand he had changed to wrench away. Then with his dying words he spoke: "By this charm magicians have said love can be firmly fixed; so were Thessalian wives by the wise Mycale instructed, whom only, midst all wonder-working crones, Luna will forsake the stars and follow. A garment, smeared with this very gore, shalt thou give to him, if ever a hated mistress should usurp thy chamber, and thy fickle husband should give another daughter to his high-thundering sire. This let no light behold; let darkness only, thick and hidden, cover it; so shall the potent blood retain its powers." Silence seized on his words and to his weary limbs came the sleep of death.

[535] No do thou, whom loyalty makes sharer of my secret, haste thee that the poison, upon a glittering robe besmeared, go through his heart and limbs and, stealing silently, enter his very marrow.

NURSE

[538] With speed will I do thy bidding, dearest child; and do thou pray to the god invincible, who with tender hand doth send unerring shafts. [*Exit NURSE.*]

DEÏANIRA

[541] Thee do I pray, by earth and heaven-dwellers held in fear, by sea, by him who wields Aetnaean thunderbolts, and by thy ruthless mother to be feared, O winged boy; with unerring hand aim a swift shaft, and not of thy lighter arrows. Choose thee, I pray one of thy heavier shafts, which thy hands have ne'er yet shot at any; for no light weapon must thou use that Hercules may feel the power of love. Stretch thy hands stiffly forth, and bend thy bow until the tips shall meet. Now, now that shaft let loose with which once thou aimedst at Jove the terrible, what time the god threw down his thunderbolt and as a bull, with horns quick-sprouting on his brow, clove through the boisterous sea, bearing the Assyrian maid. Fill him with love; let him outstrip all precedents, – let him learn to love his wife. If Iole's beauty hath kindled fires in the breast of Hercules, extinguish them

every one, and of my beauty let him deeply drink. Oft hast thou conquered Jove, the thunderer, oft him who wields the dark sceptre of the dusky world, king of the greater throng, and lord of Styx; and now, O god more dreadful than a step-dame's wrath, win thou this triumph all alone, and conquer Hercules.

[*Re-enter NURSE, with robe and charm.*]

NURSE

[563] The charm has been brought out and a robe from Pallas' distaff, at whose weaving thy maidens all have wrought with weary hands. Now let the poison be prepared and let the robe of Hercules soak up its pestilence; and by my incantations will I increase its evil.

[*While they are occupying themselves with the robe, LICHAS is seen approaching.*]

[567] But in the nick of time the zealous Lichas comes; the dire potency of the robe must be concealed lest our wiles be punished.
[*Enter LICHAS.*]

DEÏANIRA

[569] O Lichas, name ever loyal to thy lords, though loyalty proud houses ne'er possess, take thou this garment which my hands have woven while he was wandering o'er the earth, or, spent with wine, was holding in his doughty arms the Lydian queen, or seeking Iole. And yet, perchance, I may turn his rough heart to me again by my deserving; for deserts oft conquer those who work us ill. Before my husband puts this garment on, bid him burn incense and appease the gods, his stiff locks wreathed the while with hoary poplar.

[*LICHAS take the robe and departs upon his mission.*]

[579] I will myself pass within the royal palace and with prayers worship the mother of relentless Love.

[581] [*To her Aetolian attendants.*] Do ye, whom I have brought as comrades from my father's house, ye Calydonian maids, bewail the fortune that demands your tears. [*Exit.*]

CHORUS OF AETOLIAN WOMEN

[583] O child of Oeneus, truly do we weep for thy misfortunes, the band of thy companions through thy childhood years, we weep thy couch dishonoured, lady whom we revere. Often with thee have we splashed in Achelouïs' shallows, when now, the springtime passed, he allayed his swollen waters and, a slender stream, crept on with quiet course, and Lycormas no longer rolled his headlong waters on, dark-hued with bursting fountains. Together were we wont to fare to Pallas' shrines and join in virgin dances, to bear the mysteries in Theban baskets hidden, when now the wintry star had fled, and each third summer called forth the sun, and when the grain-giving goddess' sacred seat, Attic Eleusis, shut in her mystic worshippers. Now too, whatever lot thou fearest, take us as trusted comrades of thy fates; for rare is loyalty when now better fortune fails.

[604] O thou, whoe'er thou art who the sceptre holdest, though all the people throng within thy hall, pressing together through its thousand doors; though when thou walkst abroad whole nations hem thee round; in all those nations scarce one man is true. Erinys keeps the gilded gate, and when the great doors have opened wide, there come in treacheries and cunning wiles and the lurking dagger; and when amongst the people thou wouldst walk, envy walks by thy side. As often as dawn drives out the night, so often believe a king is born. Few worship kings and not their thrones; for 'tis the glitter of the royal hall that stirs the most. One man is eager to fare illustrious through broad towns next to the king himself; for greed of glory burns his wretched breast. Another longs with treasure to appease his hunger; and yet not all gem-bearing Hister's tract would satisfy, nor would the whole of Lydia sate his thirst, nor the land which, lying 'neath the west-wind, marvels to see bright Tagus gleam with golden water; nor if all Hebrus were his own, and rich Hydaspes should be added to his fields, and he should gaze on Ganges flowing with all its streams within his boundaries. For greed, for greed all nature is too little.

[632] One man courts kings and homes of kings, not that his ploughman, forever stooping o'er the deep-driven share, may never

cease his toil, or that the peasantry may till his thousand fields; but wealth alone, which he may hoard away, he seeks. Another man courts kings that he may trample all, may ruin many and establish none; he covets power only to harm therewith.

[640] How few live out their allotted span! Whom Cynthia saw in happiness, the new-born day sees wretched. 'Tis rare to find old age and happiness in one. The couch of turf, softer than Tyrian purple, oft soothes to fearless slumber; but gilded ceilings break our rest, and purple coverlets drag out wakeful nights. Oh, if the hearts of rich men were laid bare! What fears does lofty fortune stir within! The waves of Bruttium, when Corus lashes up the sea, are calmer far. The poor man's heart is free from care; he holds cups carved from the wide-spreading beech, but holds them with hand untrembling; he eats but cheap and common food, yet sees no drawn sword hanging o'er his head! 'Tis in golden cups that blood is mixed with wine.

[658] The wife is wed to one of modest means is not bedecked with necklaces of pearl, the red sea's gift, nor do stones gathered on Orient shores weigh down her gem-laden ears; for her no soft wool twice dipped in Sidonian cauldrons drinks scarlet dyes; not hers with Maeonian needle to embroider stuffs which Serians under sunlit skies gather from eastern trees. 'Tis not common herbs that dye the webs which her unskilled hands have woven; but she cherishes a marriage-couch all undisturbed. With cruel torch doth Fury pursue the bride whose wedding-day great throngs have celebrated; nor does the poor man count himself full blest, unless he sees the blessed fallen from their height.

[675] Whoever has left the middle course fares never in path secure. While for one day the youth sought to furnish light and took his stand within his father's car, and while he passed not o'er the accustomed track, but sought the stars unknown to Phoebus' rays with wandering wheel, himself he ruined and the world, as well. Daedalus, cleaving his path midway the heavens, reached peaceful shores and to no sea gave his name; but while young Icarus dared rival true birds in flight, looked down upon his father's wings and

soared aloft close to the sun itself, to an unknown sea he gave his name. To our undoing, high fortunes are by ruin balanced.

[692] Let another be noised abroad as blest and great; but let no throng hail me as powerful. Let my frail craft keep close to shore, and let no strong wind compel my bark to plough the mighty deep; misfortune passes by quiet ports, and seeks for ships sailing the open sea, whose topsails smite the clouds.

[*DEÏANIRA appears hurrying distractedly from the palace.*]

[700] But why in terror and with face of fear, like some rage-smit Bacchante, comes the Bacchante, comes the queen with step uncertain?

[*Enter DEÏANIRA.*]

[703] What new reverse of fortune whirls thee about? Poor lady, tell us. Though thou thyself sayst naught, thy face speaks out whate'er thou hidest.

DEÏANIRA

[706] Vague shivers steal through my trembling limbs, my hair starts up in horror; fear sticks in my soul till now so passion-tossed; my heart leaps wildly and my quaking liver throbs with pulsing veins. As when the storm-tossed sea still heaves, though the skies are clear and the winds have died away, so is my soul still troubled, though my fear has been allayed. Surely when God has once begun to oppress the fortunate, he bears down hard. To such an end do mighty fortunes come.

NURSE

[715] What headstrong fate, poor soul, whirls thee about?

DEÏANIRA

[716] When I had sent away the robe anointed with Nessus' blood, and, sad at heart, betook me to my chamber, my soul feared I know not what – did the dying centaur 'gainst my husband plan revenge, and plot some treachery? I was pleased to make the test. Dread Nessus forbade me to expose the wild blood to the sun's rays and to

fire; and this artifice itself forewarned me of treachery.

[722] It chanced the burning sun, its radiance by no cloud dimmed, was setting free the day's fervid head. – Even now my fear scarce suffers me to speak. – Right into the hot sunlight I had thrown the blood-soaked fleece with which the robe had been moistened and the garment smeared. The bloody fleece I flung writhed horribly and, warmed with the sun's rays, burst aflame – I have scarce words to tell of the awful thing. As the East or the warm South-wind melts the snows which glistening Mimas loses in early spring; as 'gainst Leucadia's crags, breasting the Ionian sea, up-flung waves are broken and with spent fury foam upon the shore, or as incense sprinkled on holy shrines is melted in the hot altar-fires; so all the wool withered and lost its fleece. And while I stood wondering at it, the object of my wonder disappears; nay, even the very ground begins to foam, and whatever that poison touched begins to shrink.

[*HYLLUS is seen approaching.*]

[740] But I see my son approaching with face of fear and hurrying feet. [*To HYLLUS.*] Speak out – what tidings dost thou bear?

HYLLUS

[742] [Hurrying upon the scene.] Go! flee! seek out whatever place lies far away on land, on sea, 'mongst stars, in Ocean, underworld – far beyond the labours of Alcides, mother, flee!

DEÏANIRA

[745] Some great disaster doth my mind presage.

HYLLUS

[746] She reigns, she triumphs; Juno's temple seek. This sanctuary waits thee; closed is all refuge else.

DEÏANIRA

[748] Tell what disaster my guiltless self o'erwhelms.

HYLLUS

[749] That glory and sole guardian of the world, whom the fates had

given to the lands in the place of Jove, O mother, is no more. The limbs and thews of Hercules a mysterious plague is wasting; and he who conquered monsters, he, he, the victor, is vanquished, is in grief, in agony. What more dost ask?

DEÏANIRA

[754] The wretched are in haste to hear their wretchedness. Tell me: in what condition now stands our house? O home, O wretched home! Now truly am I widowed, exiled, overwhelmed.

HYLLUS

[758] Not thou alone dost lament Hercules; low he lies for the whole world to mourn. And think not, mother, thine is a private loss; now the whole race is clamorous with woe. Lo, all men utter thy self-same groans of grief; common to all lands is the ill thou sufferest. Thou hast forestalled their grief; first, but not all alone, poor soul, dost thou mourn Hercules.

DEÏANIRA

[764] You tell me, tell, I beg, how near to death does my Alcides lie.

HYLLUS

[766] Death, who once in his own realm was overcome, flees from him; nor do the fates dare countenance so great a crime. Perchance Clotho has thrown aside her very distaff from her trembling hand, and is afraid to complete the fates of Hercules. O day, O awful day! And shall this for the great Alcides be the last?

DEÏANIRA

[772] To the shades of death and to that darker world dost say he has gone already? Can I not go before and anticipate his death? Speak, if he is not yet fallen.

HYLLUS

[775] Euboea's shore, swelling with mighty headland, on every side is beaten by the waves. Caphereus cleaves the Phrixean Sea, on this side the south-wind blows; but on the side which feels the blasts of snowy Aquilo, restless Euripus turns his wandering waves, whose

currents seven times flow and seven times ebb again, till Titan plunges his weary horses in the sea. Here on a lofty cliff, by many a storm-cloud beaten, an ancient temple of Cenean Jove stands gleaming.

[784] When all the votive herd stood at the altars, and the whole grove was filled with the bellowing of the gilded bulls, he put off his lion's skin, all stained with gore, laid down his heavy club and freed his shoulders of the quiver's weight. Then radiant in thy robe, his rough hair wreathed with hoary poplar, he lit the altar-fires. "Accept these gifts," he said, "upon thy shrine, O father, not falsely claimed, and let thy sacred fire blaze brightly with copious incense which the rich Arab gathers from Sabaeen trees, in worship of the Sun. Peace has been given to earth, to sky, to sea; all monsters have I subdued and in triumph come again. Lay down thy thunderbolt."

[796] As he thus prayed a groan fell from his lips even he standing aghast; then with dreadful cries he filled the air. As when a bull, fleeing the deep-driven axe, bearing both wound and weapon, fills with his huge bellowings the affrighted shrine, or as the launched thunder crashes in the sky; so did he with his roarings smite the stars and sea; towering Chalcis reëchoed and all the Cyclades heard his cries; then all Caphereus' crags and the whole forest resounded with the cries of Hercules. We saw him weep. The commons thought his ancient madness had returned; then his attendants fled.

[808] But he, his face writhing with pain of the burning heat, pursued and sought out Lichas alone among them all. The boy, embracing the altar with trembling hands, through sheer terror tasted the pangs of death, and left small part of his life for punishment. Then Hercules, by his hand seizing the quivering corpse, exclaimed: "By such a hand, by such a hand as this, ye fates, shall I be said to have been undone? Has Lichas conquered Hercules? Behold another slaughter; Hercules in turn slays Lichas. Be my deeds dishonoured; be this my crowning task." To the stars the boy went hurtling and sprinkled the clouds with his scattered blood. So does a Getan arrow, from the hand let fly, go speeding skyward, of the shaft a Cydonian has shot;

but far below even these weapons will wing their flight. His body falls into the sea, his head upon the rocks; one youth lies slain in both.

[823] “But hold!” said Hercules; “’tis not madness has robbed me of my wits; this bane is worse than madness and than rage; I am fain to rave against myself.” Scarce has he named the plague when lo, he raves, he tears his own flesh apart, with his own hand wounding and rending his huge limbs. He seeks to throw aside the robe; in this alone have I seen Alcides fail. Yet striving to tear the robe, he tears his limbs as well. The robe is part and parcel of his rugged body; the pest blends it with the skin. The cause of his dire suffering is hid, but still there is a cause; and, scarce able to endure his pain, now he lies spent, face down on the ground, now calls for water – water checks not his pain; he seeks the wave-resounding shore and plunges in the sea, but a slave’s hand restrains him wandering aimless there – oh, bitter lot! we were Alcides’ equals!

[839] And now a vessel is bringing him from Euboea’s shore, and a gentle south wind wafts his huge bulk along; his spirit has left his body; night seals his eyes.

DEÏANIRA

[842] Why, soul, dost hesitate? Why art amazed? The crime is done. Jupiter demands back his son of thee, Juno, her rival; yea, to the world must he be restored. What still thou canst, give back, make restitution; let the sword, deep driven, through my body pass. So, so must it be done. But does so frail hand as this exact punishment so great? With thy thunderbolts, O sire, destroy thy guilty daughter. And with no common weapon let thy hand be armed; let that bolt leap from heaven with which, had Alcides not sprung from thee, thou wouldst have scorched the Hydra. Destroy me as some strange pest, as a scourge far worse than step-dame’s wrath. Launch such a bolt as once thou didst hurl at straying Phaëthon; for I, e’en I myself, in Hercules alone have ruined nations.

[855] But why dost ask weapons of the gods? At last spare thy father.

The wife of Hercules should be ashamed to pray for death; this hand shall grant my prayer; from myself let death be sought. Then quickly seize the sword. – Why then the sword? Whatever brings to death is weapon all-sufficient – from a sky-piercing cliff I'll cast me down. Let this, this crag of Oeta, which is the first to greet the new-born day, be chosen; from this 'tis well to fling me. May its broken crags rend asunder, and every rock take its share of me; may my mangled hands hang there, and may the whole rough mountain-side run red. One death is all too light – light? but still it can be prolonged. Thou canst not choose, O soul, on what weapon thou shalt fall. Oh, would that the sword of Hercules were hanging in my chamber! Upon that steel 'twere well for me to die. But is it enough that by one right hand I perish? Come all ye nations; let the world cast rocks and huge firebrands on me; let no hand shrink its task; seize weapons, for your avenger have I done to death. Now with impunity shall cruel kings wield sceptres; yea, with impunity now fierce monsters shall be born; again shall altars be found wont to behold victim like to worshipper. A highway to crime have I prepared; I have exposed you to tyrants, kings, monsters, wild beasts and cruel gods, by slaying your avenger. Dost shirk thy task, wife of the thunderer? Why dost thou not, in imitation of thy brother, scatter fire, snatch from Jove's hand his bolt, hurl it, and thyself destroy me? Illustrious praise and mighty triumph have been snatched from thee; I have forestalled thee, Juno, in thy rival's death.

HYLLUS

[884] Why dost drag down a house already shaken? From error spring wholly whatever crime is here. He does no sin who sins without intent.

DEIANIRA

[887] Whoever, because of fate, excuses and spares himself, has deserved to err. My sentence is for death.

HYLLUS

[889] Fain would he seem guilty who seeks to die.

DEÏANIRA

[890] 'Tis death alone can make the beguiled innocent.

HYLLUS

[891] Fleeing the sun –

DEÏANIRA

[891] The sun himself flees me.

HYLLUS

[892] Wilt abandon life?

DEÏANIRA

[892] Ay! a wretched life – that Alcides I may follow.

HYLLUS

[893] But he still lives and breathes the air of haven.

DEÏANIRA

[894] When Hercules could be conquered, then he began to die.

HYLLUS

[895] Wilt leave thy son? Wilt break thy thread of life?

DEÏANIRA

[896] She whom her son has buried has lived long.

HYLLUS

[897] Follow thy husband.

DEÏANIRA

[897] Faithful wives go before.

HYLLUS

[898] If thou thyself dost doom thee, thou convictest thyself, unhappy one, of sin.

DEÏANIRA

[899] No guilty one himself annuls his punishment.

HYLLUS

[900] Life has been granted many whose guilt lay in wrong judgment, not in act. Who blames his own destiny?

DEÏANIRA

[902] Whoever has fallen on unkind fates.

HYLLUS

[903] But Hercules himself slew Megara, pierced by his arrows, and his own sons as well, shooting Lernaean shafts with furious hand; still, though thrice murderer, he forgave himself, but not his madness. At the source of Cinyps 'neath Libyan skies he washed away his guilt and cleansed his hands. Whither, poor soul, dost haste thee? Why dost condemn thy hands?

DEÏANIRA

[910] 'Tis Alcides' overthrow that doth condemn my hands. 'Tis well to punish crime.

HYLLUS

[911] If I know Hercules, he will soon be here, perchance victorious o'er the cruel plague; and pain, subdued, will yield to thy Alcides.

DEÏANIRA

[914] Thy hydra's poison, as report declares, hath consumed his frame; the deadly plague hath wasted his giant limbs.

HYLLUS

[916] Thinkst thou the poison of a serpent, slain, cannot be overcome by him who met and overcame the monster, living? He crushed the hydra, and deep in the marsh, with the fangs fixed in his flesh, he stood victorious, while his limbs were bathed in venom. Shall Nessus' blood destroy the man who overcame e'en the hands of savage Nessus?

DEÏANIRA

[922] Vainly is he restrained who is bent on death; my will is fixed straightway to flee the light. Whoever has died with Hercules has

lived enough.

NURSE

[925] Lo, by these aged locks and by these breasts which were almost as a mother's to thee, I humbly pray; put by the wild threatenings of thy wounded heart, and banish thy dread resolve of cruel death.

DEIANIRA

[929] Whoever, perchance, dissuades the wretched from death, he is the cruel one; sometimes death is a punishment, but often 'tis a boon, and to many a way of pardon has it proved.

NURSE

[932] At least absolve thy hand, unhappy one, that he may know that the deed was a treacherous foeman's not his wife's.

DEIANIRA

[934] There shall I be absolved; the lower gods will acquit the criminal, though I condemn myself. Let Pluto cleanse these hands. Upon thy banks, O Lethe, shall I stand, the past forgotten, and my grieving shade will welcome its lord again.

[938] But do thou, who torturest the realms of the dark under-world, prepare a toil – for this fault of mine outweighs all sins that man has ever dared; Juno was never bold enough to rob the world of Hercules – some dreadful toil prepare. Let Sisyphus' neck be eased and let his rock press hard upon my shoulders; let the inconstant water fly my lips, my thirst let the elusive waves deceive. Unto thy whirlings have I deserved to give my hands, whatsoever wheel thou art which rackest Thessalia's king; from every side let the greedy vulture tear my entrails out. There still lacks one from the Danaïdes; I will fill up their number – ye ghosts make room for me. Take me as thy companion, O Phasian wife; my deed is worse, far worse than both thy crimes, whether as mother or as cruel sister thou hast sinned; let me be comrade also to thy crimes, thou Thracian wife; Althea, mother, welcome thy daughter, now recognize in me thine own true child – yet what crime so great have your hands ever done? Shut

Elysium against me, O all ye faithful wives who have your dwelling in its sacred grove; but if any has bespattered her hands with her husband's blood and her chaste marriage torch forgot, has stood with drawn sword like Belus' bloody child, in me let her recognize and praise her own handiwork. To such a company of wives 'tis well to pass – but e'en that company will shun hands so accursed.

[964] O my unconquered husband, my soul is innocent, though my hands have sinned. O mind too credulous! O Nessus, false and of half-bestial guile! Striving to snatch him from a concubine, I have snatched him from myself. Away! thou sun, and life, who by thy cozening arts dost keep the unhappy in the light of day; worthless that light without my Hercules. I will exact penalty for thee, will give up my life – or shall I put off my fate, O husband, and save myself for death at thine own hands? Hast still some strength, and can thy armed hands still bend the bow and send the arrow darting? Or do thy weapons fail thee, and does thy bow no more heed thy enfeebled hand? If thou canst deal destruction, O undaunted husband, I await thy stroke. Let death be stayed awhile; crush me as thou didst the unoffending Lichas; to other cities scatter me, yeah, hurl me to a world to thee unknown. Destroy me as thou didst the Arcadian monster, and whatever else succumbed to thee; yet from them, my husband, thou didst return.

HYLLUS

[982] Give o'er now, mother, I beseech thee, pardon thy fate; an error is not counted as a crime.

DEIANIRA

[984] If, Hyllus, thou wouldst be truly filial, come, slay thy mother – why does thy hand quake and tremble? Why turnst thy face away? This crime will be filial piety. Tamely dost hesitate? This hand robbed thee of Hercules, yea, this right hand destroyed him to whom as father thou owest descent from Jove. Of greater glory have I robbed thee than I gave thee at thy birth. If thou art unskilled in monstrous crime, learn from thy mother. Whether in my throat it pleases thee to plunge the sword, or 'tis thy will to assail thy

mother's womb, thy mother herself will give thee unshrinking courage. Not by thee will this dreadful crime be done; by thy hand, truly, shall I fall, but by my will. Son of Alcides, art afraid? Wilt thou not do as bidden, wilt not crush monsters, and so be like thy sire? Thy dauntless hand make ready. Behold my breast, so full of cares, lies open: smite; I forgive the deed, the Eumenides themselves will acquit thy hand – but I hear their scourges hissing.

[1003] Oh, who is that in whose locks viperous serpents coil, who brandishes deadly shafts at her foul temples? Why dost pursue me, awful Megaera, with blazing torch? Penalty for Alcides' murder dost demand? I'll pay. Already, dread one, have the arbiters of hell passed judgment on me? They have. I see the prison doors opened wide. Who is that ancient who bears a huge stone on his toil-worn back? But see! already does the mastered stone seek to roll back again? Whose limbs on the wheel are racked? Look! here has Tisiphone taken her stand, ghastly and dread; she demands revenge. Oh, spare thy scourge, I pray thee, Megaera, spare! Keep back the Stygian torches; mine was the crime of love.

[1015] But what is this? The earth quakes, the palace resounds with the noise of crashing roofs – whence comes the rushing 'gainst me, on every side the nations rage and the whole universe demands of me its saviour. Oh, spare me now, ye cities. Whither shall I rush in headlong flight? Death alone will be granted as a haven for my cares. By gleaming Phoebus' flaming car I swear, I swear by the heavenly gods: though to my death I go, I leave Alcides still upon the earth.
[*She rushes wildly from the scene.*]

HYLLUS

[1024] Ah me! in frenzy has she fled. Already has my mother played her part – she has resolved on death; now does my part remain, to thwart her deadly purpose. O wretched plight of love! if thou forbidst thy mother's death, thou wrongst thy father; if thou sufferest her to die, still 'gainst thy mother doest thou sin. Crime drives from either hand; still must I check her, that from true crime she may be saved.
[*Exit after his mother.*]

CHORUS

[1031] True sang the bard beneath the heights of Thracian Rhodope, fitting the word to his Pierian lyre, e'en Orpheus, Calliope's blest son, that naught for endless life is made. At his sweet strains the rushing torrents' roar was stilled, and, forgetful of their eager flight, the waters ceased their flow; and, while the river stayed to hear, the far Bistonians thought their Hebrus had failed the Getan. The woods came with their birds to him, yea, perched among the trees they came; or if, in the high air soaring, some wandering bird caught sound of the charming song, his drooping wings sank earthward. Athos broke off his crags, bringing the Centaurs as he came, and next to Rhodope he stood, his snows melted by the music; the Dryad, leaving her oaken haunts, sped to the singer's side. To hear thy song, with their very lairs the wild beasts came, and close to the fearless herds the Marmaric lion crouched; does felt no fear of wolves, and the serpent fled her gloomy den, her venom at last forgot.

[1061] Nay, when through the gates Taenarian to the silent ghosts he came, smiting his mournful lyre, with his sad song he conquered Tartarus and the sullen gods of Erebus; nor was he daunted by the pools of Styx, by which the high gods swear. The never staying wheel stood still, listless, with conquered whirling; the liver of Tityus grew, undevoured, while spell-bound the singer held the birds. The impish stone allowed defeat and attended on the bard. Then first the aged Phrygian, though the waves stood still, banished his raging thirst, forgetful quite, nor to the apples stretched his hand. Thou also, ferryman, didst hear, and thy boat that plies the infernal sea came oarless on. So when by his song Orpheus had utterly o'ercome the infernal gods, then did the goddesses renew again Eurydice's exhausted thread. But while Orpheus thoughtlessly looked back, all unbelieving his Eurydice restored to him and following, he lost his singing's recompense; and she had come to the verge of life only to die once more.

[1090] Then, solace in song still seeking, in mournful measures Orpheus thus to the Getans sang: that the gods are under law, e'en he who rules the seasons, who has arranged the four changes of the

flying year; that for no one the Parcae spin again the threads of the greedy distaff, and that all which has been and shall be born shall die.

[1100] The overthrow of Hercules bids us believe the Thracian bard. Soon, soon, when to the universe shall come the day that law shall be o'erwhelmed, the southern skies shall fall upon Libya's plains and all that the scattered Garamantians possess; the northern heavens shall overwhelm all that lies beneath the pole and that Boreas smites with withering blasts. Then from the lost sky the affrighted sun shall fall and banish day. The palace of heaven shall sink, dragging down East and West, and death in some form and chaos shall o'erwhelm all gods in one destruction; and death shall at last bring doom upon itself. What place will then receive the world? Will the gates of Tartarus spread wide, that room for the shattered heavens may be found? Or is the space 'twixt heaven and earth great enough (perchance too great) for the evils of the world? What place will be great enough to hold (oh, horrible!) a death so vast, what place, the gods? Sea, Tartarus and heaven – three kingdoms shall one place contain.

[1128] But what outrageous clamour this assails our startled ears? It is, it is the sound of Hercules.

[Enter HERCULES in the extremity of suffering.]

HERCULES

[1131] Turn back, O shining Sun, thy panting steeds, and let loose the night; let this day wherein I die perish for the world, and let heaven shudder in the pitchy dark. So thwart my stepdame. Now, father, were it fitting to restore blind chaos; now this side and that should heaven's frame be burst and both poles rent asunder. Why dost thou spare the stars? Thou art losing Hercules, O father. Now, Jupiter, look well to every part of heaven, lest any Gyas hurl Thessalian crags and Othrys become a slight missile for Enceladus. Now, now will haughty Pluto open his dark prison gates, strike off his father's chains and give him back to heaven. Since I thy son, who on earth have been in place of thy bolt and lightning flash, am turning me

back to Styx, Enceladus, the fierce, will rise, and the mass 'neath which he now is crushed will he hurl against the gods; yea, father, thy whole realm of air will my death put to hazard. Then ere thou art utterly despoiled of heaven, bury me, father, 'neath the whole ruined world; shatter the skies which thou art doomed to lose.

CHORUS

[1151] Not vain thy fears, son of the Thunderer. Soon now shall Pelion weigh down Thessalian Ossa, and Athos, on Pindus heaped, shall thrust his forests midst the heavenly stars; then shall Typhoeus overcome the crags and upheave Tuscan Inarime; the Aetnaean furnaces then shall Enceladus upheave, not yet by thy bolt o'ercome, and rend the gaping mountain's side. E'en now the kingdoms of the sky are following thee.

HERCULES

[1161] Lo I, who have escaped from death, who scorned the Styx, who through the midst of Lethe's pool have returned with spoil, at sight whereof Titan was almost flung from his falling car, I, whose presence three realms of gods have felt, am perishing. No deep-thrust sword grates through my side, nor is all Othrys the instrument of my death; no giant with fierce and gaping jaws has buried my body beneath the whole of Pindus; no, without enemy am I overcome and, thought which racks me more (shame to my manhood!) the last day of Alcides has seen no monster slain. Ah, woe is me! I am squandering my life for no return.

[1173] O thou ruler of the world, ye gods, once witnesses of my deeds, O earth entire, is it resolved your Hercules should perish by such death as this? Oh, cruel shame to me, oh, end most foul – a woman will be called author of Alcides' death! And for whom is Alcides dying? If the fates unchanging have willed that by a woman's hand I fall, if through distaff so base the thread of my death has run, ah me! that I might have fallen by Juno's hate! 'Twould be by woman's hand, but of one who holds the heavens. If, O ye gods, that were too much to ask, the Amazon, born 'neath Scythian skies, might have o'ercome my strength. But by what woman's hand is Juno's foe

o'ercome? This is for thee, my stepdame, heavier shame. Why callest thou this day joyful? What monster such as this has earth produced to sate thy wrath? A mortal woman has outdone thy hate. Till now thou deemdst thyself by Alcides alone outmatched; by two hast thou been surpassed – of such wrath let heaven be ashamed! Oh, that the Nemean lion with my blood had sated his gaping jaws, or that, hedged by hundred snakes, I had fed the hydra with my gore! O that I had been given to the Centaurs as a prey, or that midst the shades I, bound to an everlasting rock, in wretchedness were sitting! But now have I dragged here my latest spoil while Death looked on amazed; now from infernal Styx have I regained the light, the bars of Dis I've conquered – on every hand death shunned me, that I might lack at last a glorious end. O beasts, O conquered beasts! Neither did the three-formed dog, when he saw the sun, drag me back to Styx, nor 'neath western skies did the Spanish rout of the wild shepherd conquer me, nor the twain serpents – ah, woe is me! how often have I missed a glorious death! My final claim to glory – what is it?

CHORUS

[1208] Seest thou how virtue, conscious of its fame, shrinks not from Lethe's stream? He grieves not at death but blushes for its cause; he longs 'neath some towering giant's vasty bulk to end the last day of life, to suffer some mountain-heaving Titan's weight, to owe his death to some wild, raging beast. But no, poor soul, because of thine own hand, there is no beast, no giant; for what worthy author of the death of Hercules is left save thy right hand?

HERCULES

[1218] Alas, what scorpion, what crab, torn from the torrid zone, burns deep fixed in my marrow? My heart, once filled with pulsing streams of blood, hotly distends the parched fibres of my lungs; my liver glows, its bile dried quite away, and a slow fire has exhausted all my blood. First did the dread plague feed upon my skin, next to my limbs it passed, devoured my sides, then deep in my joints and ribs the pest ate its way, and drank my very marrow. In my hollow bones it lurks; nor do my bones themselves retain their hardness, but, shattered with broken structure, fall in a crumbling mass. My huge

frame has shrivelled, and even the limbs of Hercules sate not the pest. – Oh, how mighty the ill which I admit is great! Oh, cruel curse! Behold, ye cities, behold what now remains of that great Hercules. Dost recognize thy Hercules, my father? Was it with these arms I crushed and overwhelmed the Nemean plague? Was it with this hand I stretched the bow that brought down the Stymphalian birds from the very stars? With these feet did I o’ertake the swift-fleeing beast with golden antlers gleaming on his head? By these hands shattered, did Calpe let out the sea? So many beasts, so many monstrous things, so many kings, have these hands of mine brought low? Upon these shoulders did the heavens rest? Is this my massive frame, is this my neck? These hands did I oppose to the falling sky? What Stygian watch-dog will hereafter be dragged forth by my hand? Where are my powers, buried before my burial? Why on Jove as father do I call? Why, wretched man, by right of the Thunderer do I claim heaven? Now, now will Amphitryon be deemed my sire.

[1249] O pest, whate’er thou art that lurkest in my vitals, come forth – why dost attack me with a hidden smart? What Scythian Sea beneath the icy pole, what sluggish Tethys, what Spanish Calpe, crowding the Moorish coast, begot thee? O cursed bane! Art thou some serpent, brandishing his foul, full-crested head, or some evil thing even to me unknown? Art thou begotten of the Lernaean monster’s gore, or did the Stygian dog leave thee here on earth? Every ill thou art and yet no ill – what form hast thou? Grant me at least to know by what ill I am perishing. Whatever pest or whatever beast thou be, oppose me openly! Who gave thee place within my inmost marrow? See, my hand has ripped away the skin and the flesh uncovered; yet deeper still must its lurking place be found – O woe, invincible as Hercules!

[1265] But whence this lamentation? Whence tears upon these cheeks? My face, before unmoved, and never wont to express its woes in tears, at last (oh, shame!) has learned to weep. What day, what country has seen the tears of Hercules? Dry-eyed have I borne my cares. To thee that strength, which has crushed so many monsters, to thee alone has yielded; thou first of all hast forced tears from mine

eyes; my face, harder than rough rock, harder than steel and the wandering Symplegades, ahs relaxed my visage and driven forth my tears. Me, weeping and groaning, O most high ruler of the heaven, the earth has seen and, thought which racks me more, my step-dame has seen. But lo, again the scorching heat flames up and burns my vitals. Oh, where is the lightning flash to bring me death?

CHORUS

[1279] What may not suffering overcome? But now, harder than Thracian Haemus' crags, than Parrhasian skies more calm, to dire agony has he yielded him; his head drops wearily upon his neck, from side to side he turns his mighty bulk and oft does his fortitude drain back his tears. So, with however fervent beam he shine, Titan avails not to melt the arctic snows, whose icy splendour defies the torches of the burning sun.

HERCULES

[1290] O father, turn thou thine eyes on my calamity. Never till now has Alcides fled to thee for aid, not even when around my limbs the hydra entwined its fertile heads. Midst the infernal pools, by the black pall of night enfolded, I stood with Death nor did I call upon thee. So many dreadful beasts have I o'ercome, yea kings and tyrants; yet have I ne'er lifted my face unto the stars. This hand of mine has ever been surety for my prayers; no bolts for my sake have flashed from the sacred sky – but this day has bidden me ask somewhat of thee. 'Tis the first to hear my prayers, 'twill be the last. Just one thunderbolt I ask; count me a giant. I could have laid hands on heaven no less than they; but while I thought thee my sire in very truth, I spared the skies. Oh, whether thou be harsh, my sire, or merciful, lay hands on thy son with speedy death and claim thee this great renown.

[1307] Or, if thy hand shrinks reluctant from the impious task, 'gainst me release from Aetna's mount the burning Titans, who in their hands may heave Pindus up, or, Ossa, thee, and by the hurled mountain overwhelm me quite. Let Bellona burst the bars of Erebus and with drawn sword rush upon me; or send fierce Mars; let the

dread god 'gainst me be armed. He is my brother, true, but of my step-dame born. Thou too, Alcides' sister, but by our sire alone, hurl thy spear, O Pallas, against thy brother hurl. And to thee, my step-dame, do I stretch suppliant hands; do thou at least, I pray, let fly thy bolt (I brook to perish by a woman's hand); oh, at last yielding, at last glutted, why still feed thy vengeance? What seekest thou further? Thou seest Alcides suppliant; whereas no land, no monster has ever seen me begging thee for quarter. Now have I need of a wrathful, raging step-dame – now has thy passion cooled? Now dost lay by thy hate? Thou sparest me when my prayer is all for death. O earth and cities of the earth, have y none to bring torches 'gainst your Hercules, none to bring arms? Do ye withhold weapons from me? So may no land produce savage monsters more when I am dead, and let the world ne'er ask for aid of mine; if any evils rise, let avenger rise as well. From every side crush out my luckless life with stones, o'erwhelm my woes. O ungrateful world, dost falter? Hast quite forgotten me? E'en now wouldst thou be prey to ills and savage beasts hadst thou not borne me. Then, O ye peoples, rescue your champion from his woes. This chance is given you to requite my services – death will be reward for all.

[*Enter ALCMENA.*]

ALCMENA

[1337] What lands shall Alcides' wretched mother seek? Where is my son, oh, where? If mine eyes see aright, yonder he lies, panting and fever-tossed; he groans, his life is at an end. In a last embrace let me enfold thee, O my son, and gather thy parting spirit in my mouth; take my embracing arms to thine – but where are thy limbs? Where is that star-bearing neck which propped the heavens up? Who is it has left to the but a shadow of thyself?

HERCULES

[1345] Hercules thou seest indeed, my mother, but 'tis the shadow and the vile somewhat of myself. Behold me, mother – why dost thou turn thine eyes away and hide thy face? Art ashamed to have Hercules called thy son?

ALCMENA

[1349] What world, what land has given birth to a fresh monster? What so dread horror is triumphing over thee? Who is a victor of Hercules?

HERCULES

[1352] By his wife's wiles thou seest Alcides low.

ALCMENA

[1353] What wile is great enough to worst Alcides?

HERCULES

[1354] Whatever, mother, suffices a woman's wrath.

ALCMENA

[1355] And how gained the pest entrance to thy joints and bones?

HERCULES

[1356] A robe, poisoned by woman's hands, gave entrance to it.

ALCMENA

[1357] Where is that robe? I see but naked limbs.

HERCULES

[1358] 'Twas consumed with me.

ALCMENA

[1358] Was so destructive pestilence ever found?

HERCULES

[1359] Believe me, mother, through my inmost parts the hydra is wandering and with the Lernaean one a thousand savage beasts. What flames as hot as these pierce the Sicilian clouds, what Lemnian fires, or heaven's burning tract, within whose scorching zone the sun's path may not lie? O comrades, throw me into the sea itself, into the river's midst – alas! what Hister is enough for me? Though greater than all lands, the Ocean itself will not cool my burning pains; to ease my woe all water will dry up, all moisture fail. Why, ruler of Erebus, didst send me back to Jove? 'Twere more seemly to

have held me fast. To thy glooms restore me, and show such Hercules as this to the ghosts I conquered. Naught will I take away; why dost fear Hercules a second time? Assail me, Death, and fear not; now do I brook to die.

ALCMENA

[1374] Restrain thy tears, at least, master thy pains; even to such woes show Hercules invincible; put death away; conquer the lords of hell as is thy wont.

HERCULES

[1377] If rugged Caucasus should offer me, bound by its chains, as a feast to greedy birds, while Scythia mourned around, no doleful cry would issue from my lips; should the wandering Symplegades crush me 'twixt both their cliffs, their returning rushes would I bear, defiant; were Pindus lying on me, and Haemus, and Athos which resists the Thracian waves, and Mimas which welcomes the bolts of Jupiter; mother, if even this sky should fall upon my head, and over my shoulders the fiery car of Phoebus should go flaming, no coward cry would subdue Alcides' soul. Though a thousand beasts at once should rush against me and rend me sore; though here from the skies Stymphalus' bird, swooping with clangour wild, and there with full strength the threatening bull should push upon me, and whatever huge monster has sprung from earth; though Sinis' groves should arise this side and that, and the rough giant shoot my limbs afar; rent limb from limb, still will I hold my peace – no beasts, no arms, naught that can be met and vanquished shall extort one groan from me.

ALCMENA

[1396] Son, 'tis no woman's poison melts thy frame; but thy hard round of labours, thine unceasing toil, perchance has fed some deadly disease in thee.

HERCULES

[1399] Disease? Where is it? Where is it, pray? Is there still aught of evil in the world with me alive? Let it come on; let some one reach

hither my bow to me – nay, my bare hands will be enough. Let it come on, I say. [*He sinks into a deep, swoon-like slumber.*]

ALCMENA

[1402] Alas! the too great shock of agony hath reft e'en his sense away. [*To attendants.*] Remove his weapons, take these deadly shafts out of his reach, I pray you; his burning cheeks portend some violence. Where shall an old woman hide herself? That is the smart of madness; it alone masters Hercules. But why should I, foolish that I am, seek flight or hiding? By a brave hand Alcmena deserves to die; so let me perish even impiously, before some craven decree my death, or a base hand triumph over me.

[1412] But see, all spent with woe, his pain holds his worn heart fast bound in slumber, and his panting chest heaves with laboured breathing. Help him, ye gods! If to my misery ye have denied my glorious son, at least spare to the world, I pray, its champion. May his smart be driven quite away, and the body of Hercules renew its strength.

[*Enter HYLLUS.*]

HYLLUS

[1419] A bitter light, O crime-filled day! Dead is the Thunderer's daughter, his son lies dying, and I, his grandson, still survive. By my mother's crime is he perishing, but she was by guile ensnared. What aged man, throughout his round of years, in his whole life, will be able to recount woes so great? Both parents has one day taken off; to say naught of other ills and to spare the fates, Hercules, my father, am I losing.

ALCMENA

[1427] Restrain thy words, child of illustrious sire, wretched Alcmena's grandson, like her in fate; perchance long slumber will o'ercome his pains. But see, repose is deserting his weary heart, and gives back his frame to suffering, me to grief.

HERCULES

[1432] [*Awakening in delirium.*] Why, what is this? Do I see Trachin midst her rugged hills, or have I, set 'mongst the stars, at last left behind the race of men? Who opens heaven for me? Thee, thee, my father, now do I behold, and my step-dame also, at last appeased, I see. What heavenly sound strikes on mine ears? Juno calls me son! I see bright heaven's gleaming palace, and the track worn by Phoebus' burning wheels. I see Night's couch; her shadows call me hence.

[1441] [*Begins to come out of his delirium.*] But what is this? Who shuts heaven's gates to me, O father, and draws me down even from the stars? But now the care of Phoebus breathed hot upon my face, now was I near to heaven – but I see Trachin. Who has given me earth again? A moment since, and Oeta stood below me, and the whole world lay beneath my feet. How well, O pain, hadst thou fallen from me! Thou compellest me to confess – but stay, forestall that word.

[1448] [*To HYLLUS.*] O Hyllus, this, this is thy mother's boon, her gift to me. Would that with lifted club I might crush out her wicked life just as I smote down the Amazonian pest upon the slopes of snowy Caucasus. O well-loved Megara, wast thou wife to me when madness came upon me? Give me my club and bow, let my right hand be defiled, let me put stain upon my glory, and let a woman be chosen as the last toil of Hercules.

HYLLUS

[1456] Check the dire threatenings of thy wrath, my father; she has it, 'tis over, the penalty which thou desirest she has paid; slain by her own hand, my mother lies in death.

HERCULES

[1459] Treacherously has she fallen; by the hands of enraged Hercules should she have died; Lichas has lost a comrade. I am moved to rage e'en 'gainst her lifeless body, and wrath impels me. Why is even her corpse safe from my assaults? Let the wild beasts make banquet on it.

HYLLUS

[1464] The unhappy woman has suffered more than him she injured; somewhat still of this thou wouldst wish to lighten. By her own hand has she fallen, through grief for thee; more suffering than thou demandest has she borne. But 'tis not by crimes of a murderous wife, nor by my mother's guile, thou liest low; Nessus contrived this snare, who, by thine arrow smit, spewed out his life. Father, 'twas in that half-beast's gore the robe was dipped, and Nessus by these thy sufferings doth requite his own.

HERCULES

[1472] 'Tis well, 'tis over, my fate unfolds itself; this is my last day on earth. This oracle the prophetic oak once gave me, and the Parnassian grot, shaking the shrines of Cirrha with rumbling tones, declared: "By the hand of one whom, conquering, thou hast slain, Alcides, one day shalt thou lie low; this end, when thou hast traversed seas and lands and shades, awaits thee at the last." We complain no more; such end was meet, that no living thing might conquer Hercules. Now let me choose a death glorious, renowned, illustrious, full worthy of myself. This day will I make famous. Go, cut down all the woods, heap Oeta's grove together, that a mighty pyre may receive Hercules, and that before he dies. Thou, son of Poeas, dear youth, perform this sad office for me; set the whole sky aglow with the flames of Hercules.

[1488] And now to thee, Hyllus, I bring my latest prayer. Among the captives is a beauteous maid, in feature revealing her race and royal state, Iole, daughter of king Eurytus. Lead her to thy chamber with wedding torch. Victorious, blood-stained, I robbed her of her fatherland and home, and to the wretched girl gave naught except Alcides; and now e'en he is reft from her. Let her find recompense for her sorrows, and cherish Jove's grandson and the son of Hercules; to thee be born whatever seed she has conceived by me.

[1497] [*To ALCMENA.*] Do thou thyself cease thy death-wails for me, I pray, illustrious mother; thy Alcides lives; by my heroic deeds have I made my step-dame seem but the concubine. Whether the tale of the

night of Hercules' begetting be the truth, or whether my sire be mortal – though I be falsely called the son of Jove, I have deserved to be his son; glory on heaven have I conferred, and to Jove's glory did my mother bring me forth. Nay, he himself, though he be Jupiter, is glad to be believed my sire. Dry now thy tears, my mother; proud 'mongst the Grecian mothers shalt thou be. What son like thine has Juno borne, though she wield the sceptre of the skies, and be the Thunderer's bride? Still, though queen of heaven, she envied a mortal woman, and wished that Alcides might be called her own.

[1512] Now, O sun, must thou speed thy course alone, for I, who have been thy companion everywhere, am bound for Tartarus and the land of shades. Yet to the depths shall I bear this glorious fame, that no pest openly has laid Alcides low, and that all pests openly has Alcides slain.

[He goes out toward the pyre which has been prepared for him.]

CHORUS

[1518] O glory of the world, O ray-girt Sun, at whose first warmth Hecate loosens the bits from the weary steeds of her nocturnal car, tell the Sabaeans who lie beneath the dawn, tell the Iberians who lie beneath thy setting, tell those who suffer 'neath the Wagon of the Bear, and those who pant beneath thy burning car: Hercules is hasting to the endless shades, to the realm of sleepless Cerberus, whence he will never more return. Let thy bright rays be overcast with clouds; gaze on the grieving world with pallid face and let disfiguring mists roam o'er thy head. When, O Titan, where, beneath what sky wilt thou follow another Hercules on the earth? To whose aid will the wretched world appeal if within Lerna's swamp some many-headed pest in a hundred snakes shall spread its poisonous rage; if for the ancient tribes of Arcady some boar shall disturb the quiet of the woods; if some son of Thracian Rhodope, harder than the ground of snow-clad Helice, shall spatter his stalls with the blood of men? Who to the trembling nations will give peace, if the angry gods shall raise up new monsters o'er the world? Level with all men he lies, whom earth produced level with the Thunderer. Through countless cities let cries of brief resound; let women with streaming

hair smite their bare arms; let the temples of all gods be closed save his step-dame's only, for she only is free from care.

[1550] Thou farest to Lethe and the Stygian shore whence no keel will ever bring thee back; thou farest, lamented one, unto the ghosts whence, overcoming Death, thou didst once return in triumph, now but a shade, with fleshless arms, wan face and drooping neck; nor will that skiff, which once bore thee alone and feared 'twould be plunged beneath the waves, bear thee alone. And yet thou shalt not dwell midst common shades; midst Aeacus and the two Cretans shalt thou be, sitting in judgment on men's deeds, scouring tyrannic kings. Spare, O ye mighty, restrain your hands. 'Tis thy praise to have kept the sword unstained and that, what time thou didst bear sway, fate midst its storms had less power against thy cities.

[1564] But now has thy manhood place amongst the stars. Wilt occupy the spaces of the north, or where Titan sends forth his oppressive rays? Or in the warm western sky wilt shine, where thou wilt hear Calpe resound with the charging sea? What region of the cloudless heavens wilt thou weigh down? What place, when Alcides comes, will be safe amidst the stars? Only may Jove give thee thy seat far from the dread Lion and the burning Crab, lest at sight of thee the affrighted stars make turmoil of their laws and Titan tremble. While flowers shall bloom as the spring days grow warm; while winter shall strip the foliage from the trees, and summer to the trees recall their foliage; while fruits shall fall as autumn takes his flight, no lapse of time shall snatch thee from the world; comrade of Phoebus, comrade of the stars, shalt thou pass on. Sooner shall wheat sprout from the surface of the deep; sooner the roaring waves of the sea be sweet; sooner shall the icy Bear come down and enjoy the forbidden waters, than shall the nations be silent of thy praise.

[1587] To thee, father of all, in wretchedness we pray: let no dread beast be born, no pest; from the fear of savage kings keep this poor world free; let no one lord it in palace hall who deems it the sole glory of his realm to have held the sword e'er threatening. If some dread thing should come again to earth, oh, give to forsaken earth a

champion.

[1595] But what is this? The universe resounds. Behold, he mourns, the father mourns Alcides; or is it the outcry of the gods or the voice of his frightened step-dame? At the sight of Hercules does Juno flee the stars? Under the mighty weight has Atlas staggered? Or is it that the awful ghosts have trembled and at sight of Hercules the hell-hound in affright has broken his chains and fled? No, we are wrong; behold with joyful face comes Poeas' son and on his shoulders he bears the shafts and the quiver known to all, the heir of Hercules.

[Enter *PHILOCTETES*.]

[1607] Speak out, good youth, and tell the end of Hercules, I pray, and with what countenance Alcides bore his death.

PHILOCTETES

[1609] With such as none e'er bore his life.

CHORUS

[1609] So joyous did he mount his funeral pyre.

PHILOCTETES

[1610] He showed that now flames were as naught to him. What 'neath the heavens has Hercules left by defeat unscathed? Lo, all things have been subdued.

CHORUS

[1613] Midst the hot flames what room was there for valour?

PHILOCTETES

[1614] The one enemy on earth which he had not o'ercome, e'en fire, is vanquished; this also has been added to the beasts; fire has taken its place midst the toils of Hercules.

CHORUS

[1617] But tell us, in what wise were the flames o'ercome?

PHILOCTETES

[1618] When the whole sorrowing band fell upon Oeta's woods, by the hands of one the beech-tree lost its shade and lay full length, hewn to the ground; one fiercely felled a pine-tree, towering to the stars, and from the clouds' midst he summoned it; in act to fall, it shook the rocky slope and with itself brought down the lesser woods. A huge oak stood, wide spreading, such as Chaonia's oak of prophecy, excluding the light of day and stretching its branches far beyond all the grove. Threat'ning it groaned, by many a blow beset, and broke the wedges; back bounded the smiting steel; its edge was dulled, too soft for such a task. When the tree, at last dislodged, falling, brings widespread ruin down, straightway the place lets the sun's full rays; the birds, driven from their perches, flit aimless through the day midst the felled grove, and, loudly complaining, with wearied wings seek for their nests. And now every tree resounded, and even the sacred oaks felt the dread steel-armed hand, and its ancient woods availed no holy grove. The whole forest was piled into a heap; and the logs, starward in layers rising, made all too small a pyre for Hercules – the pine-tree, quick to burn, the tough-fibred oak, the ilex of shorter trunk; but poplar wood, whose foliage adorns Alcides' brow, filled out the pyre.

[1642] But he, like some huge, suffering lion, which, in Libyan forest lying, roars out his pain, hurried along, – who would suppose him hasting to the flames? His gaze was of one who seeks the stars, not fires of earth, when he set foot on Oeta and with his eyes surveyed the pyre complete. The great beams broke beneath him. Then for his shafts and bow he called, and said: "Take these, thou sons of Poeas, take them as Alcides' gift and pledge of love. These did the Hydra feel; by these the Stymphalian birds lie low, and all other pests which at distance I overcame. O youth with valour blest, never in vain shalt thou send these 'gainst a foe; or if birds from the very clouds thou wouldst fetch away, birds will fall down, and out of the sky will thy shafts, sure of their prey, come floating; and ne'er will this bow disappoint thy hand. Well has it learned to poise the feathered shafts and unerringly send them flying; while the shafts themselves, loosed from the string, fail never to find their mark. Only do thou, I pray, apply the fire and set the last torch for me. Let this club," he said,

“which no hand but mine has wielded, burn in the flames with me; this weapon alone shall follow Hercules. This also shouldst thou have,” said he, “if thou couldst wield it. Let it add fuel to its master’s pyre.” Then did he call for the Nemean monster’s shaggy skin to burn with him; ‘neath the skin the pyre was hidden.

[1667] The whole throng set up a lamentation, and sorrow filled the eyes of all with tears. His mother, passionate in grief, her eager bosom stript, and she smote her breasts, naked e’en to the waist, in endless lamentation; and with her cries assailing the gods and Jove himself, she filled all the region round with womanish bewailings. “Mother,” he said, “thou dost disgrace the death of Hercules; restrain thy tears and confine thy womanish grief within thy heart. Why for thy weeping should Juno count this day joyful? For she rejoices to see her rival’s tears. Curb thy faint heart, my mother; ’tis a sin to tear the breasts and the womb that bore Alcides.” Then with dread mutterings, as when through Argive towns he dragged the dog, what time, triumphant over hell, in scorn of Dis and trembling death he returned to earth, so did he lay him down upon the pyre. What victor ever stood in his chariot so joyfully triumphant? What tyrant king with such a countenance ever gave laws to nations? How calmly he bore his fate! Even our tears were stayed, grief’s shock subsided, none grieves that he must perish. Now were we ‘shamed to weep; Alcmena, herself, whose sex impels to mourning, stood with dry cheeks, a mother now well-nigh equal to her son.

CHORUS

[1691] Sent he no supplications, heavenward to the gods e’er the fire was lit? Looked he not to Jove to hear his prayers?

PHILOCTETES

[1693] Careless of self he lay and, gazing at heaven, quested with his eyes whether from any quarter his sire looked down at him. Then, with hands outstretched, he spoke: “O father, from what quarter soe’er thou lookest on thy son, (he truly is my father, for whose sake night joined with day and one day ceased to be,) if both the bounds of Phoebus sing my praise, the tribes of Scythia and every burning

strand which daylight parches; if peace fills all the earth; if no cities groan and no man stains with sin his altar-fires; if crimes have ceased, admit this soul, I pray thee, to the stars. I have no fear of the infernal realm of death, nor do the sad realms of dusky Jove affright me; but to go, naught but a shade, to those gods I overcame, O sire, I am ashamed. Dispel the clouds, spread wide the day, that the eyes of gods may gaze on burning Hercules. Though thou deny me stars and a place in heaven, O sire, thou shalt even be compelled – ah! if pain will excuse any words of mine, then open the Stygian pools and give me to death again; but prove me first thy son. This day will make me seem worthy of the stars. Worthless is all that has been done; this day, my father, will bring Hercules to light or doom him.”

[1715] When he had thus said, he called for fire. “Up now, Alcides’ willing friend,” said he, “catch up the Oetaean torch; let my step-dame see how I can bear the flames. Why did thy right hand tremble? Did thy hand shrink timid from such unholy deed? Then give me my quiver back, thou undaring, unskilled, unwarlike – that the hand to bend my bow! Why do thy cheeks grow pale? Come, seize on the torch with courage, with face thou seest on prone Alcides. Poor soul, have some regard for him who soon will burn.

[1725] “But lo! now doth my father call me and he opens heaven. I come, O sire.” Then was his face no more the same. With trembling hand I applied the blazing pine; the flames shrunk back, the torch resisted and would not touch his limbs; but Hercules followed up the shrinking flames. Thou wouldst suppose that Caucasus or Pindus or Athos was ablaze; no sound burst forth, save that the fire seemed groaning. O stubborn heart! Had huge Typhon been lying on that pyre, he would have groaned aloud, and fierce Enceladus who upon his shoulders bore Ossa, upturn from earth.

[1736] But Hercules, midst roaring flames upstarting, all charred and mangled, gazed dauntless round and cried: “Now art thou parent true of Hercules; thus ’tis meet that thou shouldst stand, my mother, beside the pyre, and thus ’tis meet that Hercules be mourned.” Midst scorching heat and threat’ning flames, unmoved, unshaken, to neither

side turning his tortured limbs, he encourages, advises, is active still, though all aflame. To all his ministrants stoutness of soul he gives; you would deem him all on fire to burn. The whole crowd stand in speechless wonder and the flames have scarce belief, so calm his brow, the hero so majestic. Nor does he speed his burning; but when now he deemed that courage enough had been shown in death, from every side he dragged the burning logs which the fire least fed upon, and into that blazing mass he strode and sought where the flames leaped highest, all unafraid, defiant. Awhile he feasted his eyes upon the fires. But now his heavy beard burned bright; and even when threat'ning fire assailed his face and the hot tongues licked about his head, he did not close his eyes. – But what is this? I see the sad mother bearing in her bosom the remains of great Alcides, and Alcmena, tossing her squalid locks, bewails her son.

[*Enter ALCMENA, carrying in her bosom a funeral urn.*]

ALCMENA

[1758] Fear ye the fates, O powers above! [*Holding up the urn.*] See the scant dust of Hercules – to this, to this has that mighty body shrunk! O Sun, how great a mass has passed away to nothingness! Ah me, this aged breast can hold Alcides, this is a tomb for him. See, Hercules has scarce filled all the urn; how light for me his weight upon whose shoulders the whole heavens as a light weight rested. Once to the farthest realms of Tartarus, O son, didst thou go but to return – Oh, when from infernal Styx wilt thou come again? Not in such wise as to bring e'en spoil with thee, nor that Theseus again may owe thee the light of day, – but when, though all alone? Will the whole world, heaped on thee, hold thy shade, on the hell-hound avail to keep thee back? When wilt thou batter down the Taenarian gates, or to what yawning jaws shall my mother betake herself, where is the approach to death? Thou takest thy journey to the dead, and 'twill be thy only one. Why do I waste time in wailing? Why dost endure, O wretched life? Why clingest to the light? What Hercules can I again bring forth to Jove? What son so great will call me mother, will call me his Alcmena? Oh, too, too happy thou, my Theban husband, for thou to the realms of Tartarus didst descend, thy son still living; at thy approach the infernal ones, perchance, were filled with fear,

merely because thou wast the sire of Hercules, even though falsely called. – What lands shall an aged woman seek, hated by savage kins, if spite of all any savage king is left alive? Oh, woe is me! All sons who lament their murdered sires will seek revenge from me; they all will overwhelm me. If any young Busiris or if any young Antaeus terrifies the region of the burning zone, I shall be led off as booty; if any Ismarian seeks revenge for the herds of the bloody king of Thrace, upon my limbs will his horrid herds be fed. Juno, perchance, in anger will seek revenge; against me will the whole force of her wrath incline; though her soul is more disturbed by Alcides, o’ercome at last, I, the concubine, am left – ah! what punishments will she inflict, lest I be again a mother! This son has made my womb a thing of fear.

[1796] Whither shall Alcmena flee? What place, what region, what quarter of the world will take my part, or to what hiding-place shall thy mother betake herself, know everywhere though thee? Shall I seek my fatherland and my wretched home? Eurystheus is king at Argos. Shall I seek Thebes, my husband’s kingdom, the Ismenus and my bridal chamber, where once, greatly beloved by him, I looked on Jove? Oh, happy, far too happy had I been, if I myself, too, had known Jove’s thunderbolt! Oh, would that from my womb the infant Alcides had been ripped! But now was the chance given me, yea ’twas given to see my son vying in praise with Jove, that this, too, might be given me – to know of how much fate had power to rob me.

[1809] What people will live mindful of thee, O son? Now is the whole race ungrateful. Shall I seek Cleonae? seek the Arcadian tribes and hunt out the lands made famous by thy righteous toils? Here fell the serpent dire, here the bird-monster, here fell a bloody king, and here by thy hand subdued, the lion fell, who, while thou liest buried here, holds a place in heaven. If earth is grateful, let every people shield thine Alcmena. Shall I go to the Thracian peoples, and to Hebrus’ tribes? for this land, too, was defended by thy toils; low do the stables with the kingdom lie. Here peace was granted when the bloody king was overthrown; for where has it not been granted?

[1821] What tomb for thee shall a luckless old woman seek? Let the whole world contend for thy remains. The ashes of mighty Hercules, what people or what temples, what races desire to have? Who then, who seeks, who demands Alcmene's burden? What sepulchre, O son, what tomb is great enough for thee? Thy tomb is the whole wide world, and fame shall be thine epitaph. Why, soul of mine, art fearful? Thou holdst the dust of Hercules; embrace his bones; his mere dust will bring thee aid, will be defence enough; even thy ghost will cause kings to tremble.

HYLLUS

[Who seems to have been present during the preceding scene.]

[1831] Though truly they are due thy son, restrain thy tears, mother of Alcides the illustrious. He is neither to be mourned nor pursued with grievous prayers, whoe'er by his valour hath halted the march of fate; his deathless valour forbids to weep for Hercules. Brave men forbid to mourn, cowards command.

ALCMENA

[1837] When her deliverer is lost, shall a mother abate her grief?

HYLLUS

[1838] Both land and sea and where the shining sun from his bright car looks down upon both oceans, (not thou alone dost grieve) all mourn for their lost deliverer.

ALCMENA

[1840] How many sons has his wretched mother buried in him alone! Kingdom I lacked, yet kingdoms could I give. I only, midst all the mothers whom the earth contains, refrained from prayer; naught from the gods I asked, while my son remained; for what could the love of Hercules not grant to me? What god could deny me aught? In my own hands were the answers to my prayers: whatever Jove denied, Hercules could bestow. What son like this has a mortal mother borne? Once a mother stiffened into stone when, stripped of her whole brood, she stood and, one alone, lamented her twice seven children; but to how many broods like hers could my son be

compared? Till now for mother's grief a measure vast enough was lacking – Alcmene will furnish it. Then cease, ye mothers, whom persistent woe still bids to mourn, whom crushing sorrow has transformed to stone; yield ye, yea, all of you, to these my woes. Then come, beat on this aged breast, O wretched hands, – and canst thou alone suffice for loss so vast, an aged spent old woman? Soon will the whole world unite to mourn with thee. Yet raise thy arms, however weary, in lamentation; that by thy grief thou mayst stir envy in the gods, summon the whole race of men unto thy mourning.

[Here follows ALCMENA's formal song of mourning accompanied by the usual Oriental gestures of lamentation.]

[1863] Come ye, bewail Alcmene's son and mighty Jove's, for whose conception one day was lost and lingering dawn joined two nights in one; something greater than the day itself is lost. Together lament, ye nations all, whose cruel tyrants he bade descend to the abodes of Styx and lay down the sword, reeking with blood of peoples. To such deserts pay tribute of your tears; let all, yea all the world echo to your laments. Alcides let sea-girt Crete bewail, land to the great Thunderer dear; let its hundred peoples beat upon their arms. Now Cretans, now priests of Cybele, with your hands clash Ida's cymbals; 'tis meet that with arms ye mourn him. Now, now make him just funeral; low lies Alcides, equal, O Crete, to the Thunderer himself. Weep for Alcides' passing, O Arcadians, who were a people ere yet the moon was born; let Parthenius' heights and Nemea's hills resound and Maenalus smite heavy blows of grief. The bristly boar, within your fields laid low, demands lament for great Alcides, and the huge bird whose wings hid all the sky, challenged to meet his shafts. Weep, Argive Cleonae, weep; here long ago the lion who kept your walls in fear my son's right hand destroyed. Ye Bistonian dames, beat your breasts, and let cold Hebrus resound to your beatings; weep for Alcides, for no more are your children born for the stalls, nor your offspring as food for the herds. Weep thou, O land from Antaeus delivered, ye regions from fierce Geryon saved; yea, with me, ye unhappy nations, lament; let both seas re-echo your beatings.

[1903] You too, ye thronging deities of the whirling heavens, bewail Hercules' fate; for my Alcides bore your heavens upon his shoulders, your sky, ye gods above, when Atlas, starry Olympus' prop, was eased of his load awhile. Where now are thy heights, O Jove? Where is the promised palace in the sky? Alcides, mortal, is dead! mortal, is buried! How oft did he save thee thy lightnings, how seldom thy fire needed hurling! Against me at least brandish thy lightning, and deem me Semele.

[1916] And now, O son, holdst thou the Elysian seats, holdst now the shore whither nature calls all peoples? Or after the dog was stolen has the dark Styx barred thy way, and on the very threshold of Dis do the fates delay thee? What confusion now, my son, seizes the shadowy spirits? Does the boatman draw away his skiff in flight? Do Thessalian Centaurs with flying hoofs smite the affrighted ghosts? Does the hydra in terror plunge his snaky heads beneath the waves and do thy toils all fear thee, O my son? Fooled, fooled am I, distracted, mad! Nor ghosts nor shadows are afraid of thee; the fearsome pelt, stripped from the Argolic lion, with its tawny mane shields thy left arm no more, and its savage teeth hedge not thy temples; thy quiver thou hast given away and now a lesser hand will aim thy shafts. Unarmed, my son, thou farest through the shades, and with them forever shalt thou abide.

THE VOICE OF HERCULES

[1940] [*From above.*] Why, since I hold the realms of starry heaven and at last have attained the skies, dost by lamentation bid me taste of death? Give o'er; for now has my valour borne me to the stars and to the gods themselves.

ALCMENA

[1944] [*Bewildered.*] Whence, oh, whence falls that sound upon my startled ears? Whence do the thunderous tones bid check my weeping? Now know I that chaos has been o'ercome.

[1947] From the Styx, O son, art come again to me? Broken a second

time is the power of grisly death? Hast escaped once more death's stronghold and the infernal skiff's dark pools? Is Acheron's wan stream retraceable and mayst thou alone recross it? And after thy death do the fates hold thee no more? Has Pluto barred thy way, and trembling for his own sovereignty? Surely upon the blazing logs I saw thee laid, when the vast, fearful flames raged to the sky. Thou wast consumed – why, why did the bottomless abyss not gain thy shade? What part of thee did the ghosts fear, I pray? Is e'en thy shade to terrible for Dis?"

HERCULES

[His form now taking shape in the air above.]

[1963] The pools of groaning Cocytus hold me not, nor has the dark skiff borne o'er my shade; then cease thy laments, my mother; once and for all have I seen the shadowy ghosts. Whate'er in me was mortal and of thee, the vanquished flame has borne away my father's part to heaven, thy part to the flames has been consigned. Cease then thy lamentations which to a worthless son might well be given. Let tears for the inglorious flow; valour fares starward, fear, to the realm of death. In living presence, mother, from the stars Alcides speaks; soon shall bloody Eurystheus make thee full recompense; o'er his proud head shalt thou in triumph ride. But now 'tis meet that I pass to the realm above; Alcides once again has conquered hell.

[He vanishes from sight.]

ALCMENA

[1977] Stay but a little! – he has banished from my sight, is gone, to the stars faring. Am I deceived or do my eyes but deem they saw my son? My soul for very grief cannot believe it. – But no! thou art divine, and deathless the heavens possess thee. In thy triumphant entrance I believe.

[1981] Now will I take me to the realm of Thebes and there proclaim the new god added to their temples. *[Exit.]*

CHORUS

[1983] Never to Stygian shades is glorious valour borne. The brave live

on, nor shall the cruel fates bear you o'er Lethe's waters; but when the last day shall bring the final hour, glory will open wide the path to heaven.

[1989] But do thou, O mighty conqueror of beasts, peace-bringer to the world, be with us yet; still as of old regard this earth of ours; and if some strange-visaged monster cause us with dire fear to tremble, do thou o'ercome him with the forked thunderbolts – yea, more mightily than thy father's self the thunders hurl.

AGAMEMNON



Translated by Frank Justus Miller

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THE SCENE is laid partly within and partly without the palace of Agamemnon at Argos or Mycenae, on the day of the return of the king from his long absence at Troy, beginning in the period of darkness just preceding the dawn.

ARGUMENT

The blood-feud between Atreus and Thyestes was not ended with the terrible vengeance which Atreus wreaked upon his brother. It was yet in fate that Thyestes should live to beget upon his own daughter a son, Aegisthus, who should slay Atreus and bring ruin and death upon the great Atrides, Agamemnon.

The Trojan war is done. And now the near approach of the victorious king, bringing his captives and treasure home to Argos, has been announced. But little does he dream to what a home he is returning. For Clytemnestra, enraged at Agamemnon because he had sacrificed her daughter Iphigenia at Aulis to appease the winds, and full of jealousy because he brings Cassandra as her rival home, estranged also by the long-continued absence of her lord, but most estranged by her own guilty union with Aegisthus, is now plotting to slay her husband on his return, gaining thus at once revenge and safety from his wrath.

AGAMEMNON

GHOST OF THYESTES

[1] Leaving the murky regions of infernal Dis, I come, sent forth from Tartarus' deep pit, doubting which world I hate the more – Thyestes flees the lower, the upper he puts to flight. Lo, my spirit shudders, my limbs quake with fear; I see my father's, nay more, my brother's house. This is the ancient seat of Pelops' line; here 'tis the custom of the Pelasgians to crown their kings; on the this throne sit high lords whose proud hands wield the sceptre; here is their council-chamber – here they feast.

[12] Fain would I turn me back. Is it not better to haunt even the gloomy pools, better to gaze upon the guardian of the Styx, tossing his three-fold neck with sable mane? where one, his body bound on the swift-flying wheel, is whirled back upon himself; where vain uphill toil is mocked as the stone rolls ever backward; where a greedy bird tears at the liver constantly renewed; and the old man, thirst-parched midst waters, catches at fleeting waves with cheated lips, doomed to pay dearly for the banquet of the gods. But how small a part of my offence is his? Let us take count of all whom for their impious deeds the Cretan judge with whirling urn condemns; all of them by my crimes shall I, Thyestes, conquer. But by my brother shall I be conquered, full of my three sons buried in me; my own flesh have I consumed.

[28] Nor thus far only has Fortune defiled the sire, but, daring greater crime than that committed, she bade him seek his daughter's incestuous embrace. Fearlessly and to the dregs did I drain her bidding, but 'twas an impious thing I did. And therefore, that a father's power might extend o'er all his children, my daughter, forced by fate, bore child to me, worthy to call me father. Nature has been confounded; father with grandsire, yea, monstrous! husband with father, grandsons with sons, have I confused – day with night.

[37] But at length, though late and coming after death, the promise of

dim prophecy is fulfilled to me, worn with my woes; that king of kings, that leader of leaders, Agamemnon, following whose banner a thousand ships once covered the Trojan waters with their sails, now that, after ten courses of Phoebus, Ilium is o'erthrown, now is he near at hand – to give his throat into his wife's power. Now, now shall this house swim in blood other than mine; swords, axes, spears, a king's head cleft with the axe's heavy stroke, I see; now crimes are near, now treachery, slaughter, gore – feasts are being spread. The author of thy birth has come, Aegisthus. Why dost hang thy head in shame? Why doth thy trembling hand, doubtful of purpose, fall? Why doest take counsel with thyself, why turn the question o'er and o'er whether this deed become thee? Think on thy mother; it becomes thee well.

[53] But why suddenly is the summer night prolonged to winter's span? or what holds the setting stars in the sky? Are we delaying Phoebus? [*Preparing to go.*] Give back the day now to the universe. [*Ghost vanishes.*]

CHORUS

[57] O Fortune, who dost bestow the throne's high boon with mocking hand, in dangerous and doubtful state thou settest the too exalted. Never have sceptres obtained calm peace or certain tenure; care on care weighs them down, and ever do fresh storms vex their souls. Not so on Libyan quicksands does the sea rage and roll up wave on wave; not so, stirred from their lowest depths, surge Euxine's waters, hard by the icy pole, where, undipped in the azure waves, Boötes follows his shining wain, as does Fortune roll on the headlong fates of kings. To be feared they long, and to be feared they dread; kindly night gives them no safe retreat, and sleep, which conquers care, soothes not their breasts.

[77] What palace has not crime answering crime hurled headlong? What palace do impious arms not vex? Law, shame, the sacred bonds of marriage, all flee from courts. Hard in pursuit comes grim Bellona of the bloody hand, and she who frets the proud, Erinys, forever dogging homes too high, which any hour brings low from high

estate.

[87] Though arms be idle and treachery give o'er, great kingdoms sink of their own weight, and Fortune gives way 'neath the burden of herself. Sails swollen with favouring breezes fear blasts too strongly theirs; the tower which rears its head to the very clouds is beaten by rainy Auster; the grove, spreading dense shade around, sees ancient oak-trees riven; 'tis the high hills that the lightnings strike; large bodies are more to disease exposed, and while common herds stray o'er vagrant pastures, the head highest upreared is marked for death.

[101] Whatever Fortune has raised on high, she lifts but to bring low. Modest estate has longer life; then happy he whoe'er, content with the common lot, with safe breeze hugs the shore, and, fearing to trust his skiff to the wider sea, with unambitious oar keeps close to land.

CLYTEMNESTRA

[108] Why, sluggish soul, dost safe counsel seek? Why waver? Already the better way is closed. Once thou mightest have guarded thy chaste bed and thy widowed sceptre with pure, wifely faith; gone are good fashions, right doing, honour, piety, faith, – and modesty, which, once 'tis gone, knows no return. Fling loose the reins and, forward bent, rouse onward all iniquity; through crime ever is the safe way for crime. Devise now in thine own heart a woman's wiles, – what any faithless wife, beside herself with blind passion, what step-mother's hands have dared, or what she dared, that maid ablaze with impious love, who fled her Phasian realm in that Thessalian bark; dare sword, dare poison; or else flee from Mycenae with the partner of thy guilt, in stealthy bark. But why timidly talk of stealth, of exile, and of flight? Such things thy sister did; thee some greater crime becomes.

NURSE

[125] Queen of the Greeks, Leda's illustrious child, what ponderest thou in silence, what mad deed, ungoverned in thy purpose, art planning with restless soul? Though thy say no word, thy face discovers all thy anguish. Wherefore, whate'er it be, give thyself

time and room; what reason cannot, delay has oftentimes cured.

CLYTEMNESTRA

[131] Passions rack me too strong to endure delay; flames are burning my very marrow and my heart; here fear blent with anguish plies the spur, and my breast throbs with jealousy; there base love forces its yoke upon my mind and forbids me to give way. And midst such fires that beset my soul, shame, weary indeed and conquered and utterly undone, still struggles on. By shifting floods am I driven, as when here wind, there tide harries the deep, and the waters halt uncertain to which foe they will yield. Wherefore I have let go the rudder from my hands – where wrath, where smart, where hope shall carry me, there will I go; to the waves have I given my bark. Where reason fails, 'tis best to follow chance.

NURSE

[145] Blind is he and rash who follows chance.

CLYTEMNESTRA

[146] When fortune is at its worst, why fear its hazard?

NURSE

[147] Sae is thy sin and hidden, if thou allow it so.

CLYTEMNESTRA

[148] Open to view is a royal house's every sin.

NURSE

[149] Dost repent the old crime, yet plan the new?

CLYTEMNESTRA

[150] Surely 'tis folly to stop midway in sin.

NURSE

[151] Whoso piles crime on crime, makes greater what he dreads.

CLYTEMNESTRA

[152] Both knife and cautery oft take the place of drugs.

NURSE

[153] Desperate remedies no one tries at first.

CLYTEMNESTRA

[154] In midst of ills, we must snatch at headlong ways.

NURSE

[155] But let the hallowed name of wedlock turn thee back.

CLYTEMNESTRA

[156] For ten years widowed, shall I still think on husband?

NURSE

[157] Thine offspring of him thou shouldst remember.

CLYTEMNESTRA

[158] I do remember my daughter's wedding fires, my son-in-law, Achilles; true faith he showed a mother!

NURSE

[160] She freed our becalmed fleet from delay, and roused the sluggish sea from its deep repose.

CLYTEMNESTRA

[162] Oh, shame! oh, anguish! I, child of Tyndarus, of heavenly lineage, have borne a sacrifice for the Grecian fleet! Once more in memory I see my daughter's wedding rites, which he made worthy of Pelops' house, when, with prayer on lip, the father stood before the altars, how fit for nuptials! Calchas shuddered at his own oracles and at the recoiling altar-fires. O house that ever o'ertops crime with crime! With blood we purchased winds, and war with murder! But, say you, by this means a thousand ships spread sail together? 'Twas by no favouring god the fleet was freed; no! Aulis from port drave forth the impious ships. Thus beginning, not more happily did he wage the war. With love of a captive smitten, unmoved by prayer, he held as spoil the child of Smyntean Apollo's aged priest, then as now mad with passion for a sacred maid. Neither Achilles, unmoved by threats, could bend him, nor he who alone sees the secrets of the

universe, (for me and mine sure seer, for slave-girls of no weight), nor the plague-smit people, nor the blazing pyres. Midst the death-struggle of falling Greece, conquered, but by no foe, he languishes, has leisure for love, seeks new amours; and, lest his widowed couch ever be free from some barbaric mistress, he lusted for the Lyrnesian maid, Achilles' spoil, nor blushed to bear her away, torn from her lord's embrace – he, the enemy of Paris! Now, wounded afresh, he rages with passion for the inspired Phrygian maid; and after Troy's conquest, after Ilium's overthrow, he comes back home, a captive's husband Priam's son-in-law!

[193] Now gird thee up, my soul; no trivial strife art thou preparing. Crime must be forestalled. Sluggish, what day dost thou await? Till Phrygian wives shall wield our Pelops' sceptre? Do the virgin daughters of thy house and Orestes, image of his father, hold thee back? Nay, 'tis the ills that threaten them that should urge thee on; o'er them a storm of woes hangs lowering. Why, wretched woman, dost thou hesitate? Through thine own side, if not otherwise it can be done, let the sword be driven, and so slay two. Mingle thy blood with his, in thy death destroy thy husband; death hath no pang when shared with whom thou wouldest.

NURSE

[203] O Queen, restrain thyself, check thine impetuous wrath and think what thou art daring; the conqueror of wild Asia is at hand, Europe's avenger, dragging in triumph captive Pergama and the Phrygians, long since subdued. Against him now with guile and stealth dost thou essay to fight, whom Achilles with his savage sword hurt not, though in grim wrath he armed his insolent hand, nor the better Ajax raging and bent on death, nor Hector, sole bulwark against the warring Greeks, nor the sure-aimed shafts of Paris, nor swarthy Memnon, nor Xanthus, rolling down corpses and arms commingled, nor Simoïs, its waves running red with blood, nor Cynus, snowy offspring of the Ocean-god, nor warlike Rhesus and his Thracian horde, nor the Amazon, with her painted quiver, battle-axe in hand, and crescent shield? Him, home-returning, dost thou prepare to slay and to defile thine altars with slaughter impious? Will victorious Greece leave

such a deed unavenged? Horses and arms, the sea studded with ships, set these before thine eyes, the ground flowing with streams of blood, and the whole fate of the captured house of Dardanus turned 'gainst the Greeks. Control thy fierce passions, and do thou thyself set thine own soul at peace. [*Exit.*]

[*Enter AEGISTHUS.*]

AEGISTHUS

[226] [*In soliloquy.*] The hour which always in my heart and soul I dreaded is here indeed, the hour of fate for me. Why, would, dost fear to face it? Why at the first onslaught dost lay down thy arms? Be sure that for thee destruction and dread doom the pitiless gods prepare. Then set thy vile life to face all punishments, and with confronting breast welcome both sword and flame, Aegisthus; for one so born, 'tis no penalty to die.

[234] [*To CLYTEMNESTRA.*] Thou partner of my peril, thou, Leda's daughter, be but my comrade still; then blood for blood shall he repay to thee, this cowardly warrior and valiant sire. But why does pallor o'erspread thy trembling cheeks, and why in thy listless face is thine eye so dull and drooping?

CLYTEMNESTRA

[239] Love for my husband conquers and turns me back. Return we thither whence 'twere well never to have come away. E'en now let us reseek purity and truth, for never too late is trod the path to honesty; whose repents his sin is well-nigh innocent.

AEGISTHUS

[244] Whither art borne, mad one? Dost believe or hope that Agamemnon is still true to his marriage vows? Though there were nought in thine own heart to rouse grave fears, still would his arrogant, immoderate, o'er-inflated fortune swell his pride. Harsh to his allies was he while Troy still stood; what thinkest thou Troy has added to a spirit by its own nature fierce? Mycenae's king he was; he will come back her tyrant; – prosperity urges pride beyond itself.

With what magnificence the surging throng of harlots comes! But one stands out among the throng and holds the king in thrall, the handmaid of the fate-revealing god. Wilt thou give up and endure a sharer in thy marriage bed? But she will not. A wife's utmost of woe is a mistress openly queening it in her husband's house. Nor throne nor bed can brook a partnership.

CLYTEMNESTRA

[260] Aegisthus, why dost thou again drive me headlong, and fan to flame my wrath already cooling? Suppose the victor has allowed himself some liberty toward a captive maid; 'tis meet neither for wife nor mistress to take note of this. There is one law for thrones, one for the private bed. What? Does my own heart, itself conscious of base guilt, suffer me to pass harsh judgment on my husband? Let her forgive freely who forgiveness needs.

AEGISTHUS

[268] Sayst thou so? Canst bargain for mutual forgiveness? Are the rights of kings unknown to thee or strange? To us harsh judges, partial to themselves, they deem this the greatest pledge of kingship, if whate'er to others is unlawful is unlawful to them alone.

CLYTEMNESTRA

[273] He pardoned Helen; joined to her Menelaüs she returns, who Europe and Asia to like ruin dashed.

AEGISTHUS

[275] Aye, but no woman with stealthy love has stolen Atrides and captured his heart close-barred against his wife. Already thy lord seeks charge against thee, intends cause of strife. Suppose no baseness has been done by thee; what boots an honest life and sinless? Whom a master hates is condemned of guilt unheard. Spurned away, wilt thou go back to Sparta and thy Eurotas, wilt flee to thy father's house? The rejected of kings have no escape. With false hope dost thou relieve thy fears.

CLYTEMNESTRA

[284] None knows my guilt save one faithful friend.

AEGISTHUS

[285] Faith never crosses the threshold of a king.

CLYTEMNESTRA

[286] With wealth will I purchase, with bribes will I blind faith.

AEGISTHUS

[287] Faith gained by bribes is overcome by bribes.

CLYTEMNESTRA

[288] The remnant of my old time chastity revives; why dost thou cry against it? Why with cozening words dost give me evil counsel? Deserting the king of kings, shall I wed with thee, a high-born woman with an outcast?

AEGISTHUS

[292] And wherefore less than Atreus' son do I seem to thee, who am Thyestes' son?

CLYTEMNESTRA

[293] If that is not enough, say grandson, too.

AEGISTHUS

[294] Phoebus was the source of my begetting; my birth shames me not.

CLYTEMNESTRA

[295] Dost thou name Phoebus as source of an incestuous birth, whom, calling back his steeds in sudden night, you drove from heaven? Why besmirch the gods? Thou, trained by guile to steal the marriage bed, whom we know only as man of unlawful love, depart at once, take from my sight the infamy of our house; this home is waiting for its king and lord.

AEGISTHUS

[302] Exile is not new to me; I am used to woe. If thou commandest, O

queen, not alone from home and Argos do I flee: I am ready at thy bidding to plunge sword into my heart, o'erweighed with grief.

CLYTEMNESTRA

[306] [*Aside.*] Yet, should I, cruel daughter of Tyndareus, let this be done. [*To AEGISTHUS.*] Who jointly sins owes also faith to crime. Come thou with me, that the dark and threatening state of our affairs joint plans may set in order.

{*Exeunt.*}

CHORUS

[310] Sing ye, O maids renowned, of Phoebus! To thee, Phoebus, the festal throng wreaths the head, to thee, waving laurel-bough, the Argive maid in wonted fashion spreads forth her virgin locks; and thou who drinkest of Erasinus' cool waters, who of Eurotas, and who of Ismenus drinkest, silently flowing along its green banks; thou, too, though stranger in Thebes, come join in our chorus, whom Manto, reader of fate, Tiresias' daughter, warmed with due rites to worship the gods, offspring of Latona.

[326] Thy bow, now peace has come back, all-conquering Phoebus, loose, and thy quiver, full of swift arrows, lay down from thy shoulder and let resound, smit by thy flying fingers, the tuneful lyre. No stern, high strains in lofty measures would I have it sound, but such simply song as 'tis thy wont to modulate on lighter shell, when the learned Muse surveys thy sports. 'Tis thy right, too, on heavier strings to sound such strain as thou sangest when gods saw Titans by thunder overcome, even when mountains, on lofty mountains set, furnished pathway for grim monsters, when Pelion stood on Ossa set beneath, and cloud-capped Olympus weighed on both.

[348] Thou, too, be near, who as wife and sister sharest the sceptre's might, Juno the royal! We, thy chosen band, in Mycenae adore thee. Thou art the sole protector of Argos that calls on thee with anxious prayers; thou in thy hand holdest war and peace. Accept now the laurels of Agamemnon, victorious goddess. To thee the box-wood flute of many openings soundeth its solemn strains; to thee skilled

maidens touch the strings in soothing melody; to thee Grecian mothers wave the votive torch; at thy shrines shall fall the bull's white mate, which knows not the plough, whose neck the yoke ne'er scarred.

[368] And thou, child of the great Thunderer, glorious Pallas, who oft with thy spear didst attack the Dardanian towers, to thee in mingled chorus mothers, younger and older, kneel, and at thy coming the priest throws wide the doors of the temple. To thee the throng, crowned with woven wreaths, advances; to thee aged and spent old men, their petitions heard, give thanks and with trembling hand pour wine in libation.

[382] Thee, too, O Trivia, with mindful hearts and prayer familiar we adore. Thou biddest thy natal Delos to stand firm, Lucina, erstwhile a Cyclad, drifting hither and yon at the will of the winds; now 'tis a stable land with root firm fixed, repels the winds and gives anchorage for ships, though wont to follow them. Victorious, thou countest o'er the corpses that their mother, child of Tantalus, bemoaned; now on Sipylus' high top she stands, a weeping statue, and to this day fresh tears the ancient marble drips. Zealously both maid and man adore the twin divinities.

[400] And thou before all others, father and ruler, god of the thunder, by whose mere nod the farthest poles do tremble, O Jove, thou author of our race, kindly accept our gifts, and with a father's care take thought for thine own true progeny.

[408] But lo, a soldier, hurrying with huge steps, hastes hither with signs of joyful tidings clearly visible, (for his spear bears a laurel wreath on its iron tip,) and Eurybates, the ever faithful servant of the king, is here.

[*Enter EURYBATES with laurel-wreathed spear.*]

EURYBATES

[392a] Ye shrines and altars of the heavenly gods, ye household deities of my fathers, after long wanderings wearied, and scarce trusting

mine own eyes, I humbly give reverence. [*To the people.*] Pay now your vows to the high gods; the pride and glory of the Argive land returns to his own house at last, Agamemnon, victorious!

[*Enter CLYTEMNESTRA in time to hear the herald's concluding words.*]

CLYTEMNESTRA

[397a] Blessed news this that falls upon mine ears! But where delays my husband whom I have sought through ten long years? Rests he on sea, or land?

EURYBATES

[400a] Unharm'd, increased in glory, illustrious with praise, he hath set homeward foot upon the longed-for shore.

CLYTEMNESTRA

[402a] With sacred rites let us hail the day, fortunate at last, and the gods, even if propitious, yet slow in granting our request. But tell me, thou, does my husband's brother live, and where is my sister, tell.

EURYBATES

[406a] Better than our hopes I pray and beseech the gods; for the sea's dubious lot forbids to speak certainty. When our scattered fleet met swollen seas, one ship could scarce descry her sister ship. Nay, e'en Atrides' self, on the boundless ocean wandering, endured losses heavier by sea than war, and like a vanquished man, though victor, he returns, bringing but few and shattered vessels from his mighty fleet.

CLYTEMNESTRA

[414] Tell what calamity has swallowed up my ships, or what mishap by sea has dispersed the chiefs.

EURYBATES

[416] A tale bitter in the telling thou demandest; thou biddest me mix the unlucky message with the glad. My sick mind shrinks from speech and shudders at the thought of such disasters.

CLYTEMNESTRA

[419] Tell on; who shrinks from knowledge of his calamities but aggravates his fear; troubles half seen do torture all the more.

EURYBATES

[421] When all Pergamum fell 'neath the Doric fire, the spoil was divided and in eager haste all sought the sea. And now the warrior eases his side of the sword's weary load, and unheeded lie the shields along the high sterns; the oar is fitted to the warrior's hands, and to their eager haste all tarrying seems over long. Then, when the signal for return gleamed on the royal ship, and the loud trumpet-blast warned the glad rowers, the king's gilded prow, leading, marked out the way, and opened up the course for a thousand ships to follow.

[431] A gentle breeze at first steals into our sails and drives our vessels onward; the tranquil waves, scarce stirring, ripple beneath soft Zephyr's breathing, and the sea reflects the splendour of the fleet, hiding the while beneath it. 'Tis sweet to gaze on the bare shores of Troy, sweet to behold deserted Sigeum's wastes. The young men all haste to bend the oars, with strokes together, aid winds with hands and move their sturdy arms with rhythmic swing. The furrowed waters quiver, the vessel's sides hiss through the waves and dash the blue sea into hoary spray. When a fresher breeze strains the swelling sails, the warriors lay by their oars, trust ship to wind and, stretched along the benches, either watch the far-fleeing land as the sails retreat, or rehearse their wars – brave Hector's threats, the chariot and his ransomed body given to the pyre, Hercean Jove sprinkled with royal blood. Then, too, the Tyrrhene fish plays to and fro in the smooth water, leaps over the heaving seas with arching back, and sports around, now dashing about in circles, now swimming by our side, now gaily leading and again following after; anon the band in sheer wantonness touch the leading prow, now round and round the thousandth ship they swim.

[456] Meanwhile all the shore is hid and the plains sink from view, and dimly the ridges of Ida's mount appear; and now, what alone the keenest eye can see, the smoke of Ilium shows but a dusky spot.

Already from the yoke Titan was freeing his horses' weary necks; now to the stars his rays sink low, now day goes headlong down. A tiny cloud, growing to a murky mass, stains the bright radiance of the setting sun, and the many coloured sun-set has made us doubt the sea.

[465] Young night had spangled the sky with stars; the sails, deserted by the wind, hung low. Then from the mountain heights there falls a murmur deep, whose threatening, and the wide-sweeping shore and rocky headlands send forth a moaning sound; the waves, lashed by the rising wind, roll high – when suddenly the moon is hid, the stars sink out of sight, skyward the sea is lifted, the heavens are gone. 'Tis doubly night; dense fog o'erwhelms the dark and, all light withdrawn, confuses sea and sky. From all sides at once the winds fall on and ravage the sea, from its lowest depths upturned, West wind with East wind striving, South with North. Each wields his own weapons, with deadly assault stirring up the deep, while a whirlwind churns the waves. Strymonian Aquilo sends the deep snow whirling, and Libyan Auster stirs up the sands of Syrtes; nor stand the strife with Auster: Notus, heavy with clouds, blows up, swells waves with rain, while Eurus attacks the dawn, shaking Nabataean realms, and eastern gulfs. What wrought fierce Corus, thrusting forth his head from ocean? The whole sky he tears from its foundations, and you might think the very gods falling from the shattered heavens, and black chaos enveloping the world. Flood strives with wind and wind backward rolls the flood. The sea contains not itself, and rain and waves mingle their waters. Then even this comfort fails their dreadful plight, to see at least and know the disaster by which they perish. Darkness weighs on their eyes, and 'tis the infernal night of awful Styx. Yet fires burst forth, and from the riven clouds gleams the dire lightning flash, and to the poor sailors great is the sweetness of that fearful gleam; even for such light they pray.

[497] The fleet itself helps on its own destruction, prow crashing on prow and side on side. One ship the yawning deep sucks into the abyss, engulfs and spews forth again, restored to the sea above; one sinks of its own weight, another turns its wrecked side to the waves,

and one the tenth wave o'erwhelms. Here, battered and stripped of all its ornament, one floats, with neither sails nor oars nor straight mast bearing the high sailyards, a broken hulk, drifting wide on the Icarian sea. Reason, experience, are of no avail; skill yields to dire calamity. Horror holds their limbs; the sailors all stand stupefied, their tasks abandoned; oars drop from hands. To prayer abject fear drives the wretches, and Trojans and Greeks beg the same things of the gods. What can near doom accomplish? Pyrrhus envies his father, Ulysses Ajax, the younger Atrides Hector, Agamemnon Priam; whoever at Troy lies slain is hailed as blessed, who by deeds of arms earned death, whom glory guards, whom the land he conquered buries. "Do se and wave bear those who have dared naught noble and shall a coward's doom o'erwhelm brave men? Must death be squandered? Whoe'er of heaven's gods thou art, not yet with our sore troubles sated, let thy divinity be at last appeased; o'er our calamities e'en Troy would weep. But if thy hate is stubborn, and 'tis thy pleasure to send the Greek race to doom, why wouldst have those perish along with us, for whose sake we perish? Allay the raging sea: this fleet bears Greeks but it bears Trojans too." They can no more; the sea usurps their words.

[528] But lo! disaster on disaster! Pallas, armed with the bolt of angry Jove, threatening essays whate'er she may, not with spear, not with aegis, not with Gorgon's rage, but with her father's lightning, and throughout the sky new tempests blow. Ajax alone, undaunted by disaster, keeps up the struggle. Him, shortening sail with straining halyard, the hurtling lightning grazed. Another bolt is levelled; this, with all her might, Pallas launched true, with hand back drawn, in imitation of her father. Through Ajax it passed, and through his ship, and part of the ship with it, and Ajax it bore away. Then he, nothing moved, like some high crag, rises flame-scorched from the briny deep, cleaves the raging sea, with his breast bursts through the floods and, holding to his wrecked vessel with his hand, drags flames along, shines brightly midst the darkness of the sea and illumines the waves. At last, gaining a rock, in mad rage he thunders: "'Tis sweet to have conquered all things, flood and flame, to have vanquished sky, Pallas, thunderbolt and sea. If led not in terror of the god of war; both

Hector at once and Mars did I with my sole arm withstand; nor did together with their Phrygians, I conquered; – and shall I shrink from thee? Another’s weapon with weakling hand thou hurlest. What, if he himself should hurl –? When in his madness he would be daring more, father Neptune, pushing with his trident, o’erwhelmed the rock, thrusting forth his head from his waves’ depths, and broke off the drag. This in his fall Ajax bears down with him, and now he lies, by earth and fire and billows overcome.

[557] But us shipwrecked mariners, another, worse ruin challenges. There is a shallow water, a deceitful shoal full of rough boulders, where treacherous Caphereus hides his rocky base beneath whirling eddies; the sea boils upon the rocks, and ever the flood seethes with its ebb and flow. A precipitous headland o’erhangs, which on either hand looks out upon both stretches of the sea. Hence thou mayst descry thine own Pelopian shores, and Isthmus which, backward curving with its narrow soil, forbids the Ionian sea to join with Phrixus’ waves; hence also Lemnos, infamous for crime, and Calchedon, and Aulis which long delayed the fleet. Seizing this summit, the father of Palamedes with accursed hand raised from the high top a beacon-light and with treacherous torch lured the fleet upon the reefs. There hang the ships caught on jagged rocks; some are broken to pieces in the shallow water; the prow of one vessel is carried away, while a part sticks fast upon the rock; one ship crashes with another as it draws back, both wrecked and wrecking. Now ships fear land and choose the seas. Towards dawn the storm’s rage is spent; now that atonement has been made for Ilium, Phoebus returns and sad day reveals the havoc of the night.

CLYTEMNESTRA

[579] Shall I lament or rejoice me at my lord’s return? I do rejoice to see him home again, but o’er our realm’s heavy loss am I forced to grieve. At last O father, that dost shake the high-resounding heavens, restore to the Greeks their gods appeased. Now let every head by crowned with festal wreaths, let the sacrificial flute give forth sweet strains, and the white victim at the great altars fall.

[586] But see, a mournful throng with locks unbound, the Trojan women are here, while high above them all, with proud step advancing, Phoebus' mad priestess waves the inspired laurel branch.

[Enter band of Trojan women led by CASSANDRA.]

CHORUS OF TROJAN WOMEN

[589] Alas, how alluring a bane is appointed unto mortals, even dire love of live, though refuge from heir woes opes wide, and death with generous hand invites the wretched, a peaceful port of everlasting rest. Nor fear nor storm of raging Fortune disturbs that calm, nor bolt of the harsh Thunderer. Peace so deep fears no citizens' conspiracy, no victor's threatening wrath, no wild seas ruffled by stormy winds, no fierce battle lines or dark cloud raised by barbaric squadrons' hoofs, no nations falling with their city's utter overthrow, while the hostile flames lay waste the walls, no fierce, ungovernable war. All bonds will he break through, who dares scorn the fickle gods, who on the face of dark Acheron, on fearful Styx can look, unfearful, and is bold enough to put an end to life. A match for kings, a match for the high gods will he be. Oh, how wretched 'tis to know not how to die!

[612] We saw our country fall on that night of death, when you, ye Doric fires, ravished Dardania's homes. She, not in war conquered, not by arms, not, as aforetime, by Hercules' arrows, fell; her, not Peleus' and Thetis' son o'ercame, nor he, well-beloved by overbrave Pelides, when in borrowed arms he shone and drove Troy's sons in flight, a false Achilles; nor, when Pelides' self through grief gave o'er his fierce resentment, and the Trojan women, from the ramparts watching, feared his swift attack, did she lose amid her woes the crowning glory of suffering conquest bravely; for ten long years she stood, fated to perish by one night's treachery.

[627] We saw that feigned gift, measureless in bulk, and with our own hands trustfully dragged along the Greeks' deadly offering; and oft on the threshold of the gate the noisy footed monster stumbled, bearing within its hold hidden chiefs and war. We might have turned their guile against themselves, and caused the Pelasgians by their

own trick to fall. Oft sounded their jostled shields, and a low muttering smote our ears, when Pyrrhus grumbled, scarce yielding to crafty Ulysses' will.

[638] All unafraid, the Trojan youth joy to touch the fatal ropes. Companies of their own age here Astyanax leads, there she, to the Thessalian pyre betrothed, she leading maids, he youths. Gaily do mothers bring votive offerings to the gods; gaily do fathers approach the shrines; each wears but one look the city o'er; and, what never we saw since Hector's funeral, Hecuba was glad. And now, unhappy grief, what first, what last, wilt thou lament? Walls by divine hands fashioned, by our own destroyed? Temples upon their own gods consumed? Time lacks to weep such ills – thee, O great father, the Trojan women weep. I saw, I saw in the old man's throat the sword of Pyrrhus scarce wet in his scanty blood.

CASSANDRA

[659] Restrain your tears which all time will seek, ye Trojan women, and do you yourselves grieve for your own dead with groans and lamentations; my losses refuse all sharing. Cease then your grief for my disasters. I myself shall suffice for the woes of mine own house.

CHORUS

[664] 'Tis sweet to mingle tears with tears; griefs bring more smart where they wound in solitude, but 'tis sweet in company to bewail one's friends; nor shalt thou, though strong, heroic, and inured to woe, avail to lament calamities so great. Not the sad nightingale, which from the vernal bough pours forth her liquid song, piping of Itys in ever changing strains; not the bird which, perching on Bistonian battlements, tells o'er and o'er the hidden sins of her cruel lord, will e'er be able, with all her passionate lament, worthily to mourn thy house. Should bright Cynus' self, haunting midst snowy swans Ister and Tanaïs, utter his dying song; should halcyons mourn their Ceyx midst the light wave's lapping, when, though distrustful, boldly they trust once more to the tranquil ocean, and anxiously on unsteady nest cherish their young; should the sad throng which follows the unmanned men bruise their arms along with thee, the

throng which, by the shrill flute maddened, smite their breasts to the tower-crowned mother, that for Phrygian Attis they may lament, – not so, Cassandra, is there measure for our tears, for what we suffer has outmeasured measure.

[693] But why dost tear off the holy fillets from thy head? Methinks the gods should be most revered by unhappy souls.

CASSANDRA

[695] Now have our woes o'ermastered every fear. Neither do I appease the heavenly gods by any prayer, nor, should they wish to rage, have they wherewith to harm me. Fortune herself has exhausted all her powers. What fatherland remains? What father? What sister now? Altars and tombs have drunk up my blood. What of that happy throng of brothers? Gone, all! in the empty palace only sad old men are left; and throughout those many chambers they see all women, save her of Sparta, widowed. That mother of so many kings, queen of the Phrygians, Hecuba, fruitful for funeral-fires, proving new laws of fate, has put on bestial form: around her ruined walls madly she barked, surviving Troy, son, husband – and herself!

CHORUS

[710] The bride of Phoebus suddenly is still, pallor o'erspreads her cheeks, and constant tremors master all her frame. Her fillets stand erect, her soft locks rise in horror, her labouring heart sounds loud with pent murmuring, her glance wanders uncertain, her eyes seem backward turned into herself, anon they stare unmoving. Now she lifts her head into the air higher than her wont, and walks with stately tread; now makes to unlock her struggling lips, now vainly tries to close them on her words, a mad priestess fighting against the god.

CASSANDRA

[720] Why, O Parnassus' sacred heights, do ye prick me with fury's goads anew, why do you sweep me on, bereft of sense? Away! O Phoebus, I am no longer thine; quench thou the flames set deep within my breast. For whose sake wander I now in madness? for whose sake in frenzy rave? Now Troy has fallen – what have I, false

prophetess, to do?

[726] Where am I? Fled is the kindly light, deep darkness blinds my eyes, and the sky, buried in gloom, is hidden away. But see! with double sun the day gleams forth, and double Argos lifts up twin palaces! Ida's groves I see; there sits the shepherd, fateful judge midst mighty goddesses. – Fear him, ye kings, I warn you, fear the child of stolen love; that rustic foundling shall overturn your house. What means that mad woman with drawn sword in hand? What hero seeks she with her right hand, a Spartan in her garb, but carrying an Amazonian axe? – What sight is that other which now employs mine eyes? The king of beasts with his proud neck, by a base fang lies low, an Afric lion, suffering the bloody bites of his bold lioness. – Why do ye summon me, saved only of my house, my kindred shades? Thee, father, do I follow, eye-witness of Troy's burial; thee, brother, help of the Phrygians, terror of the Greeks, I see not in thine old-time splendour, or with thine hands hot from the burning of the ships, but mangled of limb, with those arms wounded by the deep-sunk thongs; thee, Troilus, I follow, to early with Achilles met; unrecognisable the face thou wearest, Deiphobus, the gift of thy new wife. 'Tis sweet to fare along the very Stygian pools; sweet to behold Tartarus' savage dog and the realms of greedy Dis! To-day this skiff of murky Phlegethon shall bear royal souls, vanquished and vanquisher. Ye shades, I pray; thou stream on which the gods make oath, thee no less I pray: for a little withdraw the covering of that dark world, that on Mycenae the shadowy throng of Phrygians may look forth. Behold, poor souls; the fates turn backward on themselves.

[759] They press on, the squalid sisters, their bloody lashes brandishing; their left hands half-burned torches bear; bloated are their pallid cheeks, and dusky robes of death their hollow loins encircle; the fearsome cries of night resound, and a huge body's bones, rotting with long decay, lie in a slimy marsh. And see! that spent old man, forgetting thirst, no longer catches at the mocking waters, grieving at death to come; but father Dardanus exults and walks along with stately tread.

CHORUS

[775] Now has her rambling frenzy spent itself, and falls, as before the altar with sinking knees falls the bull, receiving an ill-aimed stroke upon his neck. Let us lift up her body. But lo! at last his own gods, wreathed with victorious bay, Agamemnon comes; his wife with joy has gone forth to meet him, and now returns, joining her steps in harmony with his.

[Enter AGAMEMNON. He has been met and greeted by his wife, who enters with him and goes on alone into the palace.]

AGAMEMNON

[782] At length am I returned in safety to my father's house. O dear land, hail! To thee many barbaric nations have given spoil, to thee proud Asia's Troy, long blest of heaven, has yielded. – Why does the priestess there faint and fall tottering with drooping head? Slaves, lift her up, revive her with cool water. Now with languid gaze she again beholds the light. *[To CASSANDRA.]* Awake to life! that longed for haven from our woes is here; this is a festal day.

CASSANDRA

[791] 'Twas festal, too, at Troy.

AGAMEMNON

[792] Let us kneel before the altar.

CASSANDRA

[792] Before the altar my father fell.

AGAMEMNON

[793] To Jove let us pray together.

CASSANDRA

[793] Hercean Jove?

AGAMEMNON

[794] Dost think thou lookst on Ilium?

CASSANDRA

[794] And Priam, too.

AGAMEMNON

[795] Here is not Troy.

CASSANDRA

[795] Where a Helen is, I think is Troy.

AGAMEMNON

[796] Fear thou no mistress, though a slave.

CASSANDRA

[796] Freedom is near at hand.

AGAMEMNON

[797] Live on, secure.

CASSANDRA

[797] For me, death is security.

AGAMEMNON

[798] For thee there is naught to fear.

CASSANDRA

[798] But much for thee.

AGAMEMNON

[799] What can a victor fear?

CASSANDRA

[799] What he doth not fear.

AGAMEMNON

[800] Ye faithful slaves, restrain her till she throw off the god, lest in her wild frenzy she do some harm. But thee, O father, who the dire thunder hurlest, and driv'st the clouds, who the stars and lands dost rule, to whom in triumph victors bring their spoils; and thee, sister of

thine almighty lord, Argolian Juno, gladly with votive flocks, with gifts from Araby, and with suppliant offerings of entrails will I adore. [*Exit into the palace.*]

CHORUS OF ARGIVE WOMEN

[808] O Argos, ennobled by thy noble citizens, Argos, dear to the step-dame though enraged, ever mighty sons thou fosterest and hast made even the odd number of the gods. That hero of thine by his twelve labours earned the right to be chosen for the skies, great Hercules, for whom, the world's law broken, Jove doubled the hours of dewy night, bade Phoebus more slowly drive his hastening car, and thy team to turn back with laggard feet, O pale Phoebe. Backward the star turned his steps, the star who changes from name to name, and marvelled still to be called Hesperus, evening star. Aurora stirred at the accustomed hour of dawn, but, sinking back, laid her head and neck upon the breast of her aged husband. The rising, yea, and the setting of the sun felt the birth of Hercules; a hero so mighty could not be begotten in a single night. For thee the whirling universe stood still, O boy, destined to mount the skies.

[829] The lightning-swift lion of Nemea felt thy power, crushed by thy straining arms, and the Parrhasian hind, the ravager of Arcady's fields, felt thee, too, and loud bellowed the savage bull, leaving the fields of Crete. The hydra, fertile in death, he overcame and forbade new births from each neck destroyed; the mated brethren, springing three monsters from a single body, he crushed, leaping on them with his crashing club, and brought to the east the western herd, spoil of the three-formed Geryon. He drove the Thracian herd which the tyrant fed, not on the grass of the Strymon or on the banks of the Hebrus; cruel, he offered his savage horses the gore of strangers – and the blood of their driver was the last to stain red their jaws. Warlike Hippolyte saw the spoil snatched from about her breast; and by his shafts down from the riven sky from high heaven fell the Stymphalian bird. The tree, laden with golden fruit, shrank from his hands, unused to such plucking, and the bough, relieved of its burden, sprang into the air. The cold, sleepless guardian heard the sound of the clinking metal, only when heavy laden Alcides was

leaving the grove all stripped of its tawny gold. Dragged to the upper world by triple fetters, the infernal dog was silent, nor with any mouth did he bay, shrinking from the hues of unexperienced light. Under thy leadership fell the lying house of Dardanus and suffered the arrows, once again to be feared; under thy leadership in as many days Troy fell as it took years thereafter.

CASSANDRA

[867] [*Alone upon the stage.*] A great deed is done within, a match for ten years of war. Ah! What is this? Rise up, my soul, and take the reward of thy madness – we are conquerors, we conquered Phrygians! 'Tis well! Troy has risen again! In thy fall, O father, thou hast dragged down Mycenae; thy conqueror gives way! Never before did my mind's prophetic frenzy give sight to mine eyes so clear; I see, I am in the midst of it, I revel in it; 'tis no doubtful image cheats my sight; let me gaze my fill.

[875] A feast is spread within the royal house and thronged with guests, like that last banquet of the Phrygians; the couches gleam with Trojan purple, and their wine they quaff from the golden cups of old Assaracus. Lo, he himself in brodered vestments lies on lofty couch, wearing on his body the proud spoils of Priam. His wife bids him doff the raiment of his foe and don instead the mantle her own fond hands have woven – I shudder and my soul trembles at the sight! Shall an exile slay a king? an adulterer a husband? The fatal hour has come. The banquet's close shall see the master's blood, and gore shall fall into the wine. The deadly mantle he has put on delivers him bound treacherously to his doom; the loose, impenetrable folds refuse outlet to his hands and enshroud his head. With trembling right hand the half-man stabs at his side, but hath not driven deep; in mid stroke he stands as one amazed. But he, as in the deep woods a bristling boar, though with the net entangled, still tries for freedom, and by his struggling draws close his bonds and rages all in vain, – he strives to throw off the blinding folds all around him floating, and, though closely enmeshed, seeks for his foe. Now Tyndaris in mad rage snatches the two-edged axe and, as at the altar the priest marks with his eye the oxen's necks before he strikes, so,

now here, now there, her impious hand she aims. He has it! the deed is done! The scarce severed head hangs by a slender part; here blood streams o'er his headless trunk, there lie his moaning lips. And not yet do they give o'er; he attacks the already lifeless man, and keeps hacking at the corpse; she helps him in the stabbing. Each one in this dire crime answers to his own kin – he is Thyestes' son, she, Helen's sister. See, Titan, the day's work done, stands hesitant whether his own or Thyestes' course to run.

[Remains beside the altar.]

[Enter ELECTRA, leading her young brother, ORESTES.]

ELECTRA

[910] Fly, O sole avenger of our father's death, fly and escape our enemies' miscreant hands. O'erthrown is our house to its foundations, our kingdom fallen.

[913] But who is yonder stranger, driving his chariot at speed? Come brother, I will hide thee 'neath my robe. Why, foolish heart, dost thou shrink away? Strangers dost fear? 'Tis our home that must be feared. Put away now thy trembling dread, Orestes; the trusty protection of a friend I see.

[Enter STROPHIUS in a chariot, accompanied by his son PYLADES.]

STROPHIUS

[918] I, Strophius, had Phocis left, and now am home returning, made glorious by the Elean palm. The cause of my coming hither was to congratulate my friend, o'erthrown by whose hand and crushed by ten years of war has Ilium fallen. *[He notices ELECTRA's distress.]* But who is that yonder, watering her sad face with tears, fear-struck and sorrowful? One of the royal house I recognize. Electra! What cause of weeping can be in this glad house?

ELECTRA

[925] My father lies murdered by my mother's crime; they seek the son to share in his father's death; Aegisthus holds the throne by

guilty love secured.

STROPHIUS

[928] Alas! no happiness if of lengthened stay.

ELECTRA

[929] By the memory of my father I beseech thee, by his sceptre known to all the world, by the fickle gods: take this boy, Orestes, and hide the holy theft.

STROPHIUS

[932] Although murdered Agamemnon warns me to beware, I will brave the danger and gladly, Orestes, will I steal thee off. Good fortune asks for faith, adversity demands it. [*Takes ORESTES into the chariot.*] Take thou this crown, won in the games, as an ornament for thy head, and, holding this victor's bough in thy left hand, shield thy face with its great branch, and may that palm, the gift of Pisaeon Jove, afford thee at once a covering and an omen. And do thou, Pylades, who standest as comrade to guide thy father's car, learn faith from the example of thy sire. And now, do you, my horses, whose speed all Greece has seen, flee from this treacherous place in headlong flight.

[*Exeunt at great speed.*]

ELECTRA

[944] [*Looking after them.*] He has departed, gone, his car at a reckless pace has vanished from my sight. Now free from care shall I await my foes, and willingly oppose myself to death.

[947] [*She sees CLYTEMNESTRA approaching.*] Here is the bloody conqueror of her lord, with the signs of murder on her blood-stained robe. Her hands are still reeking with blood fresh-spilled, and her savage features bear tokens of her crime. I'll take me to the altar. Let me be joined, Cassandra, with thy fillets, since I fear like doom with thee.

[*Enter CLYTEMNESTRA.*]

CLYTEMNESTRA

[953] Foe of thy mother, unfilial and froward girl, by what custom doest thou, a maid, seek public gatherings?

ELECTRA

[955] Because I am a maid have I left the adulterer's home.

CLYTEMNESTRA

[956] Who would believe thee maid?

ELECTRA

[956] A child of thine?

CLYTEMNESTRA

[957] More gently with thy mother!

ELECTRA

[957] Dost thou teach piety?

CLYTEMNESTRA

[958] Thou hast a mannish soul, a heart puffed up; but, tamed by suffering, shalt thou learn to play a woman's part.

ELECTRA

[960] If perchance, I mistake not, a sword befits a woman.

CLYTEMNESTRA

[961] And thinkest thou, mad one, thou art a match for us?

ELECTRA

[962] For you? What other Agamemnon is that of thine? Speak thou as widow; lifeless if thy lord.

CLYTEMNESTRA

[964] The unbridled tongue of an unfilial girl hereafter as queen I'll check; meanwhile be quick and tell where is my son, where is thy brother.

ELECTRA

[967] Far from Mycenae.

CLYTEMNESTRA

[967] Restore me now my son.

ELECTRA

[968] And do thou restore my father.

CLYTEMNESTRA

[968] Where does he hide?

ELECTRA

[969] In peace and safety, where he fears no new-made king; for a righteous mother 'tis enough.

CLYTEMNESTRA

[970] But too little for an angry one. Thou shalt die this day.

ELECTRA

[971] So but it be by this hand of thine. I leave the altar. If 'tis thy pleasure in my throat to plunge the sword, I offer my throat to thee; of if, as men smite sheep, thou wouldst cut off my neck, my bent neck waits thy stroke. The crime is ready; thy right hand, smeared and rank with a husband's slaughter, purge with this blood of mine.

[*Enter AEGISTHUS.*]

CLYTEMNESTRA

[978] Thou partner equally in my perils and my throne, Aegisthus, come. My child undutifully insults her mother, and keeps her brother hidden.

AEGISTHUS

[981] Mad girl, hold thy impious tongue, and speak not words unworthy of thy mother's ears.

ELECTRA

[983] Shall he e'en give instruction, the worker of an impious crime,
one criminally begot, whom even his own parents cannot name, son
of his sister, grandson of his sire?

CLYTEMNESTRA

[986] Aegisthus, why dost hesitate to strike off her wicked head with
the sword? Let her at once give up her brother or her life.

AEGISTHUS

[988] Mured in a dark, rocky dungeon shall she spend her life and, by
all kinds of tortures racked, perchance she will consent to give back
him she now conceals. Resourceless, starving, in prison pent, buried
in filth, widowed ere wedded, in exile, scorned by all, denied the
light of day, then will she, though too late, yield to her doom.

ELECTRA

[994] Oh, grant me death.

AEGISTHUS

[994] Shouldst plead against, I'd grant. An unskilled tyrant he who
punishes by death.

ELECTRA

[996] Is aught worse than death?

AEGISTHUS

[996] Yes, life, if thou longest to die. Away, ye slaves, with this
unnatural girl; far from Mycenae bear her, and in the remotest corner
of the realm chain her immured in the black darkness of a cell, that
prison walls may curb the unmanageable maid.

[*ELECTRA is dragged away.*]

CLYTEMNESTRA

[1001] [*Indicating CASSANDRA.*] But she shall pay her penalty with
death, that captive bride, that mistress of the royal bed. Drag her
away, that she may follow the husband whom she stole from me.

CASSANDRA

[1004] Nay, drag me not, I will precede your going. I hasten to be first to bear news unto my Phrygians – of the sea covered with the wrecks of ships, of Mycenae taken, of the leader of a thousand leaders (that so he might meet doom equal to Troy's woes) slain by a woman's gift – by adultery, by guile. Take me away; I hold not back, but rather give you thanks. Now, now 'tis sweet to have outlived Troy, 'tis sweet.

CLYTEMNESTRA

[1012] Mad creature, thou shalt die.

CASSANDRA

[1012] On you, as well, a madness is to come.

OEDIPUS



Translated by Frank Justus Miller

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

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JOCASTA, wife of Oedipus, found to be also his mother.

CREON, a Theban prince, brother of Jocasta.

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MESSENGER, who announces the self-inflicted blindness of Oedipus and the suicide of Jocasta.

CHORUS of Theban elders.

THE SCENE is laid before the royal palace of Thebes; the play opens in the early morning of the day within which the tragedy is consummated.

ARGUMENT

An oracle once came to Laius, king of Thebes, that he should perish by his own son's hands. When, therefore, a son was born to him, he gave the infant to his chief shepherd to expose on Mount Cithaeron. But the tender-hearted rustic gave the babe instead to a wandering herdsman of Polybus, the king of Corinth.

Years later a reputed son of Polybus, Oedipus by name, fearing an oracle which doomed him to slay his father and wed his mother, fled from Corinth, that so he might escape this dreadful fate. As he fared northward he met and slew an old man who imperiously disputed the narrow way with him. Upon arriving at the Theban land he read the riddle of the Sphinx, and so destroyed that monster which Juno had sent to harass the land which she hated; and for this service Oedipus was made the husband of Jocasta, the widowed queen of Laius (recently slain, so said report, by a band of robbers, on the high road), and set upon the vacant throne.

Now other years have passed, and sons and daughters have been born to the royal pair. But now a dreadful pestilence afflicts the State. Oedipus has sent Creon to consult the oracle, to learn the cause and seek the means of deliverance from the scourge. And while he waits his messenger's return the murky dawn still finds him grieving for his kingdom's wretched plight.

OEDIPUS

OEDIPUS

[1] Now night is driven away; the hesitant sun returns, and rises, sadly veiling his beams in murky cloud; with woeful flame he brings a light of gloom and will look forth upon our homes stricken with ravaging plague, and day will reveal the havoc which night has wrought.

[6] Does any man rejoice in royalty? O deceitful good, how many ills dost hide beneath thy smiling face! As lofty peaks do ever catch the blasts, and as the cliff, which with its jutting rocks cleaves the vast deep, is beaten by the waves of even a quiet sea, so does exalted empire lie exposed to fate. How happily had I escaped the sceptre of my father, Polybus! An exile freed from cares, fearless, wandering, upon a kingdom (be heaven and the gods my witness) I came by chance. Things unspeakable I fear – that by my hand my father shall be slain. Of this the Delphic laurels warn me, and another, still greater crime they assign to me. Is any wickedness greater than a murdered sire? O hapless filial love! – I am ashamed to tell my doom – Phoebus threatens the son with his father's chamber, with bed made infamous, defiled by unhallowed passion. 'Twas the fear of this that drove me from my father's realm. Not as a fugitive did I leave my home; of my own will, distrustful of myself, O Nature, I made thy laws secure. When thou dreadest some great calamity, though thou thinkst it cannot befall, still do thou fear. I dread all things exceedingly, and I do not trust myself unto myself.

[28] Now, even now the fates were aiming some blow at me; for what am I to think when this pestilence, so deadly to Cadmus' race, so widespread in its destruction, spares me along? For what evil am I reserved? Midst the ruins of my city, midst funerals to be lamented with tears ever fresh, midst the slaughter of a nation, I stand unscathed – aye! Prisoner at Phoebus' bar. Couldst thou hope that to crimes like thine a wholesome kingdom would be granted? I have made heaven pestilent.

[37] No soft breeze with its cool breath relieves our breasts that pant with heat, no gentle Zephyrs blow; but Titan augments the scorching dog-stars's fires, close-pressing upon the Nemean Lion's back. Water has fled the streams, and from the herbage verdure. Dirce is dry, scant flows Ismenus' stream, and with its meagre wave scarce wets the naked sands. With paling light glides Phoebus' sister athwart the sky, and the gloomy heavens are wan in the lowering day. No star in clear nights glitters, but a heavy, black fog broods o'er the lands. The citadels of the heavenly gods and their homes on high are veiled in hellish aspect. The ripened corn withholds its fruitful harvest, and though the golden crop waves high its wheaten ears, the grain dies shrivelled on its parched stalk. No class is free from death; but every age and sex is smitten alike. Young men with old, fathers with sons, are joined by the deadly plague; husband and wife by a single fire are burned, and funerals lack bitter tears and lamentations. Nay, the persistent bane of our so great a woe hath of itself dried our eyes and, as oft in utmost misery, our tears have perished. Here to the final flames a stricken father bears his son; there a crazed mother carries her child and hastens back to bring another to the selfsame pyre. Nay more, in their very grief new grief arises and mist funeral rites their own rites befall. Anon, with others' fires they burn the bodies of their own; yes, fire is stolen, for the wretched have no shame. No separate mounds cover the hallowed bones. Mere burning is enough; how small a part is turned to ashes! No ground is left for tombs; nor woods refuse more pyres. Neither prayers nor any skill avails the stricken. Healers fall victims; the disease drags down those who seek to aid.

[71] Prostrate at the altars, I stretch suppliant hands, begging my fates to hasten, that I may anticipate my country's ruin and not fall after all the rest, and mine become the last funeral of my realm. Oh, divinities too harsh, Oh, heavy fate! To me alone in all this people is death denied, so ready for all others? Come, fly the land thy baleful hand has tainted, leave the tears, the deaths, the pest-laden air which thou bringest with thee, ill-omened guest; fly quickly! (long since 'twere well) – even to thy parents!

JOCASTA

[*Who has entered in time to hear her husband's last words.*]

[81] What boots it, husband, to make woe heavier by lamentation?

This very thing, methinks, is regal – to face adversity and, the more dubious thy station and the more the greatness of empire totters to its fall, the more firm to stand, brave with unfaltering foot. 'Tis not a manly thing to turn the back to Fortune.

OEDIPUS

[87] Far from me is the crime and shame of cowardice, and my valour knows not dastard fears. Should swords be drawn against me, against even the fierce Giants would I boldly bear opposing hands. The Sphinx, weaving her words in darkling measures, I fled not; I faced the bloody jaws of the fell prophetess and the ground white with scattered bones. And when from a lofty cliff, already hovering over her prey, she prepared her pinions and, lashing her tail like a savage lion, stirred up her threatening wrath, I asked her riddle. Thereupon came a sound of dread; her jaws crashed, and her talons, brooking no delay, eager for my vitals, tore at the rocks. The lot's intricate, guile-entangled words, the grim riddle of the winged beast, I solved.

[103] [*To himself.*] Why too late dost thou now in madness pray for death? Thou hadst thy chance to die. This sceptre is thy meed of praise, this thy reward for the Sphinx destroyed. That dust, that cursed dust of the artful monster is warring against me still; that pest which I destroyed is now destroying Thebes. One only salvation is left us now, if any way of salvation Phoebus shows.

CHORUS

[110] Thou art falling, O noble race of Cadmus, with all thy city. Reft of its tillers thou seest thy land, O pitiable Thebes. Destruction feeds, O Bacchus, on that soldiery of thine, thy comrades to farthest Ind, who dared to ride on the Eastern plains and plant thy banners on the world's first edge. The Arabs, blest with their cinnamon groves, they saw, and fleeing horsemen, the backs of the treacherous Parthians, to be feared for their flying shafts; they pierced to the shores of the ruddy sea, whence Phoebus discloses his rising beams, opens the

gates of day, and with nearer torch darkens the naked Indians.

[124] We, the offspring of an unconquered stock, are perishing, are falling 'neath the fierce onslaught of fate. Each hour a new train moves on to Death; the long array of a mournful band hastes to the shades; the gloomy procession jams, and for the throng that seeks burial the seven gates spread not wide enough. The grievous wrack of carnage halts and funeral crowds funeral in unbroken line.

[133] First the plague struck the slow-moving sheep; to their bane did the woolly flock crop the rich herbage. Ready to smite his victim's neck, the priest had taken his stand; while his upraised hand aimed the unerring blow, the bull, his horn glimmering with gold, sank dully down. Shattered by the blow of a heavy axe, the neck yawned open; but no blood, only foul gore, oozing from the dark wound, stained the steel. The prancing steed, slowing in mid-course, fell down and flung his rider over his sinking shoulder.

[145] The abandoned cattle lie stricken in the fields; the bull pines away amidst his dying kine. The herdsman deserts his dwindling herd, midst this wasting bullocks dying. No more do stags fear ravenous wolves; subsides the mad lion's roar; no fierceness now among the shaggy bears. The lurking serpent has lost its bane; parched and dying he lies, his venom dried.

[154] No more do the woods, crowned with their own foliage, shed dusky shadows on the mountain-sides; the fields no more grow green with fertile glebe, no more do the vine's full branches bend 'neath the load of its own deity; all things have felt our plague.

[160] They have burst the bars of abysmal Erebus, the throng of sisters with Tartarean torch, and Phlegethon, changing his own course, has mingled Styx with our Sidonian streams. Dark Death opens wide his greedy, gaping jaws and unfolds all his wings, and the boatman who plies the troubled stream with roomy skiff, tough hardy in his vigorous old age, can scarce draw back his arms wearied with constant poling, worn out with ferrying the fresh throng o'er. Nay

more, they say that the dog has burst his chains of Taenarian iron, and is wandering through our fields; that the earth has rumbled; that ghosts go stealing through the groves, larger than mortal forms; that twice have Cadmean forests trembled and shed their snows; twice has Dirce welled up with blood; in the silent night Amphion's hounds have bayed.

[180] O dire appearance and new form of death, far heavier than death! Benumbing languor fetters the listless limbs; the sickly cheeks burn red; small spots overspread the face. Then hot vapours scorch the body's very citadel and distend the cheeks with blood; the eyes stand staring, and accursed fire feeds upon the limbs. There is a ringing in the ears; black blood drips from the strained nostrils and bursts the swelling veins. Full oft does a grating cough rack the inmost frame. Now they strain cold stones close to their breasts; or where new freedom in the house permits, since the watcher has been borne forth, ye hasten to the springs, and with full draughts feed your fevered thirst. Prostrate the crowds lie at the altars and pray for death – this alone the compliant gods bestow. They seek the shrines, not that they may appease the divinities with gifts, but joying to glut the very gods.

[CREON is seen returning from his mission.]

OEDIPUS

[202] Who, pray, is he who seeks the palace with hasty steps? Is Creon at hand, noble in blood and deed, or does my sick fancy see false for true?

CHORUS

[205] He is at hand, Creon, by all our prayers desired.

[Enter CREON.]

OEDIPUS

[206] With dread am I shaken, fearing the trend of fate, and my fluttering heart wavers betwixt two moods; where joy with grief commingled lies in doubt, the uncertain soul fears though it longs to

know.

[210] O brother of my consort, if to weary hearts thou bringest any aid,
quickly declare thy news.

CREON

[212] Doubtful lies the answer and involved the doom.

OEDIPUS

[213] Who grants a doubtful help to sufferers, grants none.

CREON

[214] In mazy riddles is the Delphic god wont to hide his secrets.

OEDIPUS

[215] Speak out, though it be doubtful; to read riddles to Oedipus
alone is given.

CREON

[217] The god bids the king's murder be atoned by banishment and the
murdered Laius be avenged. Not sooner shall the bright sun course
the heavens, and give wholesome draughts of unpolluted air.

OEDIPUS

[221] And who was the murderer of the illustrious king? Tell whom
Phoebus names, that he may pay the penalty.

CREON

[223] May it be safe, I pray, to have gold of things to sight and hearing
dreadful. Numbness has settled though my limbs; my chill blood
freezes. When Phoebus' hallowed shrine I entered with reverent feet
and raised pious hands in due supplication to the god, the double
peaks of snow-clad Parnassus gave an angry roar; the overhanging
laurel of Phoebus trembled and shook its foliage, and suddenly the
holy waters of the Castalian spring stood still. The priestess of Leto's
son began to fling loose her bristling locks and, deep stirred, to suffer
Phoebus. She had not yet reached the cave, when, with a mighty roar,
words louder than voice of man leaped forth:

[233] “Kind shall the stars return to the Theban city of Cadmus,
If, O fugitive guest, Ismenian Dirce thou leavest,
Stained with the blood of a king, from infancy known to Apollo.
Brief shall be to thee the joys of thy impious slaughter:
With thee war shalt thou bring, and war to thy sons leave behind
thee,
Fouly returned, once more to the impious womb of thy mother.”

OEDIPUS

[239] That which, at Heaven’s warning, I am now prepared to do
should fittingly have been done in honour of the dead king’s dust,
that none might treacherously profane the sacred sceptre. Kings have
most need to guard the life of kings; none hath care for him when
dead whom alive he fears.

CREON

[244] Our care for the dead is greater fear dispelled.

OEDIPUS

[245] Did any fear prevent a pious duty?

CREON

[246] Aye, the Sphinx and the dire threats of her accursèd chant.

OEDIPUS

[247] Now at Heaven’s command let the crime be expiated. Whoever
of the gods dost look with favour upon kingdoms – thou, thou whose
are the laws of the swift-revolving heavens; and thou, greatest glory
of the unclouded sky, who presidest over the twelve signs in thy
changing course, who doest unroll the slow centuries with swift
wheel; and thou, his sister, ever faring opposite to thy brother,
Phoebe, night-wanderer; thou whom the winds obey, who over the
level deep dost speed thy azure care; and thou who dost allot homes
devoid of light – do ye all attend: Him by whose hand Laius fell may
no peaceful dwelling, no friendly household gods, no hospitable land
in exile entertain; over shameful nuptials may he lament and impious
progeny; may he, too, slay his own father with his own hand and do

– can aught heavier be entreated? – whatever I have fled from. There shall be no place for pardon. I swear by the sway which I now, a stranger, bear, and by that which I abandoned; by my household gods; by thee, O father Neptune, who in double stream dost play against my shores on either side with scanty waves. And do thou thyself come as witness to my words, thou who doest inspire the fate-speaking lips of Cirrha’s priestess: So may my father spend peaceful age and end his days secure on his lofty throne; so may Merope know the nuptial torches of her Polybus alone, as by no grace shall the guilty one escape my hand.

[274] But tell me, where was the impious crime committed? Did he die in open battle or by treachery?

CREON

[276] Seeking holy Castalia’s leafy groves, he trod a way hedged in by close-pressing thickets, where the road, three-forking, branches out upon the plains. One road cuts through Phocis, the land that Bacchus loves, whence lofty Parnassus, leaving the lowlands, by a gentle slope lifts heavenward his two peaks; but one leads off to the land of Sisypheus bathed by two seas; a third into the Olenian fields, through a low valley winding, reaches the vagrant waters and crosses the cool shallows of Elis’ stream. Here as he fared, relying on peaceful times, a band of robbers suddenly attacked him with the sword and wrought the crime unwitnessed.

[*TIRESIAS is seen approaching.*]

[288] But in the nick of time, stirred by Phoebus’ oracle, Tiresias, through slow with trembling limbs, comes hurrying, and with him Manto, leading her sightless father.

[*Enter TIRESIAS, old and blind, led by his daughter MANTO.*]

OEDIPUS

[291] O thou to the gods consecrate, thou next to Phoebus’ self, explain the oracle; tell whom the fates demand.

TIRESIAS

[293] That my tongue is slow to speak, that it craves delay, it behoves thee not, O great-souled Oedipus, to wonder; from the blind much of the truth is hidden. But whither my country, whither Phoebus calls me, I will follow. Let us search out the fates; if my blood were fresh and warm, I would receive the god in my own breast. Drive to the altars a pure white bull and a heifer whose neck has never borne the curved yoke. Do thou, my child, who guidest thy blind father, report the clear tokens of the prophetic sacrifice.

[The victims are stations at the altars as directed.]

MANTO

[303] A perfect victim stands before the sacred altars.

TIRESIAS

[304] To our vows invoke Heaven's presence with the accustomed prayer, and heap the altars with the Orient's gift of frankincense.

MANTO

[306] Now have I heaped incense on the gods' sacred hearth.

TIRESIAS

[307] What of the flame? Doth it already seize upon the generous feast?

MANTO

[308] It flashed up with sudden light, and suddenly died down.

TIRESIAS

[309] Did the fire stand clear and bright? Did it lift a pure, pointed flame straight skyward and, spreading, unfold its topmost crest upon the air, or sidewise does it creep uncertain of its course, and with wavering smoke fall murky?

MANTO

[314] Not one appearance only had the changeful flame. As when rain-bringing Iris entwines her various colours, who, over a great space of heaven sweeping, by her painted bow proclaims the storm, so wouldst thou be in doubt what colour is lacking, what is present in

the flame; dark-blue, mingled with yellow spots, it hovered, then was blood-red, and at last trailed off in blackness.

[321] But see, the combative flame is separating into two parts and the discordant embers of one sacred pile are rent in twain – O father, I tremble as I gaze: Bacchus' gift poured out changes to blood, and dense smoke wreathes the king's head; denser still it settles about his very face and with its thick cloud has hidden light in gloom. O father, tell us what it means.

TIRESIAS

[328] What can I tell, halting mid conflicting voices of a soul amazed? What shall I say? Dire ills they are, but hidden in mystery. 'Tis the gods' wont with clear signs to manifest their wrath. What is it which they would, and again would not, reveal? What grim menace are they concealing? Something which shames the gods. Quick, bring the victims hither, and with salted meal sprinkle the bullocks necks. With placid mien do they suffer the rites and the outstretched hands?

MANTO

[337] Facing east, the bull, lifting high his head, shrank from the day and turned in terror from the sun's bright face.

TIRESIAS

[340] With one blow smitten do they fall to earth?

MANTO

[341] The heifer threw herself upon the ready steel and with one blow fell; but the bull, twice smitten, hither and yon wanders uncertain and feebly drives forth his scarce-resisting life.

TIRESIAS

[345] Does the blood spurt quick from out a narrow thrust, or does it but slowly o'erflood a deep-driven blow?

MANTO

[347] The blood of one through the proper path, where the breast gapes wide, pours in a stream; the other's grievous wounds are stained with

but scanty drops; nay, backward turning, the blood flows copiously through mouth and eyes.

TIRESIAS

[351] These ill-omened sacrifices rouse dread forebodings. But describe to me the sure marks of the entrails.

MANTO

[353] Father, what is this? With no gentle motion, as is their wont, do the entrails shake and quiver, but my whole hand do they cause to tremble and blood spurts afresh from the veins. The heart, diseased through and through, is withered and lies deep hidden, and the reins are of livid hue. A great part of the entrails is wanting, and from the rotting liver black gall oozes forth, and see – ever fatal omen for sole sovereignty – two heads rise side by side with equal bulge; yet each cloven head is hidden in but thin membrane, refusing a lurking place to secret things. The hostile side rises with sturdy strength and shows seven swelling veins; but all these an intercepting line cuts straight across, preventing their return. The positions have been changed; no organ lies in its own place, but all things reversed: on the right side lie the lungs all clogged with blood, and with no room for breath; on the left is not the region of the heart; no caul with soft covering stretches its rich folds over the entrails. Nature is subverted; even the womb follows not its law. Let us look close and see whence comes this stiffness in the entrails. What monstrosity is this? A foetus in an unmated heifer! nor does it lie in accustomed fashion, but fills its mother in an unnatural place. Moaning it moves its limbs, and its weak members twitch with convulsive rigors. Livid gore has stained the entrails black. [*She ceases her inspection as the bodies of the victims suddenly begin to move.*] The sadly mangled forms essay to move, and one disembowelled body strives to rise and menaces the priests with its horns; the entrails flee from my hand. Nor is that wound which strikes thy ears the deep lowing of the herd, nor are frightened cattle bellowing anywhere; it is the lowing of the altar-fires, the affrighted murmurings of the hearth.

OEDIPUS

[384] What do these signs of the terrifying rites portend? Declare; with no timid ear will I drink in thy words. Extremest ills are wont to make men calm.

TIRESIAS

[387] Thou wilt look with envy upon these ills for which thou seekest aid.

OEDIPUS

[388] Tell me the one thing the gods would have me know: who has defiled his hands with the murder of the king?

TIRESIAS

[390] Neither the birds which on light pinion cut the depths of heaven, nor vitals plucked from still living breasts, can summon up the name. We must essay some other path: the king himself must be recalled from the regions of the perpetual night, that, released from Erebus, he may point out his murderer. We must unseal the earth, must implore the implacable divinity of Dis, must draw forth hither the people of infernal Styx. Say to whom thou wilt assign the awful mission; for 'tis not right for thee, whose are the highest powers of state, to look upon the shades.

OEDIPUS

[399] Thee, Creon, this task demands, to whom as next in succession my kingdom looks.

TIRESIAS

[401] While we are loosing the bars of abysmal Styx let the people's hymn sound with the praise of Bacchus.

[*Exeunt CREON, TIRESIAS, and MANTO.*]

CHORUS

[403] Bind your streaming locks with the nodding ivy, and in your soft hands grasp the Nysaeon thyrsus!

[405] Bright glory of the sky, come hither to the prayers which thine

own illustrious Thebes, O Bacchus, offers to thee with suppliant hands. Hither turn with favour thy virginal face; with thy star-bright countenance drive away the clouds, the grim threats of Erebus, and greedy fate. Thee it becomes to circle thy locks with flowers of the springtime, thee to cover thy head with Tyrian turban, or thy smooth brow to wreath with the ivy's clustering berries; now to fling loose thy lawless-streaming locks, again to bind them in a knot close-drawn; in such guise as when, fearing thy stepdame's wrath, thou didst grow to manhood with false-seeming limbs, a pretended maiden with golden ringlets, with saffron girdle binding thy garments. So thereafter this soft vesture has pleased thee, folds loose hanging and the long-trailing mantle. Seated in thy golden chariot, thy lions with long trappings covered, all the vast coast of the Orient saw thee, both he who drinks of the Ganges and whoever breaks the ice of snowy Araxes.

[429] On an unseemly ass old Silenus attends thee, his swollen temples bound with ivy garlands; while thy wanton initiates lead the mystic revels. Along with thee a troop of Bassarids in Edonian dance beat the ground, now on Mount Pangaeus' peak, now on the top of Thracian Pindus; now midst Cadmean dames has come a maenad, the impious comrade of Ogygian Bacchus, with sacred fawn-skins girt about her loins, her hand a light thyrsus brandishing. Their hearts maddened by thee, the matrons have set their hair a-flowing; and at length, after the rending of Pentheus' limbs, the Bacchanals, their bodies now freed from the frenzy, looked on their infamous deed as though they knew it not.

[444] Cadmean Ino, foster-mother of shining Bacchus, holds the realms of the deep, encircled by bands of Nereids dancing; over the waves of the mighty deep a boy holds sway, new come, the kinsman of Bacchus, no common god, Palaemon.

[449] Thee, O boy, a Tyrrhenian band once captured and Nereus allayed the swollen sea; the dark blue waters he changed to meadows. Thence flourish the plane-tree with vernal foliage and the laurel-grove dear to Phoebus; the chatter of birds sounds loud

through the branches. Fast-growing ivy clings to the oars, and grape-vines twine at the mast-head. On the prow an Idaean lion roars; at the stern crouches a tiger of Ganges. Then the frightened pirates swim in the sea, and plunged in the water their bodies assume new forms: the robbers' arms first fall away; their breasts smite their bellies and are joined in one; a tiny hand comes down at the side; with curving back they dive into the waves, and with crescent-shaped tail they cleave the sea; and now as curved dolphins they follow the fleeing sails.

[467] On its rich stream has Lydian Pactolus borne thee, leading along its burning banks the golden waters; the Massgetan who mingles blood with milk in his goblets has unstrung his vanquished bow and given up his Getan arrows; the realms of axe-wielding Lycurgus have felt the dominion of Bacchus; the fierce lands of the Zalaces have felt it, and those wandering tribes whom neighbouring Boreas smites, and the nations which Maeotis' cold water washes, and they on whom the Arcadian constellation looks down from the zenith and the wagons twain. He has subdued the scattered Gelonians; he has wrested their arms from the warrior maidens; with downcast face they fell to earth, those Thermodontian hordes, gave up at length their light arrows, and became maenads. Sacred Cithaeron has flowed with the blood of Ophionian slaughter; the Proetides fled to the woods, and Argos, in his stepdame's very presence, paid homage to Bacchus.

[487] Naxos, girt by the Aegean sea, gave him in marriage a deserted maiden, compensating her loss with a better husband. Out of the dry rock there gushed Nyctelian liquor; babbling rivulets divided the grassy meadows; deep the earth drank in the sweet juices, white fountains of snowy milk and Lesbian wine mingled with fragrant thyme. The new-made bride is led to the lofty heavens; Phoebus a stately anthem sings, with his locks flowing down his shoulders, and twin Cupids brandish their torches. Jupiter lays aside his fiery weapons and, when Bacchus comes, abhors his thunderbolt.

[504] While the bright stars of the ancient heavens shall run in their courses; while the ocean shall encircle the imprisoned earth with its

waters; while the full moon gather again her lost radiance; while the Day Star shall herald the dawn of the morning and while the lofty Bears shall know naught of caerulean Nereus; so long shall we worship the shining face of beauteous Lyaeus.

[Enter CREON, returned from the rites of necromancy.]

OEDIPUS

[509] Although thy very face displays signs of woe, declare by whose life we are to appease the gods.

CREON

[511] Thou bidst me speak what fear would leave unsaid.

OEDIPUS

[512] If falling Thebes is not enough to move thee, at least be moved by the tottering sceptre of a kindred house.

CREON

[514] Thou wilt long not to have known what thou desirest o'ermuch to know.

OEDIPUS

[515] An idle remedy for ills is ignorance. What! wilt e'en bury revelations of the public weal?

CREON

[517] Where foul the medicine, 'tis loathsome to be healed.

OEDIPUS

[518] Speak out thy tidings, or, by severe suffering broken, thou shalt know what the power of an angered king can do.

CREON

[520] Kings hate the words whose speaking they compel.

OEDIPUS

[521] To Erebus shalt thou be sent, a cheap sacrifice for all, unless by

thy speech thou disclose the secrets which the rites reveal.

CREON

[523] Let me be silent. Can any less liberty be sought from kings?

OEDIPUS

[524] Often, e'en more than speech, to king and kingdom dumb liberty brings bane.

CREON

[526] When silence is not allowed, what is allowed?

OEDIPUS

[527] He weakens power who is silent when bidden to speak.

CREON

[528] Words forced from me I pray thee hear with calm.

OEDIPUS

[529] Was any ever punished for speech compelled?

CREON

[530] Far from the city is a grove dusky with ilex-trees near the well-watered vale of Dirce's fount. A cypress, lifting its head above the lofty wood, with mighty stem holds the whole grove in its evergreen embrace; and an ancient oak spreads its gnarled branches crumbling in decay. The side of one devouring time has torn away; the other, falling, its roots rent in twain, hangs propped against a neighbouring trunk. Here are the laurel with bitter berries, slender linden-trees, Paphian myrtle, and the alder, destined to sweep its oarage over the boundless sea; and here, mounting to meet the sun, a pine-tree lifts its knotless bole to front the winds. Midmost stands a tree of mighty girth, and with its heavy shade overwhelms the lesser trees and, spreading its branches with mighty reach, it stands, the solitary guardian of the wood. Beneath this tree a gloomy spring o'erflows, that knows nor light nor sun, numb with perpetual chill; an oozy swam surrounds the sluggish pool.

[548] Hither when the aged priest came, there was no delay; the place furnished night. Then a ditch is dug and into it are thrown brands plucked from funeral pyres. The priest shrouds his body in a mournful pall and waves a branch. His gloomy robe sweeps o'er his feet; in the squalid garb of mourning the old man advances, his hoary hair bound with a wreath of death-dealing yew. Black-fleeced sheep and oxen of sable hue are backward dragged. The flame devours the feast, and the living victims writhe in the deadly fire. Then he summons the spirits of the dead, and thee who rulest the spirits, and him who blocks the entrance to the Lethaeian stream; o'er and o'er and o'er he repeats a magic rune, and fiercely, with frenzied lips, he chants a charm which either appeases or compels the flitting ghosts. He makes libation of blood upon the altars, burns the victims whole, and soaks the trench with plenteous blood. Of snowy milk likewise he makes libation, pours wine with his left hand, repeats his chants, and, with gaze on ground, summons the ghosts with deeper tone and wild.

[569] Loud bayed the pack of Hecate; thrice the deep valley gave out a mournful noise; the whole place was shaken and the ground was stricken from below. "My prayers are heard," says the priest; "prevailing words I uttered; blind Chaos is burst open, and for the tribes of Dis a way is given to the upper world." All the wood shrank down, its foliage bristling; the stout oaks were split and the whole grove shook with horror; the earth also shrank back, and from her depths gave forth a groan – whether Hell brooked it ill that its deep abyss was assailed, or Earth of herself, that she might give passage to the dead, with crashing noise burst her close barriers; or else in mad rage three-headed Cerberus shook his heavy chains.

[582] Suddenly the earth yawned and opened wide with gulf immeasurable. Myself, I saw the numb pools amidst the shadows; myself, the wan gods and night in very truth. My frozen blood stood still and clogged my veins. Forth leaped a savage cohort and stood full-armed, the whole viper brood, the troop of brothers sprung from Dircaean teeth. Then grim Erinys shrieked, and blind Fury and Horror, and all the forms which spawn and lurk midst the eternal

shades: Grief, tearing her hair; Disease, scarce holding up her wearied head; Age, burdened with herself; impending Fear, and greedy Pestilence, the Ogygian people's curse. Our spirits died within us. Even she who knew the rites and the arts of her aged sire stood amazed. But he, undaunted and bold from his lost sight, summons the bloodless throng of cruel Dis.

[598] Straightway, like clouds, the shadowy forms flit forth and snuff the air of open heaven. Not as many falling leaves does Eryx show; nor does Hybla in mid-spring as many flowers produce, when in close masses cling the swarming bees; as many waves break not on the Ionian sea; as many birds, fleeing cold Strymon's threats, leave not the wintry land and, cleaving the sky, change Arctic snows for the warm valley of the Nile; as were the throngs which the priest's call summoned forth. Eagerly the shivering ghosts seek the shelter of the shady grove. First from the gound, his right hand grasping a wild bull by the horns, Zethus emerges, and Amphion, in his left holding the shell which by its sweet music drew the rocks. And midst her children Tantalus, at last safe in her pride, holds up her head with insolent arrogance, and numbers o'er her shades. A mother worse than she, Agave comes, still raging; her the whole band follows who rent their king in pieces, and after the Bacchanals mangled Pentheus comes, even now savage and holding to his threats.

[619] At length, when often called, one lifts his shame-stricken head and, shrinking afar from all the throng, seeks to hide himself. The seer presses hard after him and redoubles his Stygian prayers, until he bring out to open view the features that fain would hide – Laïus! I shudder as I tell it. There he stood, a sight of horror, his limbs streaming o'er with blood, his ragged locks matted with foul filth; and with raving lips he spoke: "O savage house of Cadmus, rejoicing even in kindred blood, brandish the thyrsus, with frenzied hands rend thy sons – 'twere better so; for Thebes' crowning crime is – the love of mother. O fatherland, not by the wrath of Heaven, but by sin art thou despoiled. 'Tis not the plague-fraught south wind with its destructive blast, nor yet the earth, too little watered by the rain from heaven, that with its dry breath is harming thee; but thy blood-stained

king, who as the price of cruel murder has seized the sceptre and the incestuous chamber of his sire, detested son! – but worse the mother than the son, again pregnant in her unhallowed womb; and to his own origin he returned and brought his mother impious progeny, and (a thing the beasts scarce do) himself begot brothers to himself – entanglement of evil, a monster more confused than his own Sphinx. Thee, thee, who in thy blood-stained hand dost hold the sceptre, thee and thy whole city will I, thy father, still unavenged, pursue; and with me Erinys as bridesmaid of thy nuptials will I bring, yea, I will bring her sounding with her lash; thine incestuous house will I overturn and thy household with unnatural strife will I destroy.

[647] “Wherefore speedily expel ye the king from out your borders, in exile drive him to any place so-ever with his baleful step. Let him leave the land; then, blooming with flowers of spring, shall it renew its verdure, the life-giving air shall give pure breath again, and their beauty shall come back to the woods; Ruin and Pestilence, Death, Suffering, Corruption and Distress, fit company for him, shall all depart together. And he himself with hastening steps shall long to flee our kingdom, but I will set wearisome delays before his feet and hold him back. He shall creep, uncertain of his way, with the staff of age groping out his gloomy way. Rob ye him of the earth; his father will take from him the sky.”

OEDIPUS

[659] An icy chill has crept through my bones and limbs; all that I feared to do I am accused of having done. But Merope, still wed to Polybus, refutes the charge of incest; and Polybus, alive and well, cleanses my hands. Each parent clears me from the charge of blood and incest: what room is left for crime? As for Laius, Thebes mourned his loss long ere I set foot on Boeotian soil. Is the old priest lying, or is some god oppressing Thebes? – Now, now I hold the confederates of a crafty plot: the priest invents these charges, using the gods as a screen for trickery and to thee he promises my sceptre.

CREON

[671] I, should I wish my sister driven from the throne? If sacred fealty

to my kindred house held me not fixed in my present station, yet that high estate itself, ever o'erfraught with care, would frighten me. Let it be thine in safety to lay off this burden, nor let it o'erwhelm thee when thou wouldst withdraw. Now more safely wilt thou set thyself in humbler place.

OEDIPUS

[678] Dost even urge me of free will to lay down the heavy cares of state?

CREON

[679] Thus would I counsel those to whom the way e'en yet is open to either choice; but as for thee 'tis necessary now to bear thy lot.

OEDIPUS

[682] Whoso longs to reign, his surest way is to praise humble life and prate of ease and sleep. Calm is oft counterfeited by a restless soul.

CREON

[685] Does not my long loyalty plead enough for me?

OEDIPUS

[686] To traitors loyalty gives opening for treason.

CREON

[687] Free from a king's burdens, I enjoy a king's advantages; my home is honoured by throngs of citizens, and no day rises to dawning from the night on which my royal kinsman's bounty does not overflow my house; apparel, rich food, deliverance, all are granted to many through my favour. What should I think still lacking to a lot so blest?

OEDIPUS

[694] What sill is lacking; prosperity has no bounds.

CREON

[695] Shall I then, my cause unheard, fall like a criminal?

OEDIPUS

[696] Did ye show due regard unto my life? Did Tiresias hear my cause? And yet ye hold me guilty. Ye set the example; I but follow it.

CREON

[699] What if I am innocent?

OEDIPUS

[699] Doubts as if certainties kings are wont to fear.

CREON

[700] Who trembles with vain fear, true fear deserves.

OEDIPUS

[701] Set free the guilty, and he hates; let all that's doubtful perish.

CREON

[703] Thus is hatred bred.

OEDIPUS

[703] He who fears hatred overmuch knows not to rule; fear is the guard of kingdoms.

CREON

[705] Who harshly wields the sceptre with tyrannic sway, fears those who fear; terror recoils upon its author's head.

OEDIPUS

[707] [*To attendants.*] Shut up the guilty man in a rocky dungeon and guard him well. I to the royal palace will return.

[*CREON is led away by attendants. Exit OEDIPUS.*]

CHORUS

[709] Not thou the cause of our great perils, not on thy account do the fates assail the house of Labdacus; nay, 'tis the ancient wrath of the gods that follows us. Castalia's grove lent its shade to the Sidonian wanderer and Dirce bathed the colonists from Tyre, what time great

Agenor's son, weary with tracking Jove's thefts over all the world, in fear halted beneath our trees, worshipping his sister's ravisher; and, by the advice of Phoebus, bidden to follow a straying heifer which had never bent beneath the plough or the slow wain's curving yoke, he gave over his quest and named a nation from that ill-omened heifer.

[725] From that time on, our land has e'er produced strange monsters: either a serpent, rising from the valley's depths, hisses on high above the ancient oaks and overtops the pines; ever higher, above the Chaonian trees he lifts his dark-blue head, although his greater part still lies upon the ground; or else the earth, teeming with impious birth, brings forth armed men: loud resounding the battle-call from the curving horn, and the brazen trumpet sent forth its piercing notes. Their tongues and lips, ne'er nimble before, were first employed in the battle-cry of their unfamiliar voice.

[738] The kindred bands filled the plains, and this offspring, worthy the seed that had been sown, measured their life by a single day; born after the passing of the Morning Star, they perished ere Hesperus arose. The wanderer quaked at prodigies so strange, and fearfully awaited the assault of the new-born folk; until the savage youth fell in death, and their mother beheld the children she had but now brought forth returned to her own bosom. With this may the horror of civil strife have passed! May the Thebes of Hercules know those fratricidal struggles only!

[751] What of the doom of Cadmus' grandson, when the antlers of the long-lived stag covered his brow with their strange branches, and his own hounds pursued the master? Headlong from the woods and mountains the swift Actaeon fled, and with feet more nimble, scouring glades and rocky places, shuddered at the feathers fluttering in the breeze, and avoiding the snares he himself had set; at length he gazed into the still pool's water and saw his horns and his beast-like countenance. 'Twas in tha same pool the goddess of too stern chastity had bathed her virgin limbs!

OEDIPUS

[764] My soul broods o'er its cares and renews its fears. That by my crime Laius fell, gods both of heaven and hell affirm; and yet my soul conscious of innocence and known to itself better than to the gods, makes denial. Retracing the dim path of memory, I see one met on the way fallen 'neath the blow of my stout staff and given o'er to Dis; but first the old man arrogantly from his car thrust the younger from the way. Yet that was far from Thebes, where Phocis' land parts the three-forked roads.

[Enter JOCASTA.]

[773] O thou, my soul's own mate, resolve by doubts, I pray thee; what span of life had Laius at his death? In the fresh prime of life died he, or in broken age?

JOCASTA

[776] Midway between age and youth, but nearer age.

OEDIPUS

[777] Did a great thong gird the king about?

JOCASTA

[778] The most mistook the uncertain path and strayed; a few by faithful toil kept near his car.

OEDIPUS

[780] Did any companion share the royal fate?

JOCASTA

[781] One did faith and valour cause to share his fate.

OEDIPUS

[782] [*Aside.*] I have the guilty man; the number tallies, and the place.
[*To JOCASTA.*] But add the time.

JOCASTA

[783] Now is the tenth harvest being reaped.

[Enter an old Corinthian messenger.]

OLD MAN

[784] *[To OEDIPUS.]* The Corinthians summon thee to thy father's throne. Polybus has gained his everlasting rest.

OEDIPUS

[786] How heartless Fortune assails me on every hand! But tell me by what fate my sire is fallen.

OLD MAN

[788] Soft slumber set his aged spirit free.

OEDIPUS

[789] My father lies died, and by no violence. I call to witness that now I may lift clean hands to heaven, hands that need fear no charge of crime. But the more fearful part of my fates remains.

OLD MAN

[793] All fears thy father's kingdom will dispel.

OEDIPUS

[794] I would seek my father's kingdom, but from my mother do I shrink.

OLD MAN

[795] Dost fear thy mother, who, in anxious suspense, longs for thy coming.

OEDIPUS

[796] 'Tis love itself bids me flee.

OLD MAN

[797] Wilt leave her widowed?

OEDIPUS

[797] There dost thou touch on the very thing I fear!

OLD MAN

[798] Speak out; what hidden fear weighs on thy soul? 'Tis my wont to offer kings a loyal silence.

OEDIPUS

[800] Warned by the Delphic oracle, I dread my mother's bed.

OLD MAN

[801] Then cease thy empty fears, thy horrible forebodings; Merope was not in truth thy mother.

OEDIPUS

[803] What did she hope to gain by a changeling son?

OLD MAN

[804] Kings' children hold rude loyalty in check.

OEDIPUS

[805] The secrets of the chamber – tell how thou knowest them.

OLD MAN

[806] 'Twas these hands gave thee, a tiny babe, unto thy mother.

OEDIPUS

[807] Thou gav'st me to my mother; but who gave to thee?

OLD MAN

[808] A shepherd, 'neath Cithaeron's snowy peak.

OEDIPUS

[809] What chance brought thee within that wood?

OLD MAN

[810] On that mountain-side was I tending my horned flocks.

OEDIPUS

[811] Now name also the sure marks upon my body.

OLD MAN

[812] Thy soles had been pierced with iron, and thou hast thy name from thy swollen and crippled feet.

OEDIPUS

[814] Who was he who gave thee my body as a gift? I seek to know.

OLD MAN

[815] He fed the royal flocks; there was humbler band of shepherds under him.

OEDIPUS

[817] Tell me his name.

OLD MAN

[817] An old man's early memory grows faint, failing through weakness and long disuse.

OEDIPUS

[819] Couldst recognize the man by face and feature?

OLD MAN

[820] Perchance I might; some trifling mark oft-times calls back the memory of things that time hath buried and made dim.

OEDIPUS

[822] Let all the flocks be driven hither to the sacred altars, their guides with them; go, slaves, and quickly summon those with whom is the herds' chief control.

[The slaves depart on the errand.]

OLD MAN

[825] Whether design or chance conceals these things, suffer to lie hid for ever what has lain hid so long; truth often is made clear to the discoverer's bane.

OEDIPUS

[828] Can any bane greater than all this be feared?

OLD MAN

[829] Great, be thou sure, is that bane which thou seekst with toil so great. Here meet, from that side and from this, the public weal and the king's, and both are in equal balance. Keep thy hand from both; challenge thou nothing; let the fates unfold themselves.

OEDIPUS

[833] 'Tis not expedient to disturb a happy state; that is with safety changed which is at its worst.

OLD MAN

[835] Dost seek for a nobler thing than royal lineage? Beware lest thou rue the finding of thy parentage.

OEDIPUS

[837] I will seek certainty even of rueful birth; so resolved am I to know.

[*Enter PHORBAS.*]

[838] [*To himself.*] Behold the ancient, heavy with years, once keeper of the royal flocks, Phorbas. [*To OLD MAN.*] Dost recall the old man's name or features?

OLD MAN

[841] His form comes easily to my memory; but that face, while not well known, again is not unknown to me.

[843] [*To PHORBAS.*] While Laius held the throne, didst ever as a slave drive rich flocks on Cithaeron's tracts?

PHORBAS

[845] Cithaeron, abounding ever in fresh pasturage, in summer-time gave feeding-ground for my flocks.

OLD MAN

[847] Dost thou know me?

PHORBAS

[847] My memory falters and is in doubt.

OEDIPUS

[848] Didst thou once give a boy to this man here? Speak out. Thou falterest? Why do thy cheeks change colour? Why seekst for words? Truth scorns delay.

PHORBAS

[851] Thou stirrest matters o'erclouded by long lapse of time.

OEDIPUS

[852] Speak, lest pain force thee to the truth.

PHORBAS

[853] I did give him an infant, a worthless gift; ever could he have enjoyed the light or sky.

OLD MAN

[855] Far be the omen! He lives and I pray may live.

OEDIPUS

[856] Why dost thou say that the child thou gavest did not survive?

PHORBAS

[857] Through both his feet a slender iron rod was driven, binding his legs together. A swelling engendered in the wound, galled the child's body, a loathsome plague.

OEDIPUS

[860] [*To himself.*] Why seekest further? Now doth fate draw near. [*To PHORBAS.*] Who was the babe? Speak out.

PHORBAS

[861] My loyalty forbids.

OEDIPUS

[862] Hither with fire, someone! Now shall flames banish loyalty.

PHORBAS

[863] Is truth to be sought along such cruel ways? Pardon I beg.

OEDIPUS

[864] If I seem harsh to thee, and headstrong, vengeance is in thy hands; speak thou the truth. Who was he? Of what sire begot? Of what mother born?

PHORBAS

[867] Born of thy – wife.

OEDIPUS

[868] Yawn, earth! And do thou, king of the dark world, ruler of shades, to lowest Tartarus hurl this unnatural interchange ‘twixt brood and stock. Citizens, heap stones upon my accursed head; slay me with weapons. Let father, let son assail me with the sword; let husband and brothers arm hands against me, and let the sick populace snatch brands from the pyres and hurl them at me. The crime of the age I wander, hate of the gods, destruction of holy law, the very day I drew the untried air already worthy death. [*To himself.*] Now be stout of soul, now dare some deed worthy of thy crimes. Go, get thee to the palace with hurrying feet; congratulate thy mother on her house enriched by children.
[*Exit.*]

CHORUS

[882] Were it mine to shape fate at my will, I would trim my sails to gentle winds, lest my yards tremble, bent ‘neath a heavy blast. May soft breezes, gently blowing, unvarying, carry my untroubled barque along; may life bear me on safely, running in middle course.

[892] While, in fear of the Cretan king, madly the lad sought the stars, in strange devices trusting, and strove to vanquish true birds in flight, and laid his commands on pinions all too false, his name he robbed the sea of its own name. But shrewd old Daedalus, balancing a middle path, stopped midway of the clouds, awaiting his winged son (as a bird flees the threatening hawk and gathers her scattered and

frightened brood), until the boy in the sea plied hands enmeshed in the shackles of his daring flight. Whatsoever exceeds the allotted bounds, hangs in a place unsure.

[Enter a messenger from within the palace.]

[911] But what is this? The doors creak open; behold, a servant of the king, stricken with woe, beast with his hand upon his head. Tell us what news thou bringst.

MESSENGER

[915] When Oedipus grasped his foretold fate, and his breed unspeakable, he condemned himself as convicted of the crime and, seeking the palace with deadly purpose, entered within that hateful roof with hurried step. As over the fields a Libyan lion rages, with threatening front and shaking his tawny mane; so he, his face fierce with passion, with eyes wild staring, with groans and deep mutterings, limbs with cold sweat streaming, froths and threatens, and his mighty, deep-buried anguish overflows. He, raging in soul, plans some monstrous deed to match his destiny.

[926] “Why do I delay punishment?” he cries; “let someone with the sword assail this guilty breast, or overwhelm me with burning fire or stones. What tigress, what ravening bird will pounce upon my vitals? Do thou thyself, thou all-holding haunt of crime, O curst Cithaeron, send thy wild beasts against me from thy forests, send thy maddened dogs – once more send Agave. O soul, why shrinkst from death? ’Tis death alone saves innocence from fortune.”

[935] With this he lays impious hand on hilt and draws his sword. “So then? With brief suffering like this canst atone for so great crimes, and with one blow wilt pay all debts? Thy death – for thy father ’tis enough; what then to thy mother, what to thy children shamefully begot, what to her who with utter ruin is atoning for thy crime, thy mourning country, wilt thou give? Thou canst not pay! Let that same Nature who in Oedipus alone reverses established laws, devising strange births, be changed anew for my punishment. Be it thine to live again, to die again, ever to be reborn, that at each birth thou

mayst pay new penalties. Now use thy wit, poor wretch; let that which may not oft befall, befall thee long – choose thou a lasting death. Search out a way whereon to wander, not mingling with the dead and yet removed from the living; die thou, but reaching not thy sire. Dost hesitate, O soul?”

[952] Lo, with sudden shower a flood o’erwhelms his face and waters his cheeks with weeping. “And is it enough to weep? Only thus far shall mine eyes o’erflow with some few drops? Nay, driven from their sockets, let them follow the tears they shed. Ye gods of wedlock, is it enough? These eyes must be dug out!” He speaks and raves with wrath; his cheeks burn threatening with ferocious fire, and his eyeballs scarce hold themselves in their place; his face is full of reckless daring and mad savagery, as of one in boundless rage; with groans and dreadful cries, his hands into his eyes he thrusts. But his starting eyes stand forth to meet them and, eagerly following their kindred hands, rush upon their wound. With hooked fingers he greedily searches out his eyes and, torn from their very roots, he drags both eyeballs out; still stay his hands in the empty sockets and, deep fixed, tear with their nails the deep-set hollows of his eyes and empty cavities; vainly he rages, and with excessive fury raves.

[971] The hazard of light is o’er; he lifts his head, surveys the regions of the sky with his empty sockets, and makes trial of the night. The shreds which still hang from eyes unskillfully plucked out he breaks away, and in triumph cries aloud to all the gods: “Spare now my land, I pray you; now have I done justice, I have paid the debt I owed; at last have I found night worthy of my wedlock.” A hideous shower drenches his face and his mangled brow spouts streams of blood from his bursting veins.

CHORUS

[980] By fate are we driven; yield ye to fate. No anxious cares can change the threads of its inevitable spindle. Whate’er we mortals bear, whate’er we do, comes from on high; and Lachesis maintains the decrees of her distaff which by no hand may be reversed. All things move on in an appointed path, and our first day fixed our last.

Those things God may not change which speed on their way, close woven with their causes. To each his established life goes on, unmovable by any prayer. To many their very fear is bane; for many have come upon their doom while shunning doom.

[995] The gates have sounded, and he himself, with none to guide and sightless, gropes his way.

[*Enter OEDIPUS.*]

OEDIPUS

[998] All's well, 'tis finished; to my father have I paid my debt. How sweet the darkness! What god, at length appeased, has shrouded my head in this dark veil? Who has forgiven my crimes? I have escaped the conscious eye of day. Nothing, thou parricide, dost owe to thy right hand; the light hath fled from thee. This is the face becometh Oedipus.

[*Enter JOCASTA.*]

CHORUS

[1004] See, there, with hurried step, frantic, beside herself, Jocasta rushes forth, just as, in frenzied rage, the Cadmean mother tore her son's head away and realized her deed. She hesitates, longs and yet fears to speak to the afflicted one. Now shame has given way to grief; but her first words falter on her lips.

JOCASTA

[1009] What shall I call thee? Son? Dost question it? Thou art my son; does "son" shame thee? Though thou wouldst not, speak, my son – why doest thou turn away thy head, thy sightless face?

OEDIPUS

[1012] Who wills not that I enjoy my darkness? Who restores my eyes? My mother's, lo, my mother's voice! I have worked in vain. 'Tis unlawful that we meet again. Let the vast sea roll between our impious selves, let remote lands separate, and if beneath this world there hangs another, facing other stars and a straying sun, let it take

one of us.

JOCASTA

[1019] Fate's is that fault of thine: by fate no one is made guilty.

OEDIPUS

[1020] Now spare thy words, mother, spare my ears, by these remnants of my mangled body, I beseech thee, by the unhallowed offspring of my blood, by all that in our names is right and wrong.

JOCASTA

[1024] Why art benumbed, my soul? Since thou hast shared his guilt, why dost refuse to share his punishment? Through thee, incestuous one, all grace of human law has been confused and lost. Die then, and let out thy impious spirit with the sword. Not if the father of the gods himself, shaking the universe, with deadly hand should hurl his glittering bolts at me, could I ever pay penalty equal to my crimes – I, a mother accurst. Death is my darling wish; let the way of death be sought.

[1032] [*To OEDIPUS.*] Come, lend thy hand against thy mother, if thou art parricide; this lacks to crown thy work.

[1034] [*To herself.*] Nay, let me seize his sword; by this blade lies slain my husband – nay, why not call him by his true name? – my husband's father. Shall I pierce my breast with this, or thrust it deep into my bared throat? Thou knowest not to choose a place? Strike here, my hand, through this capacious womb, which bore my husband and my sons!

[*She stabs herself and falls dead.*]

CHORUS

[1040] There lies she slain. Her hand dies on the wound, and the sword is driven out by strong streams of blood.

OEDIPUS

[1042] Thee, O fate-revealer, thee, guardian and god of truth, do I upbraid. My father only did I owe the fates; twice parricide and more

guilty than I feared, I have slain my mother; for 'tis by my sin that she is done to death. O lying Phoebus, I have outdone the impious fates.

[1047] With quaking step pursue thy darkling ways; with faltering feet grope through blind night with apprehensive hand. Make haste, planting uncertain steps, go, speed thee, fly! – but stop, lest thou stumble and fall upon thy mother.

[1052] All ye who are weary in body and burdened with disease, whose hearts are faint within you, see, I fly, I leave you; lift your heads. Milder skies come when I am gone. He who, though near to death, still keeps some feeble life, may freely now draw deep, life-giving draughts of air. Go, bear ye aid to those given up to death; all pestilential humours of the land I take with me. Ye blasting Fates, thou quaking terror of Disease, Wasting, and black Pestilence, and mad Despair, come ye with me, with me. 'Tis sweet to have such guides.

[*Exit.*]

MEDEA



Translated by Frank Justus Miller

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

MEDEA, daughter of Aeëtes, king of Colchis, and wife of Jason.

JASON, son of Aeson, and nephew of Pelias, the usurping king of Thessaly; organizer and leader of the Argonautic expedition to Colchis in quest of the Golden Fleece.

CREON, king of Corinth, who had received into his hospitable kingdom Medea and Jason, fugitives from Thessaly, after Medea had plotted the death of Pelias.

NURSE of Medea.

MESSENGER.

TWO SONS of Medea and Jason (*personae mutae*).

CHORUS OF CORINTHIANS, friendly to Jason and hostile to Medea.

THE TIME of the play is confined to the single day of the culmination of the tragedy, the day proposed by Creon for the banishment of Medea and the marriage of Jason to Creusa, daughter of Creon.

THE SCENE is in Corinth, in the court of the house of Jason.

ARGUMENT

Although the play is confined in time to the final day of catastrophe at Corinth, the background is the whole romantic story of the Argonauts: how Jason and his hero-comrades, at the instigation of Pelias, the usurping king of Thessalian Iolchos, undertook the first voyage in quest of the Golden Fleece; how, after many adventures, these first sailors reached the kingdom of Aeëtes, who jealously guarded the fleece, since upon its possession depended his kingship; how the three deadly labours were imposed upon Jason before the fleece could be won – the yoking of the fiery bulls, the contest with the giants that sprang from the sown serpent's teeth, and the overcoming of the sleepless dragon that ever guarded the fleece; how, smitten by love of him, the beautiful barbaric Medea, daughter of the king, by the help of her magic aided Jason in all these labours and accompanied him in his flight; how to retard her father's pursuit she slew her brother and scattered his mangled remains in the path as they fled; how again, for love of Jason, she restored his father to youth and tricked Pelias' own daughters into slaying their aged sire; how, for this act, Medea with her husband were exiled from Thessalia and dwelt in Corinth; how, for ten happy years, she lived with her husband and two sons in this alien land, her wild past almost forgotten, her magic untouched.

But now Jason has been won away from his wife, and is about to wed Creusa, the daughter of Creon, king of Corinth. The wedding festivities have already begun when the play opens and reveals Medea invoking all the powers of heaven and hell in punishment of her false lord.

MEDEA

MEDEA

[1] Ye gods of wedlock, and thou, Lucina, guardian of the nuptial couch, and thou who didst teach Tiphys to guide his new barque to the conquest of the seas, and thou, grim ruler of the deeps of Ocean, and Titan, who dost portion out bright day unto the world, and thou who doest show thy bright face as witness of the silent mysteries, O three-formed Hecate, and ye gods by whose divinity Jason swore to me, to whom Medea may more lawfully appeal – thou chaos of endless night, ye realms remote from heaven, ye unhallowed ghosts, thou lord of the realm of gloom, and thou, his queen, won by violence but with better faith, with ill-omened speech I make my prayer to you. Be present, be present, ye goddesses who avenge crime, your hair foul with writhing snakes, grasping the smoking torch with your bloody hands, be present now, such as once ye stood in dread array beside my marriage couch; upon this new wife destruction bring, destruction on this father-in-law and the whole royal stock.

[19] I have yet curse more dire to call down on my husband – may he live. Through unknown cities may he wander, in want, in exile, in fear of life, hated and homeless; may he seek hospitality at strange doors, by now a familiar applicant; may he desire me for wife, and, that which I can pray nothing worse, may his children be like their sire and like their mother. – Already borne, borne is my vengeance! I have borne children! But why frame complaints and idle words? Shall I not go against my enemies? I'll snatch the bridal-torches from their hands and the light from heaven. Does he behold this, the Sun, father of my race, and do men still behold him as, sitting in his chariot, he courses over bright heaven's accustomed spaces? Why does he not return to his rising and measure back the day? Grant, oh, grant that I ride through the air in my father's car; give me the reins, O sire, give me the right to guide thy fire-bearing steeds with the flaming reins; then let Corinth, with her twin shores cause of delay to ships, be consumed by flames and bring the two seas together.

[37] This course alone remains, that I myself bear the wedding torch unto the chamber and, after sacrificial prayers, slay victims on consecrated altars. Amid the very entrails seek thou a way for punishment, if thou livest, O soul, if there remains to thee aught of thy old-time strength. Away with womanish fears, clothe thy heart with unfeeling Caucasus. Whatever horror Pontus has beheld, or Phasis, Isthmus shall behold. Wild deeds, unheard-of, horrible, calamities at which heaven and earth alike shall tremble, my heart deep within is planning – wounds, slaughter, death, creeping from limb to limb. Ah, too trivial the deeds I have rehearsed; these things I did in girlhood. Let my grief rise to more deadly strength; greater crimes become me, now that I am a mother. Gird thyself with wrath, and prepare thee for deadly deeds with the full force of madness. Let the story of thy rejection match the story of thy marriage. How wilt thou leave thy husband? Even as thou didst follow him. Break off now dull delay; the home which by crime was gained, by crime must be abandoned.

CHORUS

[*Chanting the epithalamium for JASON and CREUSA.*]

[56] May the high gods who rule over heaven, and thy who rule the sea, with gracious divinity attend on our princes' marriage, amid the people's solemn applause. First to the sceptre-bearing Thunderers let the bull with white-shining hide offer his high-raised neck. Lucina let a heifer appease, snow-white, untouched by the yoke; and let her who restrains the bloody hands of rough Mars, who brings peace to warring nations and holds plenty in her rich horn, mild goddess, be given a tender victim. And do thou, who the torches of lawful marriage attendest, dissipating the night with propitious hand, hither come, reeling with drunken footstep, binding thy temples with garlands of roses. And thou star, forerunner of twilight, who returnest ever slowly for lovers – thee, mothers, thee, brides eagerly await, to see the full soon thy bright beams scattering.

[75] Our maiden in beauty far excels the Cecropian brides, and those who on Taÿgetus' ridges are trained after the manner of men by the unwall'd city, and those who bathe in Aonia's waters and Alpheus'

sacred stream. Should he wish to be judged in beauty, all will yield to the son of Aeson, our leader – the ruthless lightning’s son who yokes with wild tigers, and he who makes tremble the tripod, the stern virgin’s brother; with his twin Castor, Pollux with yield, more skilful in boxing. So, so, ye heaven-dwellers, I pray you, let this bride surpass brides, this husband far excel husbands. When she has taken her stand midst her train of maidens, her one beauty shines more brightly than all. So does starlight splendour wane with the coming of the sun, and the huddled flock of the Pleiades vanish away when Phoebe, shining with borrowed light, with encircling horns encloses her full-orbed disk.

[98] While on such beauty the young lover gazes, her cheeks are suddenly covered with rosy blushes. So snowy wool, dipped in purple dye, doth redden; so shines the sun when the shepherd at dawn, wet with the dew, beholds it.

[102] Do thou, O bridegroom, rescued from the marriage bonds of barbarous Phasis, wont with fear and reluctant hand to caress an unruly wife, joyfully take to thy arms the Aeolian maid – now at last ’tis with the parents’ will.

[107] Sport, youths, with free banter and jesting; let your songs ring out, O youths, in responsive cadence; rarely against our lords is unrebuked licence given. Comely, noble scion of Lyaeus, the thyrsus-bearer, now is the time to light thy torch of frayed pinewood; toss on high the ritual fire with languishing fingers. Let saucy, sharp wit pour forth festive banterings and let the throng be free with jesting. – Let her pass in silent gloom who steals away to wed with a foreign husband.

MEDEA

[116] We are undone! Upon my ears has sounded the marriage-hymn. So great a calamity scarce I myself, scarce even yet can comprehend? Had Jason the heart to do this; having robbed me of my father, native land, and kingdom, could he leave me alone in a foreign land, cruel? Has he scorned my deservings, who saw flames

and sea conquered by my crime? Does he think that all my powers of evil are so exhausted? Perplexed, witless, with mind scarce sane, I am tossed to every side. Whence can I get vengeance? I would that he had a brother! A wife he has; into her heart let the sword be driven. Is this enough to offset my woes? All monstrous deeds which Pelasgian, which barbaric cities know, all that thy own hands do not know, must be made ready now. Let thine own crimes urge thee on, and let them all return in memory – the bright ornament of the kingdom stolen away, and the wicked girl's little comrade hewn in pieces with the sword, his murder forced upon his father's sight, his body scattered over the deep, and the limbs of aged Pelias seethed in a brazen pot. Murder and impious bloodshed now often have I wrought! – and yet no crime have I done in wrath; 'twas ill-omened love stirred me.

[137] But what else could Jason have done, once made subject to another's will and power? He should have bared his breast unto the sword – nay, ah, nay, mad grief, say not so! If possible, may he live and, mindful of me, keep unharmed the gift I gave. The fault is Creon's, all, who with unbridled sway dissolves marriages, tears mothers from their children, and breaks pledges bound by straitest oath; on him be my attack, let him alone pay the penalties which he owes. I will pile his home high with ashes; its dark pinnacles wrapt in flames Malea shall see. where, jutting out, it holds ships in tedious delay.

NURSE

[150] Be silent, I pray thee, and confide to secret grief thy hidden complaints. Whoe'er has dumbly borne hard blows with patient and calm soul, has been able to repay them; it is hidden wrath that harms; hatred proclaimed loses its chance for vengeance.

MEDEA

[155] Light is the grief which can take counsel and hide itself; great ills lie not in hiding. 'Tis pleasing to face the foe.

NURSE

[157] Stay this frenzied outburst, my child; even silent calm can scarce defend thee.

MEDEA

[159] Fortune fears the brave, the cowardly overwhelms.

NURSE

[160] If there is place for courage, then should it be approved.

MEDEA

[161] It can never be that for courage there is no place.

NURSE

[162] No hope points out a way for our broken fortunes.

MEDEA

[163] Whoso has naught to hope, let him despair of naught.

NURSE

[164] The Colchians are no longer on thy side, thy husband's vows have failed, and there is nothing left of all thy wealth.

MEDEA

[166] Medea, is left – in her thou beholdest sea and land, and sword and fire and gods and thunderbolts.

NURSE

[168] The king is to be feared.

MEDEA

[168] My father was a king.

NURSE

[169] Fearst thou not arms?

MEDEA

[169] Not though they were sprung from earth.

NURSE

[170] Thou'lt die.

MEDEA

[170] I wish it.

NURSE

[170] Flee!

MEDEA

[170] Of flight I have repented.

NURSE

[171] Medea,

MEDEA

[171] Will I be.

NURSE

[171] Thou art a mother.

MEDEA

[171] By whom, thou seest.

NURSE

[172] Dost delay flight?

MEDEA

[172] Flee I shall, but I'll take my vengeance first.

NURSE

[173] The avenger will pursue.

MEDEA

[173] Perchance I shall find means to stay him.

NURSE

[174] Check thy words, spare now thy threats, foolish one, and thy proud spirit humble; 'tis well to fit thee to the times.

MEDEA

[176] Fortune can take away my wealth, but not my spirit. – But under whose blows does the king's door upon its hinges creak? It is Creon himself, puffed with Pelasgian power.

[MEDEA has retired to the back of the stage. Exit NURSE. Enter CREON.]

CREON

[179] Medea, Colchian Aeëtes baleful child, has she not yet taken herself from my realm? She is plotting mischief; I know her guile, I know here power. Whom will she spare? Whom will she let live in peace? I was making ready to rid me of this outrageous pest by the sword's means and with all speed; but the prayers of my daughter's husband have prevailed. I have granted her life; let her free my boundaries from fear, and depart in safety.

[He sees MEDEA approaching.]

[186] Boldly she moves to meet me, and with threatening mien seeks closer speech. Keep her off, ye slaves, from touch and approach far off; bid her keep silence; let her learn at last to obey a king's commands. *[To MEDEA.]* Hence in swift flight! remove at once thine abominable presence, dire, horrible!

MEDEA

[192] What crime, what fault is punishment by my exile?

CREON

[193] What cause expels her – that may an innocent woman ask.

MEDEA

[194] If thou'rt my judge, then hear me; if my king, command.

CREON

[195] A king's commands, just and unjust, thou must obey.

MEDEA

[196] Unjust rule never abides continually.

CREON

[197] Go, complain to the Colchians.

MEDEA

[197] I go; but let him take me who brought me thence.

CREON

[198] Thy prayer comes too late; my resolve is fixed.

MEDEA

[199] Didst thou hear Pelias ere he suffered punishment? But say on; be a hearing granted to thine excellent case.

MEDEA

[203] How hard it is to turn away from wrath the spirit when once aroused, and how royal it seems to him who has grasped the sceptre in his proud hands to go on as he has begun, I have learned in my own royal home. For, although I am overwhelmed by piteous disaster, an exile, suppliant, lonely, forsaken, on all sides buffeted, once I had glory from my noble father, and from my grandsire, the Sun, traced illustrious descent. All the land that Phasis waters with its calm, winding stream, all the Scythian Pontus sees behind it, where the sea grows sweet with marshy waters, all that the unwedded hordes, crescent-shielded, hemmed by Thermodon's banks, fill with alarm – over all this my father rules. High-born, blest of heaven, in royal power and splendour then I shone; then princes sued for marriage with me, whom now I must sue. Swift and fickle is fortune and, swooping down, ahs torn me from royalty and given me o'er to exile.

[221] Put thy trust in royalty, although light chance hither and thither tosses e'en mighty wealth! This is the glorious, great privilege of kings, which time can never snatch away – to succour the afflicted, on a safe hearth to shelter suppliants. This only have I brought from my Colchian realm, that by my own self I saved that great glory and illustrious flower of Greece, bulwark of the Achaeans, offspring of gods. Orpheus is my gift, who softens the rocks by his singing and

draws trees after him; mine, too, are the twins, Castor and Pollux, and the sons of Boreas, and Lynceus, who with far-flung gaze sees things removed even beyond Pontus, – and all the Minyans. For of the leader of the leaders I say no word; for him naught is owing; I count none debtor for his sake. For you I brought back the rest; him only for myself.

[236] Come on now, and heap all kinds of shameful deeds upon me. I will confess them; but as for crimes, this only can be charged, the rescue of the Argo. Suppose modesty should please the maiden, suppose her filial duty should please her; then will the whole Pelasgian land perish with its leaders, and this thy son-in-law will first fall before the fiery breath of the fierce bull. Let what fortune will, oppress me; I repent not the glorious salvation of so many kings. Whatever reward I have won by all my crimes, it is in thy hands. Arraign and condemn me, if 'tis thy pleasure; but give me back my sin. I am guilty, I confess it, Creon; such didst thou know me when I clasped thy knees and as suppliant sought the loyalty of thy protecting hand. Once more, some corner, some abiding-place for my woes I beg, some paltry hiding-place; if from thy city thou art pleased to drive me, let some remote nook in thy realm be given me.

CREON

[252] That I am not one to wield the sceptre with violence nor to trample upon misery with haughty foot, methinks I have not unclearly shown by choosing for son-in-law an exile, crushed and stricken with heavy fear – aye, one whom Acastus, lord of Thessaly, demands for punishment and death. He complains that his father, palsied and weak with age, burdened with years, was taken off, and the murdered old man's limbs torn asunder, when, deceived by thy guile, his pious sisters dared an impious crime. Jason can defend his own cause if it is separate from thine; no blood has stained his innocence, his hand wielded no sword, and he has kept far off and free from company of such as thou. Thou, thou contriver of wickedness, who combinest woman's wanton recklessness and man's strength, with no thought of reputation, away! Purge my kingdom and take thy deadly herbs with thee; free the citizens from

fear; abiding in some other land, harry the gods.

MEDEA

[272] Dost force me to flee? Give back then to the fugitive her ship, yea, give back her comrade. Why dost thou bid me flee alone? I did not come alone. If 'tis war thou fearest, drive us both from thy kingdom. Why make distinction 'twixt two culprits? 'Tis for him Pelias lies dead, and not for me. Add flight, theft, a deserted father, a mangled brother, any crime which e'en now the bridegroom is teaching his new wives – 'tis no crime of mine. Full oft have I been made guilty, but never for myself.

CREON

[281] Thy going is already overdue. Why doest contrive delay with words?

MEDEA

[282] Suppliant I make this last prayer to thee as I depart: let not the mother's guilt drag down her guiltless sons.

CREON

[284] Go then; these will I take as father to my fatherly embrace.

MEDEA

[285] By the blest bed of this royal marriage, by thy hopes for the future, and by the estate of thrones, which fickle Fortune disturbs with changeful lot, I pray thee be bountiful of a brief stay of my flight, while I, their mother, imprint on my sons the latest kiss, perchance my dying act.

CREON

[290] For treachery thou art seeking time.

MEDEA

[291] What treachery can be feared in time so scant?

CREON

[292] No time is too brief for harm to those on evil bent.

MEDEA

[293] Dost refuse a poor mother just a little time for tears?

CREON

[294] Though my ingrained fear bids me refuse thy plea, one day shall be given to prepare for banishment.

MEDEA

[296] 'Tis more than enough, though thou retrench it somewhat. I also am in haste.

CREON

[298] With thy life shalt thou pay penalty if before Phoebus brings the bright day thou art not gone from Isthmus.

[299] But the marriage rites summon me, summons the festal day to pray to Hymen.

[*Exuent.*]

CHORUS

[301] Too venturesome the man who in frail barque first cleft the treacherous seas and, with one last look behind him at the well-known shore, trusted his life to the fickle winds; who, ploughing the waters on an unknown course, could trust to a slender plank, stretching too slight a boundary between the ways of life and death.

[329] Unsullied the ages our fathers saw, with crime banished afar. Then every man inactive kept to his own shores and lived to old age on ancestral fields, rich with but little, knowing no wealth save what his home soil had yielded. Not yet could any read the sky and use the stars with which the heavens are spangled; not yet could ships avoid the rainy Hyades; not yet did the fires of the Olenian Goat nor the Attic Wain which slow old Boótes follows and controls, not yet did Boreas, not yet Zephyrus have names.

[318] Tiphys made bold to spread his canvas on the vasty deep and to write new laws for the winds: now to spread full-bellied sail, now to haul the forward sheet and catch cross-breezes, now to set the yards

in safety midway of the mast, now to bind them at the top, when the too eager sailor prays for winds aloft the ruddy topsails flutter. The lands, well separated before by nature's laws, the Thessalian ship made one, bade the deep suffer blows, and the sequestered sea become a part of our human fear.

[340] Heavy the penalties which that bold barque paid, brought through long terrors, when two mountains, barriers of the deep, from either side quick rushing, soared as with sound of thunder, and the sea, caught between, sprinkled their peaks and the clouds themselves. Bold Tiphys paled with fear and let the helm slip wholly from his faltering hand; Orpheus was still, his lyre mute with amaze, and the Argo herself lost voice. What, when the maid of Sicilian Pelorus, her waist begirt with dogs, opened all her gaping throats together? Who did not shudder in every limb when that one monster howled with so many tongues? What, when the deadly pests soothed the Ausonian sea with their tuneful songs, when, sounding back on his Pierian lyre, Thracian Orpheus well-nigh forced the Siren to follow, though wont to hold ships spell-bound by her song? Of this voyage what was the prize? The golden fleece and Medea, worse evil than the sea, worthy to be the first ship's merchandise.

[364] Now, in our time, the deep has ceased resistance and submits utterly to law; no famous Argo, framed by a Pallas' hand, with princes to man its oars, is sought for; any little craft now wanders at will upon the deep. All bounds have been removed, cities have set their walls in new lands, and the world, now passable throughout, ahs left nothing where it once had place: the Indian drinks of the cold Arazes, the Persians quaff the Elbe and the Rhine. There will come an age in the far-off years when Ocean shall unloose the bonds of things, when the whole broad earth shall be revealed, when Tethys shall disclose new worlds and Thule not be the limit of the lands.

NURSE

[*Sees MEDEA hurrying out of the house.*]

[380] Dear child, whither hurriest thou abroad? Stay, curb thy passion, check thy impetuous haste.

[*MEDEA gods on without heeding.*]

[382] As a maenad uncertainly directs her frenzied steps when now she raves at the oncoming of the god, on snowy Pindus' top or on Nysa's ridges, so she runs now here, now there, with frantic rush, marks of distracted passion in her face. Her cheeks aflame, she pants with deep sobs for breath, shouts aloud, weeps floods of tears, beams with joy; she assumes the proof of every passion. Whither the weight of her wrath inclines, where it aims its threats, hangs still in doubt; she threatens, seethes with rage, complains, groans aloud. Where will this wave break itself? Madness o'erflows its bounds. No simple or half-way crime doth she ponder in her heart; she will outdo herself. I recognize the marks of her old-time rage. Something great is impending, wild, monstrous, impious.

[*MEDEA now approached*]

[396] I see madness in her face. May Heaven avert my fears!

MEDEA

[397] [*Aside.*] If thou seekst, poor soul, what limit thou shouldst set to hate, copy thy love. Can it be that unavenged I should endure this royal wedding? Shall this day go idly by so anxiously besought, so anxiously bestowed? While the central earth shall bear up the balanced heavens, while the bright universe shall pursue its unchanging rounds, while sands lack number, while day attends the sun and stars the night, while the dry Bears revolve about the pole, and rivers fall to the sea, my madness shall never cease its quest of vengeance and shall grow on for ever. What ferocity of beasts, what Scylla, what Charybdis, sucking up the Ausonian and Sicilian waters, or what Aetna, resting heavily on panting Titan, shall burn with such threats as I? No whirling river, no storm-tossed sea, no Pontus, raging beneath the north-west wind, no violence of fire, fanned by the gale, could imitate the onrush of my wrath. I shall lay prostrate and destroy all things.

[415] Did he fear Creon and the threats of Thessaly's king? True love can fear no man. But grant that under compulsion he yielded and made surrender; he could at least have come to me, could have

spoken some last words to his wife. This also, though bold of heart, he feared to do. Surely 'twas in the power of the king's son-in-law to put off the time of my cruel banishment – one day was given for my children twain. But I complain not that the time is short; it shall stretch far. This day shall do, shall do that whereof no day shall e'er be dumb. I will storm the gods, and shake the universe.

NURSE

[425] Win back thy woe-troubled heart, my mistress; calm thy soul.

MEDEA

[426] The only calm for me – if with me I see the universe o'erwhelmed in ruins; with me let all things pass away. 'Tis sweet to drag others down when thou art perishing.

[*Exit.*]

NURSE

[*Calling after MEDEA.*]

[429] Beware how many perils are to be feared if thou persist; no one may safely assail the strong.

[*Enter JASON.*]

JASON

[431] O fate, ever hard, and fortune, cruel – when she rages and when she spares, equally malign! How often does God find cures for us worse than our perils; should I resolve to be faithful to my wife according to her deserts, my life would be forfeited to death; should I refuse to die, alas! I must be faithless. It is not fear, but fearful father-love that has conquered faith; surely my children would share their parents' death. O holy Justice, if in heaven thou dwellest, I call thy divinity to witness: the sons have prevailed upon the sire. Nay, even she herself, though she is fierce of heart and ill brooks the yoke, would rather, methinks, take thought for her sons than for her marriage rights. My mind is fixed to assail her wrath with prayers.

[*Enter MEDEA.*]

[445] And see, at sight of me she stars up, bursts into a passion,

displays her hate; all her anguish is in her face.

MEDEA

[447] We are fleeing, Jason, fleeing. 'Tis no new thing to change our abode; but the cause of flight is new – 'twas for thee I was wont to flee. I withdraw, I go away, whom thou art forcing to flee forth from thy home; but whither dost thou send me back? Shall I seek Phasis and the Colchians, my father's kingdom, the fields drenched with my brother's blood? What lands dost thou bid me seek? What waters dost show to me? The jaws of the Pontic sea through which I brought back the noble band of princes, following thee, thou wanton, through the Clashing Rocks? Is it little Iolcos or Thessalian Tempe I shall seek? All the ways which I have opened for thee I have closed upon myself. Whither dost send me back? Thou imposest exile on an exile, but givest no place. But let me go. A king's son-in-law has commanded it; I'll not refuse. Heap dire penalties upon me; them have I deserved. Let the angry king crush thy mistress with cruel punishments, load her hands with chains, shut her up and bury her in dungeons of eternal darkness; I shall suffer less than I deserve.

[465] O ungrateful man, let thy heart recall the bull's fiery breath, and, midst the savage terrors of unconquered race, the fire-breathing herd on Aëtes' arm-bearing plain, the weapons of the suddenly appearing foe, when, at my order, the earth-born soldiery fell in mutual slaughter. Think, too, on the long-sought spoil of the ram of Phrixus, the sleepless dragon, bidden to close his eyes in unknown slumber, my brother given up to death, crime not done once alone in one act of crime; think on the daughters who, lured by my guile, dared dismember the old man who was never to return to life. By the hopes of thy children, thine established house, by the monsters conquered, by these hands which I have never spared in thy service, by the perils we have undergone, by heaven and sea, witnesses of my marriage, have mercy on me; happy thyself, give thy suppliant her turn at happiness. Seeking a kingdom for another, I have given up my own; of all that wealth which, plundered even from the distant swart tribes of India, the Scythians heap up, that golden treasure which, since the packed palace can scarce contain it, we hang upon the trees, I

brought away nothing in my exile save only my brother's limbs. Those also I squandered upon thee; for thee my country has given place, for thee father, brother, maidenhood – with this dower did I wed thee. Give back to the fugitive her own.

JASON

[490] When angry Creon was bent on thy destruction, 'twas by my tears he was prevailed upon to grant thee banishment.

MEDEA

[492] As punishment I deemed it; now, as I see, exile is a boon.

JASON

[493] Depart while still thou mayst; take thyself hence; grievous ever is the wrath of kings.

MEDEA

[494] In urging this upon me, thou art Creusa's advocate; thou wouldst remove the rival whom she hates.

JASON

[496] What! Medea charge me with love?

MEDEA

[496] Yes, murder, too, and treachery.

JASON

[497] What crime, pray, canst thou charge to me?

MEDEA

[498] Whatever I have don.

JASON

[498] This one thing remains still for me, to become guilty of thy sins as well.

MEDEA

[500] They are, they are thine own; who profits by a sin has done the

sin. Though all should hold thy wife infamous, do thou alone protect her, do thou alone call her innocent; let her be guiltless in thy sight, who for thy sake is guilty.

JASON

[504] Unwelcome is life which one is ashamed to have accepted.

MEDEA

[505] Then one should not keep a life which he is ashamed to have accepted.

JASON

[506] Nay, calm thy wrath-stirred heart; for thy sons sake be reconciled.

MEDEA

[507] I reject, forswear, disown them! Shall Creusa bear brothers to my children?

JASON

[509] Yes, a queen, to the sons of exiles; a royal lady to the fallen.

MEDEA

[510] Never may such ill day come to the wretched, as shall mingle a base breed with illustrious stock, Phoebus' sons with the sons of Sisyphus.

JASON

[513] Why, wretched woman, dost thou drag both me and thee to ruin? Begone, I pray thee.

MEDEA

[514] Creon has heard my prayer.

JASON

[515] What can I do? Tell me.

MEDEA

[515] For me? Crime.

JASON

[516] A king on this side and on that –

MEDEA

[516] There is (and this more fearsome still) Medea. Let us strive together, and let the prize be Jason.

JASON

[518] I yield, worn with trouble. And do thou thyself beware lest thou tempt fate too often.

MEDEA

[520] Always has every fortune stood beneath my feet.

JASON

[521] Acastus is hard after us.

MEDEA

[521] Nearer foe is Creon; flee them both. That thou arm thy hand against thy father-in-law, and stain thyself with kindred blood, Medea does not compel thee; remain guiltless and escape with me.

JASON

[525] And who will resist if double war assail us, if Creon and Acastus unite their arms?

MEDEA

[527] Add the Colchians to these, add Aeetes, too, to lead them, join Scythians with Pelasgians; to destruction will I give them all.

JASON

[529] I tremble at lofty sceptres.

MEDEA

[529] See that thou lust not after them.

JASON

[530] Cut short this long discourse, lest it arouse suspicion.

MEDEA

[531] Now, O most high Jupiter, thunder throughout thy heavens, stretch forth thy hand, thine avenging flames prepare, rend the clouds and make the whole world quake. Let thy bolts be poised with hand that chooseth neither me nor him; whichever of us falls will perish guilty; against us thy bolt can make no error.

JASON

[537] Begin to think with reason, and speak with calm. If any solace from my father-in-law's house can soothe thy flight, request it.

MEDEA

[540] To scorn the wealth of kings, my soul, as well thou knowest, hath strength and wont. I ask but this: that I may have my children as comrades of my flight, that in their bosoms I may pour forth my tears. Thee new sons await.

JASON

[544] I confess that right gladly would I yield unto thy prayer, but a father's love forbids; for that I should permit this thing, not Creon himself, my king and father-in-law, could force me. This is my reason for living, this, my heart's comfort, consumed as it is with cares. Sooner could I part with breath, with limbs, with light.

MEDEA

[549] [*Aside.*] Thus does he love his sons? 'Tis well! I have him! The palce to wound him is laid bare. [*To JASON.*] As I depart, my final message, at least, grant me to speak; grant me to give the last embrace; e'en that will be a boon. With my latest utterance I beg thee now; let not any words my distracted grief has poured forth remain within my mind; let the memory of my better self stay with thee, and let these words spoken in wrath be quite forgot.

JASON

[557] All have I driven from my mind, and I also make prayer to thee

that thou curb thy hot passion and be calm; peace soothes the soul's distresses.

[*Exit.*]

MEDEA

[560] He has gone! Can it be so? Goest thou, forgetful of me and of all the deeds I wrought? Have we fallen from thy memory? Nay, we shall never fall therefrom. [*To herself.*] To thy task; summon up all thy powers and arts. The fruit of thy crimes is to count nothing crime. There is scant room for fraud; we are held in fear. There make attack where no one can fear aught. Haste thee now, dare, begin whatever Medea can – and cannot – do.

[568] [*To the NURSE.*] Do thou, faithful nurse, comrade of my grief and of my shifting fortunes, help my unhappy plannings. I have a robe, a gift from heaven, the glory of our house and kingdom, given by the Sun to Aeetes as a pledge of fatherhood; there is also a gleaming necklace of woven gold and a golden band which the sparkle of gems adorns, with which the air is encircled. Let my sons bring these as gifts unto the bride, but let them first be anointed and imbued with baneful poisons. Now call on Hecate. Prepare the death-dealing rites; let altars be erected, and let now their fires resound within the palace.

CHORUS

[579] No violence of fire or of swelling gale, no fearful force of hurtling spear, is as great as when a wife, robbed of her love, burns hot with hate; not when cloudy Auster has brought the winter's rains, and Hister's floods speeds on, wrecking bridges in its course, and wanders afield; not when the Rhone beats back the sea, or when the snows melt into streams beneath the sun's strong rays and in mid-spring Haemus has dissolved. Blind is the fire of love when fanned by rage, cares not to be controlled, brooks no restraint, has no fear of death; 'tis eager to advance even against the sword.

[595] Have mercy, O gods, be gracious, we beseech you, that he may live in safety who tamed the sea; but the lord of the deep is enraged

that the second realm is conquered. The youth who dared drive the everlasting chariot, heedless of his father's goal, himself caught the fire which in his madness he scattered o'er the sky. The familiar path has cost no mortal dear; walk thou where 'twas safe for folk aforetime, nor break, rash man, the inviolable covenants of the universe.

[607] Whoever handled that daring ship's famous oars and despoiled Pelion of his sacred grove's thick shade, whoever entered between the roaming rocks and, having passed the perils of the deep, moored his vessel on a savage shore, to return captor of foreign gold – all by a dreadful end atoned for the sea's outraged laws.

[616] Punishment the challenged ocean claims. First of all, Tiphys, the tamer of the deep, gave up control to an untrained helmsman; dying on a foreign shore, far from his ancestral realm, in a paltry tomb he lies midst unfamiliar shades. For this, Aulis, remembering her lost king, in her becalmed harbour holds ships chafing at delay.

[625] That son of the tuneful Muse, at whose sweet melodies the swift stream stood still and the winds were hushed, when the bird, leaving off its own singing, came near him, the whole wood following after – he lay scattered over the Thracian fields, but his head floated down mournful Hebrus; he came to the familiar Styx and Tartarus, never to return.

[634] Alcides laid low the sons of Aquilo, he slew Neptune's son wont to take upon him countless shapes; but he himself, after establishing peace on land and sea, after opening up the kingdoms of savage Dis, laid him down, living, on burning Oeta, and gave his body to the devouring flames, consumed by the wasting of the double blood, his wife's offering.

[643] The bristling boar, irresistible in his thrust, laid Ancaeus low; thou, Meleager, dost impiously slay thy mother's brother and diest by thine enraged mother's hand. All these deserved the charge for which that tender boy, sought vainly by mighty Hercules, atoned by

death – the boy snatched away, alas, midst peaceful waters. Go now, ye brave, plough the sea, whose streams ye ought to dread.

[652] Idmon, though he well knew his fate, was slain by a serpent on Libya's sands; true to all, but false to himself alone, Mopsus fell and saw not Thebes again. If he told truth as to the future, Thetis' husband shall in exile wander. Nauplius, while striving to wreck the Argives by false beacon fires, shall fall headlong into the deep; his son shall perish and pay the penalty of his father's sin; Oileus, too, dying midst flame and flood; redeeming from death her lord of Pherae, the wife shall perish, giving up her life for her husband's sake. Pelias himself, who bade the prize of the golden spoil be brought away in the first ship, seething in boiling pot, wandering midst waters close confined, perished by fire. Enough now, ye gods, have ye avenged the sea; spare him who was ordered to the task.

NURSE

[670] [*Alone.*] My spirit quakes with horror; some great disaster is at hand. Monstrously grows her grief, feeds its own fires and renews its former strength. Often have I seen her in frenzy and assailing the gods, drawing down the sky; but greater than such deeds, greater is the monstrous thing Medea is preparing. For now that with maddened steps she has gone out and come to her baleful shrine, she lavishes all her stores and brings forth whatever e'en she herself long has dreaded, and marshals her whole train of evil powers, things occult, mysterious, hidden; and, supplicating the grim altar with her left hand, she summons destructive agencies, whatever burning Libya's sands produce, what Taurus, stiff with arctic cold, holds fast in his everlasting snows, and all monstrous things. Drawn by her magic incantations, the scaly brood leave their lairs and come to her. Here a savage serpent drags its huge length along, darts out its forked tongue, and seeks against whom it is to come death-dealing; hearing her incantation, it stops in amaze, knots its swollen body into writhing folds, and settles them into coils. "Petty are the evils," she cries, "and cheap is the weapon which deepest earth begets; from heaven will I seek my poisons. Now, now is the time to set in motion some plan deeper than common guile. Hither let that serpent descend

which lies like a vast rushing stream, whose huge folds the two beasts feel, the greater and the less (the greater used by Pelasgians; by Sidonians, the less); let Ophiuchus at length relax his choking grip and give the poison vent; in answer to my incantations let Python come, who dared to attack the twin divinities. Let Hydra return and every serpent cut off by the hand of Hercules, restoring itself by its own destruction. Thou, too, ever-watchful dragon, quitting the Colchians, come thou to my aid, thou who through my incantations wast first lulled to slumber.”

[705] When she had summoned forth the whole tribe of serpents, she assembled her evil store of baleful herbs. Whatever trackless Eryx produces on his rocky slopes; plants that grow on heights clothed in unbroken winter, the heights of Caucasus, spattered with Prometheus’ gore; plants wherewith the rich Arabians smear their arrows, and the bold Mede, girt with his quiver, or the light-armed Parthians; or those juices which, under the bold pole, high-born Sueban women gather in Hyrcanian groves; whatever the earth produces in the nest-building springtime of when frozen winter has stripped the woods of their glory and bound all things with icy fetters; all plants that bloom with deadly flower, and all whose juices breed case of death in their twisted roots – all these she handles. Haemonian Athos contributed those baneful herbs, these, mighty Pindus; on the ridges of Pangaeus that plant was lopped of its tender foliage with a bloody sickle; these Tigris fed, checking his deep flood the while; the Danube, those; these, gem-studded Hydaspes, flowing with warm waters through thirsty tracts, and the Baetis, which gave its name to its own country, pushing into the western sea with languorous flood. These plants felt the knife while Phoebus was making ready the day; the shoot of that was clipped at midnight; while this was severed by finger-nail with muttered charm.

[731] She seizes death-dealing herbs, squeezes out serpents’ venom, and with these mingles unclean birds, the heart of a boding owl, and a hoarse screech-owl’s vitals cut out alive. Other objects the mistress of evil lays out, arranged in separate heaps; in some is the ravening power of fire; in others numbing frost’s icy cold. She adds to her

poisons words, no less fearsome than they. – But listen, her frenzied step has sounded, and she chants her incantations. All nature shudders as she begins her song.

[*Enter MEDEA singing an incantation.*]

MEDEA

[740] I supplicate the throng of the silent, and, you, funereal gods, murky Chaos and shadowy Dis' dark dwelling-place, the abysses of dismal Death, girt by the banks of Tartarus. Leaving your punishments, ye ghosts, haste to the new nuptials; let the wheel stop that is whirling his body, and Ixion stand on earth; let Tantalus in peace drink his fill of the Pirenian spring. You, too, whom a fruitless toil mocks with urns full of holes, ye Danaids, come hither: this day needs your hands. On one alone, my lord's new father, let a penalty rest heavier – let the slippery stone roll Sisypheus backward o'er the rocks.

[750] Now, summoned by my sacred rites, do thou, orb of the night, put on thy most evil face and come, threatening in all thy forms.

[752] For thee, losing my hair from its band after the manner of my people, with bare feet have I trod the secret groves and called forth rain from the dry clouds; I have driven the seas back to their lowest depths, and the Ocean, his tides outdone, has sent his crushing waves farther into the land; and in like manner, with heaven's law confounded the world has seen both sun and stars together, and you, ye bears, have bathed in the forbidden sea. The order of the seasons have I changed: the summer land has blossomed 'neath my magic song, and by my compelling Ceres has seen harvest in winter-time; Phasis has turned his swift waters backward to their source, and Hister, divided into many mouths, has checked his boisterous streams and flowed sluggishly in all his beds. The waves have roared, the mad sea swelled, though the winds were still; the heart of the ancient woods has lost its shadows, when the bright day has come back to them at commandment of my voice; Phoebus has halted in mid-heaven, and the Hyades, moved by my incantations,

totter to their fall. The hour is at hand, O Phoebe, for thy sacred rites.

[*She offers various gifts to HECATE.*]

[771] To thee I offer these wreaths wrought with bloody hands, each entwined with nine serpent coils; to thee, these serpent limbs which rebellious Typhoeus wore, who caused Jove's throne to tremble. In this is the blood which Nessus, that traitor ferryman, bestowed as he expired. With these ashes the pyre on Oeta sank down which drank in the poisoned blood of Hercules. Here thou seest the billet of a pious sister but impious mother, Althaea, the avenger. These feathers the Harpy left in her trackless lair when she fled from Zetes. Add to these the quills of the wounded Stymphalian bird which felt the darts of Lerna. – You have given forth your voice, ye altars; I see my tripods shaken by the favouring deity.

[787] I see Trivia's swift gliding car, not as when, radiant, with full face, she drives the livelong night, but as when, ghastly, with mournful aspect, harried by Thessalian threats, she skirts with nearer rein the edge of heaven. So do thou wanly shed from thy torch a gloomy light through air; terrify the peoples with new dread, and let precious Corinthian bronzes resound, Dictynna, to thy aid. To thee on the altar's bloody turf we perform thy solemn rites; to thee a torch caught up from the midst of a funeral pyre has illumed the night; to thee, tossing my head and with bended neck, I have uttered my magic words; for thee a fillet, lying in funeral fashion, binds my flowing locks; to thee is brandished the gloomy branch from the Stygian stream; to thee with bared breast will I as a maenad smite my arms with the sacrificial knife. Let my blood flow upon the altars; accustom thyself, my hand, to draw the sword and endure the sight of beloved blood. [*She slashes her arm and lets the blood flow upon the altar.*] Self-smitten have I poured forth the sacred stream.

[812] But if thou complainest that too often thou art called on by my prayers, pardon, I pray; the cause, O Perses' daughter, of my too oft calling on thy bows is one and the same ever, Jason.

[817] Do thou now [*she takes a phial*] poison Creusa's robe that, when

she has donned it, the creeping flame may consume her inmost marrow. Within this tawny gold [*she takes a casket*] lurks fire, darkly hid; Prometheus gave it me, even he who expiates with ever-growing live his theft from heaven, and taught me by his art how to store up its powers. Mulciber hath also given me fires which subtly lurk in sulphur; and bolts of living flame I took from my kinsman, Phaëthon. I have gifts from Chimaera's middle part, I have flames caught from the bull's scorched throat, which, well mixed with Medusa's gall, I have bidden to guard their bane in silence.

[833] Give sting to my poisons, Hecate, and in my gifts keep hidden the seeds of fire. Let them cheat the sight, let them endure the touch; let burning fire penetrate to heart and veins; let her limbs melt and her bones consume in smoke, and with her blazing locks let the bride outshine her wedding torches.

[840] My prayers are heard: thrice has bold Hecate bayed loud, and has raised the accursèd fire with its baleful light. Now all my power is marshalled; hither call my sons that by their hands thou mayst send these costly gifts unto the bride.

[*MEDEA's sons are brought in.*]

[843] Go, go, my sons, born of an ill-starred mother, win to yourselves by means of gifts and much beseeching your mistress and stepmother. Begone and quickly come you home again, that I may enjoy one last embrace.

[*Exuent sons toward the palace; MEDEA in the opposite direction.*]

CHORUS

[849] Whither is this blood-stained maenad borne headlong by mad passion? What crime with reckless fury is she preparing? Her distraught face is hard set in anger, and with fierce tossings of her head she haughtily threatens e'en the king. Who would think her an exile.

[858] Her cheeks blaze red, pallor puts red to flight; no colour in her changing aspect does she keep long. Hither and thither she wanders,

as a tigress, robbed of her cubs, ranges in mad course through the jungles of Ganges.

[866] How to curb her anger Medea knows not, nor yet her love; now that anger and love have joined cause, what will the outcome be? When will the wicked Colchian be gone from the Pelasgian borders and free from terror at once our kingdom and our kings? Now, O Phoebus, speed thy chariot with no check of rein; let friendly darkness veil the light and let Hesperus, vanguard of the night, plunge deep this fearful day.

[Enter MESSENGER, running from the direction of the palace.]

MESSENGER

[879] All is lost! The kingdom's props have fallen. Daughter and father in commingled ashes lie.

CHORUS

[881] By what snare taken?

MESSENGER

[881] By the common snare of kings – by gifts.

CHORUS

[882] What snare could have been in them?

MESSENGER

[883] Myself, I also marvel, and, though the woeful thing is done, can scarce believe it could be done. What stay is there to ruin? The greedy fire rages through the palace's every part as if 'twere bidden so. Already the whole house has fallen, the city is in peril.

CHORUS

[897] Let water put out the flames.

MESSENGER

[898] Nay, in this disaster this marvel, too, has happened: water feeds the flames, and the more 'tis checked the more fiercely burns the fire;

the very defences does it seize upon.

[Enter MEDEA, in time to hear the last words.]

NURSE

[891] [To MEDEA.] Quickly begone, Medea, from the land of Pelops; seek headlong any land thou wilt!

MEDEA

[893] What I – shall I give ground? Nay, had I fled already, for this I should return. Strange nuptials see I here.

[She becomes absorbed in her own thoughts.]

[895] Why, soul, dost falter? Follow up the attack so well begun. How small a part of thy vengeance is that in which thou art rejoicing! Thou dost love him still, mad one, if 'tis enough for thee that Jason wifeless be. Seek thou some unaccustomed form of chastisement, and now thus prepare thyself: let all right give way; let honour begone, defeated; light is the rod which innocent hands uplift. Bend to thine anger, rouse up thy halting purpose, and with all thy strength drain from thy heart's very depths its old-time violence. Let all that has yet been done be called but piety. To the task; let them know how petty, of what common stamp, were the crimes I wrought to serve him. In them my grief was but practising; what great deed had prentice hands the power to do? What, a girl's rage? Now I am Medea; my wit has grown through suffering.

[911] Glad am I, glad, that I tore off my brother's head, glad that I carved his limbs, that I robbed my father of his guarded treasure, glad that I armed daughters for an old man's death. Seek thou fresh fields, my grief; no untrained hand wilt thou bring to any crime.

[916] Whither, then, wrath, art tending, or what weapons art thou aiming at the forsworn foe? A dark purpose my fierce spirit hath resolved within me, and dares not yet acknowledged to itself. Fool! fool! I have gone too fast – would that mine enemy had children by his paramour! [She pauses and then addresses herself.] All offspring that thou hast by him are Creusa's brood. Resolved is this way of

vengeance, rightly resolved; for a last deed of guilt, I see it now, must my soul make ready. Children that once were mine, do you pay penalty for your father's crimes.

[926] Horror has smit my heart! My limbs are numb with cold and my heart with terror flutters. Wrath has given place; the mother has all come back, the wife is banished. Can I shed my children's, my own offspring's blood? Ah, mad rage, say not so! Far, even from me, be that unheard-of deed, that accursed guilt! What sin will the poor boys atone? Their sin is that Jason is their father, and, greater sin, that Medea is their mother. [*She pauses.*] Let them die, they are none of mine; let them be lost – they are my own. They are without crime and guilt, yea, they are innocent – I acknowledge it; so, too, was my brother. Why, soul, dost hesitate? Why are my cheeks wet with tears? Why do anger and love now hither, now thither draw my changeful heart? A double tide tosses me, uncertain of my course; as when rushing winds wage mad warfare, and from both sides conflicting floods lash the seas and the fluctuating waters boil, even so is my heart tossed. Anger puts love to flight, and love, anger. O wrath, yield thee to love.

[945] Hither, dear children, sole comfort of my fallen house, come hither and link your entwining limbs with mine. Let your father have you unharmed, so but your mother may have you too. But exile and flight press hard upon me; now, now will they be torn from my bosom and carried away from me, midst tears and sighs and kisses. – Let them be lost to their father; they are lost to me. My grief grows again and my hate burns hot; Erinys, as of old, claims my unwilling hand. O wrath, where thou dost lead I follow. I would that from my womb the throng of proud Niobe had sprung, and that I had been the mother of twice seven sons! Too barren have I been for vengeance – yet for my brother and my father there is enough, for I have borne two sons.

[958] Whither hastes that headlong horde of Furies? Whom seek they? Against whom are they preparing their flaming blows? Whom does the hellish host threaten with its bloody brands? A huge snake hisses,

whirled with the writhing lash. Whom does Megaera seek with her deadly torch? Whose shade comes there dimly seen, its limbs all scattered? It is my brother, and 'tis punishment he seeks. We'll pay, yes, all the debt. Plunge your brands into my eyes, tear, burn; see, my breast is open to the Furies.

[967] O brother, bid the avenging goddesses depart from me, and go in peace to the deep-buried ghosts; to myself leave me and use this hand, brother, which has drawn the sword – [*She slays the first son.*] With this victim I appease thy ghost. – What means that sudden noise? 'Tis arms they are making ready, and they seek me for my slaying. To the lofty roof of our palace will I mount, now the bloody work hath been begun. [*To her remaining son.*] Do thou come with me. [*To her dead son.*] Thy corpse also will I take hence with me. Now to the task, O soul; not in secrecy must thy great deed be lost; to the people approve thy handiwork.

[*Exit MEDEA, carrying the body of her dead son and leading the living. Enter JASON in the street below shouting to the citizens.*]

JASON

[978] Ye faithful souls, who mourn your princes' doom, rally to me that we may take the author herself of this dread crime. Here, here, my brave band of warriors, bring weapons, raze this house to the very ground.

MEDEA

[*Appearing on the house-top.*]

[982] Now, now have I regained my regal state, my brother, my sire; and the Colchians have once more the spoil of the golden fleece; restored is my kingdom, my ravished virginity is restored. Oh, divinities, at last propitious, oh, festal day, oh, nuptial day! On! the crime is accomplished; but vengeance is not yet complete; be done with it while they hands are still about it. Why dost thou delay now, O soul? Why hesitate, though thou canst do it? Now has my wrath died within me. I am sorry for my act, ashamed. What, wretched woman, have I done? – wretched, say I? Though I repent, yet have I

done it! Great joy steals on me 'gainst my will, and lo, it is increasing. [*She catches sight of JASON in the crowd below.*] This one thing I lacked, that yon man should behold. Naught have I done as yet; whatever crime I've done is lost unless he sees it.

JASON

[*Discovering her.*]

[995] See, there she is herself, leaning over the sheer battlement!
Someone bring fire that she may fall consumed by her own flames.

MEDEA

[997] Nay, Jason, heap up for thy sons their last funeral pyre; build them a tomb. Thy wife and father have already the services due the dead, buried by me; this son has met his doom, and this shall suffer like fate before thy eyes.

JASON

[1002] By all the gods, by our flight together, by our marriage couch, to which I have not been faithless, spare the boy. If there is any guilt, 'tis mine. I give myself up to death; destroy my guilty head.

MEDEA

[1006] Here where thou dost forbid it, where it will grieve thee, will I plunge the sword. Go now, haughty man, take thee maids for wives, abandon mothers.

JASON

[1008] One is enough for punishment.

MEDEA

[1009] If this hand could be satisfied with the death of one, it would have sought no death at all. Though I slay two, still is the count too small to appease my grief. If in my womb there still lurk any pledge of thee, I'll search my very vitals with the sword and hale it forth.

JASON

[1014] Now end what thou hast begun – I make no more entreaty – and at least spare my sufferings this suspense.

MEDEA

[1016] Enjoy a slow revenge, hasten not, my grief; mine is the day; we are but using the allotted time.

JASON

[1018] O heartless one, slay me.

MEDEA

[1018] Thou biddst me pity – [*She slays the second son.*] 'Tis well, 'tis done. I had no more atonement to offer thee, O grief. Lift thy tear-swollen eyes hither, ungrateful Jason. Dost recognize thy wife? 'Tis thus I am wont to flee. A way through the air has opened for me; two serpents offer their scaly necks bending to the yoke. Now, father, take back thy sons. [*She throws the bodies down to him.*] I through the air on my winged car shall ride.

[*She mounts the car and is borne away.*]

JASON

[1026] [*Calling after her.*] Go on through the lofty spaces of high heaven and bear witness, where thou ridest, that there are no gods.

OCTAVIA



Translated by Frank Justus Miller

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OCTAVIA

A FABULA PRAETEXTA

THE ONLY EXTANT ROMAN HISTORICAL DRAMA

INTRODUCTION

THE Roman historical drama had a place among the earliest products of Roman literature, and seems to have enjoyed a degree of popularity through all succeeding periods. That Roman literary genius did not find a much fuller expression through this channel was not due to a lack of national pride and patriotism, nor yet to a dearth of interesting and inspiring subjects in Roman history. The true reason is probably to be found in the fact that by the time national conditions were ripe for the development of any form of literature, the Greeks had already worked, and well worked, nearly all available fields, and had produced a mass of literature which dazzled the Roman mind when at last circumstances brought these two nations into closer contact.

The natural and immediate result was an attempt on the part of the Romans to imitate these great models. And hence we have in drama, both in tragedy and in comedy, a wholesale imitation of the Greek dramas, oftentimes nothing more than a translation of these, with only here and there an attempt to produce something of a strictly native character, entirely independent of the Greek influence.

This imitative impulse was augmented by the fact that the Romans were following the line of least resistance, since it is always easier to imitate than to create. Furthermore, they had as yet developed no national pride of literature to hold them to their own lines of national development; they had no forms of their own so well established that the mere force of literary momentum would carry them steadily on toward a fuller development, in spite of the disturbing effects of the influx of other and better models. They had, indeed, developed a native Saturnian verse which, had it been allowed a free field, might have reached a high pitch of literary

excellence. But it speedily gave way at the approach of the more elegant imported forms.

The overwhelming influence of Greek tragedy upon the Roman dramatists can be seen at a glance as we review the dramatic product of the Roman tragedians. We have titles and fragments of nine tragedies by Livius Andronicus, seven by Naevius, twenty-two by Ennius, thirteen by Pacuvius, forty-six by Accius, and many fragments from each of these, unassignable to definite plays, which indicate numerous other plays of the same character. To these should be added additional fragments from nearly a score more of Roman writers during the next two hundred years after Accius. All the above-mentioned plays are on Greek subjects; and most of those whose fragments are sufficiently extensive to allow us to form an opinion of their character are either translations or close imitations of the Greeks, or are so influenced by these as to be decidedly Greek rather than Roman in character.

And what of the genuine Roman dramatic product? Speaking for the *fabula praetexta*, or Roman historical drama, alone, the entire output, so far as our records go, is contained in the following list of authors and titles.

From Naevius (265-204 B.C.) we have the *Clastidium*, written in celebration of the victory of Marcellus (at Clastidium in 222 B.C.) over Vidumarus, king of the Transpadane Gauls, whom Marcellus slew and stripped of his armour, thus gaining the rare *spolia opima*. The play was probably written for the especial occasion either of the triumph of Marcellus or of the celebration of his funeral.

We have also from Naevius a play variously entitled *Lupus* or *Romulus* or *Alimonium Remi et Romuli*, evidently one of those dramatic reproductions of scenes in the life of a god, enacted as a part of the ceremonies of his worship. This play is comparable to dramatic representations among the Greeks in the worship of Dionysus.

The *Ambracia* and the *Sabinae* of Ennius (239-169 B.C.) are ordinarily classed as *fabulae praetextae* although Lucian Miiller classes the fragments of the *Ambracia* among the *Salurae* of Ennius; while Vahlen puts the *Ambracia* under the heading *Comoediarum et*

ceterorum carminum reliquiae, and classifies the fragments of the *Sabinae* under *ex incertis saturarum libris*. The *Ambracia* is evidently called after the city of that name in Epirus, celebrated for the long and remarkable siege which it sustained against the Romans under M. Fulvius Nobilior. That general finally captured the city in 189 B.C. If the piece is to be considered as a play, it was, like the *Clastidium*) written in honour of the Roman general, and acted on the occasion either of his triumph or of his funeral.

We have four short fragments from the *Paulus* of Pacuvius (220-130 B.C.), written in celebration of the exploits of L. Aemilius Paulus who conquered Perseus, king of Macedonia, in the battle of Pydna, 168 B.C.

The fragments of the plays already mentioned are too brief to afford any adequate idea of their character or content. But in the *Brutus* of Accius (b. 170. B.C.), which centres around the expulsion of the Tarquins and the establishment of the Republic, we have a larger glimpse into the play through two most interesting fragments consisting of twelve iambic trimeters and ten trochaic tetrameters, respectively. In the first, King Tarquin relates to his seer an ill-ominous dream which he has had; the second is the seer's interpretation of this dream, pointing to Tarquin's dethronement by Brutus. Other short fragments give glimpses of the outrage of Lucretia by Sextus at Collatia, and the scene in the forum where Brutus takes his oath of office as first consul. This play, unlike most of its predecessors, was not written at the time of the events which it portrays, but may still be classed with them, so far as its object is concerned, since it is generally thought to have been written in honour of D. Junius Brutus, who was consul in 138 B.C., and with whom the poet enjoyed an intimate friendship.

Another *praetexta* of Accius is preserved, the *Decius*, of which eleven short fragments remain. This play celebrates the victory of Quintus Fabius Maximus and P. Decius Mus over the Samnites and Gauls at Sentinum in 295 B.C. The climax of the play would be the self-immolation of Decius after the example of his father in the Latin war of 340 B.C.

A In addition to these plays of the Roman dramatists of the Republic, we have knowledge of a few which date from later times.

There was a historical drama entitled *Iter*, by L. Cornelius Balbus, who dramatized the incidents of a journey which he made to Pompey's camp at Dyrrachium at the opening of civil war in 49 b c. Balbus was under commission from Caesar 404 to treat with the consul, L. Cornelius Lentulus, and other optimates who had fled from Rome, concerning their return to the city. The journey was a complete fiasco, so far as results were concerned; but the vanity of Balbus was so flattered by this (to him) important mission that he must needs dramatize his experiences and present the play under his own direction in his native city of Gades.

We have mention also of an *Aeneas* by Pomponius Secundus, and of two *praetextae* by Curiatius Maternus, entitled *Domitius* and *Cato*.

These eleven historical plays are, as we have seen, for the most part, plays of occasion, and would be at best of but temporary interest, born of the special circumstances which inspired them. They are in no way comparable with such historical dramas on Roman subjects as Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* or *Coriolanus*, whose interest is for all times.

We have still a twelfth play of this class, which enjoys the unique distinction of being the only Roman historical drama which has come down to us in its complete form — the *Octavia*. Its authorship is unknown, although tradition gives it a place among the tragedies of Seneca, the philosopher. The general opinion of modern critics, however, is against this tradition, chiefly because one passage in the play, in the form of a prophecy, too circumstantially describes the death of Nero, which occurred three years after the death of Seneca. It is generally agreed that the play must have been written soon after the death of Nero, and by some one, possibly Maternus, who had been an eye-witness of the events, and who had been inspired by his sympathies for the unfortunate Octavia to write this story of her sufferings.

SUMMARY OF THE IMPERIAL FAMILY HISTORY WHICH FORMS A BACKGROUND TO THE OCTAVIA AND TO WHICH REFERENCES ARE MADE THROUGHOUT THE PLAY.

TIBERIUS CLAUDIUS DRUSUS NERO CAESAR GERMANICUS, more commonly known as Claudius, fourth emperor of Rome, had taken for his third wife the daughter of M. Valerius Messala, Messalina, who bore to him two children, Britannicus and Octavia. Always notorious for her profligacy and licentiousness, Messalina crowned her career by publicly marrying C. Silius at Rome during the temporary sojourn of her imperial husband at Ostia. Claudius long wavered as to her punishment, but at last, through the influence of his favourite, Narcissus, he signed her death warrant, and she was executed by a tribune of the guards in 48 A.D.

In the following year, through the intrigue of the freedman Pallas, Claudius married his brother's daughter, Agrippina, who brought with her into the emperor's household Lucius Domitius, her son by her first husband, Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus.

Immediately Agrippina began to plot for the succession of her son to the throne of the Caesars. In 50 A.D. she prevailed upon Claudius to adopt, to the prejudice of Britannicus, her own son, who was thereafter known as Nero. She had already caused Seneca, who had been exiled at the instance of Messalina, to be recalled that he might serve as Nero's tutor. In 53 A.D. she further advanced her plans by compassing the marriage of her son to Octavia, the emperor's daughter. Octavia had already been betrothed by Claudius to L. Silanus, who now, to escape the vengeance of Agrippina, committed suicide.

Her plans being now fully laid for the final act, Agrippina secretly poisoned Claudius on October 12th, 54 A.D., and on the following day Nero succeeded to the throne, being then seventeen years of age. In the following year, by the joint plotting of mother and son, the

young Britannicus, also, was poisoned.

Because of the youth and inexperience of her son, Agrippina enjoyed four years of practically imperial power; but at last, in 59 A.D., Nero, tired of his mother's ascendancy, caused her to be assassinated, after an unsuccessful attempt upon her life by means of a treacherous vessel, in which death-trap he had sent her to sea.

Nero had long since become enamoured of Poppaea, a beautiful profligate, who had left her husband, Rufinus Crispinus, to live with Otho, and who now became mistress of the emperor. Aspiring to be his wife, she had plotted to bring about the death of Agrippina and later the divorce of Octavia. Through these machinations of his mistress and Nero's own more than ready acquiescence, Octavia was falsely accused of adultery and in 62 A.D. she was banished to Pandataria, where she was shortly afterwards put to death.

Poppaea herself died in 65 A.D. as the result, it was said, of a kick by her brutal husband when she was far advanced in pregnancy. In the same year, at the command of the emperor, Seneca committed suicide; and three years thereafter, in 68 A.D., Nero himself, deposed by the praetorian guards, who had espoused the cause of Galba, and condemned to death by the Senate, fled from Rome and, after vain efforts to escape, received his death-stroke by his own request at the hands of a faithful attendant who had fled with him.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE.

OCTAVIA, stepsister and wife of Nero.

NURSE of OCTAVIA.

POPPAEA, mistress and afterward wife of Nero.

Nurse of POPPAEA.

GHOST Of AGRIPPINA, mother of NERO , slain by him.

NERO, Emperor of Rome.

SENECA, former tutor of Nero, and later one of his chief counsellors.

PREFECT of Roman Soldiers.

MESSENGER.

CHORUS OF ROMANS, sympathetic with OCTAVIA.

CHORUS, attached to the interests of the court.

THE SCENE is laid throughout in different apartments of the palace of Nero, and is concerned with the events of the year 62 a. D.

OCTAVIA

OCTAVIA

[1] Now doth flushing dawn drive the wandering stars from heaven; with radiant beams the sun arises and gives the world once more the light of day. On then, with all thy woes weighed down, resume thy now accustomed plaints and outvail the sea-bred Halcyons, out-vail the birds of old Pandion's house; for more grievous is thy lot than theirs. O mother, constant source of tears to me, first cause of my misfortunes, hearken to thy daughter's sad complaints, if any consciousness remains among the shades. Oh, that the ancient Clotho with her own hand had clipped my threads before sadly I saw thy wounds, thy face with foul gore besmeared! O light, ever calamitous to me, from that time, O light, thou art more hateful than the dark! We have endured a cruel step-dame's orders, her hostile spirit and her aspect fierce. 'Twas she, 'twas she, the baleful fury, who bore the Stygian torches to my bridal chamber, and quenched thy light, O wretched father, whom but yesterday the whole world obeyed, even beyond Ocean's bounds, before whom the Britons fled, erstwhile to our leaders all unknown and unsubdued. Alas, my father, by thy wife's plots thou liest crushed, and thy house together with thy child bends to a tyrant's will.

[Exit to her chamber. Enter nurse.]

NURSE

Whoso, overpowered by the novel splendor and the frail blessings of deceitful royalty, stands awestruck and amazed, lo, beneath the sudden blow of lurking Fate, let him behold, overthrown, the house and stock of Claudius, but now all powerful, under whose rule the whole world was brought, whom the Ocean, long to sway unknown, obeyed and, all unwillingly, received his ships. Lo, he who first on the Britons set a yoke, who covered unknown floods with his mighty fleets, who was safe midst tribes barbaric, midst raging seas, by his wife's crime is fallen; she soon by her son's hand fell; and by his poison lies my brother slain. The unhappy sister, yea, the unhappy

wife grieves on, nor can she hide her bitter sufferings, forced to the angry will of her cruel husband. From him ever the pure girl recoils, and her husband, though by equal hate inspired, with incestuous passion burns. Our fond love strives in vain to console her grieving heart; her cruel smart overcomes our counsels, nor can the noble passion of her soul be governed, but from her woes she draws new strength. Alas! how my fears forbode some desperate deed, which may the gods forbid.

OCTAVIA

[heard speaking from her chamber]

O fate of mine, to be matched by no misfortunes, though I recall thy woes, Electra. Thou couldst weep out thy grief for thy father's murder, couldst take vengeance on the crime with thy brother as avenger, whom thy love snatched from the foe and thy faithful care protected; but me fear forbids to mourn my parents reft from me by cruel fate, forbids to bewail my brother's taking off, in whom was my sole hope, the fleeting solace of my many woes. And now, saved but to my suffering, I remain, the shadow of a noble name.

NURSE

Hark! the voice of my sad foster-child strikes on mine ears. Does thy slow age take thee to her chamber with lagging steps?

[She advances toward the chamber, but is met by OCTAVIA, coming forth.]

OCTAVIA

Receive my tears, dear nurse, thou trusty witness of my suffering.

NURSE

What day will free thee from thy mighty cares, poor child?

OCTAVIA

The day that sends me to the Stygian shades.

NURSE

Far from us be the omen of that word, I pray.

OCTAVIA

No longer is it thy prayers that shape my life but the fates.

NURSE

God in his mercy will bring to thine affliction better days. Do thou but be soothed, and win thy husband with gentle courtesy.

OCTAVIA

Sooner shall I win savage lions and fierce tigers, than that savage tyrant's brutal heart. He hates all born of noble blood, scorns gods and men alike; nor can he of himself wield his high fortune which by a monstrous crime his impious mother bestowed on him. Yes! though the ungrateful wretch count it shame to take this empire as his cursed mother's gift, though he requite her mighty gift with death, still will the woman even after death win the fame thereof for ever through unending age.

NURSE

Check thou the utterance of thy raging heart; repress the words thou hast poured forth too rashly.

OCTAVIA

Though I should endure what must be borne, never could my woes be ended, save by gloomy death. With my mother slain, my father by crime snatched from me, robbed of my brother, by wretchedness and grief overwhelmed, by sorrow crushed, by my husband hated, and set beneath my slave, the sweet light brings no joy to me; for my heart is ever trembling, not with the fear of death, but of crime — be crime but lacking to my misfortunes, death will be delight. For 'tis a punishment far worse than death to look in the tyrant's face, all swollen with rage against wretched me, to kiss my foe, to fear his very nod, obedience to whom my smarting grief could not endure after my brother's death, most sinfully destroyed, whose throne he usurps, and rejoices in being the worker of a death unspeakable. How oft does my brother's sad shade appear before my eyes when rest has

relaxed my body, and sleep weighed down my eyes, weary with weeping. Now with smoking torches he arms his feeble hands, and with deadly purpose aims at his brother's eyes and face; and now in trembling fright takes refuge in my chamber; his enemy pursues and, even while the lad clings in my embrace, savagely he thrusts his sword through both our bodies. Then trembling and mighty terror banish my slumbers, and bring back to my wretched heart its grief and fear. Add to all this the proud concubine, bedecked with our house's spoil, as gift for whom the son set his own mother on the Stygian bark; and, when she had overcome dread shipwreck and the sea, himself more pitiless than ocean's waves, slew her with the sword. What hope of safety, after crime so great, have I? My victorious foe threatens my chamber, blazes with hate of me, and, as the reward of her adultery, demands of my husband his lawful consort's head. Arise thou, my father, from the shades and bring help to thy daughter who calls on thee; or else, rending the earth, lay bare the Stygian abyss, that I may plunge thither headlong.

NURSE

In vain dost thou call upon thy father's ghost, poor girl, in vain, for no care for his child abides amidst the shades with him who to his own son could prefer one born of other blood, and, taking his brother's child to wife, wed her with couch incestuous and gloomy torch. Thence sprung a train of crimes — murders, deceits, the lust for empire, thirst for illustrious blood; as victim offered to the father's marriage bed the son-in-law was slain, lest, wedded to thee he might become too strong. Oh, monstrous crime! To a woman was Silanus given as a boon and with his blood defiled the ancestral gods, charged with a crime that was not his. Then entered the foe, ah me! into the conquered palace, by a step-mother's wiles made an emperor's son-in-law and son withal, a youth of bent unnatural, fertile in crime, whose passion thy cruel mother fanned, and forced thee by fear to wed him, against thy will. Triumphant and emboldened by such success, she dared aspire to the awful empire of the world. Who can rehearse the various forms of crime, the wicked hopes, the cozening wiles of her who by all crimes would mount to empire round by round? Then holy Piety with trembling step

withdrew, and raging Fury with baleful feet entered the empty palace, defiled with Stygian torch the holy household-gods, and in mad rage rent nature's laws and all things sacred. The wife for her husband mingled deadly poison, and soon by her son's crime the same wife fell. Thou too dost lie dead, unhappy youth, ever to be mourned by us, but late the world's star, the prop of a noble house, Britannicus, and now, ah me! only light ashes and a mournful shade, over whom even thy step-mother wept, when on the pyre she gave thy body to be burned, and when thy limbs and features, that were like a winged god's, were by the mournful flame consumed.

OCTAVIA

Let him destroy me also, lest by my hand he fall.

NURSE

Nature has not bestowed on thee such strength.

OCTAVIA

Anguish, anger, sorrow, wretchedness, grief will bestow it.

NURSE

By compliance, rather, win thine unfeeling lord.

OCTAVIA

That he may give back to me my brother, wickedly destroyed?

NURSE

That thou mayst be thyself unharmed, that one day thou mayst restore thy father's tottering house with sons of thine.

OCTAVIA

The royal house expects another son ; me my poor brother's cruel fates drag down.

NURSE

Let thy soul be strengthened by the citizens' great love.

OCTAVIA

That comforts my woes but does not lighten them.

NURSE

The people's power is mighty.

OCTAVIA

But the emperor's mightier.

NURSE

Of himself will he respect his wife.

OCTAVIA

His concubine forbids.

NURSE

Surely she is scorned by all.

OCTAVIA

But to her husband, dear.

NURSE

She is not yet a wife.

OCTAVIA

But soon will be, and a mother, too.

NURSE

Youthful passion burns fierce at the first rush but readily grows dull, nor long endures in foul adultery, like heat of flickering flame; but a chaste wife's love remains perpetual. She who first dared profane thy bed, and, though a slave, has long held in thrall her master's heart, already herself fears —

OCTAVIA

Aye! a more favored mistress.

NURSE

— subdued and humble, and gives signs by which she confesses her

own great fear. Even her shall winged Cupid, false and fickle god, betray; though she be passing fair, boastful in power, hers shall be but a transitory joy.

The queen of the gods herself like sorrows suffered, when the lord of heaven and father of the gods into all forms changed, and now wings of a swan put on, now the horns of a bull of Sidon, and again in a golden shower poured down; the stars of Leda glitter in the sky, Bacchus on his father's Olympus dwells, Alcides as a god possesses Hebe and now no more fears Juno's wrath; he is her son-in-law who was her enemy. Yet wise compliance and controlled wrath won victory for the queenly wife; without rival, without care does Juno hold the Thunderer on her heavenly couch, and no more does Jupiter, by mortal beauty smitten, desert the court of heaven. Thou too, on earth a second Juno, Augustus' wife and sister, thy grievous woes overcome.

OCTAVIA

Sooner shall savage seas unite with stars, water with fire, heaven with sad Tartarus, the kindly light with darkness, day with the dewy night, than with my accursed husband's impious soul this soul of mine, that ever broods upon my brother's death. And oh, that the lord of the heaven-dwellers, who often shakes the lands with deadly bolt and terrifies our souls with awful fires and portents strange, would make ready to overwhelm with flames this impious prince. We have seen a glowing radiance in the sky, a comet spreading its baleful trail, where slow Bootes, numb with Arctic chill, with endless, nightlong wheeling, guides his wain. Lo, by the pestilential breath of this destructive leader the very air is tainted; the stars threaten unheard disasters for the nations which this godless leader rules. Not such a pest was Typhon, whom wrathful mother Earth produced in scorn of Jove; this scourge, worse than he, this enemy of gods and men, has driven the heavenly ones from their shrines, and citizens from their country, from his brother has he reft the breath of life, and drained his mother's blood — and he still sees the light of day, still lives and draws his baneful breath! O high exalted father, why vainly, why so oft at random dost thou hurl thy darts invincible with thine imperial

hand? Against one so criminal why is thy right hand stayed? Would that he might pay penalty for his crimes, this spurious Nero, son of Domitius, tyrant of a world he burdens with his shameful yoke, and with foul ways pollutes the name Augustus!

NURSE

Unworthy he, I do confess it, to mate with thee; but yield thee to the fates and to thy lot, my child, I beg, nor rouse thy violent husband's wrath. Perchance some god will arise as thine avenger, and a day of happiness will come again.

OCTAVIA

Long since has the heavy wrath of the gods pursued our house, which harsh Venus first overwhelmed in my poor mother's madness; for she, already wed, in mad folly wed another with unholy torch, of me, of her husband forgetful, and regardless of the laws. Against her to that hellish couch, with streaming hair and girt about with snakes, came the avenging Fury and quenched those stolen wedding fires in blood; with rage she inflamed the cruel emperor's heart to impious murder; my ill-starred mother fell, alas, and, by the sword destroyed, overwhelmed me in endless suffering; her husband and her son did she drag down to death and shamefully betrayed our fallen house.

NURSE

Forbear with weeping to renew thy filial griefs, and vex not thy mother's spirit, who for her madness has grievously atoned.

[Exeunt.]

CHORUS

What rumor has but now come to our ears? May it prove false and gain no credence though vainly told over and over; and may no new wife the emperor's chamber enter, and may his bride, the child of Claudius, keep her rightful home, and bring forth sons, pledges of peace, wherein the untroubled world may rejoice and Rome preserve her everlasting glory. Her brother's bridal chamber mightiest Juno won and holds; why is Augustus's sister, made partner of his couch, driven from her father's house? Of what avail to her is pure devotion,

a father deified, virginity, unblemished chastity? We too, after his death have quite forgot our leader, and betray his child at the bidding of sick fear. Right Roman virtue of old our fathers had; in such men was the true race and blood of Mars. They from this city arrogant kings expelled, and well did they avenge thy ghost, O virgin, slain by thy father's hand lest thou shouldst suffer slavery's heavy load, and lest cruel lust, victorious, should gain its shameless prize. Thee also a sad war followed, daughter of Lucretius, slain, poor girl, by thine own hand, by a brutal tyrant outraged. With Tarquin Tullia, his wife, paid penalty for crime unspeakable, who, over the body of her murdered father heartlessly drove her cruel car, and, mad daughter, refused the mangled old man a funeral-pyre.

This age as well has seen a son's dire crime, when in a deadly bark the prince sent his mother out on the Tyrrhene sea, by a trick ensnared. At his bidding the sailors make haste to leave the peaceful port and, smit by the oars, the sea resounds. The vessel is borne far out upon the deep; and there, with loosened timbers, sinking, overwhelmed, it yawns wide and drinks in the sea. A mighty outcry rises to the stars, mingled with shrieks of women. Death stalks dire before the eyes of all; each for himself seeks refuge from destruction; some cling naked to planks of the broken ship and face the floods, while others, swimming, seek to gain the shore; fate plunges many into the depths below. Augusta rends her garments and tears her hair and waters her cheeks with grieving tears.

At last, with hope of safety gone, blazing with anger and now overcome with woe, she cries; "Such reward as this for my great boon, O son, dost thou return me? Worthy am I of this ship, I do confess, who brought thee forth, who gave thee light and empire and the name of Caesar, fool that I was. Thrust forth thy face from Acheron, and glut thee with my punishment, O husband; I caused thy death, poor soul, was the author of thy son's destruction, and lo, as I have merited, to thy ghost am I now borne unburied, whelmed in the cruel waters of the sea."

Even while she speaks the waves wash over her lips, and down into

the deep she plunges; anon she rises from the briny weight and with her hands, fear driving her, lashes the sea; but soon, outwearied, gives over the struggle. There still lived in secret hearts fidelity which scorned the grim fear of death. Many to their mistress dare bring aid, when her strength is exhausted by the sea, and, as she drags her arms, though sluggishly, along, with their voices cheer her and lift her with their hands. But what availed it to have escaped the waters of the cruel sea? By the sword of thine own son thou art to die, to whose crime scarce will posterity, slowly will all future ages, give belief. He rages and grieves that his mother, snatched from the sea, still lives, the impious monster, and heaps huge guilt on guilt; bent on his wretched mother's death, he brooks no stay of crime. Sent to the task, his creature works his will, and with the sword lays open his mistress' breast. The unhappy woman, dying, begs her murderer to sheathe his fell sword within her womb: "'Tis this, 'tis this that must with the sword be pierced, which gave such monster birth!" After such utterance, with a dying groan commingled, at length through the cruel wound she yielded her sad ghost.

SENECA

[alone] Why, potent Fortune, with false, flattering looks, hast high exalted me when contented with my lot, that, raised to a lofty pinnacle, in heavier ruin I might fall, and might look out upon so many fears? Better was I hid, far out of the reach of envy's sting, midst the crags of Corsica, facing on the sea, where my spirit, free and its own lord, had ever time to contemplate my favorite themes. Oh, 'twas joy — a joy surpassing anything to which mother Nature, contriver of this fabric infinite, hath given birth, to gaze upon the heavens, the sun's sacred chariot, the motions of the universe and the sun's recurring rounds, and the orb of Phoebe, which the wandering stars encircle, and the far effulgent glory of the mighty sky. If this sky is growing old, doomed wholly once more to fall into blind nothingness, then for the universe is that last day at hand which shall crush sinful man beneath heaven's ruin, that so once more a reborn and better world may bring forth a new race such as she bore in youth, when Saturn held the kingdoms of the sky. Then did that virgin, Justice, goddess of mighty sway, from heaven sent down

with holy Faith to earth, rule with mild sway the race of men. No wars the nations knew, no trumpet's threatening blasts, no arms, nor were they used to surround their cities with a wall: open to all was the way, in common was the use of every thing; and the glad Earth herself willingly laid bare her fruitful breast, a mother happy and safe amid such duteous nurslings.

But another race arose which proved less gentle; another yet, cunning in unknown arts, but holy still; then came a restless race, which dared pursue the wild beasts in the chase, draw fish from their coverts beneath the sea with weighted net or slender rod, catch birds, on a strong leash hold unruly dogs, force headstrong bullocks to endure the yoke, furrow the earth which had never felt the plow, and which, now thus outraged, had hidden her fruits deeper in her sacred bosom. But into its mother's bowels did that degenerate age intrude; it dug out heavy iron and gold, and soon did it arm savage hands for war. Marking out boundaries, it established kingdoms, built cities, hitherto unknown, guarded its own dwellings or, bent on booty, with weapons attacked another's. Away from earth that scorned her, from the wild ways of men and hands defiled with bloody slaughter, fled the maid, Astraea, chief glory of the firmament. Lust for war increased and hunger for gold throughout the world; luxury arose, deadliest of ills, a luring pest, which acquired strength and force by long use and grievous error. These sins, through many ages gathering, are overflowing upon us; a heavy age weighs us down, wherein crime is regnant, impiety runs mad, all-potent lust lords it with shameless love, and triumphant luxury has long with greedy hands been clutching the world's unbounded stores — that she may squander them.

[NERO is seen approaching.]

But see, with startled step and savage mien Nero approaches. At thought of what he brings I tremble.

[Enfer NERO, followed by a Prefect.]

NERO

[to Prefect] Go do my bidding; send one to slay me Plautus and Sulla and bring back their severed heads.

PREFECT

Thy bidding will I do: to the camp forthwith I'll take me. *[Exit.]*

SENECA

'Tis not becoming to proceed rashly against one's friends.

NERO

'Tis easy to be just when the heart is free from fear.

SENECA

A sovereign cure for fear is clemency.

NERO

To destroy foes is a leader's greatest virtue.

SENECA

For the father of his country to save citizens, is greater still.

NERO

A mild old man should give schooling to boys.

SENECA

More needful 'tis that fiery youth be ruled.

NERO

I deem that at this age we are wise enough.

SENECA

May thy deeds be ever pleasing to the gods.

NERO

Foolish I'd be to fear the gods, when I myself make them.

SENECA

Fear thou the more, that so great power is thine.

NERO

My fortune doth allow all things to me.

SENECA

Indulgent fortune trust more cautiously; she is a fickle goddess.

NERO

'Tis a dullard's part not to know what he may do.

SENECA

'Tis praiseworthy to do, not what one may, but what one ought.

NERO

Him who lies down the crowd trample on.

SENECA

Him whom they hate, they crush.

NERO

The sword protects the prince.

SENECA

Still better, loyalty.

NERO

A Caesar should be feared.

SENECA

But more be loved.

NERO

But men must fear —

SENECA

What is compelled is burdensome.

NERO

Let them obey our orders.

SENECA

Give righteous orders —

NERO

I shall myself decide.

SENECA

which the general thought may ratify.

NERO

Reverence for the sword will ratify them.

SENECA

May heaven forbid!

NERO

Shall I then go on suffering them to seek my blood, that, unavenged and scorned, I may suddenly be crushed? Exile has not broken Plautus and Sulla, though far removed, whose persistent rage arms the agents of their guilt to work my death, since still, though absent, great is the favor they enjoy in this our city, which nurtures the exiles' hopes. Let the sword remove foemen whom I suspect; let my hateful wife perish and follow the brother whom she loves. Whatever is high exalted, let it fall.

SENECA

'Tis glorious to tower aloft amongst great men, to have care for father-land, to spare the downtrodden, to abstain from cruel bloodshed, to be slow to wrath, give quiet to the world, peace to one's time. This is virtue's crown, by this way is heaven sought. So did that first Augustus, his country's father, gain the stars, and is worshipped in the temples as a god. Yet him did Fortune toss for long on land and sea in battle's deadly chances, until his father's foes he overwhelmed. But to thee hath she yielded her divinity, unstained of blood; hath with easy hand given thee the reins of government, and to thy nod subjected lands and seas. Sour hate, overcome, hath yielded in loyal harmony; the senate's favor and the knights' is warm toward thee; and by the people's prayers and the judgment of the

Fathers, thou art the source of peace, the arbiter of human destinies, chosen to rule the world with godlike mien, the country's father. This name Rome prays thee to preserve, and to thy care commends her citizens.

NERO

'Tis the gift of heaven that Rome herself and the senate are subject unto me, and that from unwilling lips prayers and servile words are extorted by fear of me. To preserve citizens, to ruler and fatherland alike oppressive, puffed up with pride of race — what folly is it, when with a word one may give to death those he suspects? Brutus for the murder of his chief, to whom he owed his safety, armed his hands; and Caesar, invincible in battle shock, tamer of nations, walking, a very Jove, along the upward path of honors, died by the unspeakable crime of citizens. What streams of her own blood did Rome then behold, so often rent with strife! He who earned heaven by piety, the deified Augustus, how many nobles did he put to death, young men and old, scattered throughout the world, when they fled their own homes through fear of death and the sword of the three handed chiefs — all by the accusing list delivered to grim destruction! The grieving fathers saw the heads of the slain set out upon the rostra, but dared not weep their dead nor groan, while the forum reeked with foul corruption, and sluggish gore dripped down the rotting faces. Nor was this the end of slaughter and of blood: long did grim Philippi feed birds and beasts of prey, and the Sicilian sea engulfed fleets and men often retreating; the world was shaken by its own contending forces. The great commander, by the leaders' array overcome, with his ships prepared for flight, hid him to the Nile, himself doomed soon to perish; incestuous Egypt a second time drank a Roman leader's blood, and now covers his flitting shade. There civil strife is buried, waged impiously and long. At last the victor now weary, sheathed his sword, blunted with savage blows, and maintained his sway by fear. Safe under the protection of his loyal guards he lived, and when he died, by the surpassing piety of his son was made a god, hallowed and enshrined. Me, too, shall the stars await, if with relentless sword I first destroy whatever is hostile to me, and on a worthy offspring found my house.

SENECA

With stock celestial will she fill thy halls, she, the daughter of a god
[Claudius, by courtesy and custom called divus after death], the
Claudian race's glory, who has, like Juno, gained her brother's bed.

NERO

A harlot mother brings her birth in doubt; — and the soul of my wife
was never linked with mine.

SENECA

In tender years rarely is love revealed, when, by modesty overcome,
it hides its fires.

NERO

This truly I, too, myself have vainly trusted long, although clear
signs from her unloving heart and face betrayed her hate of me;
which to avenge at last my hot grief has resolved. And now I have
found a wife worthy of my bed in birth and beauty, to whom Venus,
outshone, would yield, and the wife of Jove and the goddess bold in
battle.

SENECA

But honor, wifely faith, virtue and modesty, should please a husband;
for 'tis these only, the treasures of mind and heart, that, subject to
none, abide perpetual; but beauty's flower each passing day despoils.

NERO

All charms upon one woman has God bestowed, and such was she
born, — so have the fates decreed, — for me.

SENECA

Love will depart from thee, be not too credulous.

NERO

What? He whom the lightning's lord cannot put off? Heaven's tyrant,
who enters the savage seas and the realm of Dis, and draws gods
from the sky?

SENECA

'Tis our human ignorance fashions Love a winged god, implacable, and arms with shafts and bow his sacred hands, equips him with blazing torch, and counts him the son of Venus, Vulcan's seed. This "Love" is a mighty force of mind, a fond heat of the soul; 'tis born of youth, 'tis nursed by luxury and ease midst the glad gifts of Fortune; and if thou cease to feed and foster it, it falls away and quickly is its power dead and lost.

NERO

This do I deem the chiefest source of life, whence pleasure hath its birth; 'tis a deathless thing, since the human race is evermore renewed by pleasing Love, who softens even savage beasts. May this god bear before me the wedding torch, and with his fire join Poppaea to my bed.

SENECA

The people's grief could scarce endure to see such marriage, nor would holy reverence allow it.

NERO

Shall I alone be forbidden what all may do?

SENECA

Greatest from highest ever the state exacts.

NERO

Fain would I make trial whether, broken by my might, this rashly cherished regard would not vanish from their hearts.

SENECA

Bend, rather, peacefully to thy people's will.

NERO

Ill fares the state when commons govern kings.

SENECA

He justly chafes who naught avails by prayer

NERO

Is it right to extort what prayer cannot obtain

SENECA

To refuse is harsh.

NERO

To force a prince is outrage.

SENECA

He should himself give way.

NERO

But rumor will report him conquered.

SENECA

A trivial and empty thing is rumor.

NERO

Even so, it disgraces many.

SENECA

It fears the high exalted.

NERO

But none the less maligns.

SENECA

'Twill easily be crushed. Let the merits of thy sainted father break thy will, and thy wife's youth, her faith, her chastity.

NERO

Have done at last; already too wearisome has thy insistence grown; permit me to do what Seneca disapproves. Long since am I myself Poppaea's prayers delaying, since in her womb she bears a pledge and part of me. Why not appoint to-morrow for the wedding day?

[Exeunt.]

[Enter Ghost of AGRIPPINA bearing a flaming torch.]

AGRIPPINA

Through the rent earth from Tartarus have I come forth, bringing in bloody hand a Stygian torch to these cursed marriage rites. With these flames let Poppaea wed my son, which a mother's avenging hand and grief shall turn to grim funeral pyres. Ever amidst the shades the memory of my impious murder abides with me, burdening my ghost still unavenged. The payment I received for all my services was that death-fraught ship, and the reward of empire, that night wherein I mourned my wreck. My comrades' murder and my son's heartless crime I would have wept — no time was given for tears, but with crime he doubled that awful crime. Though saved from the sea, yet by the sword undone, loathsome with wounds, midst the holy images I gave up my troubled ghost. Still my blood quenched not the hatred of my son. Rages the mad tyrant against his mother's name, longs to blot out her merits; my statues, my inscriptions he destroys by threat of death throughout the world — the world which, to my own punishment, my ill-starred love gave to a boy's government.

[She seems to see her husband's ghost.]

Wrathfully doth my dead husband harass my ghost, and with torches attacks my guilty face; pursues me, threatens, charges to me his death and his son's burial mound, demands the author of the murderous deed. Have done; he shall be given; 'tis no long time I seek. The avenging Fury plans for the impious tyrant a worthy doom; blows and base flight and sufferings whereby he may surpass even Tantalus' thirst, the dread toil of Sisypheus, the bird of Tityus and the wheel which whirls Ixion's limbs around. Though in his pride he build him marble palaces and roof them in with gold, though armed guards stand at their chieftain's door, though the beggared world send him its boundless riches, though Parthians in suppliance seek his bloody hand, though kingdoms bring wealth to him; the day and the hour will come when for his crimes he shall pay his guilty soul, shall give his throat to his enemies, abandoned and undone and stripped of all.

Alas! to what end my labor and my prayers? Hath thy frenzy carried thee so far in madness and thy destiny, my son, that the wrath of a mother murdered by thy hand gives way before such woes? Would that, ere I brought thee, a tiny babe, to light, and suckled thee, savage beasts of prey had rent my vitals; then without crime, without sense and innocent, thou wouldst have died — my own; close clinging to my side, thou wouldst forever see the quiet seats of the underworld, thy grandsires and thy sire, heroes of glorious name, whom now shame and grief perpetual await because of thee, thou monster, and of me who bore such son. But why delay to hide my face in Tartarus, as step-dame, mother, wife, a curse unto my own?

[The Ghost vanishes. Enter OCTAVIA.]

OCTAVIA

[to the Chorus] Restrain your tears on this glad, festal day of Rome, lest your great love and care for me arouse the emperor's sharp wrath, and I be cause of suffering to you. This wound is not the first my heart has felt; far heavier have I borne; but this day shall end my cares even by my death. No more shall I be forced to look on my brutal husband's face, nor to enter a slave's chamber which I hate; Augustus' sister shall I be, not wife. Only may I be spared dire punishments and fearful death. — And canst thou, poor, foolish girl, remembering thy cruel husband's crimes, yet hope for this? Long kept back for this marriage-festival, thou shalt fall at last, an ill-starred victim. But why so often to thy father's house dost look back with streaming eyes? Haste thee to leave this roof; abandon the blood-stained palace of the emperor. *[Exit.]*

CHORUS

Lo, now has dawned the day long dim foreseen, so oft by rumor bruited. Departed is Claudia from cruel Nero's chamber, which even now Poppaea holds in triumph, while lags our love by grievous fear repressed, and grief is numb. Where is the Roman people's manhood now, which oft in olden times hath crushed illustrious chiefs, given laws to an unconquered land, the fasces to worthy citizens, made war and peace at will, conquered wild races and imprisoned captive

kings? Lo, grievous to our sight, on every hand now gleams Poppaea's image, with Nero's joined! Let violent hands throw them to the ground, too like their mistress' features; let them drag her down from her lofty couch, and then with devouring flames and savage spears attack the palace of the emperor. [*Exit CHORUS.*]

[Enter POPPAEA'S NURSE and POPPAEA herself, who appears, distraught, coming out of her chamber.]

NURSE

Whither, dear child, dost pass all trembling from the chamber of thy lord, or what hidden place seekst thou with troubled face? Why are thy checks wet with weeping? Surely the day sought by our prayers and vows has dawned; to thy Caesar art thou joined by the marriage torch, him whom thy beauty snared, whom Venus hath delivered in bonds to thee, Venus, of Seneca flouted, mother of Love, most mighty deity. Oh, how beautiful and stately wast thou on the high couch reclining in the hall! The senate looked on thy beauty in amaze, when incense to the gods thou offeredst and with pleasing wine didst sprinkle the sacred shrines, thy head covered with filmy marriage-veil, flame-colored. And close beside thee, majestic midst the favoring plaudits of the citizens, walked the prince himself, showing, in look and bearing, his joy and pride. So did Peleus take Thetis for his bride, risen up from Ocean's foam, to whose marriage, they say, the heaven-dwellers thronged, and with equal joy each sea divinity. What cause so suddenly has changed thy face? Tell me what mean thy pallor and thy tears.

POPPAEA

My sad heart, dear nurse, is confused and troubled by a fearful vision of yester-night, and my senses reel. For, after joyful day had to the dark stars yielded, and the sky to night, held close in my Nero's arms I lay relaxed in slumber. But not long was it granted to enjoy sweet rest; for my marriage chamber seemed thronged with many mourners; with streaming hair did Roman matrons come, making tearful lamentations; midst oft repeated and fearful trumpet blasts, my husband's mother, with threatening mien and savage, brandished

a blood-spattered torch.

While I was following her, driven by urgent fear, suddenly the earth yawned beneath me in a mighty chasm. Downward through this I plunged and there, as on earth, beheld my wedding-couch, wondering to behold it, whereon I sank in utter weariness, I saw approaching, with a throng around him, my former husband and my son . Crispinus hastened to take me in his arms, to kiss me as long ago; when hurriedly into my chamber Nero burst and buried his savage sword in the other's throat. At length a mighty fear roused me from slumber; my bones and limbs shook with a violent trembling; my heart beat wildly; fear checked my utterance, which now thy love and loyalty have restored to me. Alas! What do the spirits of the dead threaten me, or what means the blood of my husband that I saw?

NURSE

Whatever the mind's waking vigor eagerly pursues, a mysterious, secret sense, swift working, brings back in sleep. Dost marvel that thou didst behold husband and marriage-bed, held fast in thy new lord's arms? But do hands beating breasts and streaming hair on a day of joy trouble thee? 'Twas Octavia's divorce they mourned midst her brother's sacred gods and her father's house. That torch which thou didst follow, borne in Augusta's hand, foretells the name that thou shall gain illumed by envy. Thy abode in the lower world promises the stablished marriage-bed of a home unending. Whereas thine emperor buried his sword in that other's throat, wars shall he not wage, but in peace shall sheathe his sword. Take heart again, recall thy joy, I pray; banish thy fear and return thee to thy chamber.

POPPAEA

Rather am I resolved to seek the shrines and sacred altars, and with slain victims sacrifice to the holy gods, that the threats of night and sleep may be averted, and that my crazed terror may turn against my foes. Do thou make vows for me and with pious prayers implore the gods of heaven that my present lot may be abiding. [*Exeunt.*]

CHORUS

[of Roman women in sympathy with POPPAEA.] If truly speaks babbling rumor of the Thunderer's sweet stolen loves, (who now, they say, in feathery plumage hid, held Leda in his embrace, now over the waves, in fierce bull-form, the stolen Europa bore,) even now will he desert the stars over which he rules and seek thy arms, Poppaea, which even to Leda's he might prefer, and to thine, O Danae, before whose wondering eyes in olden time he poured down in yellow gold. Let Sparta vaunt the beauty of her daughter, and let the Phrygian shepherd vaunt his prize; she will outshine the face of Tyndaris, which set dread war on foot and levelled Phrygia's kingdom with the ground.

But who comes running with excited steps? What tidings bears he in his heaving breast?

[Enter MESSENGER.]

MESSENGER

Whatever guard holds watch over our leader's house, let it defend the palace which the people's fury threatens. See, in trembling haste the captains are bringing cohorts to defend the town; nor does the mob's madness, rashly roused, give place, overcome with fear, but gathers strength.

CHORUS

What is that wild frenzy which stirs their hearts?

MESSENGER

Smitten with love for Octavia and beside themselves with rage, the throngs rush on, in mood for any crime.

CHORUS

What do they dare to do, or what is their plan, tell thou.

MESSENGER

They plan to give back to Claudia her dead father's house, her brother's bed and her due share of empire.

CHORUS

Which even now Poppaea shares with her lord in mutual loyalty?

MESSENGER

'Tis this too stubborn love that inflames their minds and into rash madness drives them headlong. Whatever statue was set up of noble marble or of gleaming bronze, which bore the features of Poppaea, lies low, cast down by base-born hands and by relentless bars overturned; the limbs, pulled down by ropes, they drag piecemeal, trample them over and over and cover them with foul mud. Commingled curses match their savage acts, which I am afraid to tell of. They make ready to hem the emperor's house with flames should he not yield to the people's wrath his new-made bride, not yield to Claudia the home that is her own. That he himself may know of the citizens' uprising, with my own lips will I hasten to perform the prefect's bidding. [*Exit.*]

CHORUS

Why do you stir up dire strife in vain? Invincible the shafts that Cupid bears; with his own flames will he overwhelm your fires, with which he oft has quenched thunderbolts and dragged Jove as his captive from the sky. To the offended god dire penalties shall you pay even with your blood. Not slow to wrath is the glowing boy, nor easy to be ruled; 'twas he who bade the fierce Achilles smite the lyre, broke down the Greeks, broke down Atrides, the kingdoms of Priam overthrew, and famed cities utterly destroyed; and now my mind shudders at the thought of what the unchecked power of the relentless god will do.

[*Enter NERO.*]

NERO

Oh, too slow are my soldiers' hands, and too patient my wrath after such sacrilege as this, seeing that the blood of citizens has not quenched the fires they kindled against me, and that with the slaughter of her people mourning Rome reeks not, who bore such men as these. But she for whose sake the citizens rage at me, my

sister-wife whom with distrust I ever look upon, shall give her life at last to sate my grief, and quench my anger with her blood. But now death is too light a punishment for her deeds. Heavier doom has the people's unhallowed guilt deserved. Quickly let Rome's roofs fall beneath my flames; let fires, let ruins crush the guilty populace, and wretched want, and grief and hunger dire. The huge mob grows riotous, distempered by the blessings of my age, nor hath it understanding of my mercy in its thanklessness nor can it suffer peace; but here 'tis swept along by restless insolence and there by its own recklessness is headlong borne. By suffering must it be held in check, be ever pressed beneath the heavy yoke, that it may never dare the like again, and against my wife's sacred countenance lift its eyes; crushed by the fear of punishment, it shall be taught to obey its emperor's nod.

But here I see the man whose rare loyalty and proven faith have made him captain of my royal guards.

[Enter PREFECT.]

PREFECT

The people's rage by slaughter of some few, who recklessly long resisted, is put down: such is my report.

NERO

And is this enough? Is it thus a soldier has obeyed his chief? "Put down," sayst thou? Is this the vengeance due to me?

PREFECT

The guilty ring-leaders of the mob have fallen by the sword.

NERO

But the mob itself, that dared to attack my household with their torches, dictate to the emperor, from my very bed to drag my noble wife, to offer her violence, so far as lay in their power, with hands unclean and voices insolent? Are they still without due punishment?

PREFECT

Shall angry grief determine penalty against thy citizens?

NERO

It shall determine, the tale of which no age shall banish from men's lips.

PREFECT

Which neither wrath nor fear of us can hold in check?

NERO

She first shall appease who has first deserved my wrath.

PREFECT

Whom it demands tell thou, that my hand may spare not.

NERO

The slaughter of my sister it demands, and her hateful head.

PREFECT

Fearful, benumbing horror holds me fast.

NERO

Does thy obedience falter?

PREFECT

Why dost condemn my faith?

NERO

Because thou sparest my foe.

PREFECT

Callest thou a woman foe?

NERO

If crime she has committed.

PREFECT

Who charges her with guilt?

NERO

The people's rage.

PREFECT

But who can check their madness?

NERO

She who could rouse it.

PREFECT

Not any one, I think.

NERO

Woman, to whom nature has given a mind to mischief prone, and equipped her heart with wiles to work us ill.

PREFECT

But strength it has denied her.

NERO

That so she might not be impregnable, but that fear or punishment might break her feeble strength, a punishment which now, though late, shall crush the criminal, who has too long been guilty.

But have done with advice and prayers, and do my bidding: let her be borne by ship to some far distant shore and there be slain, that at last the terror at my heart may be at rest. [*Exeunt.*]

CHORUS

Oh, dire and deadly to many has the people's favor proved, that has filled their vessels' sails with prosperous breeze and borne them out afar, then, languishing, has failed them on the deep and dangerous sea. The wretched mother of the Gracchi wept her sons, whom, though nobly born, for loyal faith and eloquence renowned, though brave in heart, keen in defense of law, the great love and excessive favor of the citizens destroyed. Thee also, Livius, to fate like theirs did fortune give, whom neither his lictors' rods nor his own house protected. But present grief forbids us to rehearse more instances.

Her, to whom but now the citizens decreed the restoration of her father's house, her brother's bed, now may they see dragged out in tears and misery to punishment and death. Oh, blessed poverty, content to hide beneath a lowly roof, while lofty homes the storm-blasts oft-times shatter, or fortune overthrows.

[Enter OCTAVIA in the custody of the palace guards, who are dragging her roughly away.]

OCTAVIA

Oh, whither do ye drag me? What exile does the tyrant or his queen ordain, if, softened and overcome by all my miseries, she grants me life? But if by death she is ready to crown my sufferings, why, cruel, does she even grudge me death at home? But now is no hope of safety — ah, woe is me, I see my brother's ship. And lo, on that vessel on which his mother once was borne, now, driven from his chamber, his wretched sister, too, shall sail away. Now Piety no longer has divinity, nor are there any gods; grim Fury reigns throughout the universe. Who worthily can lament my evil plight? What nightingale can match my tears with her complaints? Whose wings would that the fates might grant to wretched me! Then on swift pinions borne, would I leave my grievous troubles far behind, the dismal haunts of men, and cruel slaughter. There, all alone, within some solitary wood, perched on a slender bough, might I pour forth from plaintive throat my song of woe.

CHORUS

Our mortal race is ruled by fate, nor may any promise to himself that the path of life will be sure and steadfast, along which each coming day with its continual fears brings ever-shifting chances. Comfort now thy heart with the many sufferings which thine own house has borne. In what has fortune been more harsh to thee?

And thee first must I name, the mother of so many sons, Agrippa's child, Augustus' daughter-in-law, a Caesar's wife, whose name shone bright throughout the world, whose teeming womb brought forth so many hostages of peace; yet thou wast doomed to suffer

exile, blows and galling chains, loss of thy friends, and bitter grief, and at last a death of lingering agony . And Livia, blest in her Drusus' chamber, in her sons, fell into brutal crime — and punishment. Julia met her mother's fate; though after long delay, yet she was slain by the sword, though no man called her guilty. What power once was thy mother's , who ruled the palace of the emperor , dear to her husband, and in her son secure? Yet she was made subject to her slave , and fell beneath a brutal soldier's sword. And what of her who might have hoped for the very throne of heaven, the emperor's great mother? Was she not first by a murderous boatman's hand abused, then, mangled by the sword, lay she not long the victim of her cruel son?

OCTAVIA

Me also to the gloomy shades and ghosts, the cruel tyrant, see, is sending. Why do I now make vain and pitiable delay? Hurry me on to death, ye to whose power fortune hath given me. Witness, ye heavenly gods — what wouldst thou, fool? Pray not to deities who scorn thee. Witness, O Tartarus, ye goddesses of Erebus who punish crime, and thou, O father: destroy the tyrant, worthy such death and punishment. *[To her guards.]* I dread not the death you threaten. Put your ship in readiness, set sail upon the deep, and let your pilot speed before the winds to Pandataria's shore.

[Exit OCTAVIA with her guards.]

CHORUS

Ye gentle breezes and ye zephyrs mild, that once caught Iphigenia wrapped in an airy cloud, and bore her from the altar of the cruel maid , this maiden, too, far from her dire punishment bear ye, I pray, to the shrine of Trivia. More merciful than Rome is Aulis and the Taurians' barbarous land: there by the blood of strangers are the gods appeased; but Rome's delight is in her children's blood.

The Epistles



Corsica, the French island west of Italy. In 41 AD, Claudius succeeded Caligula as Emperor and at the behest of his wife, Messalina, he banished Seneca to Corsica on a charge of adultery with Caligula's sister, Julia Livilla. Seneca spent his exile in philosophical and natural study, as counselled by Roman Stoic thought and it was here that he composed the Consolations.

TO MARCIA, ON CONSOLATION



Translated by Aubrey Stewart

Composed circa 40 AD, Seneca's three Consolatory works, *De Consolatione ad Marciam*, *De Consolatione ad Polybium*, and *De Consolatione ad Helviam Matrem* demonstrate the essential principles of his Stoic teachings. Although they are formed as personal epistles, they are written more like essays than personal letters of consolation. In the three works, Seneca appears to be more concerned with presenting facts of the universe and the human condition, rather than offering solace.

Seneca was most likely motivated to write *De Consolatione ad Marciam* as a letter of consolation to Marcia in order to gain her favour. She was the daughter of a prominent historian, Aulus Cremutius Cordus, and her family's enormous wealth and influence most likely inspired Seneca to compose the work. Throughout the essay he adheres to philosophical abstractions concerning Stoic precepts of life and death. For a letter offering solace, he notably lacks empathy toward Marcia's individual grief and loss.

Marcia actively mourned the death of her son Metilius for over three years. Seneca attempts to convince her that the fate of her son, although tragic, should not have been a surprise. She knew many other mothers that had lost their sons; why should she expect her own son to survive her? The acknowledgement, even expectation, of the worst of all possible outcomes is a recurring concept of Seneca's Stoic philosophy. While Seneca sympathised with Marcia, he reminded her that "we are born into a world of things which are all destined to die," and that if she could accept that no one is guaranteed a just life (that is, one in which sons always outlive their mothers), she could finally end her mourning and live the rest of her life in peace.



*Ancient bust of Seneca, part of a double herm, now housed in the Antikensammlung
Berlin*

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I.

DID I not know, Marcia, that you have as little of a woman's weakness of mind as of her other vices, and that your life was regarded as a pattern of antique virtue, I should not have dared to combat your grief, which is one that many men fondly nurse and embrace, nor should I have conceived the hope of persuading you to hold fortune blameless, having to plead for her at such an unfavorable time, before so partial a judge, and against such an odious charge. I derive confidence, however, from the proved strength of your mind, and your virtue, which has been proved by a severe test. All men know how well you behaved towards your father, whom you loved as dearly as your children in all respects, save that you did not wish him to survive you: indeed, for all that I know you may have wished that also: for great affection ventures to break some of the golden rules of life. You did all that lay in your power to avert the death of your father, Aulus Cremutius Cordus; but when it became clear that, surrounded as he was by the myrmidons of Sejanus, there was no other way of escape from slavery, you did not indeed approve of his resolution, but gave up all attempts to oppose it; you shed tears openly, and choked down your sobs, yet did not screen them behind a smiling face; and you did all this in the present century, when not to be unnatural towards one's parents is considered the height of filial affection. When the changes of our times gave you an opportunity, you restored to the use of man that genius of your father for which he had suffered, and made him in real truth immortal by publishing as an eternal memorial of him those books which that bravest of men had written with his own blood. You have done a great service to Roman literature: a large part of Cordus's books had been burned; a great service to posterity, who will receive a true account of events, which cost its author so dear; and a great service to himself, whose memory flourishes and ever will flourish, as long as men set any value upon the facts of Roman history, as long as any one lives who wishes to review the deeds of our fathers, to know what a true Roman was like — one who still remained unconquered when all other necks were broken in

to receive the yoke of Sejanus, one who was free in every thought, feeling, and act. By Hercules, the state would have sustained a great loss if you had not brought him forth from the oblivion to which his two splendid qualities, eloquence and independence, had consigned him: he is now read, is popular, is received into men's hands and bosoms, and fears no old age: but as for those who butchered him, before long men will cease to speak even of their crimes, the only things by which they are remembered. This greatness of mind in you has forbidden me to take into consideration your sex or your face, still clouded by the sorrow by which so many years ago it was suddenly overcast. See; I shall do nothing underhand, nor try to steal away your sorrows: I have reminded you of old hurts, and to prove that your present wound may be healed, I have shown you the scar of one which was equally severe. Let others use soft measures and caresses; I have determined to do battle with your grief, and I will dry those weary and exhausted eyes, which already, to tell you the truth, are weeping more from habit than from sorrow. I will effect this cure, if possible, with your goodwill: if you disapprove of my efforts, or dislike them, then you must continue to hug and fondle the grief which you have adopted as the survivor of your son. What, I pray you, is to be the end of it? All means have been tried in vain: the consolations of your friends, who are weary of offering them, and the influence of great men who are related to you: literature, a taste which your father enjoyed and which you have inherited from him, now finds your ears closed, and affords you but a futile consolation, which scarcely engages your thoughts for a moment. Even time itself, nature's greatest remedy, which quiets the most bitter grief, loses its power with you alone. Three years have already passed, and still your grief has lost none of its first poignancy, but renews and strengthens itself day by day, and has now dwelt so long with you that it has acquired a domicile in your mind, and actually thinks that it would be base to leave it. All vices sink into our whole being, if we do not crush them before they gain a footing; and in like manner these sad, pitiable, and discordant feelings end by feeding upon their own bitterness, until the unhappy mind takes a sort of morbid delight in grief. I should have liked, therefore, to have attempted to effect this cure in the earliest stages of the disorder, before its force was

fully developed; it might have been checked by milder remedies, but now that it has been confirmed by time it cannot be beaten without a hard struggle. In like manner, wounds heal easily when the blood is fresh upon them: they can then be cleared out and brought to the surface, and admit of being probed by the finger: when disease has turned them into malignant ulcers, their cure is more difficult. I cannot now influence so strong a grief by polite and mild measures: it must be broken down by force.

II.

I am aware that all who wish to give any one advice begin with precepts, and end with examples: but it is sometimes useful to alter this fashion, for we must deal differently with different people. Some are guided by reason, others must be confronted with authority and the names of celebrated persons, whose brilliancy dazzles their mind and destroys their power of free judgment. I will place before your eyes two of the greatest examples belonging to your sex and your century: one, that of a woman who allowed herself to be entirely carried away by grief; the other, one who, though afflicted by a like misfortune, and an even greater loss, yet did not allow her sorrows to reign over her for a very long time, but quickly restored her mind to its accustomed frame. Octavia and Livia, the former Augustus's sister, the latter his wife, both lost their sons when they were young men, and when they were certain of succeeding to the throne. Octavia lost Marcellus, whom both his father-in-law and his uncle had begun to depend upon, and to place upon his shoulders the weight of the empire — a young man of keen intelligence and firm character, frugal and moderate in his desires to an extent which deserved especial admiration in one so young and so wealthy, strong to endure labour, averse to indulgence, and able to bear whatever burden his uncle might choose to lay, or I may say to pile upon his shoulders. Augustus had well chosen him as a foundation, for he would not have given way under any weight, however excessive. His mother never ceased to weep and sob during her whole life, never endured to listen to wholesome advice, never even allowed her thoughts to be diverted from her sorrow. She remained during her whole life just as she was during the funeral, with all the strength of her mind intently fixed upon one subject. I do not say that she lacked the courage to shake off her grief, but she refused to be comforted, thought that it would be a second bereavement to lose her tears, and would not have any portrait of her darling son, nor allow any allusion to be made to him. She hated all mothers, and raged against Livia with especial fury, because it seemed as though the brilliant prospect once in store for her own child was now transferred to Livia's son.

Passing all her days in darkened rooms and alone, not conversing even with her brother, she refused to accept the poems which were composed in memory of Marcellus, and all the other honours paid him by literature, and closed her ears against all consolation. She lived buried and hidden from view, neglecting her accustomed duties, and actually angry with the excessive splendour of her brother's prosperity, in which she shared. Though surrounded by her children and grandchildren, she would not lay aside her mourning garb, though by retaining it she seemed to put a slight upon all her relations, in thinking herself bereaved in spite of their being alive.

III.

Livia lost her son Drusus, who would have been a great emperor, and was already a great general: he had marched far into Germany, and had planted the Roman standards in places where the very existence of the Romans was hardly known. He died on the march, his very foes treating him with respect, observing a reciprocal truce, and not having the heart to wish for what would do them most service. In addition to his dying thus in his country's service, great sorrow for him was expressed by the citizens, the provinces, and the whole of Italy, through which his corpse was attended by the people of the free towns and colonies, who poured out to perform the last sad offices to him, till it reached Rome in a procession which resembled a triumph. His mother was not permitted to receive his last kiss and gather the last fond words from his dying lips: she followed the relics of her Drusus on their long journey, though every one of the funeral pyres with which all Italy was glowing seemed to renew her grief, as though she had lost him so many times. When, however, she at last laid him in the tomb, she left her sorrow there with him, and grieved no more than was becoming to a Caesar or due to a son. She did not cease to make frequent mention of the name of her Drusus, to set up his portrait in all places, both public and private, and to speak of him and listen while others spoke of him with the greatest pleasure: she lived with his memory ; which none can embrace and consort with who has made it painful to himself. Choose, therefore, which of these two examples you think the more commendable: if you prefer to follow the former, you will remove yourself from the number of the living; you will shun the sight both of other people's children and of your own, and even of him whose loss you deplore; you will be looked upon by mothers as an omen of evil; you will refuse to take part in honourable, permissible pleasures, thinking them unbecoming for one so afflicted; you will be loath to linger above ground, and will be especially angry with your age, because it will not straightway bring your life abruptly to an end. I here put the best construction on what is really most contemptible and foreign to your character. I mean that you will show yourself unwilling to live, and unable to die.

If, on the other hand, showing a milder and better regulated spirit, you try to follow the example of the latter most exalted lady, you will not be in misery, nor will you wear your life out with suffering. Plague on it! what madness this is, to punish one's self because one is unfortunate, and not to lessen, but to increase one's ills! You ought to display, in this matter also, that decent behaviour and modesty which has characterised all your life: for there is such a thing as self-restraint in grief also. You will show more respect for the youth himself, who well deserves that it should make you glad to speak and think of him, if you make him able to meet his mother with a cheerful countenance, even as he was wont to do when alive.

IV.

I will not invite you to practise the sterner kind of maxims, nor bid you bear the lot of humanity with more than human philosophy; neither will I attempt to dry a mother's eyes on the very day of her son's burial. I will appear with you before an arbitrator: the matter upon which we shall join issue is, whether grief ought to be deep or unceasing. I doubt not that you will prefer the example of Julia Augusta, who was your intimate friend: she invites you to follow her method: she, in her first paroxysm, when grief is especially keen and hard to bear, betook herself for consolation to Areus, her husband's teacher in philosophy, and declared that this did her much good; more good than the thought of the Roman people, whom she was unwilling to sadden by her mourning; more than Augustus, who, staggering under the loss of one of his two chief supporters, ought not to be yet more bowed down by the sorrow of his relatives; more even than her son Tiberius, whose affection during that untimely burial of one for whom whole nations wept made her feel that she had only lost one member of her family. This was, I imagine, his introduction to and grounding in philosophy of a woman peculiarly tenacious of her own opinion :— “Even to the present day, Julia, as far as I can tell — and I was your husband's constant companion, and knew not only what all men were allowed to know, but all the most secret thoughts of your hearts — you have been careful that no one should find anything to blame in your conduct; not only in matters of importance, but even in trifles you have taken pains to do nothing which you could wish common fame, that most frank judge of the acts of princes, to overlook. Nothing, I think, is more admirable than that those who are in high places should pardon many shortcomings in others, and have to ask it for none of their own. So also in this matter of mourning you ought to act up to your maxim of doing nothing which you could wish undone, or done otherwise.

V.

“In the next place, I pray and beseech you not to be self-willed and beyond the management of your friends. You must be aware that none of them know how to behave, whether to mention Drusus in your presence or not, as they neither wish to wrong a noble youth by forgetting him nor to hurt you by speaking of him. When we leave you and assemble together by ourselves, we talk freely about his sayings and doings, treating them with the respect which they deserve: in your presence deep silence is observed about him, and thus you lose that greatest of pleasures, the hearing the praises of your son, which I doubt not you would be willing to hand down to all future ages, had you the means of so doing, even at the cost of your own life. Wherefore endure to listen to, nay, encourage conversation of which he is the subject, and let your ears be open to the name and memory of your son. You ought not to consider this painful, like those who in such a case think that part of their misfortune consists in listening to consolation. As it is, you have altogether run into the other extreme, and, forgetting the better aspects of your lot, look only upon its worse side: you pay no attention to the pleasure you have had in your son’s society and your joyful meetings with him, the sweet caresses of his babyhood, the progress of his education: you fix all your attention upon that last scene of all: and to this, as though it were not shocking enough, you add every horror you can. Do not, I implore you, take a perverse pride in appearing the most unhappy of women: and reflect also that there is no great credit in behaving bravely in times of prosperity, when life glides easily with a favouring current- neither does; a calm sea and fair wind display the art of the pilot . some foul weather is wanted to prove his courage. Like him, then, do not give way, but rather plant yourself firmly, and endure whatever burden may fall upon you from above; scared though you may have been at the first roar of the tempest. There is nothing that fastens such a reproach on Fortune as resignation.” After this he points out to her the son who is yet alive: he points out grandchildren from the lost one.

VI.

It is your trouble, Marcia, which has been dealt with here: it is beside your couch of mourning that Areus has been sitting: change the characters, and it is you whom he has been consoling. But, on the other hand, Marcia, suppose that you have sustained a greater loss than ever mother did before you: see, I am not soothing you or making light of your misfortune: if fate can be overcome by tears, let us bring tears to bear upon it: let every day be passed in mourning, every night be spent in sorrow instead of sleep: let your breast be torn by your own hands, your very face attacked by them, and every kind of cruelty be practised by your grief, if it will profit you. But if the dead cannot be brought back to life, however much we may beat our breasts, if destiny remains fixed and immovable forever, not to be changed by any sorrow, however great, and death does not loose his hold of anything that he once has taken away, then let our futile grief be brought to an end. Let us, then, steer our own course, and no longer allow ourselves to be driven to leeward by the force of our misfortune. He is a sorry pilot who lets the waves wring his rudder from his grasp, who leaves the sails to fly loose, and abandons the ship to the storm: but he who boldly grasps the helm and clings to it until the sea closes over him, deserves praise even though he be shipwrecked.

VII.

“But,” say you, “sorrow for the loss of one’s own children is natural.” Who denies it? provided it be reasonable? for we cannot help feeling a pang, and the stoutest-hearted of us are cast down not only at the death of those dearest to us, but even when they leave us on a journey. Nevertheless, the mourning which public opinion enjoins is more than nature insists upon. Observe how intense and yet how brief are the sorrows of dumb animals: we hear a cow lowing for one or two days, nor do mares pursue their wild and senseless gallops for longer: wild beasts after they have tracked their lost cubs throughout the forest, and often visited their plundered dens, quench their rage within a short space of time. Birds circle round their empty nests with loud and piteous cries, yet almost immediately resume their ordinary flight in silence; nor does any creature spend long periods in sorrowing for the loss of its offspring, except man, who encourages his own grief, the measure of which depends not upon his sufferings, but upon his will. You may know that to be utterly broken down by grief is not natural, by observing that the same bereavement inflicts a deeper wound upon women than upon men, upon savages than upon civilized and cultivated persons, upon the unlearned than upon the learned: yet those passions which derive their force from nature are equally powerful in all men: therefore it is dear that a passion of varying strength cannot be a natural one. Fire will burn all people equally, male and female, of every rank and every age: steel will exhibit its cutting power on all bodies alike: and why? Because these things derive their strength from nature, which makes no distinction of persons. Poverty, grief, and ambition, are felt differently by different people, according as they are influenced by habit: a rooted prejudice about the terrors of these things, though they are not really to be feared, makes a man weak and unable to endure them.

VIII.

Moreover, that which depends upon nature is not weakened by delay, but grief is gradually effaced by time. However obstinate it may be, though it be daily renewed and be exasperated by all attempts to soothe it, yet even this becomes weakened by time, which is the most efficient means of taming its fierceness. You, Marcia, have still a mighty sorrow abiding with you, nevertheless it already appears to have become blunted: it is obstinate and enduring, but not so acute as it was at first: and this also will be taken from you piecemeal by succeeding years. Whenever you are engaged in other pursuits your mind will be relieved from its burden: at present you keep watch over yourself to prevent this. Yet there is a great difference between allowing and forcing yourself to grieve. How much more in accordance with your cultivated taste it would be to put an end to your mourning instead of looking for the end to come, and not to wait for the day when your sorrow shall cease against your will: dismiss it of your own accord.

IX.

“Why then,” you ask, “do we show such persistence in mourning for our friends, if it be not nature that bids us do so?” It is because we never expect that any evil will befall ourselves before it comes, we will not be taught by seeing the misfortunes of others that they are the common inheritance of all men, but imagine that the path which we have begun to tread is free from them and less beset by dangers than that of other people. How many funerals pass our houses? yet we do not think of death. How many untimely deaths? we think only of our son’s coming of age, of his service in the army, or of his succession to his father’s estate. How many rich men suddenly sink into poverty before our very eyes, without its ever occurring to our minds that our own wealth is exposed to exactly the same risks? When, therefore, misfortune befalls us, we cannot help collapsing all the more completely, because we are struck as it were unawares: a blow which has long been foreseen falls much less heavily upon us. Do you wish to know how completely exposed you are to every stroke of fate, and that the same shafts which have transfixed others are whirling around yourself? Then imagine that you are mounting without sufficient armour to assault some city wall or some strong and lofty position manned by a great host, expect a wound, and suppose that all those stones, arrows, and darts which fill the upper air are aimed at your body: whenever anyone falls at your side or behind your back, exclaim, “Fortune, you will not outwit me, or catch me confident and heedless: I know what you are preparing to do: you have struck down another, but you aimed at me.” Whoever looks upon his own affairs as though he were at the point of death? which of us ever dares to think about banishment, want, or mourning? who, if advised to meditate upon these subjects, would not reject the idea like an evil omen, and bid it depart from him and alight on the heads of his enemies, or even on that of his untimely adviser? “I never thought it would happen!” How can you think that anything will not happen, when you know that it may happen to many men, and has happened to many? That is a noble verse, and worthy of a nobler source than the stage: —

“What one hath suffered may befall us all.”

That man has lost his children: you may lose yours. That man has been convicted: your innocence is in peril. We are deceived and weakened by this delusion, when we suffer what we never foresaw that we possibly could suffer: but by looking forward to the coming of our sorrows we take the sting out of them when they come.

X.

My Marcia, all these adventitious circumstances which glitter around us, such as children, office in the state, wealth, large halls, vestibules crowded with clients seeking vainly for admittance, a noble name, a well-born or beautiful wife, and every other thing which depends entirely upon uncertain and changeful fortune, are but furniture which is not our own, but entrusted to us on loan: none of these things are given to us outright: the stage of our lives is adorned with properties gathered from various sources, and soon to be returned to their several owners: some of them will be taken away on the first day, some on the second, and but few will remain till the end. We have, therefore, no grounds for regarding ourselves with complacency, as though the things which surround us were our own: they are only borrowed: we have the use and enjoyment of them for a time regulated by the lender, who controls his own gift: it is our duty always to be able to lay our hands upon what has been lent us with no fixed date for its return, and to restore it when called upon without a murmur: the most detestable kind of debtor is he who rails at his creditor. Hence all our relatives, both those who by the order of their birth we hope will outlive ourselves, and those who themselves most properly wish to die before us, ought to be loved by us as persons whom we cannot be sure of having with us forever, nor even for long. We ought frequently to remind ourselves that we must love the things of this life as we would what is shortly to leave us, or indeed in the very act of leaving us. Whatever gift Fortune bestows upon a man, let him think while he enjoys it, that it will prove as fickle as the goddess from whom it came. Snatch what pleasure you can from your children, allow your children in their turn to take pleasure in your society, and drain every pleasure to the dregs without any delay. We cannot reckon on tonight, nay, I have allowed too long a delay, we cannot reckon on this hour: we must make haste: the enemy presses on behind us: soon that society of yours will be broken up, that pleasant company will be taken by assault and dispersed. Pillage is the universal law: unhappy creatures, know you not that life is but a flight? If you grieve for the death of your son, the fault lies with the

time when he was born, for at his birth he was told that death was his doom: it is the law under which he was born, the fate which has pursued him ever since he left his mother's womb. We have come under the dominion of Fortune, and a harsh and unconquerable dominion it is: at her caprice we must suffer all things whether we deserve them or not. She maltreats our bodies with anger, insult, and cruelty: some she burns, the fire being sometimes applied as a punishment and sometimes as a remedy: some she imprisons, allowing it to be done at one time by our enemies, at another by our countrymen: she tosses others naked on the changeful seas, and after their struggle with the waves will not even cast them out upon the sand or the shore, but will entomb them in the belly of some huge sea-monster: she wears away others to a skeleton by diverse kinds of disease, and keeps them long in suspense between life and death: she is as capricious in her rewards and punishments as a fickle, whimsical, and careless mistress is with those of her slaves.

XI.

Why need we weep over parts of our life? the whole of it calls for tears: new miseries assail us before we have freed ourselves from the old ones. You, therefore, who allow them to trouble you to an unreasonable extent ought especially to restrain yourselves, and to muster all the powers of the human breast to combat your fears and your pains. Moreover, what forgetfulness of your own position and that of mankind is this? You were born a mortal, and you have given birth to mortals: yourself a weak and fragile body, liable to all diseases, can you have hoped to produce anything strong and lasting from such unstable materials? Your son has died: in other words he has reached that goal towards which those whom you regard as more fortunate than your offspring are still hastening. this is the point towards which move at different rates all the crowds which are squabbling in the law courts, sitting in the theatres, praying in the temples. Those whom you love and those whom you despise will both be made equal in the same ashes. This is the meaning of that command, KNOW THYSELF, which is written on the shrine of the Pythian oracle. What is man? a potter's vessel, to be broken by the slightest shake or toss: it requires no great storm to rend you asunder: you fall to pieces wherever you strike. What is man? a weakly and frail body, naked, without any natural protection, dependent on the help of others, exposed to all the scorn of Fortune; even when his muscles are well trained he is the prey and the food of the first wild beast he meets, formed of weak and unstable substances, fair in outward feature, but unable to endure cold, heat, or labour, and yet falling to ruin if kept in sloth and idleness, fearing his very victuals, for he is starved if he has them not, and bursts if he has too much. He cannot be kept safe without anxious care, his breath only stays in the body on sufferance, and has no real hold upon it; he starts at every sudden danger, every loud and unexpected noise that reaches his ears. Ever a cause of anxiety to ourselves, diseased and useless as we are, can we be surprised at the death of a creature which can be killed by a single hiccup? Is it a great undertaking to put an end to us? why, smells, tastes, fatigue and want of sleep, food and drink, and the very

necessaries of life, are mortal. Whithersoever he moves he straightway becomes conscious of his weakness, not being able to bear all climates, falling sick after drinking strange water, breathing an air to which he is not accustomed, or from other causes and reasons of the most trifling kind, frail, sickly, entering upon his life with weeping: yet nevertheless what a disturbance this despicable creature makes! what ideas it conceives, forgetting its lowly condition! It exercises its mind upon matters which are immortal and eternal, and arranges the affairs of its grandchildren and great-grandchildren, while death surprises it in the midst of its far-reaching schemes, and what we call old age is but the round of a very few years.

XII.

Supposing that your sorrow has any method at all, is it your own sufferings or those of him who is gone that it has in view? Why do you grieve over your lost son? is it because you have received no pleasure from him, or because you would have received more had he lived longer? If you answer that you have received no pleasure from him you make your loss more endurable: for men miss less when lost what has given them no enjoyment or gladness. If, again, you admit that you have received much pleasure, it is your duty not to complain of that part which you have lost, but to return thanks for that which you have enjoyed. His rearing alone ought to have brought you a sufficient return for your labours, for it can hardly be that those who take the greatest pains to rear puppies, birds, and such like paltry objects of amusement derive a certain pleasure from the sight and touch and fawning caresses of these dumb creatures, and yet that those who rear children should not find their reward in doing so. Thus, even though his industry may have gained nothing for you, his carefulness may have saved nothing for you, his foresight may have given you no advice, yet you found sufficient reward in having owned him and loved him. "But," say you, "it might have lasted longer." True, but you have been better dealt with than if you had never had a son, for, supposing you were given your choice, which is the better lot, to be happy for a short time or not at all? It is better to enjoy pleasures which soon leave us than to enjoy none at all. Which, again, would you choose? to have had one who was a disgrace to you, and who merely filled the position and owned the name of your son, or one of such noble character as your son's was? a youth who soon grew discreet and dutiful, soon became a husband and a father, soon became eager for public honours, and soon obtained the priesthood, winning his way to all these admirable things with equally admirable speed. It falls to scarcely any one's lot to enjoy great prosperity, and also to enjoy it for a long time: only a dull kind of happiness can last for long and accompany us to the end of our lives. The immortal gods, who did not intend to give you a son for long, gave you one who was straightway what another would have

required long training to become. You cannot even say that you have been specially marked by the gods for misfortune because you have had no pleasure in your son. Look at any company of people, whether they be known to you or not: everywhere you will see some who have endured greater misfortunes than your own. Great generals and princes have undergone like bereavements: mythology tells us that the gods themselves are not exempt from them, its aim, I suppose, being to lighten our sorrow at death by the thought that even deities are subject to it. Look around, I repeat, at every one: you cannot mention any house so miserable as not to find comfort in the fact of another being yet more miserable. I do not, by Hercules, think so ill of your principles as to suppose that you would bear your sorrow more lightly were I to show you an enormous company of mourners: that is a spiteful sort of consolation which we derive from the number of our fellow-sufferers: nevertheless I will quote some instances, not indeed in order to teach you that this often befalls men, for it is absurd to multiply examples of man's mortality, but to let you know that there have been many who have lightened their misfortunes by patient endurance of them. I will begin with the luckiest man of all. Lucius Sulla lost his son, yet this did not impair either the spitefulness or the brilliant valour which he displayed at the expense of his enemies and his countrymen alike, nor did it make him appear to have assumed his well-known title untruly that he did so after his son's death, fearing neither the hatred of men, by whose sufferings that excessive prosperity of his was purchased, nor the ill-will of the gods, to whom it was a reproach that Sulla should be so truly The Fortunate. What, however, Sulla's real character was may pass among questions still undecided: even his enemies will admit that he took up arms with honour, and laid them aside with honour: his example proves the point at issue, that an evil which befalls even the most prosperous cannot be one of the first magnitude.

XIII.

That Greece cannot boast unduly of that father who, being in the act of offering sacrifice when he heard the news of his son's death, merely ordered the flute-player to be silent, and removed the garland from his head, but accomplished all the rest of the ceremony in due form, is due to a Roman, Pulvillus the high priest. When he was in the act of holding the doorpost and dedicating the Capitol the news of his son's death was brought to him. He pretended not to hear it, and pronounced the form of words proper for the high priest on such an occasion, without his prayer being interrupted by a single groan, begging that Jupiter would show himself gracious, at the very instant that he heard his son's name mentioned as dead. Do you imagine that this man's mourning knew no end, if the first day and the first shock could not drive him, though a father, away from the public altar of the state, or cause him to mar the ceremony of dedication by words of ill omen? Worthy, indeed, of the most exalted priesthood was he who ceased not to revere the gods even when they were angry. Yet he, after he had gone home, filled his eyes with tears, said a few words of lamentation, and performed the rites with which it was then customary to honour the dead, resumed the expression of countenance which he had worn in the Capitol.

Paulus, about the time of his magnificent triumph, in which he drove Perses in chains before his car, gave two of his sons to be adopted into other families, and buried those whom he had kept for himself. What, think you, must those whom he kept have been, when Scipio was one of those whom he gave away? It was not without emotion that the Roman people looked upon Paulus's empty chariot: nevertheless he made a speech to them, and returned thanks to the gods for having granted his prayer: for he had prayed that, if any offering to Nemesis were due in consequence of the stupendous victory which he had won, it might be paid at his own expense rather than at that of his country. Do you see how magnanimously he bore his loss? he even congratulated himself on being left childless, though who had more to suffer by such a change? he lost at once his comforters and his helpers. Yet Perses did not have the pleasure of

seeing Paulus look sorrowful.

XIV.

Why should I lead you on through the endless series of great men and pick out the unhappy ones, as though it were not more difficult to find happy ones? For how few households have remained possessed of all their members until the end? what one is there that has not suffered some loss? Take any one year you please and name the consuls for it: if you like, that of Lucius Bibulus and Gaius Caesar; you will see that, though these colleagues were each other's bitterest enemies, yet their fortunes agreed. Lucius Bibulus, a man more remarkable for goodness than for strength of character, had both his sons murdered at the same time, and even insulted by the Egyptian soldiery, so that the agent of his bereavement was as much a subject for tears as the bereavement itself. Nevertheless Bibulus, who during the whole of his year of office had remained hidden in his house, to cast reproach upon his colleague Caesar on the day following that upon which he heard of both his sons' deaths, came forth and went through the routine business of his magistracy. Who could devote less than one day to mourning for two sons? Thus soon did he end his mourning for his children, although he had mourned a whole year for his consulship. Gaius Caesar, after having traversed Britain, and not allowed even the ocean to set bounds to his successes, heard of the death of his daughter, which hurried on the crisis of affairs. Already Gnaeus Pompeius stood before his eyes, a man who would ill endure that any one besides himself should become a great power in the state, and one who was likely to place a check upon his advancement, which he had regarded as onerous even when each gained by the other's rise: yet within three days' time he resumed his duties as general, and conquered his grief as quickly as he was wont to conquer everything else.

XV.

“Why need I remind you of the deaths of the other Caesars, whom fortune appears to me sometimes to have outraged in order that even by their deaths they might be useful to mankind, by proving that not even they, although they were styled “sons of gods,” and “fathers of gods to come,” could exercise the same power over their own fortunes which they did over those of others? The Emperor Augustus lost his children and his grandchildren, and after all the family of Caesar had perished was obliged to prop his empty house by adopting a son: yet he bore his losses as bravely as though he were already personally concerned in the honour of the gods, and as though it were especially to his interest that no one should complain of the injustice of Heaven. Tiberius Caesar lost both the son whom he begot and the son whom he adopted, yet he himself pronounced a panegyric upon his son from the Rostra, and stood in full view of the corpse, which merely had a curtain on one side to prevent the eyes of the high priest resting upon the dead body, and did not change his countenance, though all the Romans wept: he gave Sejanus, who stood by his side, a proof of how patiently he could endure the loss of his relatives. See you not what numbers of most eminent men there have been, none of whom have been spared by this blight which prostrates us all: men, too, adorned with every grace of character, and every distinction that public or private life can confer. It appears as though this plague moved in a regular orbit, and spread ruin and desolation among us all without distinction of persons, all being alike its prey. Bid any number of individuals tell you the story of their lives: you will find that all have paid some penalty for being born.

XVI.

I know what you will say, "You quote men as examples: you forget that it is a woman that you are trying to console." Yet who would say that nature has dealt grudgingly with the minds of women, and stunted their virtues? Believe me, they have the same intellectual power as men, and the same capacity for honourable and generous action. If trained to do so, they are just as able to endure sorrow or labour. Ye good gods, do I say this in that very city in which Lucretia and Brutus removed the yoke of kings from the necks of the Romans? We owe liberty to Brutus, but we owe Brutus to Lucretia — in which Cloelia, for the sublime courage with which she scorned both the enemy and the river, has been almost reckoned as a man. The statue of Cloelia, mounted on horseback, in that busiest of thoroughfares, the Sacred Way, continually reproaches the youth of the present day, who never mount anything but a cushioned seat in a carriage, with journeying in such a fashion through that very city in which we have enrolled even women among our knights. If you wish me to point out to you examples of women who have bravely endured the loss of their children, I shall not go far afield to search for them: in one family I can quote two Cornelias, one the daughter of Scipio, and the mother of the Gracchi, who made acknowledgment of the birth of her twelve children by burying them all: nor was it so hard to do this in the case of the others, whose birth and death were alike unknown to the public, but she beheld the murdered and unburied corpses of both Tiberius Gracchus and Gaius Gracchus, whom even those who will not call them good must admit were great men. Yet to those who tried to console her and called her unfortunate, she answered, "I shall never cease to call myself happy, because I am the mother of the Gracchi." Cornelia, the wife of Livius Drusus, lost by the hands of an unknown assassin a young son of great distinction, who was treading in the footsteps of the Gracchi, and was murdered in his own house just when he had so many bills half way through the process of becoming law: nevertheless she bore the untimely and unavenged death of her son with as lofty a spirit as he had shown in carrying his laws. Will you not, Marcia, forgive

fortune because she has not refrained from striking you with the darts with which she launched at the Scipios, and the mothers and daughters of the Scipios, and with which she has attacked the Caesars themselves? Life is full of misfortunes; our path is beset with them: no one can make a long peace, nay, scarcely an armistice with fortune. You, Marcia, have borne four children: now they say that no dart which is hurled into a close column of soldiers can fail to hit one, — ought you then to wonder at not having been able to lead along such a company without exciting the ill-will of Fortune, or suffering loss at her hands? “But,” say you, “Fortune has treated me unfairly, for she not only has bereaved me of my son, but chose my best beloved to deprive me of.” Yet you never can say that you have been wronged, if you divide the stakes equally with an antagonist who is stronger than yourself: Fortune has left you two daughters, and their children: she has not even taken away altogether him who you now mourn for, forgetful of his elder brother: you have two daughters by him, who if you support them ill will prove great burdens, but if well, great comforts to you. You ought to prevail upon yourself, when you see them, to let them remind you of your son, and not of your grief. When a husbandman’s trees have either been torn up, roots and all, by the wind, or broken off short by the force of a hurricane, he takes care of what is left of their stock, straightway plants seeds or cuttings in the place of those which he has lost, and in a moment — for time is as swift in repairing losses as in causing them — more nourishing trees are growing than were there before. Take, then, in the place of your Metilius these his two daughters, and by their two-fold consolation lighten your single sorrow. True, human nature is so constituted as to love nothing so much as what it has lost, and our yearning after those who have been taken from us makes us judge unfairly of those who are left to us: nevertheless, if you choose to reckon up how merciful Fortune has been to you even in her anger, you will feel that you have more than enough to console you. Look at all your grandchildren, and your two daughters: and say also, Marcia:— “I should indeed be cast down, if everyone’s fortune followed his deserts, and if no evil ever befell good men: but as it is I perceive that no distinction is made, and that the bad and the good are both harassed alike.”

XVII.

“Still, it is a sad thing to lose a young man whom you have brought up, just as he was becoming a defence and a pride both to his mother and to his country.” No one denies that it is sad: but it is the common lot of mortals. You were born to lose others, to be lost, to hope, to fear, to destroy your own peace and that of others, to fear and yet to long for death, and, worst of all, never to know what your real position is. If you were about to journey to Syracuse, and someone were to say :— “Learn beforehand all the discomforts, and all the pleasures of your coming voyage, and then set sail. The sights which you will enjoy will be as follows: first, you will see the island itself, now separated from Italy by a narrow strait, but which, we know, once formed part of the mainland. The sea suddenly broke through, and

‘Sever’d Sicilia from the western shore.’

Next, as you will be able to sail close to Charybdis, of which the poets have sung, you will see that greediest of whirlpools, quite smooth if no south wind be blowing, but whenever there is a gale from that quarter, sucking down ships into a huge and deep abyss. You will see the fountain of Arethusa, so famed in song, with its waters bright and pellucid to the very bottom, and pouring forth an icy stream which it either finds on the spot or else plunges it under ground, conveys it thither as a separate river beneath so many seas, free from any mixture of less pure water, and there brings it again to the surface. You will see a harbor which is more sheltered than all the others in the world, whether they be natural or improved by human art for the protection of shipping; so safe, that even the most violent storms are powerless to disturb it. You will see the place where the power of Athens was broken, where that natural prison, hewn deep among precipices of rock, received so many thousands of captives: you will see the great city itself, occupying a wider site than many capitals, an extremely warm resort in winter, where not a single day passes without sunshine: but when you have observed all this, you must remember that the advantages of its winter climate are counterbalanced by a hot and pestilential summer: that here will be

the tyrant Dionysius, the destroyer of freedom, of justice, and of law, who is greedy of power even after conversing with Plato, and of life even after he has been exiled; that he will burn some, flog others, and behead others for slight offences; that he will exercise his lust upon both sexes You have now heard all that can attract you thither, all that can deter you from going: now, then, either set sail or remain at home!" If, after this declaration, anybody were to say that he wished to go to Syracuse, he could blame no one but himself for what befell him there, because he would not stumble upon it unknowingly, but would have gone thither fully aware of what was before him. To everyone Nature says: "I do not deceive any person. If you choose to have children, they may be handsome, or they may be deformed; perhaps they will be born dumb. One of them may perhaps prove the saviour of his country, or perhaps its betrayer. You need not despair of their being raised to such honour that for their sake no one will dare to speak evil of you: yet remember that they may reach such a pitch of infamy as themselves to become curses to you. There is nothing to prevent their performing the last offices for you, and your panegyric being spoken by your children: but bold yourself prepared nevertheless to place a son as boy, man, or greybeard, upon the funeral pyre: for years have nothing to do with the matter, since every sort of funeral in which a parent buries his child must alike be untimely. If you still choose to rear children, after I have explained these conditions to you, you render yourself incapable of blaming the gods, for they never guaranteed anything to you."

XVIII.

You may make this simile apply to your whole entrance into life. I have explained to you what attractions and what drawbacks there would be if you were thinking of going to Syracuse: now suppose that I were to come and give you advice when you were going to be born. "You are about," I should say, "to enter a city of which both gods and men are citizens, a city which contains the whole universe, which is bound by irrevocable and eternal laws, and wherein the heavenly bodies run their unwearied courses: you will see therein innumerable twinkling stars, and the sun, whose single light pervades every place, who by his daily course marks the times of day and night, and by his yearly course makes a more equal division between summer and winter. You will see his place taken by night by the moon, who borrows at her meetings with her brother a gentle and softer light, and who at one time is invisible, at another hangs full faced above the earth, ever waxing and waning, each phase unlike the last. You will see five stars, moving in the opposite direction to the others, stemming the whirl of the skies towards the West: on the slightest motions of these depend the fortunes of nations, and according as the aspect of the planets is auspicious or malignant, the greatest empires rise and fall: you will see with wonder the gathering clouds, the falling showers, the zigzag lightning, the crashing together of the heavens. When, sated with the wonders above, you turn your eyes towards the earth, they will be met by objects of a different yet equally admirable aspect: on one side a boundless expanse of open plains, on another the towering peaks of lofty and snow-clad mountains: the downward course of rivers, some streams running eastward, some westward from the same source: the woods which wave even on the mountain tops, the vast forests with all the creatures that dwell therein, and the confused harmony of the birds: the variously-placed cities, the nations which natural obstacles keep secluded from the world, some of whom withdraw themselves to lofty mountains, while others dwell in fear and trembling on the sloping banks of rivers: the crops which are assisted by cultivation, and the trees which bear fruit even without it: the rivers that flow

gently through the meadows, the lovely bays and shores that curve inwards to form harbours: the countless islands scattered over the main, which break and spangle the seas. What of the brilliancy of stones and gems, the gold that rolls amid the sands of rushing streams, the heaven-born fires that burst forth from the midst of the earth and even from the midst of the sea; the ocean itself, that binds land to land, dividing the nations by its three-fold indentations, and boiling up with mighty rage? Swimming upon its waves, making them disturbed and swelling without wind, you will see animals exceeding the size of any that belong to the land, some clumsy and requiring others to guide their movements, some swift and .moving faster than the utmost efforts of rowers, some of them that drink in the waters and blow them out again to the great perils of those who sail near them: you will see here ships seeking for unknown lands: you will see that man's audacity leaves nothing unattempted, and you will yourself be both a witness and a sharer in great attempts. You will both learn and teach the arts by which men's lives are supplied with necessities, are adorned, and are ruled: but in this same place there will be a thousand pestilences fatal to both body and mind, there will be wars and highway robberies, poisonings and shipwrecks, extremes of climate and excesses of body, untimely griefs for our dearest ones, and death for ourselves, of which we cannot tell whether it will be easy or by torture at the hands of the executioner. Now consider and weigh carefully in your own mind which you would choose. If you wish to enjoy these blessings you must pass through these pains. Do you answer that you choose to live? 'Of course.' Nay, I thought you would not enter upon that of which the least diminution causes pain. Live, then, as has been agreed on. You say, "No one has asked my opinion." Our parents' opinion was taken about us, when, knowing what the conditions of life are, they brought us into it.

XIX.

But, to come to topics of consolation, in the first place consider if you please to what our remedies must be applied, and next, in what way. It is regret for the absence of his loved one which causes a mourner to grieve: yet it is clear that this in itself is bearable enough; for we do not weep at their being absent or intending to be absent during their lifetime, although when they leave our sight we have no more pleasure in them. What tortures us, therefore, is an idea. Now every evil is just as great as we consider it to be: we have, therefore, the remedy in our own hands. Let us suppose that they are on a journey, and let us deceive ourselves: we have sent them away, or, rather, we have sent them on in advance to a place whither we shall soon follow them. Besides this, mourners are wont to suffer from the thought, "I shall have no one to protect me, no one to avenge me when I am scorned." To use a very disreputable but very true mode of consolation, I may say that in our country the loss of children bestows more influence than it takes away, and loneliness, which used to bring the aged to ruin, now makes them so powerful that some old men have pretended to pick quarrels with their sons, have disowned their own children, and have made themselves childless by their own act. I know what you will say: "My own losses do not grieve me:" and indeed a man does not deserve to be consoled if he is sorry for his son's death as he would be for that of a slave, who is capable of seeing anything in his son beyond his son's self. What then, Marcia, is it that grieves you? is it that your son has died, or that he did not live long? If it be his having died, then you ought always to have grieved, for you always knew that he would die. Reflect that the dead huffers no evils, that all those stories which make us dread the nether world are mere fables, that he who dies need fear no darkness, no prison, no blazing streams of fire, no river of Lethe, no judgment seat before which he must appear, and that Death is such utter freedom that he need fear no more despots. All that is a phantasy of the poets, who have terrified us without a cause. Death is a release from and an end of all pains: beyond it our sufferings cannot extend: it restores us to the peaceful rest in which

we lay before we were born. If anyone pities the dead, he ought also to pity those who have not been born. Death is neither a good nor a bad thing, for that alone which is something can be a good or a bad thing: but that which is nothing, and reduces all things to nothing, does not hand us over to either fortune, because good and bad require some material to work upon. Fortune cannot take hold of that which Nature has let go, nor can a man be unhappy if he is nothing. Your son has passed beyond the border of the country where men are forced to labour; he has reached deep and everlasting peace. He feels no fear of want, no anxiety about his riches, no stings of lust that tears the heart in guise of pleasure: he knows no envy of another's prosperity, he is not crushed by the weight of his own; even his chaste ears are not wounded by any ribaldry: he is menaced by no disaster, either to his country or to himself. He does not hang, full of anxiety, upon the issue of events, to reap even greater uncertainty as his reward: he has at last taken up a position from which nothing can dislodge him, where nothing can make him afraid.

XX.

O how little do men understand their own misery, that they do not praise and look forward to death as the best discovery of Nature, whether because it hedges in happiness, or because it drives away misery: because it puts an end to the sated weariness of old age, cuts down youth in its bloom while still full of hope of better things, or calls home childhood before the harsher stages of life are reached: it is the end of all men, a relief to many, a desire to some, and it treats none so well as those to whom it comes before they call for it. Death frees the slave though his master wills it not, it lightens the captive's chains: it leads out of prison those whom headstrong power has forbidden to quit it: it points out to exiles, whose minds and eyes are ever turned towards their own country, that it makes no difference under what people's soil one lies. When Fortune has unjustly divided the common stock, and has given over one man to another, though they were born with equal rights, Death makes them all equal. After Death no one acts any more at another's bidding: in death no man suffers any more from the sense of his low position. It is open to all: it was what your father, Marcia, longed for: it is this, I say, that renders it no misery to be born, which enables me to face the threatenings of misfortune without quailing, and to keep my mind unharmed and able to command itself. I have a last appeal. I see before me crosses not all alike, but differently made by different peoples: some hang a man head downwards, some force a stick upwards through his groin, some stretch out his arms on a forked gibbet. I see cords, scourges, and instruments of torture for each limb and each joint: but I see Death also. There are bloodthirsty enemies, there are overbearing fellow-countrymen, but where they are there I see Death also. Slavery is not grievous if a man can gain his freedom by one step as soon as he becomes tired of thralldom. Life, it is thanks to Death that I hold thee so dear. Think how great a blessing is a timely death, how many have been injured by living longer than they ought. If sickness had carried off that glory and support of the empire Gnaeus Pompeius, at Naples, he would have died the undoubted head of the Roman people, but as it was, a short extension

of time cast him down from his pinnacle of fame: he beheld his legions slaughtered before his eyes: and what a sad relic of that battle, in which the Senate formed the first line, was the survival of the general. He saw his Egyptian butcher, and offered his body, hallowed by so many victories, to a guardsman's sword, although even had he been unhurt, he would have regretted his safety: for what could have been more infamous than that a Pompeius should owe his life to the clemency of a king? If Marcus Cicero had fallen at the time when he avoided those daggers which Catiline aimed equally at him and at his country, he might have died as the saviour of the commonwealth which he had set free: if his death had even followed upon that of his daughter, he might have died happy. He would not then have seen swords drawn for the slaughter of Roman citizens, the goods of the murdered divided among the murderers, that men might pay from their own purse the price of their own blood, the public auction of the consul's spoil in the civil war, the public letting out of murder to be done, brigandage, war, pillage, hosts of Catilines. Would it not have been a good thing for Marcus Cato if the sea had swallowed him up when he was returning from Cyprus after sequestrating the king's hereditary possessions, even if that very money which he was bringing to pay the soldiers in the civil war had been lost with him? He certainly would have been able to boast that no one would dare to do wrong in the presence of Cato: as it was, the extension of his life for a very few more years forced one who was born for personal and political freedom to flee from Caesar and to become Pompeius's follower. Premature death therefore did him no evil: indeed, it put an end to the power of any evil to hurt him.

XXI.

“Yet,” say you, “he perished too soon and untimely.” In the first place, suppose that he had lived to extreme old age: let him continue alive to the extreme limits of human existence: how much is it after all? Born for a very brief space of time, we regard this life as an inn which we are soon to quit that it may be made ready for the coming guest. Do I speak of our lives, which we know roll away incredibly fast? Reckon up the centuries of cities: you will find that even those which boast of their antiquity have not existed for long. All human works are brief and fleeting; they take up no part whatever of infinite time. Tried by the standard of the universe, we regard this earth of ours, with all its cities, nations, rivers, and sea-board as a mere point: our life occupies less than a point when compared with all time, the measure of which exceeds that of the world, for indeed the world is contained many times in it. Of what importance, then, can it be to lengthen that which, however much you add to it, will never be much more than nothing? We can only make our lives long by one expedient, that is, by being satisfied with their length: you may tell me of long-lived men, whose length of days has been celebrated by tradition, you may assign a hundred and ten years apiece to them: yet when you allow your mind to conceive the idea of eternity, there will be no difference between the shortest and the longest life, if you compare the time during which any one has been alive with that during which he has not been alive. In the next place, when he died his life was complete: he had lived as long as he needed to live: there was nothing left for him to accomplish. All men do not grow old at the same age, nor indeed do all animals: some are wearied out by life at fourteen years of age, and what is only the first stage of life with man is their extreme limit of longevity. To each man a varying length of days has been assigned: no one dies before his time, because he was not destined to live any longer than he did. Everyone’s end is fixed, and will always remain where it has been placed: neither industry nor favour will move it on any further. Believe, then, that you lost him by advice: he took all that was his own,

“And reached the goal allotted to his life,”

so you need not burden yourself with the thought, “He might have lived longer.” His life has not been cut short, nor does chance ever cut short our years: every man receives as much as was promised to him: the Fates go their own way, and neither add anything nor take away anything from what they have once promised. Prayers and endeavours are all in vain : each man will have as much life as his first day placed to his credit: from the time when he first saw the light he has entered on the path that leads to death, and is drawing nearer to his doom: those same years which were added to his youth were subtracted from his life. We all fall into this mistake of supposing that it is only old men, already in the decline of life, who are drawing near to death, whereas our first infancy, our youth, indeed every time of life leads thither. The Fates ply their own work: they take from us the consciousness of our death, and, the better to conceal its approaches, death lurks under the very names we give to life: infancy changes into boyhood, maturity swallows up the boy, old age the man: these stages themselves, if you reckon them properly, are so many losses.

XXII.

Do you complain, Marcia, that your son did not live as long as he might have done? How do you know that it was to his advantage to live longer? whether his interest was not served by this death? Whom can you find at the present time whose fortunes are grounded on such sure foundations that they have nothing to fear in the future? All human affairs are evanescent and perishable, nor is any part of our life so frail and liable to accident as that which we especially enjoy. We ought, therefore, to pray for death when our fortune is at its best, because so great is the uncertainty and turmoil in which we live, that we can be sure of nothing but what is past. Think of your son's handsome person, which you had guarded in perfect purity among all the temptations of a voluptuous capital. Who could have undertaken to keep that clear of all diseases, so that it might preserve its beauty of form unimpaired even to old age? Think of the many taints of the mind: for fine dispositions do not always continue to their life's end to make good the promise of their youth, but have often broken down: either extravagance, all the more shameful for being indulged in late in life, takes possession of men and makes their well-begun lives end in disgrace, or they devote their entire thoughts to the eating-house and the belly, and they become interested in nothing save what they shall eat and what they shall drink. Add to this conflagrations, falling houses, shipwrecks, the agonizing operations of surgeons, who cut pieces of bone out of men's living bodies, plunge their whole hands into their entrails, and inflict more than one kind of pain to effect the cure of shameful diseases. After these comes exile; your son was not more innocent than Rutilius: imprisonment; he was not wiser than Socrates: the piercing of one's breast by a self-inflicted wound; he was not of holier life than Cato. When you look at these examples, you will perceive that nature deals very kindly with those whom she puts speedily in a place of safety because there awaited them the payment of some such price as this for their lives. Nothing is so deceptive, nothing is so treacherous as human life; by Hercules, were it not given to men before they could form an opinion, no one would take it. Not to be born, therefore, is

the happiest lot of all, and the nearest thing to this, I imagine, is that we should soon finish our strife here and be restored again to our former rest. Recall to your mind that time, so painful to you, during which Sejanus handed over your father as a present to his client Satrius Secundus: he was angry with him about something or other which he had said with too great freedom, because he was not able to keep silence and see Sejanus climbing up to take his seat upon our necks, which would have been bad enough had he been placed there by his master. He was decreed the honour of a statue, to be set up in the theatre of Pompeius, which had been burned down and was being restored by Caesar. Cordus exclaimed that "Now the theatre was really destroyed." What then? should he not burst with spite at a Sejanus being set up over the ashes of Gnaeus Pompeius, at a faithless soldier being commemorated within the memorial of a consummate commander?

The inscription was put up: and those keen-scented hounds whom Sejanus used to feed on human blood, to make them tame towards himself and fierce to all the world beside, began to bay around their victim and even to make premature snaps at him. What was he to do? If he chose to live, he must gain the consent of Sejanus; if to die, he must gain that of his daughter; and neither of them could have been persuaded to grant it: he therefore determined to deceive his daughter, and having taken a bath in order to weaken himself still further, he retired to his bed-chamber on the pretence of taking a meal there. After dismissing his slaves he threw some of the food out of the window, that he might appear to have eaten it: then he took no supper, making the excuse that he had already had enough food in his chamber. This he continued to do on the second and the third day: the fourth betrayed his condition by his bodily weakness; so, embracing you, "My dearest daughter," said he, "from whom I have never throughout your whole life concealed aught but this, I have begun my journey towards death, and have already travelled half-way thither. You cannot and you ought not to call me back." So saying he ordered all light to be excluded from the room and shut himself up in the darkness. When his determination became known there was a general feeling of pleasure at the prey being snatched out of the jaws of those ravening wolves. His prosecutors, at the instance

of Sejanus, went to the judgment-seat of the consuls, complained that Cordus was dying, and begged the consuls to interpose to prevent his doing what they themselves had driven him to do; so true was it that Cordus appeared to them to be escaping: an important matter was at stake, namely, whether the accused should lose the right to die. While this point was being debated, and the prosecutors were going to attend the court a second time, he had set himself free from them. Do you see, Marcia, how suddenly evil days come upon a man? and do you weep because one of your family could not avoid dying? one of your family was within a very little of not being allowed to die.

XXIII.

Besides the fact that everything that is future is uncertain, and the only certainty is that it is more likely to turn out ill than well, our spirits find the path to the Gods above easiest when it is soon allowed to leave the society of mankind, because it has then contracted fewest impurities to weigh it down : if set free before they become hardened worldlings, before earthly things have sunk too deep into them, they fly all the more lightly back to the place from whence they came, and all the more easily wash away the stains and defilements which they may have contracted. Great minds never love to linger long in the body: they are eager to burst its bonds and escape from it, they chafe at the narrowness of their prison, having been wont to wander through space, and from aloft in the upper air to look down with contempt upon human affairs. Hence it is that Plato declares that the wise man's mind is entirely given up to death, longs for it, contemplates it, and through his eagerness for it is always striving after things which lie beyond this life. Why, Marcia, when you saw him while yet young displaying the wisdom of age, with a mind that could rise superior to all sensual enjoyments, faultless and without a blemish, able to win riches without greediness, public office without ambition, pleasure without extravagance, did you suppose it would long be your lot to keep him safe by your side? Whatever has arrived at perfection, is ripe for dissolution. Consummate virtue flees away and betakes itself out of our sight, and those things which come to maturity in the first stage of their being do not wait for the last. The brighter a fire glows, the sooner it goes out: it lasts longer when it is made up with bad and slowly burning fuel, and shows a dull light through a cloud of smoke: its being poorly fed makes it linger all the longer. So also the more brilliant men's minds, the shorter lived they are: for when there is no room for further growth, the end is near. Fabianus tells us, what our parents themselves have seen, that there was at Rome a boy of gigantic stature, exceeding that of a man: but he soon died, and every sensible person always said that he would soon die, for he could not live to reach the age which he had assumed before it was due. So it is: too complete maturity is a proof that

destruction is near and the end approaches when growth is over.

XXIV.

Begin to reckon his age, not by years, but by virtues: he lived long enough. He was left as a ward in the care of guardians up to his fourteenth year, and never passed out of that of his mother: when he had a household of his own he was loath to leave yours, and continued to dwell under his mother's roof, though few sons can endure to live under their father's. Though a youth whose height, beauty, and vigour of body destined him for the army, yet he refused to serve, that he might not be separated from you. Consider, Marcia, how seldom mothers who live in separate houses see their children: consider how they lose and pass in anxiety all those years during which they have sons in the army, and you will see that this time, none of which you lost, was of considerable extent: he never went out of your sight: it was under your eyes that he applied himself to the cultivation of an admirable intellect and one which would have rivalled that of his grandfather, had it not been hindered by shyness, which has concealed many men's accomplishments: though a youth of unusual beauty, and living among such throngs of women who made it their business to seduce men, he gratified the wishes of none of them, and when the effrontery of some led them so far as actually to tempt him, he blushed as deeply at having found favour in their eyes as though he had been guilty. By this holiness of life he caused himself, while yet quite a boy, to be thought worthy of the priesthood, which no doubt he owed to his mother's influence; but even his mother's influence would have had no weight if the candidate for whom it was exerted had been unfit for the post. Dwell upon these virtues, and nurse your son as it were in your lap: now he is more at leisure to respond to your caresses, he has nothing to call him away from you, he will never be an anxiety or a sorrow to you. You have grieved at the only grief so good a son could cause you: all else is beyond the power of fortune to harm, and is full of pleasure, if only you know how to make use of your son, if you do but know what his most precious quality was. It is merely the outward semblance of your son that has perished, his likeness, and that not a very good one; he himself is immortal, and is now in a far better

state, set free from the burden of all that was not his own, and left simply by himself: all this apparatus which you see about us of bones and sinews, this covering of skin, this face, these our servants the hands, and all the rest of our environment, are but chains and darkness to the soul: they overwhelm it, choke it, corrupt it, fill it with false ideas, and keep it at a distance from its own true sphere: it has to struggle continually against this burden of the flesh, lest it be dragged down and sunk by it. It ever strives to rise up again to the place from whence it was sent down on earth: there eternal rest awaits it, there it will behold what is pure and clear, in place of what is foul and turbid.

XXV.

You need not, therefore, hasten to the burial-place of your son : that which lies there is but the worst part of him and that which gave him most trouble, only bones and ashes, which are no more parts of him than clothes or other coverings of his body. He is complete, and without leaving any part of himself behind on earth has taken wing and gone away altogether: he has tarried a brief space above us while his soul was being cleansed and purified from the vices and rust which all mortal lives must contract, and from thence he will rise to the high heavens and join the souls of the blessed: a saintly company will welcome him thither, — Scipios and Catos; and among the rest of those who have held life cheap and set themselves free, thanks to death, albeit all there are alike akin, your father, Marcia, will embrace his grandson as he rejoices in the unwonted light, will teach him the motion of the stars which are so near to them, and introduce him with joy into all the secrets of nature, not by guesswork but by real knowledge. Even as a stranger is grateful to one who shows him the way about an unknown city, so is a searcher after the causes of what he sees in the heavens to one of his own family who can explain them to him. He will delight in gazing deep down upon the earth, for it is a delight to look from aloft at what one has left below. Bear yourself, therefore, Marcia, as though you were placed before the eyes of your father and your son, yet not such as you knew them, but far loftier beings, placed in a higher sphere. Blush, then, to do any mean or common action, or to weep for those your relatives who have been changed for the better. Free to roam through the open, boundless realms of the ever-living universe, they are not hindered in their course by intervening seas, lofty mountains, impassable valleys, or the treacherous flats of the Syrtes: they find a level path everywhere, are swift and ready of motion, and are permeated in their turn by the stars and dwell together with them.

XXVI.

Imagine then, Marcia, that your father, whose influence over you was as great as yours over your son, no longer in that frame of mind in which he deplored the civil wars, or in which he forever proscribed those who would have proscribed him, but in a mood as much more joyful as his abode now is higher than of old, is saying, as he looks down from the height of heaven, "My daughter, why does this sorrow possess you for so long? why do you live in such ignorance of the truth, as to think that your son has been unfairly dealt with because he has returned to his ancestors in his prime, without decay of body or mind, leaving his family flourishing? Do you not know with what storms Fortune unsettles everything? how she proves kind and compliant to none save to those who have the fewest possible dealings with her? Need I remind you of kings who would have been the happiest of mortals had death sooner withdrawn them from the ruin which was approaching them? or of Roman generals, whose greatness, had but a few years been taken from their lives, would have wanted nothing to render it complete? or of men of the highest distinction and noblest birth who have calmly offered their necks to the stroke of a soldier's sword? Look at your father and your grandfather: the former fell into the hands of a foreign murderer: I allowed no man to take any liberties with me, and by abstinence from food showed that my spirit was as great as my writings had represented it. Why, then, should that member of our household who died most happily of all be mourned in it the longest? We have all assembled together, and, not being plunged in utter darkness, we see that with you on earth there is nothing to be wished for, nothing grand or magnificent, but all is mean, sad, anxious, and hardly receives a fractional part of the clear light in which we dwell. I need not say that here are no frantic charges of rival armies, no fleets shattering one another, no parricides, actual or meditated, no courts where men babble over lawsuits for days together, here is nothing underhand, all hearts and minds are open and unveiled, our life is public and known to all, and that we command a view of all time and of things to come. I used to take pleasure in compiling the history of

what took place in one century among a few people in the most out-of-the-way corner of the world: here I enjoy the spectacle of all the centuries, the whole chain of events from age to age as long as years have been. I may view kingdoms when they rise and when they fall, and behold the ruin of cities and the new channels made by the sea. If it will be any consolation to you in your bereavement to know that it is the common lot of all, be assured that nothing will continue to stand in the place in which it now stands, but that time will lay everything low and bear it away with itself: it will sport, not only with men — for how small a part are they of the dominion of Fortune? — but with districts, provinces, quarters of the world: it will efface entire mountains, and in other places will pile new rocks on high: it will dry up seas, change the course of rivers, destroy the intercourse of nation with nation, and break up the communion and fellowship of the human race: in other regions it will swallow up cities by opening vast chasms in the earth, will shake them with earthquakes, will breathe forth pestilence from the nether world, cover all habitable ground with inundations and destroy every creature in the flooded world, or burn up all mortals by a huge conflagration. When the time shall arrive for the world to be brought to an end, that it may begin its life anew, all the forces of nature will perish in conflict with one another, the stars will be dashed together, and all the lights which now gleam in regular order in various parts of the sky will then blaze in one fire with all their fuel burning at once. Then we also, the souls of the blest and the heirs of eternal life, whenever God thinks fit to reconstruct the universe, when all things are settling down again, we also, being a small accessory to the universal wreck, shall be changed into our old elements. Happy is your son, Marcia, in that he already knows this.”

TO MY MOTHER HELVIA, ON CONSOLATION



Translated by Aubrey Stewart

Composed circa 42 AD, the *De Consolatione ad Helviam Matrem* is a letter written to Seneca's mother, consoling her on his recent exile to Corsica. In the epistle, Seneca employs many of the rhetorical devices common to the Consolatio Tradition, whilst promoting key tenets of his Stoic Philosophy. Seneca had been charged with adultery with Julia Livilla, sister of Emperor Caligula in 41 AD and so was shortly after exiled to Corsica.

In the text, Seneca tells his mother that as he feels no grief, she should not mourn his absence. He refers to his exile merely as a 'change of place', reassuring her that it has brought him no feelings of disgrace. Seneca comments on his mother's strong character as a virtue that will allow her to bear his absence. The philosopher's seemingly positive outlook on his own exile follows his Stoic philosophy teachings that one should not be upset by uncontrollable events.



Julia Livilla (18-42 AD) was the youngest child of Germanicus and Agrippina the Elder and the youngest sister of the Emperor Caligula.

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I.

MY best of mothers, I have often felt eager to console you, and have as often checked that impulse. Many things urged me to make the attempt: in the first place, I thought that if, though. I might not be able to restrain your tears, yet that if I could even wipe them away, I should set myself free from all my own sorrows: then I was quite sure that I should rouse you from your grief with more authority if I had first shaken it off myself. I feared, too, lest Fortune, though overcome by me, might nevertheless overcome some one of my family. Then I endeavoured to crawl and bind up your wounds in the best way I could, holding my hand over my own wound; but then again other considerations occurred to me which held me back: I knew that I must not oppose your grief during its first transports, lest my very attempts at consolation might irritate it, and add fuel to it: for in diseases, also, there is nothing more hurtful than medicine applied too soon. I waited, therefore, until it exhausted itself by its own violence, and being weakened by time, so that it was able to bear remedies, would allow itself to be handled and touched. Beside this, while turning over all the works which the greatest geniuses have composed, for the purpose of soothing and pacifying grief, I could not find any instance of one who had offered consolation to his relatives, while he himself was being sorrowed over by them. Thus, the subject being a new one, I hesitated and feared that instead of consoling, I might embitter your grief. Then here was the thought that a man who had only just raised his head after burying his child, and who wished to console his friends, would require to use new phrases not taken from our common every-day words of comfort: but every sorrow of more than usual magnitude must needs prevent one's choosing one's words, seeing that it often prevents one's using one's very voice. However this may be, I will make the attempt, not trusting in my own genius, but because my consolation will be most powerful since it is I who offer it. You never would deny me anything, and I hope, though all grief is obstinate, that you will surely not refuse me this request, that you will allow me to set bounds to your sorrow.

II.

See how far I have presumed upon your indulgence: I have no doubts about my having more power over you than your grief, than which nothing has more power over the unhappy. In order, therefore, to avoid encountering it straightway, I will at first take its part and offer it every encouragement: I will rip up and bring to light again wounds already scarred. Someone may say, "What sort of consolation is this, for a man to rake up buried evils, and to bring all its sorrows before a mind which scarcely can bear the sight of one?" but let him reflect that diseases which are so malignant that they do but gather strength from ordinary remedies, may often be cured by the opposite treatment: I will, therefore, display before your grief all its woes and miseries: this will be to effect a cure, not by soothing measures, but by cautery and the knife. What shall I gain by this? I shall make the mind that could overcome so many sorrows, ashamed to bewail one wound more in a body so full of scars. Let those whose feeble minds have been enervated by a long period of happiness, weep and lament for many days, and faint away on receiving the slightest blow: but those whose years have all been passed amid catastrophes should bear the severest losses with brave and unyielding patience. Continual misfortune has this one advantage, that it ends by rendering callous those whom it is always scourging. Ill fortune has given you no respite, and has not left even your birthday free from the bitterest grief: you lost your mother as soon as you were born, nay, while you were being born, and you came into life, as it were, an outcast: you grew up under a step-mother, whom you made into a mother by all the obedience and respect which even a real daughter could have bestowed upon her: and even a good step-mother costs every one dear. You lost your most affectionate uncle, a brave and excellent man, just when you were awaiting his return: and, lest Fortune should weaken its blows by dividing them, within a month you lost your beloved husband, by whom you had become the mother of three children. This sorrowful news was brought you while you were already in mourning, while all your children were absent, so that all your misfortunes seemed to have been purposely brought

upon you at a time when your grief could nowhere find any repose. I pass over all the dangers and alarms which you have endured without any respite: it was but the other day that you received the bones of three of your grandchildren in the bosom from which you had sent them forth: less than twenty days after you had buried my child, who perished in your arms and amid your kisses, you heard that I had been exiled: you wanted only this drop in your cup, to have to weep for those who still lived.

III.

The last wound is, I admit, the severest that you have ever yet sustained: it has not merely torn the skin, but has pierced you to the very heart: yet as recruits cry aloud when only slightly wounded, and shudder more at the hands of the surgeon than at the sword, while veterans even when transfixed allow their hurts to be dressed without a groan, and as patiently as if they were in someone else's body, so now you ought to offer yourself courageously to be healed. Lay aside lamentations and wailings, and all the usual noisy manifestations of female sorrow: you have gained nothing by so many misfortunes, if you have not learned how to suffer. Now, do I seem not to have spared you? nay, I have not passed over any of your sorrows, but have placed them all together in a mass before you.

IV.

I have done this by way of a heroic remedy: for I have determined to conquer this grief of yours, not merely to limit it; and I shall conquer it, I believe, if in the first place I can prove that I am not suffering enough to entitle me to be called unhappy, let alone to justify me in rendering my family unhappy: and, secondly, if I can deal with your case and prove that even your misfortune, which comes upon you entirely through me, is not a severe one. The point to which I shall first address myself is that of which your motherly love longs to hear, I mean, that I am not suffering: if I can, I will make it clear to you that the events by which you think that I am overwhelmed, are not unendurable: if you cannot believe this, I at any rate shall be all the more pleased with myself for being happy under circumstances which could make most men miserable. You need not believe what others say about me: that you may not be puzzled by any uncertainty as to what to think, I distinctly tell you that I am not miserable: I will add, for your greater comfort, that it is not possible for me to be made miserable.

V

We are born to a comfortable position enough, if we do not afterwards lose it: the aim of Nature has been to enable us to live well without needing a vast apparatus to enable us to do so: every man is able by himself to make himself happy. External circumstances have very little importance either for good or for evil: the wise man is neither elated by prosperity nor depressed by adversity; for he has always endeavoured to depend chiefly upon himself and to derive all his joys from himself. Do I, then, call myself a wise man? far from it: for were I able to profess myself wise, I should not only say that I was not unhappy, but should avow myself to be the most fortunate of men, and to be raised almost to the level of a god: as it is, I have applied myself to the society of wise men, which suffices to lighten all sorrows, and, not being as yet able to rely upon my own strength, I have betaken myself for refuge to the camp of others, of those, namely, who can easily defend both themselves and their friends. They have ordered me always to stand as it were on guard, and to mark the attacks and charges of Fortune long before she delivers them; she is only terrible to those whom she catches unawares; he who is always looking out for her assault, easily sustains it: for so also an invasion of the enemy overthrows those by whom it is unexpected, but those who have prepared themselves for the coming war before it broke out, stand in their ranks fully equipped and repel with ease the first, which is always the most furious onset. I never have trusted in Fortune, even when she seemed most peaceful. I have accepted all the gifts of wealth, high office, and influence, which she has so bountifully bestowed upon me, in such a manner that she can take them back again without disturbing me: I have kept a great distance between them and myself: and therefore she has taken them, not painfully torn them away from me. No man loses anything by the frowns of Fortune unless he has been deceived by her smiles: those who have enjoyed her bounty as though it were their own heritage forever, and who have chosen to take precedence of others because of it, lie in abject sorrow when her unreal and fleeting delights forsake their empty childish minds, that

know nothing about solid pleasure: but he who has not been puffed up by success, does not collapse after failure: he possesses a mind of tried constancy, superior to the influences of either state; for even in the midst of prosperity he has experimented upon his powers of enduring adversity. Consequently I have always believed that there was no real good in any of those things which all men desire: I then found that they were empty, and merely painted over with artificial and deceitful dyes, without containing anything within which corresponds to their outside: I now find nothing so harsh and fearful as the common opinion of mankind threatened me with in this which is known as adversity: the word itself, owing to the prevalent belief and ideas current about it, strikes somewhat unpleasantly upon one's ears, and thrills the hearers as something dismal and accursed, for so hath the vulgar decreed that it should be: but a great many of the decrees of the vulgar are reversed by the wise.

VI.

Setting aside, then, the verdict of the majority, who are carried away by the first appearance of things and the usual opinion about them, let us consider what is meant by exile: clearly a changing from one place to another. That I may not seem to be narrowing its force, and taking away its worst parts, I must add, that this changing of place is accompanied by poverty, disgrace, and contempt. Against these I will combat later on: meanwhile I wish to consider what there is unpleasant in the mere act of changing one's place of abode. "It is unbearable," men say, "to lose one's native land." Look, I pray you, on these vast crowds, for whom all the countless roofs of Rome can scarcely find shelter: the greater part of those crowds have lost their native land: they have flocked hither from their country towns and colonies, and in fine from all parts of the world. Some have been brought by ambition, some by the exigencies of public office, some by being entrusted with embassies, some by luxury which seeks a convenient spot, rich in vices, for its exercise, some by their wish for a liberal education, others by a wish to see the public shows. Some have been led hither by friendship, some by industry, which finds here a wide field for the display of its powers. Some have brought their beauty for sale, some their eloquence: people of every kind assemble themselves together in Rome, which sets a high price both upon virtues and vices. Bid them all to be summoned to answer to their names, and ask each one from what home he has come: you will find that the greater part of them have left their own abodes, and journeyed to a city which, though great and beautiful beyond all others, is nevertheless not their own. Then leave this city, which may be said to be the common property of all men, and visit all other towns: there is not one of them which does not contain a large proportion of aliens. Pass away from those whose delightful situation and convenient position attracts many settlers: examine wildernesses and the most rugged islands, Sciathus and Seriphus, Gyarus and Corsica: you will find no place of exile where someone does not dwell for his own pleasure. What can be found barer or more precipitous on every side than this rock? what more barren in respect

of food? what more uncouth in its inhabitants? more mountainous in its configuration? or more rigorous in its climate? yet even here there are more strangers than natives. So far, therefore, is the mere change of place from being irksome, that even this place has allured some away from their country. I find some writers who declare that mankind has a natural itch for change of abode and alteration of domicile: for the mind of man is wandering and unquiet; it never stands still, but spreads itself abroad and sends forth its thoughts into all regions, known or unknown; being nomadic, impatient of repose, and loving novelty beyond everything else. You need not be surprised at this, if you reflect upon its original source: it is not formed from the same elements as the heavy and earthly body, but from heavenly spirit: now heavenly things are by their nature always in motion, speeding along and flying with the greatest swiftness. Look at the luminaries which light the world: none of them stands still. The sun is perpetually in motion, and passes from one quarter to another, and although he revolves with the entire heaven, yet nevertheless he has a motion in the contrary direction to that of the universe itself, and passes through all the constellations without remaining in any: his wandering is incessant, and he never ceases to move from place to place. All things continually revolve and are for ever changing; they pass from one position to another in accordance with natural and unalterable laws: after they have completed a certain circuit in a fixed space of time, they begin again the path which they had previously trodden. Be not surprised, then, if the human mind, which is formed from the same seeds as the heavenly bodies, delights in change and wandering, since the divine nature itself either takes pleasure in constant and exceeding swift motion or perhaps even preserves its existence thereby.

VII.

Come now, turn from divine to human affairs: you will see that whole tribes and nations have changed their abodes. What is the meaning of Greek cities in the midst of barbarous districts? or of the Macedonian language existing among the Indians and the Persians? Scythia and all that region which swarms with wild and uncivilized tribes boasts nevertheless Achaean cities along the shores of the Black Sea. Neither the rigours of eternal winter, nor the character of men as savage as their climate, has prevented people migrating thither. There is a mass of Athenians in Asia Minor. Miletus has sent out into various parts of the world citizens enough to populate seventy-five cities. That whole coast of Italy which is washed by the Lower Sea is a part of what once was "Greater Greece." Asia claims the Tuscans as her own: there are Tyrians living in Africa, Carthaginians in Spain; Greeks have pushed in among the Gauls, and Gauls among the Greeks. The Pyrenees have proved no barrier to the Germans: human caprice makes its way through pathless and unknown regions: men drag along with them their children, their wives, and their aged and worn-out parents. Some have been tossed hither and thither by long wanderings, until they have become too wearied to choose an abode, but have settled in whatever place was nearest to them: others have made themselves masters of foreign countries by force of arms: some nations while making for parts unknown have been swallowed up by the sea: some have established themselves in the place in which they were originally stranded by utter destitution. Nor have all men had the same reasons for leaving their country and for seeking for a new one: some have escaped from their cities when destroyed by hostile armies, and having lost their own lands have been thrust upon those of others: some have been cast out by domestic quarrels: some have been driven forth in consequence of an excess of population, in order to relieve the pressure at home: some have been forced to leave by pestilence, or frequent earthquakes, or some unbearable defects of a barren soil: some have been seduced by the fame of a fertile and over-praised clime. Different people have been led away from their homes by

different causes; but in all cases it is clear that nothing remains in the same place in which it was born: the movement of the human race is perpetual: in this vast world some changes take place daily. The foundations of new cities are laid, new names of nations arise, while the former ones die out, or become absorbed by more powerful ones. And yet what else are all these general migrations but the banishments of whole peoples? Why should I lead you through all these details? what is the use of mentioning Antenor the founder of Padua, or Evander who established his kingdom of Arcadian settlers on the banks of the Tiber? or Diomedes and the other heroes, both victors and vanquished, whom the Trojan war scattered over lands which were not their own? It is a fact that the Roman Empire itself traces its origin back to an exile as its founder, who, fleeing from his country after its conquest, with what few relics he had saved from the wreck, had been brought to Italy by hard necessity and fear of his conqueror, which bade him seek distant lands. Since then, how many colonies has this people sent forth into every province? wherever the Roman conquers, there he dwells. These migrations always found people eager to take part in them, and veteran soldiers desert their native hearths and follow the flag of the colonists across the sea. The matter does not need illustrations by any more examples: yet I will add one more which I have before my eyes: this very island [Corsica] has often changed its inhabitants. Not to mention more ancient events, which have become obscure from their antiquity, the Greeks who inhabit Marseilles at the present day, when they left Phocaea, first settled here, and it is doubtful what drove them hence, whether it was the rigour of the climate, the sight of the more powerful land of Italy, or the want of harbours on the coast: for the fact of their having placed themselves in the midst of what were then the most savage and uncouth tribes of Gaul proves that they were not driven hence by the ferocity of the natives. Subsequently the Ligurians came over into this same island, and also the Spaniards, which is proved by the resemblance of their customs: for they wear the same head-coverings and the same sort of shoes as the Cantabrians, and some of their words are the same: for by association with Greeks and Ligurians they have entirely lost their native speech. Hither since then have been brought two Roman colonies, one by Marius, the other by

Sulla: so often has the population of this barren and thorny rock been changed. In fine, you will scarcely find any land which is still in the hands of its original inhabitants: all peoples have become confused and intermingled: one has come after another: one has wished for what another scorned: some have been driven out of the land which they took from another. Thus fate has decreed that nothing should ever enjoy an uninterrupted course of good fortune.

VIII.

Varro, that most learned of all the Romans, thought that for the mere change of place, apart from the other evils attendant on exile, we may find a sufficient remedy in the thought that wherever we go we always have the same Nature to deal with. Marcus Brutus thought that there was sufficient comfort in the thought that those who go into exile are permitted to carry their virtues thither with them. Though one might think that neither of these alone were able to console an exile, yet it must be confessed that when combined they have great power: for how very little it is that we lose! whithersoever we betake ourselves two most excellent things will accompany us, namely, a common Nature and our own especial virtue. Believe me, this is the work of whoever was the Creator of the universe, whether he be an all-powerful deity, an incorporeal mind which effects vast works, a divine spirit by which all things from the greatest to the smallest are equally pervaded, or fate and an unalterable connected sequence of events, this, I say, is its work, that nothing above the very lowest can ever fall into the power of another: all that is best for a man's enjoyment lies beyond human power, and can neither be bestowed or taken away: this world, the greatest and the most beautiful of Nature's productions, and its noblest part, a mind which can behold and admire it, are our own property, and will remain with us as long as we ourselves endure. Let us therefore briskly and cheerfully hasten with undaunted steps whithersoever circumstances call us: let us wander over whatever countries we please; no place of banishment can be found in the whole world in which man cannot find a home. I can raise my eyes from the earth to the sky in one place as well as in another; the heavenly bodies are everywhere equally near to mankind: accordingly, as long as my eyes are not deprived of that spectacle of which they never can have their fill, as long as I am allowed to gaze on the sun and moon, to dwell upon the other stars, to speculate upon their risings and settings, their periods, and the reasons why they move faster or slower, to see so many stars glittering throughout the night, some fixed, some not moving in a wide orbit but revolving in their own proper track, some suddenly

diverging from it, some dazzling our eyes by a fiery blaze as though they were falling, or flying along drawing after them a long trail of brilliant light: while I am permitted to commune with these, and to hold intercourse, as far as a human being may, with all the company of heaven, while I can raise my spirit aloft to view its kindred sparks above, what does it matter upon what soil I tread?

IX.

“But this country does not produce beautiful or fruit-bearing trees; it is not watered by the courses of large or navigable rivers; it bears nothing which other nations would covet, since its produce barely suffices to support its inhabitants: no precious marbles are quarried here, no veins of gold and silver are dug out.” What of that! It must be a narrow mind that takes pleasure in things of the earth: it ought to be turned away from them to the contemplation of those which can be seen everywhere, which are equally brilliant everywhere: we ought to reflect, also, that these vulgar matters by a mistaken perversion of ideas prevent really good things reaching us: the further men stretch out their porticos, the higher they raise their towers, the more widely they extend their streets, the deeper they sink their retreats from the heats of summer, the more ponderous the roofs with which they cover their banqueting halls, the more there will be to obstruct their view of heaven. Fortune has cast you into a country in which there is no lodging more splendid than a cottage: you must indeed have a poor spirit, and one which seeks low sources of consolation, if you endure this bravely because you have seen the cottage of Romulus: say, rather, “Should that lowly barn be entered by the virtues, it will straightway become more beautiful than any temple, because within it will be seen justice, self-restraint, prudence, love, a right division of all duties, a knowledge of all things on earth and in heaven. No place can be narrow, if it contains such a company of the greatest virtues ; no exile can be irksome in which one can be attended by these companions. Brutus, in the book which he wrote upon virtue, says that he saw Marcellus in exile at Mytilene, living as happily as it is permitted to man to live, and never keener in his pursuit of literature than at that time. He consequently adds the reflexion: ‘I seemed rather to be going into exile myself when I had to return without him, than to be leaving him in exile.’ O how much more fortunate was Marcellus at that time, when Brutus praised him for his exile, than when Rome praised him for his consulship! what a man that must have been who made any one think himself exiled because he was leaving him in exile! what a man that must have been

who attracted the admiration of one whom even his friend Cato admired! Brutus goes on to say:— ‘Gaius Caesar sailed past Mytilene without landing, because he could not bear to see a fallen man.’ The Senate did indeed obtain his recall by public petition, being so anxious and sorrowful the while, that you would have thought that they all were of Brutus’s mind that day, and were not pleading the cause of Marcellus, but their own, that they might not be sent into exile by being deprived of him: yet he gained far greater glory on the day when Brutus could not bear to leave him in exile, and Caesar could not bear to see him: for each of them bore witness to his worth: Brutus grieved, and Caesar blushed at going home without Marcellus. Can you doubt that so great a man as Marcellus frequently encouraged himself to endure his exile patiently in some such terms as these: “The loss of your country is no misery to you: you have so steeped yourself in philosophic lore, as to know that all the world is the wise man’s country? What! was not this very man who banished you absent from his country for ten successive years? he was, no doubt, engaged in the extension of the empire, but for all that he was absent from his country. Now see how his presence is required in Africa, which threatens to re-kindle the war, in Spain which is nursing up again the strength of the broken and shattered opposite faction, in treacherous Egypt, in fine, in all the parts of the world, for all are watching their opportunity to seize the empire at a disadvantage. Which will he go to meet first? which part of the universal conspiracy will he first oppose? His victory will drag him through every country in the world. Let nations look up to him and worship him: do thou live satisfied with the admiration of Brutus.”

X.

Marcellus, then, nobly endured his exile, and his change of place made no change in his mind, even though it was accompanied by poverty, in which every man who has not fallen into the madness of avarice and luxury, which upset all our ideas, sees no harm. Indeed, how very little is required to keep a man alive? and who, that has any virtue whatever, will find this fail him? As for myself, I do not feel that I have lost my wealth, but my occupation: the wants of the body are few: it wants protection from the cold, and the means of allaying hunger and thirst: all desires beyond these are vices, not necessities. There is no need for prying into all the depths of the sea, for loading one's stomach with heaps of slaughtered animals, or for tearing up shell-fish from the unknown shore of the furthest sea: may the gods and goddesses bring ruin upon those whose luxury transcends the bounds of an empire which is already perilously wide. They want to have their ostentatious kitchens supplied with game from the other side of the Phasis, and though Rome has not yet obtained satisfaction from the Parthians, they are not ashamed to obtain birds from them: they bring together from all regions everything, known or unknown, to tempt their fastidious palate: food, which their stomach, worn out with delicacies, can scarcely retain, is brought from the most distant ocean: they vomit that they may eat, and eat that they may vomit, and do not even deign to digest the banquets which they ransack the globe to obtain. If a man despises these things, what harm can poverty do him? If he desires them, then poverty even does him good, for lie is cured in spite of himself, and though he will not receive remedies even upon compulsion, yet while he is unable to fulfill his wishes he is as though he had them not. Gaius Caesar, whom in my opinion Nature produced in order to show what unlimited vice would be capable of when combined with unlimited power, dined one day at a cost of ten millions of sesterces: and though in this he had the assistance of the intelligence of all his subjects, yet he could hardly find how to make one dinner out of the tribute-money of three provinces. How unhappy are they whose appetite can only be aroused by costly food! and the costliness of

food depends not upon its delightful flavor and sweetness of taste, but upon its rarity and the difficulty of procuring it: otherwise, if they chose to return to their sound senses, what need would they have of so many arts which minister to the stomach? of so great a commerce? of such ravaging of forests? of such ransacking of the depths of the sea? Food is to be found everywhere, and has been placed by Nature in every part the world, but they pass it by as though they were blind, and wander through all countries, cross the seas, and excite at a great cost the hunger which they might allay at a small one. One would like to say: Why do you launch ships? why do you arm your hands for battle both with men and wild beasts? why do you run so riotously hither and thither? why do you amass fortune after fortune? Are you unwilling to remember how small our bodies are? is it not frenzy and the wildest insanity to wish for so much when you can contain so little? Though you may increase your income, and extend the boundaries of your property, yet you never can enlarge your own bodies: when your business transactions have turned out well, when you have made a successful campaign, when you have collected the food for which you have hunted through all lands, you will have no place in which to bestow all these superfluities. Why do you strive to obtain so much? Do you think that our ancestors, whose virtue supports our vices even to the present day, were unhappy, though they dressed their food with their own hands, though the earth was their bed, though their roofs did not yet glitter with gold, nor their temples with precious stones? and so they used then to swear with scrupulous honesty by earthenware gods; those who called these gods to witness would go back to the enemy for certain death rather than break their word. Do you suppose that our dictator who granted an audience to the ambassadors of the Samnites, while he roasted the commonest food before the fire himself with that very hand with which he had so often smitten the enemy, and with which he had placed his laurel wreath upon the lap of Capitolian Jove, enjoyed life less than the Apicius who lived in our own days, whose habits tainted the entire century, who set himself up as a professor of gastronomy in that very city from which philosophers once were banished as corrupters of youth? It is worthwhile to know his end. After he had spent a hundred millions of sesterces on his kitchen, and

had wasted on each single banquet a sum equal to so many presents from the reigning emperors, and the vast revenue which he drew from the Capitol being overburdened with debt, he then for the first time was forced to examine his accounts: he calculated that he would have ten millions left of his fortune, and, as though he would live a life of mere starvation on ten millions, put an end to his life by poison. How great must the luxury of that man have been, to whom ten millions signified want? Can you think after this that the amount of money necessary to make a fortune depends upon its actual extent rather than on the mind of the owner? Here was a man who shuddered at the thought of a fortune of ten million sesterces, and escaped by poison from a prospect which other men pray for. Yet, for a mind so diseased, that last draught of his was the most wholesome: he was really eating and drinking poisons when he was not only enjoying, but boasting of his enormous banquets, when he was flaunting his vices, when he was causing his country to follow his example, when he was inviting youths to imitate him, albeit youth is quick to learn evil, without being provided with a model to copy. This is what befalls those who do not use their wealth according to reason, which has fixed limits, but according to vicious fashion, whose caprices are boundless and immeasurable. Nothing is sufficient for covetous desire, but Nature can be satisfied even with scant measure. The poverty of an exile, therefore, causes no inconvenience, for no place of exile is so barren as not to produce what is abundantly sufficient to support a man.

XI.

Next, need an exile regret his former dress and house? If he only wishes for these things because of their use to him, he will want neither roof nor garment, for it takes as little to cover the body as it does to feed it: Nature has annexed no difficult conditions to anything which man is obliged to do. If, however, he sighs for a purple robe steeped in floods of dye, interwoven with threads of gold and with many coloured artistic embroideries, then his poverty is his own fault, not that of Fortune: even though you restored to him all that he has lost, you would do him no good; for he would have more unsatisfied ambitions, if restored, than he had unsatisfied wants when he was an exile. If he longs for furniture glittering with silver vases, plate which boasts the signature of antique artists, bronze which the mania of a small clique has rendered costly, slaves enough to crowd however large a house, purposely overfed horses, and precious stones of all countries: whatever collections he may make of these, he never will satisfy his insatiable appetite, any more than any amount of liquor will quench a thirst which arises not from the need of drink but from the burning heat within a man; for this is not thirst but disease. Nor does this take place only with regard to money and food, but every want which is caused by vice and not by necessity is of this nature: however much you supply it with you do not quench it but intensify it. He who restrains himself within the limits prescribed by nature, will not feel poverty; he who exceeds them will always be poor, however great his wealth may be. Even a place of exile suffices to provide one with necessities; whole kingdoms do not suffice to provide one with superfluities. It is the mind which makes men rich: this it is that accompanies them into exile, and in the most savage wildernesses, after having found sufficient sustenance for the body, enjoys its own overflowing resources: the mind has no more connexion with money than the immortal gods have with those things which are so highly valued by untutored intellects, sunk in the bondage of the flesh. Gems, gold, silver, and vast polished round tables are but earthly dross, which cannot be loved by a pure mind that is mindful of whence it came, is unblemished by sin, and which,

when released from the body, will straightway soar aloft to the highest heaven: meanwhile, as far as it is permitted by the hindrances of its mortal limbs and this heavy clog of the body by which it is surrounded, it examines divine things with swift and airy thought. From this it follows that no free-born man, who is akin to the gods, and fit for any world and any age, can ever be in exile: for his thoughts are directed to all the heavens and to all times past and future: this trumpery body, the prison and fetter of the spirit, may be tossed to this place or to that; upon it tortures, robberies, and diseases may work their will: but the spirit itself is holy and eternal, and upon it no one can lay hands.

XII.

That you may not suppose that I merely use the maxims of the philosophers to disparage the evils of poverty, which no one finds terrible, unless he thinks it so; consider in the first place how many more poor people there are than rich, and yet you will not find that they are sadder or more anxious than the rich: nay, I am not sure that they are not happier, because they have fewer things to distract their minds. From these poor men, who often are not unhappy at their poverty, let us pass to the rich. How many occasions there are on which they are just like poor men! When they are on a journey their baggage is cut down, whenever they are obliged to travel fast their train of attendants is dismissed. When they are serving in the army, how small a part of their property can they have with them, since camp discipline forbids superfluities! Nor is it only temporary exigencies or desert places that put them on the same level as poor men: they have some days on which they become sick of their riches, dine reclining on the ground, put away all their gold and silver plate, and use earthenware. Madmen! they are always afraid of this for which they sometimes wish. O how dense a stupidity, how great an ignorance of the truth they show when they flee from this thing and yet amuse themselves by playing with it! Whenever I look back to the great examples of antiquity, I feel ashamed to seek consolation for my poverty, now that luxury has advanced so far in the present age, that the allowance of an exile is larger than the inheritance of the princes of old. It is well known that Homer had one slave, that Plato had three, and that Zeno, who first taught the stern and masculine doctrine of the Stoics, had none: yet could anyone say that they lived wretchedly without himself being thought a most pitiable wretch by all men? Menenius Agrippa, by whose mediation the patricians and plebeians were reconciled, was buried by public subscription. Attilius Regulus, while he was engaged in scattering the Carthaginians in Africa, wrote to the Senate that his hired servant had left him, and that consequently his farm was deserted: whereupon it was decreed that as long as Regulus was absent, it should be cultivated at the expense of the state. Was it not worth his

while to have no slave, if thereby he obtained the Roman people for his farm-bailiff? Scipio's daughters received their dowries from the Treasury, because their father had left them none: by Hercules, it was right for the Roman people to pay tribute to Scipio for once, since he had exacted it forever from Carthage. O how happy were those girls' husbands, who had the Roman people for their father-in-law. Can you think that those whose daughters dance in the ballet, and marry with a settlement of a million sesterces, are happier than Scipio, whose children received their dowry of old-fashioned brass money from their guardian the Senate? Can anyone despise poverty, when she has such a noble descent to boast of? can an exile be angry at any privation, when Scipio could not afford a portion for his daughters, Regulus could not afford a hired labourer, Menenius could not afford a funeral? when all these men's wants were supplied in a manner which rendered them a source of additional honour? Poverty, when such men as these plead its cause, is not only harmless, but positively attractive.

XIII.

To this one may answer: “Why do you thus ingeniously divide what can indeed be endured if taken singly, but which all together are overwhelming? Change of place can be borne if nothing more than one’s place be changed: poverty can be borne if it be without disgrace, which is enough to cow our spirits by itself.” If any one were to endeavour to frighten me with the number of my misfortunes, I should answer him as follows: If you have enough strength to resist any one part of your ill-fortune, you will have enough to resist it all. If virtue has once hardened your mind, it renders it impervious to blows from any quarter: if avarice, that greatest pest of the human race, has left it, you will not be troubled by ambition: if you regard the end of your days not as a punishment, but as an ordinance of nature, no fear of anything else will dare to enter the breast which has cast out the fear of death. If you consider sexual passion to have been bestowed on mankind not for the sake of pleasure, but for the continuance of the race, all other desires will pass harmlessly by one who is safe even from this secret plague, implanted in our very bosoms. Reason does not conquer vices one by one, but all together: if reason is defeated, it is utterly defeated once for all. Do you suppose that any wise man, who relies entirely upon himself, who has set himself free from the ideas of the common herd, can be wrought upon by disgrace? A disgraceful death is worse even than disgrace: yet Socrates bore the same expression of countenance with which he had rebuked thirty tyrants, when he entered the prison and thereby took away the infamous character of the place; for the place which contained Socrates could not be regarded as a prison. Was any one ever so blind to the truth as to suppose that Marcus Cato was disgraced by his double defeat in his candidature for the praetorship and the consulship? that disgrace fell on the praetorship and consulship which Cato honoured by his candidature. No one is despised by others unless he be previously despised by himself: a groveling and abject mind may fall an easy prey to such contempt: but he who stands up against the most cruel misfortunes, and overcomes those evils by which others would have been crushed —

such a man, I say, turns his misfortunes into badges of honour, because we are so constituted as to admire nothing so much as a man who bears adversity bravely. At Athens, when Aristides was being led to execution, everyone who met him cast down his eyes and groaned, as though not merely a just man but justice herself was being put to death. Yet one man was found who spat in his face: he might have been disturbed at this, since he knew it could only be a foul-mouthed fellow that would have the heart to do so; he, however, wiped his face, and with a smile asked the magistrate who accompanied him to warn that man not to open his mouth so rudely again. To act thus was to treat contumely itself with contempt. I know that some say that there is nothing more terrible than disgrace, and that they would prefer death. To such men I answer that even exile is often accompanied by no disgrace whatever: if a great man falls, he remains a great man after his fall, you can no more suppose that he is disgraced than when people tread upon the walls of a ruined temple, which the pious treat with as much respect as when they were standing.

XIV.

Since, then, my dearest mother, you have no reason for endless weeping on my account, it follows that your tears must flow on your own: there are two causes for this, either your having lost my protection, or your not being able to bear the mere fact of separation. The first of these I shall only touch upon lightly, for I know that your heart loves nothing belonging to your children except themselves. Let other mothers look to that, who make use of their sons' authority with a woman's passion, who are ambitious through their sons because they cannot bear office themselves, who spend their sons' inheritance, and yet are eager to inherit it, and who weary their sons by lending their eloquence to others: you have always rejoiced exceedingly in the successes of your sons, and have made no use of them whatever: you have always set bounds to our generosity, although you set none to your own: you, while a minor under the power of the head of the family, still used to make presents to your wealthy sons: you managed our inheritances with as much care as if you were working for your own, yet refrained from touching them as scrupulously as if they belonged to strangers: you have spared to use our influence, as though you enjoyed other means of your own, and you have taken no part in the public offices to which we have been elected beyond rejoicing in our success and paying our expenses: your indulgence has never been tainted by any thought of profit, and you cannot regret the loss of your son for a reason which never had any weight with you before his exile.

XV.

All my powers of consolation must be directed to the other point, the true source of your maternal grief. You say, "I am deprived of the embraces of my darling son, I cannot enjoy the pleasure of seeing him and of hearing him talk. Where is he at whose sight I used to smooth my troubled brow, in whose keeping I used to deposit all my cares? Where is his conversation, of which I never could have enough? his studies, in which I used to take part with more than a woman's eagerness, with more than a mother's familiarity? Where are our meetings? The boyish delight which he always showed at the sight of his mother?" To all this you add the actual places of our merrymakings and conversation, and, what must needs have more power to move you than anything else, the traces of our late social life, for Fortune treated you with the additional cruelty of allowing you to depart on the very third day before my ruin, without a trace of anxiety, and not fearing anything of the kind. It was well that we had been separated by a vast distance: it was well that an absence of some years had prepared you to bear this blow: you came home, not to take any pleasure in your son, but to get rid of the habit of longing for him. Had you been absent long before, you would have borne it more bravely, as the very length of your absence would have moderated your longing to see me: had you never gone away, you would at any rate have gained one last advantage in seeing your son for two days longer: as it was, cruel Fate so arranged it that you were not present with me during my good fortune, and yet have not become accustomed to my absence. But the harder these things are to bear, the more virtue you must summon to your aid, and the more bravely you must struggle as it were with an enemy whom you know well, and whom you have already often conquered. This blood did not flow from a body previously unhurt: you have been struck through the scar of an old wound.

XVI.

You have no grounds for excusing yourself on the ground of being a woman, who has a sort of right to weep without restraint, though not without limit. For this reason our ancestors allotted a space of ten months' mourning for women who had lost their husbands, thus settling the violence of a woman's grief by a public ordinance. They did not forbid them to mourn, but they set limits to their grief: for while it is a foolish weakness to give way to endless grief when you lose one of those dearest to you, yet it shows an unnatural hardness of heart to express no grief at all: the best middle course between affection and hard common sense is both to feel regret and to restrain it. You need not look at certain women whose sorrow, when once begun, has been ended only by death: you know some who after the loss of their sons have never laid aside the garb of mourning: you are constitutionally stronger than these, and from you more is required. You cannot avail yourself of the excuse of being a woman, for you have no womanish vices. Unchastity, the greatest evil of the age, has never classed you with the majority of women; you have not been tempted either by gems or by pearls; riches have not allured you into thinking them the greatest blessing that man can own; respectably brought up as you were in an old-fashioned and strict household, you have never been led astray by that imitation of others which is so full of danger even to virtuous women. You have never been ashamed of your fruitfulness as though it were a reproach to your youth: you never concealed the signs of pregnancy as though it were an unbecoming burden, nor did you ever destroy your expected child within your womb after the fashion of many other women, whose attractions are to be found in their beauty alone. You never defiled your face with paints or cosmetics: you never liked clothes which showed the figure as plainly as though it were naked: your sole ornament has been a consummate loveliness which no time can impair, your greatest glory has been your modesty. You cannot, therefore, plead your womanhood as an excuse for your grief, because your virtues have raised you above it: you ought to be as superior to womanish tears as you are to womanish vices. Even

women would not allow you to pine away after receiving this blow, but would bid you quickly and calmly go through the necessary amount of mourning, and then to arise and shake it off: I mean, if you are willing to take as your models those women whose eminent virtue has given them a place among even great men. Misfortune reduced the number of Cornelia's children from twelve to two: if you count the number of their deaths, Cornelia had lost ten: if you weigh them, she had lost the Gracchi: nevertheless, when her friends were weeping around her and using too bitter imprecations against her fate, she forbade them to blame fortune for having deprived her of her sons the Gracchi. Such ought to have been the mother of him who, when speaking in the Forum, said, "Would you speak evil of the mother who bore me?" The mother's speech seems to me to show a far greater spirit: the son set a high value on the birth of the Gracchi; the mother set an equal value on their deaths. Rutilia followed her son Cotta into exile, and was so passionately attached to him that she could bear exile better than absence from him ; nor did she return home before her son did so: after he had been restored, and had been raised to honour in the republic, she bore his death as bravely as she had borne his exile. No one saw any traces of tears upon her cheeks after she had buried her son: she displayed her courage when he was banished, her wisdom when he died: she allowed no considerations either to interfere with her affection, or to force her to protract a useless and foolish mourning. These are the women with whom I wish you to be numbered: you have the best reasons for restraining and suppressing your sorrow as they did, because you have always imitated their lives.

XVII.

I am aware that this is a matter which is not in our power, and that none of the passions, least of all that which arises from grief, are obedient to our wishes; indeed, it is overbearing and obstinate, and stubbornly rejects all remedies: we sometimes wish to crush it, and to swallow our emotion, but, nevertheless, tears flow over our carefully arranged and made-up countenance. Sometimes we occupy our minds with public spectacles and shows of gladiators; but during the very sights by which it is amused, the mind is wrung by slight touches of sorrow. It is better, therefore, to conquer it than to cheat it; for a grief which has been deceived and driven away either by pleasure or by business rises again, and its period of rest does but give it strength for a more terrible attack; but a grief which has been conquered by reason is appeased forever. I shall not, then, give you the advice which so many, I know, adopt, that you should distract your thoughts by a long journey, or amuse them by a beautiful one; that you should spend much of your time in the careful examination of accounts, and the management of your estate, and that you should keep constantly engaging in new enterprises: all these things avail but little, and do not cure, but merely obstruct our sorrow. I had rather it should be brought to an end than that it should be cheated: and, therefore, I would fain lead you to the study of philosophy, the true place of refuge for all those who are flying from the cruelty of Fortune: this will heal your wounds and take away all your sadness: to this you would now have to apply yourself, even though you had never done so before; but as far as my father's old-fashioned strictness permitted, you have gained a superficial, though not a thorough knowledge of all liberal studies. Would that my father, most excellent man that he was, had been less devoted to the customs of our ancestors, and had been willing to have you thoroughly instructed in the elements of philosophy, instead of receiving a mere smattering of it! I should not now need to be providing you with the means of struggling against Fortune, but you would offer them to me: but he did not allow you to pursue your studies far, because some women use literature to teach them luxury instead of wisdom. Still,

thanks to your keen intellectual appetite, you learned more than one could have expected in the time: you laid the foundations of all good learning: now return to them: they will render you safe, they will console you, and charm you. If once they have thoroughly entered into your mind, grief, anxiety, the distress of vain suffering will never gain admittance thither: your breast will not be open to any of these; against all other vices it has long been closed. Philosophy is your most trustworthy guardian, and it alone can save you from the attacks of Fortune.

XVIII.

Since, however, you require something to lean upon until you can reach that haven of rest which philosophy offers to you, I wish in the meantime to point out to you the consolations which you have. Look at my two brothers — while they are safe, you have no grounds for complaint against Fortune; you can derive pleasure from the virtues of each of them, different as they are; the one has gained high office by attention to business, the other has philosophically despised it. Rejoice in the great place of one of your sons, in the peaceful retirement of the other, in the filial affection of both. I know my brothers' most secret motives: the one adorns his high office in order to confer lustre upon you, the other has withdrawn from the world into his life of quiet, and contemplation, that he may have full enjoyment of your society. Fortune has consulted both your safety and your pleasure in her disposal of your two sons: you may be protected by the authority of the one, and delighted by the literary leisure of the other. They will vie with one another in dutiful affection to you, and the loss of one son will be supplied by the love of two others. I can confidently promise that you will find nothing wanting in your sons except their number. Now, then, turn your eyes from them to your grandchildren; to Marcus, that most engaging child, whose sight no sorrow can withstand. No grief can be so great or so fresh in any one's bosom as not to be charmed away by his presence. Where are the tears which his joyousness could not dry? whose heart is so nipped by sorrow that his animation would not cause it to dilate? who would not be rendered mirthful by his playfulness? who would not be attracted and made to forget his gloomy thoughts by that prattle to which no one can ever be weary of listening? I pray the gods that he may survive us: may all the cruelty of fate exhaust itself on me and go no further; may all the sorrow destined for my mother and my grandmother fall upon me; but let all the rest flourish as they do now: I shall make no complaints about my childlessness or my exile, if only my sacrifice may be received as a sufficient atonement, and my family suffer nothing more. Hold in your bosom Novatilla, who soon will present you with great-

grandchildren, she whom I had so entirely adopted and made my own, that, now that she has lost me, she seems like an orphan, even though her father is alive. Love her for my sake as well as for her own: Fortune has lately deprived her of her mother: your affection will be able to prevent her really feeling the loss of the mother whom she mourns. Take this opportunity of forming and strengthening her principles; nothing sinks so deeply into the mind as the teaching which we receive in our earliest years; let her become accustomed to hearing your discourses; let her character be moulded according to your pleasure: she will gain much even if you give her nothing more than your example. This continually recurring duty will be a remedy in itself: for when your mind is full of maternal sorrow, nothing can distract it from its grief except either philosophic argument or honourable work. I should count your father among your greatest consolations, were he not absent: as it is, judge from your affection for me what his affection is for you, and then you will see how much more just it is that you should be preserved for him than that you should be sacrificed to me. Whenever your keenest paroxysms of grief assail you and bid you give way to them, think of your father. By giving him so many grandchildren and great-grandchildren you have made yourself no longer his only daughter; but you alone can crown his prosperous life by a happy end: as long as he is alive it is impiety for you to regret having been born.

XIX.

I have hitherto said nothing of your chief source of consolation, your sister, that most faithful heart which shares all your sorrows as fully as your own, and who feels for all of us like a mother. With her you have mingled your tears, on her bosom you have tasted your first repose: she always feels for your troubles, and when I am in the case she does not grieve for you alone. It was in her arms that I was carried into Rome: by her affectionate and motherly nursing I regained my strength after a long period of sickness: she enlarged her influence to obtain the office of quaestor for me, and her fondness for me made her conquer a shyness which at other times made her shrink from speaking to, or loudly greeting her friends. Neither her retired mode of life, nor her country-bred modesty, at a time when so many women display such boldness of manner, her placidity, nor her habits of solitary seclusion prevented her from becoming actually ambitious on my account. Here, my dearest mother, is a source from which you may gain true consolation: join yourself, as far as you are able, to her, bind yourself to her by the closest embraces. Those who are in sorrow are wont to flee from those who are dearest to them, and to seek liberty for the indulgence of their grief: do you let her share your every thought: if you wish to nurse your grief, she will be your companion, if you wish to lay it aside she will bring it to an end. If, however, I rightly understand the wisdom of that most perfect woman, she will not suffer you to waste your life in unprofitable mourning, and will tell you what happened in her own instance, which I myself witnessed. During a sea-voyage she lost a beloved husband, my uncle, whom she married when a maiden; she endured at the same time grief for him and fear for herself, and at last, though ship-wrecked, nevertheless rescued his body from the vanquished tempest. How many noble deeds are unknown to fame! If only she had had the simple-minded ancients to admire her virtues, how many brilliant intellects would have vied with one another in singing the praises of a wife who forgot the weakness of her sex, forgot the perils of the sea, which terrify even the boldest, exposed herself to death in order to lay him in the earth, and who was so eager to give

him decent burial that she cared nothing about whether she shared it or no. All the poets have made the wife [Alcestia] famous who gave herself to death instead of her husband: my aunt did more when she risked her life in order to give her husband a tomb: it shows greater love to endure the same peril for a less important end. After this, no one need wonder that for sixteen years, during which her husband governed the province of Egypt, she was never beheld in public, never admitted any of the natives to her house, never begged any favour of her husband, and never allowed anyone to beg one of her. Thus it came to pass that a gossiping province, ingenious in inventing scandal about its rulers, in which even the blameless often incurred disgrace, respected her as a singular example of uprightness, never made free with her name, — a remarkable piece of self-restraint among a people who will risk everything rather than forego a jest, — and that at the present time it hopes for another governor's wife like her, although it has no reasonable expectation of ever seeing one. It would have been greatly to her credit if the province had approved her conduct for a space of sixteen years: it was much more creditable to her that it knew not of her existence. I do not remind you of this in order to celebrate her praises, for to take such scanty notice of them is to curtail them, but in order that you may understand the magnanimity of a woman who has not yielded either to ambition or to avarice, those twin attendants and scourges of authority, who, when her ship was disabled and her own death was impending, was not restrained by fear from keeping fast hold of her husband's dead body, and who sought not how to escape from the wreck, but how to carry him out of it with her. You must now show a virtue equal to hers, recall your mind from grief, and take care that no one may think that you are sorry that you have borne a son.

XX.

However, since it is necessary, whatever you do, that your thoughts should sometimes revert to me, and that I should now be present to your mind more often than your other children, not because they are less dear to you, but because it is natural to lay one's hands more often upon a place that pains one; learn how you are to think of me: I am as joyous and cheerful as in my best days: indeed these days are my best, because my mind is relieved from all pressure of business and is at leisure to attend to its own affairs, and at one time amuses itself with lighter studies, at another eagerly presses its inquiries into its own nature and that of the universe: first it considers the countries of the world and their position: then the character of the sea which flows between them, and the alternate ebbings and flowings of its tides; next it investigates all the terrors which hang between heaven and earth, the region which is torn asunder by thunderings, lightnings, gusts of wind, vapour, showers of snow and hail. Finally, having traversed every one of the realms below, it soars to the highest heaven, enjoys the noblest of all spectacles, that of things divine, and, remembering itself to be eternal, reviews all that has been and all that will be for ever and ever.

TO POLYBIUS, ON CONSOLATION



Translated by Aubrey Stewart

Seneca composed *De Consolatione ad Polybium* in circa 44 AD, during his years in exile. The epistle addresses Polybius, Emperor Claudius' Literary Secretary, consoling him on the death of his brother. Seneca's Stoic philosophy particularly focuses attention on the theme of the inescapable reality of death. Despite its obvious personal matter, the essay itself does not appear as empathetic to Polybius' grief, but instead forms a broader essay on grief and bereavement. In fact, Seneca does not even mention the name of Polybius' deceased brother.

In the text, Seneca encourages Polybius to use his busy work schedule to distract himself from grief. The epistle also contains flattery of Claudius, as Seneca credits the Emperor as the source of his 'high station' and as the giver of his 'pleasure of being able to perform duties', invoking long life for the Emperor. This switch of tone is sudden and unsuited to Seneca's stoic philosophy, causing some scholars to ascribe the text to another author, though others argue that the tonal switch in *De Consolatione ad Polybium* was nothing more than Seneca's desperate attempt to escape exile and return from Corsica.



Claudius (10 BC–54 AD) was Roman emperor from 41 to 54 AD.

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I.

.... compared with ours is firm and lasting; but if you transfer it to the domain of Nature, which destroys every- thing and calls everything back to the place from whence it came, it is transitory. What, indeed, have mortal hands made that is not mortal? The seven wonders of the world, and any even greater wonders which the ambition of later ages has constructed, will be seen some day leveled with the ground. So it is: nothing lasts forever, few things even last for long: all are susceptible of decay in one way or another. The ways in which things come to an end are manifold, but yet everything that has a beginning has an end also. Some threaten the world with death, and, though you may think the thought to be impious, this entire universe, containing gods and men and all their works will someday be swept away and plunged a second time into its original darkness and chaos. Weep, if you can, after this, over the loss of any individual life! Can we mourn the ashes of Carthage, Numantia, Corinth, or any city that has fallen from a high estate, when we know that the world must perish, albeit it has no place into which it can fall. Weep, if you can, because Fate has not spared you, she who someday will dare to work so great a wickedness! Who can be so haughtily and peevishly arrogant as to expect that this law of nature by which every thing is brought to an end will be set aside in his own case, and that his own house will be exempted from the ruin which menaces the whole world itself? It is, therefore, a great consolation to reflect that what has happened to us has happened to everyone before us and will happen to everyone after us. In my opinion, nature has made her cruellest acts affect all men alike, in order that the universality of their lot might console them for its hardship.

II.

It will also be no small assistance to you to reflect that grief can do no good either to him whom you have lost or to yourself, and you would not wish to protract what is useless: for if we could gain anything by sorrow, I should not refuse to bestow upon your misfortunes whatever tears my own have left at my disposal: I would force some drops to flow from these eyes, exhausted as they are with weeping over my own domestic afflictions, were it likely to be of any service to you. Why do you hesitate? let us lament together, and I will even make this quarrel my own:—" Fortune, whom everyone thinks most unjust, you seemed hitherto to have restrained yourself from attacking one who by your favour had become the object of such universal respect that — rare distinction for anyone — his prosperity had excited no jealousy: but now, behold! you have dealt him the cruellest wound which, while Caesar lives, he could receive, and after reconnoitering him from all sides you have discovered that on this point alone he was exposed to your strokes. What else indeed could you have done to him? should you take away his wealth? he never was its slave: now he has even as far as possible put it away from him, and the chief thing that he has gained by his unrivalled facilities for amassing money has been to despise it. Should you take away his friends? you knew that he was of so loveable a disposition that he could easily gain others to replace those whom he might lose: for of all the powerful officers of the Imperial household he seems to me to be the only one whom all men wish to have for their friend without considering how advantageous his friendship would be. Should you take away his reputation? it is so firmly established, that even you could not shake it. Should you take away his health? you knew that his mind was so grounded on philosophical studies, in whose schools he was born as well as bred, that it would rise superior to any sufferings of the body. Should you take away his breath? how small an injury would that be to him? fame promised his genius one of the longest of lives: he himself has taken care that his better part should remain alive, and has guarded himself against death by the composition of his admirable works of eloquence: as long as

literature shall be held in any honour, as long as the vigour of the Latin or the grace of the Greek language shall endure, he will flourish together with their greatest writers, with whose genius he has measured, or, if his modesty will not let me say this, has connected his own. This, then, was the only means you could devise of doing him a great injury. The better a man is, the more frequently he is wont to suffer from your indiscriminate rage, you who are to be feared even when you are bestowing benefits upon one. How little it would have cost you to avert this blow from one upon whom your favours seemed to be conferred according to some regular plan, and not to be flung at random in your wonted fashion!"

III.

Let us add, if you please, to these grounds of complaint the disposition of the youth himself, cut off in the midst of its first growth. He was worthy to be your brother: you most certainly did not deserve to be given any pain through your brother, even though he had been unworthy. All men alike bear witness to his merits: he is regretted for your sake, and is praised for his own. He had no qualities which you would not be glad to recognize. You would indeed have been good to a worse brother, but to him your fraternal love was given all the more freely because in him it found so fitting a field for its exercise. No one ever was made to feel his influence by receiving wrongs at his hands, he never used the fact of your being his brother to threaten any one: he had moulded his character after the pattern of your modesty, and reflected how great a glory and how great a burden you were to your family: the burden he was able to sustain; but, O pitiless Fate, always unjust to virtue — before your brother could taste the happiness of his position, he was called away. I am well aware that I express my feelings inadequately; for nothing is harder than to find words which adequately represent great grief: still, let us again lament for him, if it be of any use to do so:— “What did you mean, Fortune, by being so unjust and so savage? did you so soon repent you of your favour? What cruelty it was to fall upon brothers, to break up so loving a circle by so deadly an attack; why did you bring mourning into a house so plenteously stocked with admirable youths, in which no brother came short of the high standard of the rest, and without any cause pluck one of them away? So, then, scrupulous innocence of life, old-fashioned frugality, the power of amassing vast wealth wielded with the greatest self-denial, a true and imperishable love of literature, a mind free from the least spot of sin, all avail nothing: Polybius is in mourning, and, warned by the fate of one brother what he may have to dread for the rest, he fears for the very persons who soothe his grief. O shame! Polybius is in mourning, and mourns even though he still enjoys the favour of Caesar. No doubt, Fortune, what you aimed at in your impotent rage was to prove that no one could be protected from your attacks, not

even by Caesar himself.”

IV.

We might go on blaming fate much longer, but we cannot alter it: it stands harsh and inexorable: no one can move it by reproaches, by tears, or by justice. Fate never spares anyone, never makes allowances to anyone. Let us, then, refrain from unprofitable tears: for our grief will carry us away to join him sooner than it will bring him back to us: and if it tortures us without helping us, we ought to lay it aside as soon as possible, and restore the tone of our minds after their indulgence in that vain solace and the bitter luxury of woe: for unless reason puts an end to our tears, fortune will not do so. Look around, I pray you, upon all mortals: everywhere there is ample and constant reason for weeping: one man is driven to daily labour by toilsome poverty, another is tormented by never-resting ambition, another fears the very riches that he once wished for, and suffers from the granting of his own prayer: one man is made wretched by loneliness, another by labour, another by the crowds which always besiege his antechamber. This man mourns because he has children, that one because he has lost them. Tears will fail us sooner than causes for shedding them. Do you not see what sort of a life it must be that Nature has promised to us men when she makes us weep as soon as we are born? We begin life in this fashion, and all the chain of years that follow it is in harmony with it. Thus we pass our lives, and consequently we ought to be sparing in doing what we have to do so often, and when we look back upon the mass of sorrows that hangs over us, we ought, if not to end our tears, at any rate to reserve them. There is nothing that we ought to husband more carefully than this, which we are so often obliged to expend.

V.

It will also be no small assistance to you to consider that there is no one to whom your grief is more offensive than he upon whom it is nominally bestowed: he either does not wish you to suffer or does not understand why you suffer. There is, therefore, no reason for a service which is useless if it is not felt by him who is the object of it, and which is displeasing to him if it is. I can boldly affirm that there is no one in the whole world who derives any pleasure from your tears. What then? do you suppose that your brother has a feeling against you which no one else has, that he wishes you to be injured by your self-torture, that he desires to separate you from the business of your life, that is, from philosophy and from Caesar? that is not likely: for he always gave way to you as a brother, respected you as a parent, courted you as a superior. He wishes to be fondly remembered by you, but not to be a source of agony to you. Why, then, should you insist upon pining away with a grief which, if the dead have any feelings, your brother wishes to bring to an end? If it were any other brother about whose affection there could be any question, I should put all this vaguely, and say, "If your brother wishes you to be tortured with endless mourning, he does not deserve such affection: if he does not wish it, dismiss the grief which affects you both: an unnatural brother ought not, a good brother would not wish to be so mourned for," but with one whose brotherly love has been so clearly proved, we may be quite sure that nothing could hurt him more than that you should be hurt by his loss, that it should agonize you, that your eyes, most undeserving as they are of such a fate, should be by the same cause continually filled and drained of never-ceasing tears.

Nothing however will restrain your loving nature from these useless tears so effectually as the reflexion that you ought to show your brothers an example by bearing this outrage of fortune bravely. You ought to imitate great generals in times of disaster, when they are careful to affect a cheerful demeanour, and conceal misfortunes by a counterfeited joyousness, lest, if the soldiers saw their leader cast down, they should themselves become dispirited. This must now

be done by you also. Put on a countenance that does not reflect your feelings, and if you possibly can, cast out conceal it within you and hide it away so that it may not be seen, and take care that your brothers, who will think everything honourable that they see you doing, imitate you in this and take courage from the sight of your looks. It is your duty to be both their comfort and their consoler; but you will have no power to check their grief if you humour your own.

VI.

It may also keep you from excessive grief if you remind yourself that nothing which you do can be done in secret: all men agree in regarding you as an important personage, and you must keep up this character: you are encompassed by all that mass of offerers of consolation who all are peering into your mind to learn how much strength it has to resist grief, and whether you merely know how to avail yourself cunningly of prosperity, or whether you can also bear adversity with a manly spirit: the expression of your very eyes is watched. Those who are able to conceal their feelings may indulge them more freely ; but you are not free to have any secrecy: your fortune has set you in so brilliant a position, that nothing which you do can be hid: all men will know how you have borne this wound of yours, whether you laid down your arms at the first shock or whether you stood your ground. Long ago the love of Caesar raised you, and your own literary pursuits brought you, to the highest rank in the state: nothing vulgar, nothing mean befits you: yet what can be meaner or more womanish than to make oneself a victim to grief? Although your sorrow is as great as that of your brothers, yet you may not indulge it as much as they: the ideas which the public have formed about your philosophic learning and your character make many things impossible for you. Men demand much, and expect much from you: you ought not to have drawn all eyes upon yourself, if you wished to be allowed to act as you pleased: as it is, you must make good that of which you have given promise. All those, who praise the works of your genius, who make copies of them, who need your genius if they do not need your fortune, are as guards set over your mind: you cannot, therefore, ever do anything unworthy of the character of a thorough philosopher and sage, without many men feeling sorry that they ever admired you. You may not weep beyond reason: nor is this the only thing that you may not do: you may not so much as remain asleep after daybreak, or retreat from the noisy troubles of public business to the peaceful repose of the country, or refresh yourself with a pleasure tour when wearied by constant attendance to the duties of your toilsome post, or amuse yourself

with beholding various shows, or even arrange your day according to your own wish. Many things are forbidden to you which are permitted to the poorest beggars that lie about in holes and corners. A great fortune is a great slavery; you may not do anything according to your wish: you must give audiences to all those thousands of people, you must take charge of all those petitions: you must cheer yourself up, in order that all this mass of business which flows hither from every part of the world may be offered in due order for the consideration of our excellent emperor. I repeat, you yourself are forbidden to weep, that you may be able to listen to so many weeping petitioners: your own tears must be dried, in order that the tears of those who are in peril and who desire to obtain the gracious pardon of the kindest-hearted of Caesars may be dried.

VII.

These reflexions will serve you as partial remedies for your grief, but if you wish to forget it altogether, remember Caesar: think with what loyalty, with what industry you are bound to requite the favours which he has shown you: you will then see that you can no more sink beneath your burden than could he of whom the myths tells us, he whose shoulders upheld the world. Even Caesar, who may do all things, may not do many things for this very reason: his watchfulness protects all men's sleep, his labour guarantees their leisure, his toil ensures their pleasures, his work preserves their holidays. On the day on which Caesar devoted his services to the universe, he lost them for himself, and like the planets which ever unrestingly pursue their course, he can never halt or attend to any affair of his own. After a certain fashion this prohibition is imposed upon you also; you may not consider your own interests, or devote yourself to your own studies: while Caesar owns the world, you cannot allow either joy or grief, or anything else to occupy any part of you: you owe your entire self to Caesar. Add to this that, since you have always declared that Caesar was dearer to you than your own life, you have no right to complain of misfortune as long as Caesar is alive: while he is safe all your friends are alive, you have lost nothing, your eyes ought not only to be dry, but glad. In him is your all, he stands in the place of all else to you: you are not grateful enough for your present happy state (which God forbid that one of your most wise and loyal disposition should be) if you permit yourself to weep at all while Caesar is safe.

VIII.

I will now point out to you yet another remedy, of a more domestic, though not of a more efficacious character. Your sorrow is most to be feared when you have retired to your own home: for as long as your divinity is before your eyes, it can find no means of access to you, but Caesar will possess your entire being; when you have left his presence, grief, as though it then had an opportunity of attack, will lie in ambush for you in your loneliness, and creep by degrees over your mind as it rests from its labours. You ought not, therefore, to allow any moment to be unoccupied by literary pursuits: at such times let literature repay to you the debt which your long and faithful love has laid upon it, let it claim you for its high priest and worshipper: at such times let Homer and Virgil be much in your company, those poets to whom the human race owes as much as everyone owes to you, and they especially, because you have made them known to a wider circle than that for which they wrote. All time which you entrust to their keeping will be safe. At such times, as far as you are able, compile an account of your Caesar's acts, that they may be read by all future ages in a panegyric written by one of his own household: for he himself will afford you both the noblest subject and the noblest example for putting together and composing a history. I dare not go so far as to advise you to write in your usual elegant style a version of Æsop's fables, a work which no Roman intellect has hitherto attempted. It is hard, no doubt, for a mind which has received so rude a shock to betake itself so quickly to these livelier pursuits: but if it is able to pass from more serious studies to these lighter ones, you must regard it as a proof that it has recovered its strength, and is itself again. In the former case, although it may suffer and hang back, still it will be led on by the serious nature of the subject under consideration to take an interest in it: but, unless it has thoroughly recovered, it will not endure to treat of subjects which must be written of in a cheerful spirit. You ought, therefore, first to exercise your mind upon grave studies, and then to enliven it with gayer ones.

IX.

It will also be a great solace to you if you often ask yourself: "Am I grieving on my own account or on that of him who is gone? if on my own, I have no right to boast of my affectionate sensibility; grief is only excusable as long as it is honourable; but when it is only caused by personal interests, it no longer springs from tenderness: nothing can be less becoming to a good man than to make a calculation about his grief for his brother. If I grieve on his account, I must necessarily take one of the two following views: if the dead retain no feeling whatever, my brother has escaped from all the troubles of life, has been restored to the place which he occupied before his birth, and, being free from every kind of ill, can neither fear, nor desire, nor suffer: what madness then for me never to cease grieving for one who will never grieve again? If the dead have any feeling, then my brother is now like one who has been let out of a prison in which he has long been confined, who at last is free and his own master, and who enjoys himself, amuses himself with viewing the works of Nature, and looks down from above the earth upon all human things, while he looks at things divine, whose meaning he has long sought in vain, from a much nearer standpoint. Why then am I wasting away with grief for one who is either in bliss or non-existent? it would be envy to weep for one who is in bliss, it would be madness to weep for one who has no existence whatever." Are you affected by the thought that he appears to have been deprived of great blessings just at the moment when they came crowding upon him? after thinking how much he has lost, call to mind how much more he has ceased to fear: anger will never more wring his heart, disease will not crush him, suspicion will not disquiet him, the gnawing pain of envy which we feel at the successes of others will not attend him, terror will not make him wretched, the fickleness of fortune who quickly transfers her favours from one man to another will not alarm him. If you reckon it up properly, he has been spared more than he has lost. He will not enjoy wealth, or your influence at Court, or his own: he will not receive benefits, and will not confer them: do you imagine him to be unhappy, because he has lost these things, or happy because he

does not miss them? Believe me, he who does not need good fortune is happier than he on whom it attends: all those good things which charm us by the attractive but unreal pleasures which they afford, such as money, high office, influence, and many other things which dazzle the stupid greed of mankind, require hard labour to keep, are regarded by others with bitter jealousy, and are more of a menace than an advantage to those who are bedecked and encumbered by them. They are slippery and uncertain; one never can enjoy them in comfort; for, even setting aside anxiety about the future, the present management of great prosperity is an uneasy task. If we are to believe some profound seekers after truth, life is all torment: we are flung, as it were, into this deep and rough sea, whose tides ebb and flow, at one time raising us aloft by sudden accessions of fortune, at another bringing down low by still greater losses, and for ever tossing us about, never letting us rest on firm ground. We roll and plunge upon the waves, and sometimes strike against one another, sometimes are ship-wrecked, always are in terror. For those who sail upon this stormy sea, exposed as it is to every gale, there is no harbour save death. Do not, then, grudge your brother his rest: he has at last become free, safe, and immortal: he leaves surviving him Caesar and all his family, yourself, and his and your brothers. He left Fortune before she had ceased to regard him with favour, while she stood still by him, offering him gifts with a full hand. He now ranges free and joyous through the boundless heavens; he has left this poor and low-lying region, and has soared upwards to that place, whatever it may be, which receives in its happy bosom the souls which have been set free from the chains of matter: he now roams there at liberty, and enjoys with the keenest delight all the blessings of Nature. You are mistaken! your brother has not lost the light of day, but has obtained a more enduring light: whither he has gone, we all alike must go: why then do we weep for his fate? He has not left us, but has gone on before us. Believe me, there is great happiness in a happy death. We cannot be sure of anything even for one whole day: since the truth is so dark and hard to come at, who can tell whether death came to your brother out of malice or out of kindness?

X.

One who is as just in all things as you are, must find comfort in the thought that no wrong has been done you by the loss of so noble a brother, but that you have received a benefit by having been permitted for so long a time to enjoy his affection. He who will not allow his benefactor to choose his own way of bestowing a gift upon him, is unjust: he who does not reckon what he receives as gain, and yet reckons what he gives back again as loss, is greedy: he who says that he has been wronged, because his pleasure has come to an end, is ungrateful: he who thinks that we gain nothing from good things beyond the present enjoyment of them, is a fool, because he finds no pleasure in past joys, and does not regard those which are gone as his most certain possessions, since he need not fear that they will come to an end. A man limits his pleasures too narrowly if he believes that he enjoys those things only which he touches and sees, if he counts the having enjoyed them for nothing: for all pleasure quickly leaves us, seeing that it flows away, flits across our lives, and is gone almost before it has come. We ought, therefore, to make our mind travel back over past time, to bring back whatever we once took pleasure in, and frequently to ruminate over it in our thoughts: the remembrance of pleasures is truer and more trustworthy than their reality. Regard it, then, among your greatest blessings that you have had an excellent brother: you need not think for how much longer you might have had him, but for how long you did have him. Nature gave him to you, as she gives others to other brothers, not as an absolute property, but as a loan: afterwards when she thought proper she took him back again, and followed her own rules of action, instead of waiting until you had indulged your love to satiety. If any one were to be indignant at having to repay a loan of money, especially if he had been allowed to use it without having to pay any interest, would he not be thought an unreasonable man? Nature gave your brother his life, just as she gave you yours: exercising her lawful rights, she has chosen to ask one of you to repay her loan before the other: she cannot be blamed for this, for you knew the conditions on which you received it: you must blame the greedy

hopes of mortal men's minds, which every now and then forget what Nature is, and never remember their own lot unless reminded of it. Rejoice, then, that you have had so good a brother, and be grateful for having had the use and enjoyment of him, though it was for a shorter time than you wished. Reflect that what you have had of him was most delightful, that your having lost him is an accident common to mankind. There is nothing more inconsistent than that a man should grieve that so good a brother was not long enough with him, and should not rejoice that he nevertheless has been with him.

XI.

“But,” you say, “he was taken away unexpectedly.” Every man is deceived by his own willingness to believe what he wishes, and he chooses to forget that those whom he loves are mortal: yet Nature gives us clear proofs that she will not suspend her laws in favour of any one: the funeral processions of our friends and of strangers alike pass daily before our eyes, yet we take no notice of them, and when an event happens which our whole life warns us will someday happen, we call it sudden. This is not, therefore, the injustice of fate, but the perversity and insatiable universal greediness of the human mind, which is indignant at having to leave a place to which it was only admitted on sufferance. How far more righteous was he who, on hearing of the death of his son, made a speech worthy of a great man, saying: “When I begat him, I knew that he would die some day.” Indeed, you need not be surprised at the son of such a man being able to die bravely. He did not receive the tidings of his son’s death as news: for what is there new in a man’s dying, when his whole life is merely a journey towards death? “When I begat him, I knew that he would die some day,” said he: and then he added, what showed even more wisdom and courage, “It was for this that I brought him up.” It is for this that we have all been brought up: everyone who is brought into life is intended to die. Let us enjoy what is given to us, and give it back when it is asked for: the Fates lay their hands on some men at some times, and on other men at other times, but they will never pass any one by altogether. Our mind ought always to be on the alert, and while it ought never to fear what is certain to happen, it ought always to be ready for what may happen at any time. Why need I tell you of generals and the children of generals, of men ennobled by many consulships and triumphs, who have succumbed to pitiless fate? Whole kingdoms together with their kings, whole nations with all their component tribes, have all submitted to their doom. All men, nay, all things look forward to an end of their days: yet all do not come to the same end: one man loses his life in the midst of his career, another at the very beginning of it, another seems hardly able to free himself from it when worn out with extreme old age, and

eager to be released: we are all going to the same place, but we all go thither at different times. I know not whether it is more foolish not to know the law of mortality, or more presumptuous to refuse to obey it. Come, take into your hands the poems of whichever you please of those two authors upon whom your genius has expended so much labour, whom you have so well paraphrased, that although the structure of the verse be removed, its charm nevertheless is preserved; for you have transferred them from one language to another so well as to effect the most difficult matter of all, that of making all the beauties of the original reappear in a foreign speech: among their works you will find no volume which will not offer you numberless instances of the vicissitudes of human life, of the uncertainty of events, and of tears shed for various reasons. Bead with what fire you have thundered out their swelling phrases: you will feel ashamed of suddenly failing and falling short of the elevation of their magnificent language. Do not commit the fault of making every one, who according to his ability admires your writings, ask how so frail a mind can have formed such stable and well-connected ideas.

XII.

Turn yourself away from these thoughts which torment you, and look rather at those numerous and powerful sources of consolation which you possess: look at your excellent brothers, look at your wife and your son. It is to guarantee the safety of all these that Fortune has struck you in this this quarter: you have many left in whom you can take comfort. Guard yourself from the shame of letting all men think that a single grief has more power with you than these many consolations. You see all of them cast down into the same despondency as yourself, and you know that they cannot help you, nay, that on the other hand they look to you to encourage them: wherefore, the less learning and the less intellect they possess, the more vigorously you ought to withstand the evil which has fallen upon you all. The very fact of one's grief being shared by many persons acts as a consolation, because if it be distributed among such a number the share of it which falls upon you must be small. I shall never cease to recall your thoughts to Caesar. While he governs the earth, and shows how far better the empire may be maintained by kindnesses than by arms, while he presides over the affairs of mankind, there is no danger of your feeling that you have lost anything: in this fact alone you will find ample help and ample consolation; raise yourself up, and fix your eyes upon Caesar whenever tears rise to them; they will become dry on beholding that greatest and most brilliant light; his splendour will attract them and firmly attach them to himself, so that they are able to see nothing else. He whom you behold both by day and by night, from whom your mind never deviates to meaner matters, must occupy your thoughts and be your defence against Fortune; indeed, so kind and gracious as he is towards all his followers that he has already, I doubt not, laid many healing balms upon this wound of yours, and furnished you with many antidotes for your sorrow. Why, even had he done nothing of the kind, is not the mere sight and thought of Caesar in itself your greatest consolation? May the gods and goddesses long spare him to the earth: may he rival the deeds of the Emperor Augustus, and surpass him in length of days! As long as he

remains among mortals, may he never be reminded that any of his house are mortal: may he train up his son by long and faithful service to be the ruler of the Roman people, and see him share his father's power before he succeeds to it: may the day on which his kindred shall claim him for heaven be far distant, and may our grandchildren alone be alive to see it.

XIII.

Fortune, refrain your hands from him, and show your power over him only in doing him good: allow him to heal the long sickness from which mankind has suffered; to replace and restore whatever has been shattered by the frenzy of our late sovereign: may this star, which has shed its rays upon a world overthrown and cast into darkness, ever shine brightly: may he give peace to Germany, open Britain to us, and lead through the city triumphs, both over the nations whom his fathers conquered, and over new ones. Of these his clemency, the first of his many virtues, gives me hopes of being a spectator: for he has not so utterly cast me down that he will never raise me up again; nay, he has not cast me down at all; rather he has supported me when I was struck by evil fortune and was tottering, and has gently used his godlike hand to break my headlong fall: he pleaded with the Senate on my behalf, and not only gave me my life but even begged it for me. He will see to my cause: let him judge my cause to be such as he would desire; let his justice pronounce it good or his clemency so regard it: his kindness to me will be equal in either case, whether he knows me to be innocent or chooses that I should be thought so. Meanwhile it is a great comfort to me for my own miseries to behold his pardons travelling throughout the world: even from the corner in which I am confined his mercy has unearthed and restored to light many exiles who had been buried and forgotten here for long years, and I have no fear that I alone shall be passed over by it. He best knows the time at which he ought to show favour to each man: I will use my utmost efforts to prevent his having to blush when he comes to me. O how blessed is your clemency, Caesar, which makes exiles live more peacefully during your reign than princes did in that of Gaius! We do not tremble or expect the fatal stroke every hour, nor are we terrified whenever a ship comes in sight: you have set bounds to the cruelty of Fortune towards us, and have given us present peace and hopes of a happier future. You may indeed be sure that those thunderbolts alone are just which are worshipped even by those who are struck by them.

XIV.

Thus this prince, who is the universal consoler of all men, has, unless I am altogether mistaken, already revived your spirit and applied more powerful remedies to so severe a wound than I can: he has already strengthened you in every way: his singularly retentive memory has already furnished you with all the examples which will produce tranquility: his practised eloquence has already displayed before you all the precepts of sages. No one therefore could console you as well as he: when he speaks his words have greater weight, as though they were the utterances of an oracle: his divine authority will crush all the strength of your grief. Think, then, that he speaks to you as follows:— “Fortune has not chosen you as the only man in the world to receive so severe a blow: there is no house in all the earth, and never has been one, that has not something to mourn for: I will pass over examples taken from the common herd, which, while they are of less importance, are also endless in number, and I will direct your attention to the Calendar and the State Chronicles. Do you see all these images which fill the hall of the Caesars? there is not one of these men who was not especially afflicted by domestic sorrows: As one of those men who shine there as the ornament of the ages was not either tortured by grief for some of his family or most bitterly mourned for by those whom he left behind. Why need I remind you of Scipio Africanus, who heard the news of his brother’s death when he was himself in exile? he who saved his brother from prison could not save him from his fate. Yet all men saw how impatient Africanus’s brotherly affection was even of equal law: on the same day on which Scipio Africanus rescued his brother from the hands of the apparitor, he, although not holding any office, protested against the action of the tribune of the people. He mourned for his brother as magnanimously as he had defended him. Why need I remind you of Scipio Æmilianus, who almost at one and the same time beheld his father’s triumph and the funeral of his two brothers? yet, although a stripling and hardly more than a boy, he bore the sudden bereavement which befell his family at the very time of Paulus’s triumph with all the courage which beseemed one who was born that

Rome might not be without a Scipio and that she might be without a Carthage.

XV.

Why should I speak of the intimacy of the two Luculli, which was broken only by their death? or of the Pompeii? whom the cruelty of Fortune did not even allow to perish by the same catastrophe; for Sextus Pompeius in the first place survived his sister, by whose death the firmly knit bond of peace in the Roman empire was broken, and he also survived his noble brother, whom Fortune had raised so high in order that she might cast him down from as great a height as she had already cast down his father; yet after this great misfortune Sextus Pompeius was able not only to endure his grief but even to make war. Innumerable instances occur to me of brothers who were separated by death: indeed on the other hand we see very few pairs of brothers growing old together: however, I shall content myself with examples from my own family. No one can be so devoid of feeling or of reason as to complain of Fortune's having thrown him into mourning when he learns that she has coveted the tears of the Caesars themselves. The Emperor Augustus lost his darling sister Octavia, and though Nature destined him for heaven, yet she did not relax her laws to spare him from mourning while on earth: nay, he suffered every kind of bereavement, losing his sister's son, who was intended to be his heir. In fine, not to mention his sorrows in detail, he lost his son-in-law, his children, and his grandchildren, and, while he remained among men, no mortal was more often reminded that he was a man. Yet his mind, which was able to bear all things, bore all these heavy sorrows, and the blessed Augustus was the conqueror, not only of foreign nations, but also of his own sorrows. Gaius Caesar, the grandson of the blessed Augustus, my maternal great uncle, in the first years of manhood, when Prince of the Roman Youth, as he was preparing for the Parthian war, lost his darling brother Lucius who was also 'Prince of the Roman Youth,' and suffered more thereby in his mind than he did afterwards in his body, though he bore both afflictions with the greatest piety and fortitude. Tiberius Caesar, my paternal uncle, lost his younger brother Drusus Germanicus, my father, when he was opening out the innermost fastnesses of Germany, and bringing the fiercest tribes under the

dominion of the Roman empire; he embraced him and received his last kiss, but he nevertheless restrained not only his own grief but that of others, and when the whole army, not merely sorrowful but heart-broken, claimed the corpse of their Drusus for themselves, he made them grieve only as it became Romans to grieve, and taught them that they must observe military discipline not only in fighting but also in mourning. He could not have checked the tears of others had he not first repressed his own.

XVI.

“Marcus Antonius, my grandfather, who was second to none save his conqueror, received the news of his brother’s execution at the very time when the state was at his disposal, and when, as a member of the triumvirate, he saw no one in the world superior to himself in power, nay, when, with the exception of his two colleagues, every man was subordinate to himself. O wanton Fortune, what sport you make for yourself out of human sorrows! At the very time when Marcus Antonius was enthroned with power of life and death over his countrymen, Marcus Antonius’s brother was being led to his death: yet Antonius bore this cruel wound with the same greatness of mind with which he had endured all his other crosses; and he mourned for his brother by offering the blood of twenty legions to his manes. However, to pass by all other instances, not to speak of the other deaths which have occurred in my own house, Fortune has twice assailed me through the death of a brother; she has twice learned that she could wound me but could not overthrow me. I lost my brother Germanicus, whom I loved in a manner which any one will understand if he thinks how affectionate brothers love one another; yet I so restrained my passion of grief as neither to leave undone anything which a good brother could be called upon to do, nor yet to do anything which a sovereign could be blamed for doing.” Think, then, that our common parent quotes these instances to you, and that he points out to you how nothing is respected or held inviolable by Fortune, who actually dares to send out funeral processions from the very house in which she will have to look for gods: so let no one be surprised at her committing any act of cruelty or injustice; for how could she show any humanity or moderation in her dealings with private families, when her pitiless fury has so often hung the very throne itself with black? She will not change her habits even though reproached, not by my voice alone, but by that of the entire nation: she will hold on her course in spite of all prayers and complaints. Such has Fortune always been, and such she ever will be in connexion with human affairs: she has never shrunk from attacking anything, and she will never let anything alone: she will

rage everywhere terribly, as she has always been wont to do: she will dare to enter for evil purposes into those houses whose entrance lies through the temples of the gods, and will hang signs of mourning upon laurelled door-posts. However, if she has not yet determined to destroy the human race: if she still looks with favour upon the Roman nation, may our public and private prayers prevail upon her to regard as sacred from her violence this prince, whom all men think to be sacred, who has been granted them by heaven to give them rest after their misfortunes: let her learn clemency from him, and let the mildest of all sovereigns teach her mildness.

XVII.

You ought, therefore, to fix your eyes upon all the persons whom I have just mentioned, who have either been deified or were nearly related to those who have been deified, and when Fortune lays her hands upon you to bear it calmly, seeing that she does not even respect those by whose names we swear. It is your duty to imitate their constancy in enduring and triumphing over suffering, as far as it is permitted to a mere man to follow in the footsteps of the immortals. Albeit in all other matters rank and birth make great distinctions between men, yet virtue is open to all; she despises no one provided he thinks himself worthy to possess her. Surely you cannot do better than follow the example of those who, though they might have been angry at not being exempt from this evil, nevertheless have decided to regard this, the only thing which brings them down to the level of other men, not as a wrong done to themselves, but as the law of our mortal nature, and to bear what befalls them without undue bitterness and wrath, and yet in no base or cowardly spirit: for it is not human not to feel our sorrows, while it is unmanly not to bear them. When I glance through the roll of all the Caesars whom fate has bereaved of sisters or brothers, I cannot pass over that one who is unworthy to figure on the list of Caesars, whom Nature produced to be the ruin and the shame of the human race, who utterly wrecked and destroyed the state which is now recovering under the gentle rule of the most benign of princes. On losing his sister Drusilla, Gaius Caesar, a man who could neither mourn nor rejoice as becomes a prince, shrank from seeing and speaking to his countrymen, was not present at his sister's funeral, did not pay her the conventional tribute of respect, but tried to forget the sorrows caused by this most distressing death by playing at dice in his Alban villa, and by sitting on the judgment-seat, and the like customary engagements. What a disgrace to the Empire! a Roman emperor solaced himself by gambling for his grief at the loss of his sister! This same Gaius, with frantic levity, at one time let his beard and hair grow long, at another wandered aimlessly along the coast of Italy and Sicily. He never clearly made up his mind whether he

wished his sister to be mourned for or to be worshipped, and during all the time that he was raising temples and shrines in her honour he punished those who did not manifest sufficient sorrow with the most cruel tortures: for his mind was so ill-balanced, that he was as much cast down by adversity as he was unbecomingly elated and puffed up by success. Far be it from every Roman to follow such an example, either to divert his mind from his grief by unreasonable amusements, to stimulate it by unseemly squalor and neglect, or to be so inhuman as to console himself by taking pleasure in the sufferings of others.

XVIII.

You, however, need change none of your ordinary habits, since you have taught yourself to love those studies which, while they are pre-eminently fitted for perfecting our happiness, at the same time teach us how we may bear misfortune most lightly, and which are at the same time a man's greatest honour and greatest comfort. Now, therefore, immerse yourself even more deeply in your studies, now surround your mind with them like fortifications, so that grief may not find any place at which it can gain entrance. At the same time, prolong the remembrance of your brother by inserting some memoir of him among your other writings: for that is the only sort of monument that can be erected by man which no storm can injure, no time destroy. The others, which consist of piles of stone, masses of marble, or huge mounds of earth heaped on high, cannot preserve his memory for long, because they themselves perish; but the memorials which genius raises are everlasting. Lavish these upon your brother, embalm him in these: you will do better to immortalise him by an everlasting work of genius than to mourn over him with useless grief. As for Fortune herself, although I cannot just now plead her cause before you, because all that she has given us is now hateful to you, because she has taken something away from you, yet I will plead her cause as soon as time shall have rendered you a more impartial judge of her action: indeed she has bestowed much upon you to make amends for the injury which she has done you, and she will give more hereafter by way of atonement for it: and, after all, it was she herself who gave you this brother whom she has taken away. Forbear, then, to display your abilities against your own self, or to take part with your grief against yourself: your eloquence, can, no doubt, make trifles appear great, and, conversely, can disparage and depreciate great things until they seem the merest trifles; but let it reserve those powers and use them on some other subject, and at the present time devote its entire strength to the task of consoling you. Yet see whether even this task be not unnecessary. Nature demands from us a certain amount of grief, our imagination adds some more to it; but I will never forbid you to mourn at all. I know, indeed, that

there are some men, whose wisdom is of a harsh rather than a brave character, who say that the wise man never would mourn. It seems to me that they never can have been in the position of mourners, for otherwise their misfortune would have shaken all their haughty philosophy out of them, and, however much against their will, would have forced them to confess their sorrow. Reason will have done enough if she does but cut off from our grief all that is superfluous and useless: as for her not allowing us to grieve at all, that we ought neither to expect nor to wish for. Let her rather restrain us within the bounds of a chastened grief, which partakes neither of indifference nor of madness, and let her keep our minds in that attitude which becomes affection without excitement: let your tears flow, but let them some day cease to flow: groan as deeply as you will, but let your groans cease some day: regulate your conduct so that both philosophers and brothers may approve of it. Make yourself feel pleasure in often thinking about your brother, talk constantly about him, and keep him ever present in your memory; which you cannot succeed in doing unless you make the remembrance of him pleasant rather than sad: for it is but natural that the mind should shrink from a subject which it cannot contemplate without sadness. Think of his retiring disposition, of his abilities for business, his diligence in carrying it out, his loyalty to his word. Tell other men of all his sayings and doings, and remind your own self of them: think how good he was and how great you hoped he might become: for what success is there which you might not safely have wagered that such a brother would win?

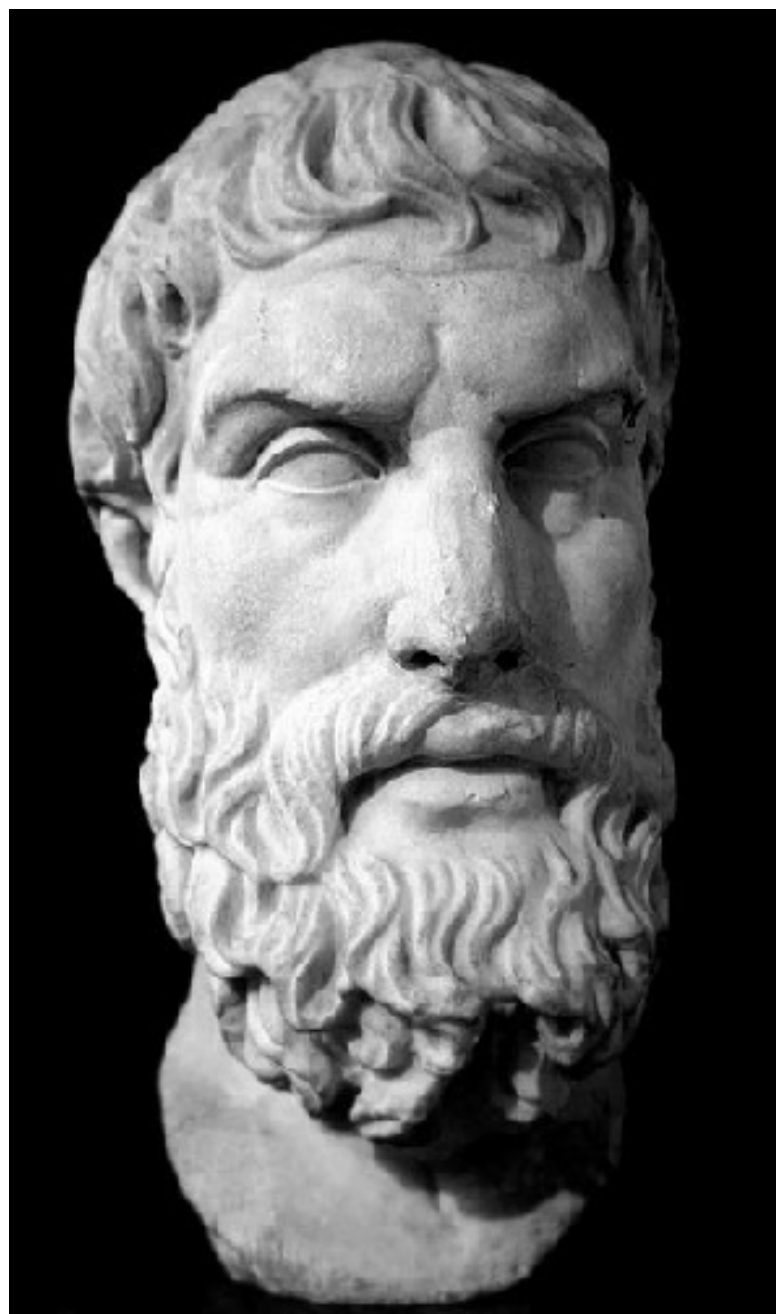
I have thrown together these reflexions in the best way that I could, for my mind is dimmed and stupefied with the tedium of my long exile: if, therefore, you should find them unworthy of the consideration of a person of your intelligence, or unable to console you in your grief, remember how impossible it is for one who is full of his own sorrows to find time to minister to those of others, and how hard it is to express oneself in the Latin language, when all around one hears nothing but a rude foreign jargon, which even barbarians of the more civilised sort regard with disgust.

THE MORAL EPISTLES



Translated by Richard Mott Gummere

Composed circa 64 at the end of Seneca's life, the *Epistulae morales ad Lucilium* is a collection of 124 letters addressed to the author's friend Lucilius, the procurator of Sicily, who is known only through Seneca's writings. Each epistle commences with the phrase "Seneca Lucilio suo salutem" (Seneca greets his Lucilius) and concludes with the word "Vale" ("Farewell"). In these letters, Seneca gives his friend advice on how to become a more devoted Stoic, while faced by the many ordeals of life. Although the epistles are products of Seneca's eclectic form of Stoic philosophy, as well as the author's high regard for the philosopher Epicurus, they also provide valuable insights into the daily life in ancient Rome.



Epicurus (341–270 BC) was an ancient Greek philosopher, as well as the founder of the school of philosophy called Epicureanism. Only a few fragments and letters of Epicurus' works remain, with many key quotations being preserved in Seneca's epistles.

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Introduction

Among the personalities of the early Roman Empire there are few who offer to the readers of to-day such dramatic interest as does Lucius Annaeus Seneca, the author of the Epistles which are translated in this volume. Born in a province, educated at Rome, prominent at the bar, a distinguished exile, a trusted minister of State, and a doomed victim of a capricious emperor, Seneca is so linked with the age in which he lived that in reading his works we read those of a true representative of the most thrilling period of Roman history.

Seneca was born in the year 4 B.C., a time of great opportunity, at Corduba, in Spain, son of the talented rhetorician, Annaeus Seneca. We gather that the family moved to Rome during the boyhood of Lucius, that he was educated for the bar, and that he was soon attracted by the Stoic philosophy, the stern nurse of heroes during the first century of the Empire. That his social connexions were distinguished we infer from the prominence and refinement of his brother Gallio, – the Gallio of the New Testament, – from the fact that he himself was noticed and almost condemned to death by the Emperor Caligula soon after he began to speak in public, and especially because his aunt, whom he visited in Egypt, was the wife of the governor of that country.

Up to the year 41 he prospered. He makes mention of his children, of his mother who, like the mother of Goethe, seems to have imbued him with idealism and a certain amount of mysticism, and of many valued friends. But during that year, as a result of court intrigue, he was banished to the island of Corsica. The charge against him was a too great intimacy with Iulia Livilla, unfortunate sister of the late emperor, and the arch-foe of Messalina, whose husband, Claudius, had recalled the princess from exile. We may discount any crime on Seneca's part because even the gossip-laden Suetonius says: "The charge was vague and the accused was given no opportunity to defend himself."

The eight years of exile were productive of much literary work. The tragedies, which have had such influence on later drama, are the

fruit of this period, besides certain essays on philosophic subjects, and a rather cringing letter to Polybius, a rich freedman at the court of Claudius. In 49, however, Fortune, whom Seneca as a Stoic so often ridicules, came to his rescue. Agrippina had him recalled and appointed tutor to her young son, later to become the Emperor Nero. Holding the usual offices of state, and growing in prominence, Seneca administered the affairs of the prince, in partnership with Burrus, the praetorian. Together they maintained the balance of power between throne and Senate until the death of Burrus in the year 62. After that time, a philosopher without the support of military power was unable to cope with the vices and whims of the monster on the throne.

The last two years of Seneca's life were spent in travelling about southern Italy, composing essays on natural history and relieving his burdened soul by correspondence with his friend Lucilius. In the year 65 came his suicide, anticipating an act of violence on the Emperor's part; in this deed of heroism he was nobly supported by his young wife Paulina. The best account of these dark days is given in Tacitus.

These letters are all addressed to Lucilius. From internal evidence we gather that the native country of this Lucilius was Campania, and his native city Pompeii or Naples. He was a Roman knight, having gained that position, as Seneca tells us, by sheer industry. Prominent in the civil service, he had filled many important positions and was, at the time when the *Letters* were written, procurator in Sicily. He seems to have had Epicurean tendencies, like so many men from this part of Italy; the author argues and tries to win him over to Stoicism, in the kindest manner. Lucilius wrote books, was interested in philosophy and geography, knew intimately many persons in high places, and is thought by some to be the author of the extant poem *Aetna*.

When their friendship began we cannot say. The *Naturales Quaestiones* and the *Letters* are the work of Seneca's closing years. Both are addressed to Lucilius. The essay *De Providentia*, which was also dedicated to him, is of doubtful date, and may be fixed at any time between the beginning of the exile in Corsica and the period when the *Letters* were written.

In spite of the many problems which confront us, it may be safely

said that the years 63-65 constitute the period of the *Letters*. We find possible allusions to the Campanian earthquake of 63, a reference to the conflagration at Lyons, which took place either in 64 or in 65, and various hints that the philosopher was travelling about Italy in order to forget politics. The form of this work, as Bacon says, is a collection of essays rather than of letters. The recipient is often mentioned by name; but his identity is secondary to the main purpose. The language at the beginning of the seventy-fifth letter, for example, might lead one to suppose that they were dashed off in close succession: "You complain that you receive from me letters which are rather carelessly written;" but the ingenious juxtaposition of effective words, the balance in style and thought, and the continual striving after point, indicate that the language of the diatribe had affected the informality of the epistle.

The structure of each letter is interesting. A concrete fact, such as the mention of an illness, a voyage by sea or land, an incident like the adventure in the Naples tunnel, a picnic party, or an assemblage of friends who discuss questions from Plato, or Aristotle, or Epicurus, – these are the elements which serve to justify the reflections which follow. After such an introduction, the writer takes up his theme; he deals with abstract subjects, such as the contempt of death, the stout-heartedness of the sage, or the quality of the Supreme Good. We shall not mention the sources of all these topics in footnotes, but shall aim only to explain that which is obscure in meaning or unusual in its import. Plato's Theory of Ideas, Aristotle's Categories, Theophrastus on Friendship, Epicurus on Pleasure, and all the countless doctrinal shades of difference which we find in the Stoic leaders, are at least sketched in outline.

But we must give full credit to the philosopher's own originality. In these letters, it is impossible to ignore the advance from a somewhat stiff and Ciceronian point of view into the attractive and debatable land of what one may fairly call modern ideas. The style of the Epistles is bold, and so is the thought.

Considered en masse, the letters form a fruitful and helpful handbook, of the very widest scope and interest. The value of intelligent reading and the studies which make for culture is presented to Lucilius with frequency, notably in Nos. II. and

LXXXVIII. Seneca agrees with the definition of higher studies as “those which have no reference to mere utility.” The dignity of the orator’s profession (XL. and CXIV.) is brought to the attention of a young self-made merchant who seems inclined towards platform display. The modern note is struck when the author protests against the swinish and debasing effects of slavery or gladiatorial combats (XLVII. and LXX.); preaches against the degeneracy of drunkenness (LXXXIII.); portrays the charms of plain living and love of nature (LVII., LXVII., LXXIX., LXXXVI., LXXXVII., XC., XCIV.); recommends retirement (XVIII., LI., LVI., LXXX., CXXII.); or manifests a Baconian interest in scientific inventions (LVII., LXXIX.). Most striking of all is the plea (XCIV.) for the equality of the sexes and for conjugal fidelity in the husband, to be interpreted no less strictly than honour on the part of the wife. The craze for athletics is also analyzed and rebuked (XV.).

The Epistles contain also, of course, the usual literary types which every Roman epistolographer would feel bound to introduce. There is the *consolatio*; there is the theme of friendship; there are second-hand lectures on philosophy taken from Plato and Aristotle and Theophrastus, as we have indicated above; and several characteristically Roman laudations of certain old men (including the author himself) who wrestle with physical infirmities. But the Stoic doctrine is interpreted better, from the Roman point of view, by no other Latin writer. The facts of Seneca’s life prove the sincerity of his utterances, and blunt the edge of many of the sneers which we find in Dio Cassius, regarding the fabulous sums which he had out at interest and the costly tables purchased for the palace of a millionaire.

Finally, in no pagan author, save perhaps Vergil, is the beauty of holiness (XLI.) so sincerely presented from a Roman standpoint. Although his connexion with the early Church has been disproved, Seneca shows the modern, the Christian, spirit. Three of the ideals mentioned above, the hatred of combats in the arena, the humane treatment of slaves, and the sanctity of marriage, draw us towards Seneca as towards a teacher like Jeremy Taylor.

There is no pretence of originality in the Latin text; the translator has adopted, with very few deviations, that of O. Hense’s second

edition. This text he has found to be excellent, and he has also derived assistance from the notes accompanying the Selected Letters of W. C. Summers.

Richard M. Gummere.

Haverford College, May, 1916.

I. On Saving Time

Greetings from Seneca to his friend Lucilius.

1. Continue to act thus, my dear Lucilius – set yourself free for your own sake; gather and save your time, which till lately has been forced from you, or filched away, or has merely slipped from your hands. Make yourself believe the truth of my words, – that certain moments are torn from us, that some are gently removed, and that others glide beyond our reach. The most disgraceful kind of loss, however, is that due to carelessness. Furthermore, if you will pay close heed to the problem, you will find that the largest portion of our life passes while we are doing ill, a goodly share while we are doing nothing, and the whole while we are doing that which is not to the purpose. 2. What man can you show me who places any value on his time, who reckons the worth of each day, who understands that he is dying daily? For we are mistaken when we look forward to death; the major portion of death has already passed. Whatever years be behind us are in death's hands.

Therefore, Lucilius, do as you write me that you are doing: hold every hour in your grasp. Lay hold of to-day's task, and you will not need to depend so much upon to-morrow's. While we are postponing, life speeds by. 3. Nothing, Lucilius, is ours, except time. We were entrusted by nature with the ownership of this single thing, so fleeting and slippery that anyone who will can oust us from possession. What fools these mortals be! They allow the cheapest and most useless things, which can easily be replaced, to be charged in the reckoning, after they have acquired them; but they never regard themselves as in debt when they have received some of that precious commodity, – time! And yet time is the one loan which even a grateful recipient cannot repay.

4. You may desire to know how I, who preach to you so freely, am practising. I confess frankly: my expense account balances, as you would expect from one who is free-handed but careful. I cannot boast that I waste nothing, but I can at least tell you what I am wasting, and the cause and manner of the loss; I can give you the reasons why I am a poor man. My situation, however, is the same as that of many

who are reduced to slender means through no fault of their own: every one forgives them, but no one comes to their rescue.

5. What is the state of things, then? It is this: I do not regard a man as poor, if the little which remains is enough for him. I advise you, however, to keep what is really yours; and you cannot begin too early. For, as our ancestors believed, it is too late to spare when you reach the dregs of the cask. Of that which remains at the bottom, the amount is slight, and the quality is vile. Farewell.

II. On Discursiveness in Reading

1. Judging by what you write me, and by what I hear, I am forming a good opinion regarding your future. You do not run hither and thither and distract yourself by changing your abode; for such restlessness is the sign of a disordered spirit. The primary indication, to my thinking, of a well-ordered mind is a man's ability to remain in one place and linger in his own company. 2. Be careful, however, lest this reading of many authors and books of every sort may tend to make you discursive and unsteady. You must linger among a limited number of master thinkers, and digest their works, if you would derive ideas which shall win firm hold in your mind. Everywhere means nowhere. When a person spends all his time in foreign travel, he ends by having many acquaintances, but no friends. And the same thing must hold true of men who seek intimate acquaintance with no single author, but visit them all in a hasty and hurried manner. 3. Food does no good and is not assimilated into the body if it leaves the stomach as soon as it is eaten; nothing hinders a cure so much as frequent change of medicine; no wound will heal when one salve is tried after another; a plant which is often moved can never grow strong. There is nothing so efficacious that it can be helpful while it is being shifted about. And in reading of many books is distraction.

Accordingly, since you cannot read all the books which you may possess, it is enough to possess only as many books as you can read. 4. "But," you reply, "I wish to dip first into one book and then into another." I tell you that it is the sign of an overnice appetite to toy with many dishes; for when they are manifold and varied, they cloy but do not nourish. So you should always read standard authors; and when you crave a change, fall back upon those whom you read before. Each day acquire something that will fortify you against poverty, against death, indeed against other misfortunes as well; and after you have run over many thoughts, select one to be thoroughly digested that day. 5. This is my own custom; from the many things which I have read, I claim some one part for myself.

The thought for today is one which I discovered in Epicurus; for I am wont to cross over even into the enemy's camp, – not as a

deserter, but as a scout. 6. He says: "Contented poverty is an honourable estate." Indeed, if it be contented, it is not poverty at all. It is not the man who has too little, but the man who craves more, that is poor. What does it matter how much a man has laid up in his safe, or in his warehouse, how large are his flocks and how fat his dividends, if he covets his neighbour's property, and reckons, not his past gains, but his hopes of gains to come? Do you ask what is the proper limit to wealth? It is, first, to have what is necessary, and, second, to have what is enough. Farewell.

III. On True and False Friendship

1. You have sent a letter to me through the hand of a “friend” of yours, as you call him. And in your very next sentence you warn me not to discuss with him all the matters that concern you, saying that even you yourself are not accustomed to do this; in other words, you have in the same letter affirmed and denied that he is your friend. 2. Now if you used this word of ours in the popular sense, and called him “friend” in the same way in which we speak of all candidates for election as “honourable gentlemen,” and as we greet all men whom we meet casually, if their names slip us for the moment, with the salutation “my dear sir,” – so be it. But if you consider any man a friend whom you do not trust as you trust yourself, you are mightily mistaken and you do not sufficiently understand what true friendship means. Indeed, I would have you discuss everything with a friend; but first of all discuss the man himself. When friendship is settled, you must trust; before friendship is formed, you must pass judgment. Those persons indeed put last first and confound their duties, who, violating the rules of Theophrastus, judge a man after they have made him their friend, instead of making him their friend after they have judged him. Ponder for a long time whether you shall admit a given person to your friendship; but when you have decided to admit him, welcome him with all your heart and soul. Speak as boldly with him as with yourself. 3. As to yourself, although you should live in such a way that you trust your own self with nothing which you could not entrust even to your enemy, yet, since certain matters occur which convention keeps secret, you should share with a friend at least all your worries and reflections. Regard him as loyal, and you will make him loyal. Some, for example, fearing to be deceived, have taught men to deceive; by their suspicions they have given their friend the right to do wrong. Why need I keep back any words in the presence of my friend? Why should I not regard myself as alone when in his company?

4. There is a class of men who communicate, to anyone whom they meet, matters which should be revealed to friends alone, and unload upon the chance listener whatever irks them. Others, again,

fear to confide in their closest intimates; and if it were possible, they would not trust even themselves, burying their secrets deep in their hearts. But we should do neither. It is equally faulty to trust everyone and to trust no one. Yet the former fault is, I should say, the more ingenuous, the latter the more safe. 5. In like manner you should rebuke these two kinds of men, – both those who always lack repose, and those who are always in repose. For love of bustle is not industry, – it is only the restlessness of a hunted mind. And true repose does not consist in condemning all motion as merely vexation; that kind of repose is slackness and inertia. 6. Therefore, you should note the following saying, taken from my reading in Pomponius: “Some men shrink into dark corners, to such a degree that they see darkly by day.” No, men should combine these tendencies, and he who reposes should act and he who acts should take repose. Discuss the problem with Nature; she will tell you that she has created both day and night. Farewell.

IV. On the Terrors of Death

1. Keep on as you have begun, and make all possible haste, so that you may have longer enjoyment of an improved mind, one that is at peace with itself. Doubtless you will derive enjoyment during the time when you are improving your mind and setting it at peace with itself; but quite different is the pleasure which comes from contemplation when one's mind is so cleansed from every stain that it shines. 2. You remember, of course, what joy you felt when you laid aside the garments of boyhood and donned the man's toga, and were escorted to the forum; nevertheless, you may look for a still greater joy when you have laid aside the mind of boyhood and when wisdom has enrolled you among men. For it is not boyhood that still stays with us, but something worse, – boyishness. And this condition is all the more serious because we possess the authority of old age, together with the follies of boyhood, yea, even the follies of infancy. Boys fear trifles, children fear shadows, we fear both.

3. All you need to do is to advance; you will thus understand that some things are less to be dreaded, precisely because they inspire us with great fear. No evil is great which is the last evil of all. Death arrives; it would be a thing to dread, if it could remain with you. But death must either not come at all, or else must come and pass away.

4. "It is difficult, however," you say, "to bring the mind to a point where it can scorn life." But do you not see what trifling reasons impel men to scorn life? One hangs himself before the door of his mistress; another hurls himself from the house-top that he may no longer be compelled to bear the taunts of a bad-tempered master; a third, to be saved from arrest after running away, drives a sword into his vitals. Do you not suppose that virtue will be as efficacious as excessive fear? No man can have a peaceful life who thinks too much about lengthening it, or believes that living through many consulships is a great blessing. 5. Rehearse this thought every day, that you may be able to depart from life contentedly; for many men clutch and cling to life, even as those who are carried down a rushing stream clutch and cling to briars and sharp rocks.

Most men ebb and flow in wretchedness between the fear of death

and the hardships of life; they are unwilling to live, and yet they do not know how to die. 6. For this reason, make life as a whole agreeable to yourself by banishing all worry about it. No good thing renders its possessor happy, unless his mind is reconciled to the possibility of loss; nothing, however, is lost with less discomfort than that which, when lost, cannot be missed. Therefore, encourage and toughen your spirit against the mishaps that afflict even the most powerful. 7. For example, the fate of Pompey was settled by a boy and a eunuch, that of Crassus by a cruel and insolent Parthian. Gaius Caesar ordered Lepidus to bare his neck for the axe of the tribune Dexter; and he himself offered his own throat to Chaerea. No man has ever been so far advanced by Fortune that she did not threaten him as greatly as she had previously indulged him. Do not trust her seeming calm; in a moment the sea is moved to its depths. The very day the ships have made a brave show in the games, they are engulfed. 8. Reflect that a highwayman or an enemy may cut your throat; and, though he is not your master, every slave wields the power of life and death over you. Therefore I declare to you: he is lord of your life that scorns his own. Think of those who have perished through plots in their own home, slain either openly or by guile; you will that just as many have been killed by angry slaves as by angry kings. What matter, therefore, how powerful he be whom you fear, when every one possesses the power which inspires your fear? 9. "But," you will say, "if you should chance to fall into the hands of the enemy, the conqueror will command that you be led away," – yes, whither you are already being led. Why do you voluntarily deceive yourself and require to be told now for the first time what fate it is that you have long been labouring under? Take my word for it: since the day you were born you are being led thither. We must ponder this thought, and thoughts of the like nature, if we desire to be calm as we await that last hour, the fear of which makes all previous hours uneasy.

10. But I must end my letter. Let me share with you the saying which pleased me to-day. It, too, is culled from another man's Garden: "Poverty brought into conformity with the law of nature, is great wealth." Do you know what limits that law of nature ordains for us? Merely to avert hunger, thirst, and cold. In order to banish

hunger and thirst, it is not necessary for you to pay court at the doors of the purse-proud, or to submit to the stern frown, or to the kindness that humiliates; nor is it necessary for you to scour the seas, or go campaigning; nature's needs are easily provided and ready to hand.

11. It is the superfluous things for which men sweat, – the superfluous things that wear our togas threadbare, that force us to grow old in camp, that dash us upon foreign shores. That which is enough is ready to our hands. He who has made a fair compact with poverty is rich. Farewell.

V. On the Philosopher's Mean

1. I commend you and rejoice in the fact that you are persistent in your studies, and that, putting all else aside, you make it each day your endeavour to become a better man. I do not merely exhort you to keep at it; I actually beg you to do so. I warn you, however, not to act after the fashion of those who desire to be conspicuous rather than to improve, by doing things which will rouse comment as regards your dress or general way of living. 2. Repellent attire, unkempt hair, slovenly beard, open scorn of silver dishes, a couch on the bare earth, and any other perverted forms of self-display, are to be avoided. The mere name of philosophy, however quietly pursued, is an object of sufficient scorn; and what would happen if we should begin to separate ourselves from the customs of our fellow-men? Inwardly, we ought to be different in all respects, but our exterior should conform to society. 3. Do not wear too fine, nor yet too frowzy, a toga. One needs no silver plate, encrusted and embossed in solid gold; but we should not believe the lack of silver and gold to be proof of the simple life. Let us try to maintain a higher standard of life than that of the multitude, but not a contrary standard; otherwise, we shall frighten away and repel the very persons whom we are trying to improve. We also bring it about that they are unwilling to imitate us in anything, because they are afraid lest they might be compelled to imitate us in everything.

4. The first thing which philosophy undertakes to give is fellow-feeling with all men; in other words, sympathy and sociability. We part company with our promise if we are unlike other men. We must see to it that the means by which we wish to draw admiration be not absurd and odious. Our motto, as you know, is "Live according to Nature"; but it is quite contrary to nature to torture the body, to hate unlaboured elegance, to be dirty on purpose, to eat food that is not only plain, but disgusting and forbidding. 5. Just as it is a sign of luxury to seek out dainties, so it is madness to avoid that which is customary and can be purchased at no great price. Philosophy calls for plain living, but not for penance; and we may perfectly well be plain and neat at the same time. This is the mean of which I approve;

our life should observe a happy medium between the ways of a sage and the ways of the world at large; all men should admire it, but they should understand it also.

6. "Well then, shall we act like other men? Shall there be no distinction between ourselves and the world?" Yes, a very great one; let men find that we are unlike the common herd, if they look closely. If they visit us at home, they should admire us, rather than our household appointments. He is a great man who uses earthenware dishes as if they were silver; but he is equally great who uses silver as if it were earthenware. It is the sign of an unstable mind not to be able to endure riches.

7. But I wish to share with you to-day's profit also. I find in the writings of our Hecato that the limiting of desires helps also to cure fears: "Cease to hope," he says, "and you will cease to fear." "But how," you will reply, "can things so different go side by side?" In this way, my dear Lucilius: though they do seem at variance, yet they are really united. Just as the same chain fastens the prisoner and the soldier who guards him, so hope and fear, dissimilar as they are, keep step together; fear follows hope. 8. I am not surprised that they proceed in this way; each alike belongs to a mind that is in suspense, a mind that is fretted by looking forward to the future. But the chief cause of both these ills is that we do not adapt ourselves to the present, but send our thoughts a long way ahead. And so foresight, the noblest blessing of the human race, becomes perverted. 9. Beasts avoid the dangers which they see, and when they have escaped them are free from care; but we men torment ourselves over that which is to come as well as over that which is past. Many of our blessings bring bane to us; for memory recalls the tortures of fear, while foresight anticipates them. The present alone can make no man wretched. Farewell.

VI. On Sharing Knowledge

1. I feel, my dear Lucilius, that I am being not only reformed, but transformed. I do not yet, however, assure myself, or indulge the hope, that there are no elements left in me which need to be changed. Of course there are many that should be made more compact, or made thinner, or be brought into greater prominence. And indeed this very fact is proof that my spirit is altered into something better, – that it can see its own faults, of which it was previously ignorant. In certain cases sick men are congratulated because they themselves have perceived that they are sick.

2. I therefore wish to impart to you this sudden change in myself; I should then begin to place a surer trust in our friendship, – the true friendship which hope and fear and self-interest cannot sever, the friendship in which and for the sake of which men meet death. 3. I can show you many who have lacked, not a friend, but a friendship; this, however, cannot possibly happen when souls are drawn together by identical inclinations into an alliance of honourable desires. And why can it not happen? Because in such cases men know that they have all things in common, especially their troubles.

You cannot conceive what distinct progress I notice that each day brings to me. 4. And when you say: “Give me also a share in these gifts which you have found so helpful,” I reply that I am anxious to heap all these privileges upon you, and that I am glad to learn in order that I may teach. Nothing will ever please me, no matter how excellent or beneficial, if I must retain the knowledge of it to myself. And if wisdom were given me under the express condition that it must be kept hidden and not uttered, I should refuse it. No good thing is pleasant to possess, without friends to share it.

5. I shall therefore send to you the actual books; and in order that you may not waste time in searching here and there for profitable topics, I shall mark certain passages, so that you can turn at once to those which I approve and admire. Of course, however, the living voice and the intimacy of a common life will help you more than the written word. You must go to the scene of action, first, because men put more faith in their eyes than in their ears, and second, because the

way is long if one follows precepts, but short and helpful, if one follows patterns. 6. Cleanthes could not have been the express image of Zeno, if he had merely heard his lectures; he shared in his life, saw into his hidden purposes, and watched him to see whether he lived according to his own rules. Plato, Aristotle, and the whole throng of sages who were destined to go each his different way, derived more benefit from the character than from the words of Socrates. It was not the class-room of Epicurus, but living together under the same roof, that made great men of Metrodorus, Hermarchus, and Polyaeus. Therefore I summon you, not merely that you may derive benefit, but that you may confer benefit; for we can assist each other greatly.

7. Meanwhile, I owe you my little daily contribution; you shall be told what pleased me to-day in the writings of Hecato; it is these words: "What progress, you ask, have I made? I have begun to be a friend to myself." That was indeed a great benefit; such a person can never be alone. You may be sure that such a man is a friend to all mankind. Farewell.

VII. On Crowds

1. Do you ask me what you should regard as especially to be avoided? I say, crowds; for as yet you cannot trust yourself to them with safety. I shall admit my own weakness, at any rate; for I never bring back home the same character that I took abroad with me. Something of that which I have forced to be calm within me is disturbed; some of the foes that I have routed return again. Just as the sick man, who has been weak for a long time, is in such a condition that he cannot be taken out of the house without suffering a relapse, so we ourselves are affected when our souls are recovering from a lingering disease. 2. To consort with the crowd is harmful; there is no person who does not make some vice attractive to us, or stamp it upon us, or taint us unconsciously therewith. Certainly, the greater the mob with which we mingle, the greater the danger.

But nothing is so damaging to good character as the habit of lounging at the games; for then it is that vice steals subtly upon one through the avenue of pleasure. 3. What do you think I mean? I mean that I come home more greedy, more ambitious, more voluptuous, and even more cruel and inhuman, because I have been among human beings. By chance I attended a mid-day exhibition, expecting some fun, wit, and relaxation, – an exhibition at which men's eyes have respite from the slaughter of their fellow-men. But it was quite the reverse. The previous combats were the essence of compassion; but now all the trifling is put aside and it is pure murder. The men have no defensive armour. They are exposed to blows at all points, and no one ever strikes in vain. 4. Many persons prefer this programme to the usual pairs and to the bouts "by request." Of course they do; there is no helmet or shield to deflect the weapon. What is the need of defensive armour, or of skill? All these mean delaying death. In the morning they throw men to the lions and the bears; at noon, they throw them to the spectators. The spectators demand that the slayer shall face the man who is to slay him in his turn; and they always reserve the latest conqueror for another butchering. The outcome of every fight is death, and the means are fire and sword. This sort of thing goes on while the arena is empty. 5.

You may retort: "But he was a highway robber; he killed a man!" And what of it? Granted that, as a murderer, he deserved this punishment, what crime have you committed, poor fellow, that you should deserve to sit and see this show? In the morning they cried "Kill him! Lash him! Burn him! Why does he meet the sword in so cowardly a way? Why does he strike so feebly? Why doesn't he die game? Whip him to meet his wounds! Let them receive blow for blow, with chests bare and exposed to the stroke!" And when the games stop for the intermission, they announce: "A little throatcutting in the meantime, so that there may still be something going on!"

Come now; do you not understand even this truth, that a bad example reacts on the agent? Thank the immortal gods that you are teaching cruelty to a person who cannot learn to be cruel. 6. The young character, which cannot hold fast to righteousness, must be rescued from the mob; it is too easy to side with the majority. Even Socrates, Cato, and Laelius might have been shaken in their moral strength by a crowd that was unlike them; so true it is that none of us, no matter how much he cultivates his abilities, can withstand the shock of faults that approach, as it were, with so great a retinue. 7. Much harm is done by a single case of indulgence or greed; the familiar friend, if he be luxurious, weakens and softens us imperceptibly; the neighbour, if he be rich, rouses our covetousness; the companion, if he be slanderous, rubs off some of his rust upon us, even though we be spotless and sincere. What then do you think the effect will be on character, when the world at large assaults it! You must either imitate or loathe the world.

8. But both courses are to be avoided; you should not copy the bad simply because they are many, nor should you hate the many because they are unlike you. Withdraw into yourself, as far as you can. Associate with those who will make a better man of you. Welcome those whom you yourself can improve. The process is mutual; for men learn while they teach. 9. There is no reason why pride in advertising your abilities should lure you into publicity, so that you should desire to recite or harangue before the general public. Of course I should be willing for you to do so if you had a stock-in-trade that suited such a mob; as it is, there is not a man of them who can

understand you. One or two individuals will perhaps come in your way, but even these will have to be moulded and trained by you so that they will understand you. You may say: “For what purpose did I learn all these things?” But you need not fear that you have wasted your efforts; it was for yourself that you learned them.

10. In order, however, that I may not to-day have learned exclusively for myself, I shall share with you three excellent sayings, of the same general purport, which have come to my attention. This letter will give you one of them as payment of my debt; the other two you may accept as a contribution in advance. Democritus says: “One man means as much to me as a multitude, and a multitude only as much as one man.” 11. The following also was nobly spoken by someone or other, for it is doubtful who the author was; they asked him what was the object of all this study applied to an art that would reach but very few. He replied: “I am content with few, content with one, content with none at all.” The third saying – and a noteworthy one, too – is by Epicurus, written to one of the partners of his studies: “I write this not for the many, but for you; each of us is enough of an audience for the other.” 12. Lay these words to heart, Lucilius, that you may scorn the pleasure which comes from the applause of the majority. Many men praise you; but have you any reason for being pleased with yourself, if you are a person whom the many can understand? Your good qualities should face inwards. Farewell.

VIII. On the Philosopher's Seclusion

1. "Do you bid me," you say, "shun the throng, and withdraw from men, and be content with my own conscience? Where are the counsels of your school, which order a man to die in the midst of active work?" As to the course which I seem to you to be urging on you now and then, my object in shutting myself up and locking the door is to be able to help a greater number. I never spend a day in idleness; I appropriate even a part of the night for study. I do not allow time for sleep but yield to it when I must, and when my eyes are wearied with waking and ready to fall shut, I keep them at their task. 2. I have withdrawn not only from men, but from affairs, especially from my own affairs; I am working for later generations, writing down some ideas that may be of assistance to them. There are certain wholesome counsels, which may be compared to prescriptions of useful drugs; these I am putting into writing; for I have found them helpful in ministering to my own sores, which, if not wholly cured, have at any rate ceased to spread.

3. I point other men to the right path, which I have found late in life, when wearied with wandering. I cry out to them: "Avoid whatever pleases the throng: avoid the gifts of Chance! Halt before every good which Chance brings to you, in a spirit of doubt and fear; for it is the dumb animals and fish that are deceived by tempting hopes. Do you call these things the 'gifts' of Fortune? They are snares. And any man among you who wishes to live a life of safety will avoid, to the utmost of his power, these limed twigs of her favour, by which we mortals, most wretched in this respect also, are deceived; for we think that we hold them in our grasp, but they hold us in theirs. 4. Such a career leads us into precipitous ways, and life on such heights ends in a fall. Moreover, we cannot even stand up against prosperity when she begins to drive us to leeward; nor can we go down, either, 'with the ship at least on her course,' or once for all; Fortune does not capsize us, – she plunges our bows under and dashes us on the rocks.

5. "Hold fast, then, to this sound and wholesome rule of life – that you indulge the body only so far as is needful for good health. The

body should be treated more rigorously, that it may not be disobedient to the mind. Eat merely to relieve your hunger; drink merely to quench your thirst; dress merely to keep out the cold; house yourself merely as a protection against personal discomfort. It matters little whether the house be built of turf, or of variously coloured imported marble; understand that a man is sheltered just as well by a thatch as by a roof of gold. Despise everything that useless toil creates as an ornament and an object of beauty. And reflect that nothing except the soul is worthy of wonder; for to the soul, if it be great, naught is great."

6. When I commune in such terms with myself and with future generations, do you not think that I am doing more good than when I appear as counsel in court, or stamp my seal upon a will, or lend my assistance in the senate, by word or action, to a candidate? Believe me, those who seem to be busied with nothing are busied with the greater tasks; they are dealing at the same time with things mortal and things immortal.

7. But I must stop, and pay my customary contribution, to balance this letter. The payment shall not be made from my own property; for I am still conning Epicurus. I read to-day, in his works, the following sentence: "If you would enjoy real freedom, you must be the slave of Philosophy." The man who submits and surrenders himself to her is not kept waiting; he is emancipated on the spot. For the very service of Philosophy is freedom.

8. It is likely that you will ask me why I quote so many of Epicurus's noble words instead of words taken from our own school. But is there any reason why you should regard them as sayings of Epicurus and not common property? How many poets give forth ideas that have been uttered, or may be uttered, by philosophers! I need not touch upon the tragedians and our writers of national drama; for these last are also somewhat serious, and stand half-way between comedy and tragedy. What a quantity of sagacious verses lie buried in the mime! How many of Publilius's lines are worthy of being spoken by buskin-clad actors, as well as by wearers of the slipper! 9. I shall quote one verse of his, which concerns philosophy, and particularly that phase of it which we were discussing a moment ago, wherein he says that the gifts of Chance are not to be regarded as part

of our possessions:

Still alien is whatever you have gained
By coveting.

10. I recall that you yourself expressed this idea much more happily and concisely:

What Chance has made yours is not really yours.

And a third, spoken by you still more happily, shall not be omitted:

The good that could be given, can be removed.

I shall not charge this up to the expense account, because I have given it to you from your own stock. Farewell.

IX. On Philosophy and Friendship

1. You desire to know whether Epicurus is right when, in one of his letters, he rebukes those who hold that the wise man is self-sufficient and for that reason does not stand in need of friendships. This is the objection raised by Epicurus against Stilbo and those who believe that the Supreme Good is a soul which is insensible to feeling.

2. We are bound to meet with a double meaning if we try to express the Greek term “lack of feeling” summarily, in a single word, rendering it by the Latin word *impatientia*. For it may be understood in the meaning the opposite to that which we wish it to have. What we mean to express is, a soul which rejects any sensation of evil; but people will interpret the idea as that of a soul which can endure no evil. Consider, therefore, whether it is not better to say “a soul that cannot be harmed,” or “a soul entirely beyond the realm of suffering.” 3. There is this difference between ourselves and the other school: our ideal wise man feels his troubles, but overcomes them; their wise man does not even feel them. But we and they alike hold this idea, – that the wise man is self-sufficient. Nevertheless, he desires friends, neighbours, and associates, no matter how much he is sufficient unto himself. 4. And mark how self-sufficient he is; for on occasion he can be content with a part of himself. If he lose a hand through disease or war, or if some accident puts out one or both of his eyes, he will be satisfied with what is left, taking as much pleasure in his impaired and maimed body as he took when it was sound. But while he does not pine for these parts if they are missing, he prefers not to lose them. 5. In this sense the wise man is self-sufficient, that he can do without friends, not that he desires to do without them. When I say “can,” I mean this: he endures the loss of a friend with equanimity.

But he need never lack friends, for it lies in his own control how soon he shall make good a loss. Just as Phidias, if he lose a statue, can straightway carve another, even so our master in the art of making friendships can fill the place of a friend he has lost. 6. If you ask how one can make oneself a friend quickly, I will tell you, provided we are agreed that I may pay my debt at once and square

the account, so far as this letter is concerned. Hecato, says: "I can show you a philtre, compounded without drugs, herbs, or any witch's incantation: 'If you would be loved, love.'" Now there is great pleasure, not only in maintaining old and established friendships, but also in beginning and acquiring new ones. 7. There is the same difference between winning a new friend and having already won him, as there is between the farmer who sows and the farmer who reaps. The philosopher Attalus used to say: "It is more pleasant to make than to keep a friend, as it is more pleasant to the artist to paint than to have finished painting." When one is busy and absorbed in one's work, the very absorption affords great delight; but when one has withdrawn one's hand from the completed masterpiece, the pleasure is not so keen. Henceforth it is the fruits of his art that he enjoys; it was the art itself that he enjoyed while he was painting. In the case of our children, their young manhood yields the more abundant fruits, but their infancy was sweeter.

8. Let us now return to the question. The wise man, I say, self-sufficient though he be, nevertheless desires friends if only for the purpose of practising friendship, in order that his noble qualities may not lie dormant. Not, however, for the purpose mentioned by Epicurus in the letter quoted above: "That there may be someone to sit by him when he is ill, to help him when he is in prison or in want;" but that he may have someone by whose sick-bed he himself may sit, someone a prisoner in hostile hands whom he himself may set free. He who regards himself only, and enters upon friendships for this reason, reckons wrongly. The end will be like the beginning: he has made friends with one who might assist him out of bondage; at the first rattle of the chain such a friend will desert him. 9. These are the so-called "fair-weather" friendships; one who is chosen for the sake of utility will be satisfactory only so long as he is useful. Hence prosperous men are blockaded by troops of friends; but those who have failed stand amid vast loneliness their friends fleeing from the very crisis which is to test their worth. Hence, also, we notice those many shameful cases of persons who, through fear, desert or betray. The beginning and the end cannot but harmonize. He who begins to be your friend because it pays will also cease because it pays. A man will be attracted by some reward offered in exchange

for his friendship, if he be attracted by aught in friendship other than friendship itself.

10. For what purpose, then, do I make a man my friend? In order to have someone for whom I may die, whom I may follow into exile, against whose death I may stake my own life, and pay the pledge, too. The friendship which you portray is a bargain and not a friendship; it regards convenience only, and looks to the results. 11. Beyond question the feeling of a lover has in it something akin to friendship; one might call it friendship run mad. But, though this is true, does anyone love for the sake of gain, or promotion, or renown? Pure love, careless of all other things, kindles the soul with desire for the beautiful object, not without the hope of a return of the affection. What then? Can a cause which is more honourable produce a passion that is base? 12. You may retort: "We are now discussing the question whether friendship is to be cultivated for its own sake." On the contrary, nothing more urgently requires demonstration; for if friendship is to be sought for its own sake, he may seek it who is self-sufficient. "How, then," you ask, "does he seek it?" Precisely as he seeks an object of great beauty, not attracted to it by desire for gain, nor yet frightened by the instability of Fortune. One who seeks friendship for favourable occasions, strips it of all its nobility.

13. "The wise man is self-sufficient." This phrase, my dear Lucilius, is incorrectly explained by many; for they withdraw the wise man from the world, and force him to dwell within his own skin. But we must mark with care what this sentence signifies and how far it applies; the wise man is sufficient unto himself for a happy existence, but not for mere existence. For he needs many helps towards mere existence; but for a happy existence he needs only a sound and upright soul, one that despises Fortune.

14. I should like also to state to you one of the distinctions of Chrysippus, who declares that the wise man is in want of nothing, and yet needs many things. "On the other hand," he says, "nothing is needed by the fool, for he does not understand how to use anything, but he is in want of everything." The wise man needs hands, eyes, and many things that are necessary for his daily use; but he is in want of nothing. For want implies a necessity, and nothing is necessary to the wise man. 15. Therefore, although he is self-sufficient, yet he has

need of friends. He craves as many friends as possible, not, however, that he may live happily; for he will live happily even without friends. The Supreme Good calls for no practical aids from outside; it is developed at home, and arises entirely within itself. If the good seeks any portion of itself from without, it begins to be subject to the play of Fortune.

16. People may say: "But what sort of existence will the wise man have, if he be left friendless when thrown into prison, or when stranded in some foreign nation, or when delayed on a long voyage, or when out upon a lonely shore?" His life will be like that of Jupiter, who, amid the dissolution of the world, when the gods are confounded together and Nature rests for a space from her work, can retire into himself and give himself over to his own thoughts. In some such way as this the sage will act; he will retreat into himself, and live with himself. 17. As long as he is allowed to order his affairs according to his judgment, he is self-sufficient – and marries a wife; he is self-sufficient – and brings up children; he is self-sufficient – and yet could not live if he had to live without the society of man. Natural promptings, and not his own selfish needs, draw him into Friendships. For just as other things have for us an inherent attractiveness, so has friendship. As we hate solitude and crave society, as nature draws men to each other, so in this matter also there is an attraction which makes us desirous of friendship. Nevertheless, though the sage may love his friends dearly, often comparing them with himself, and putting them ahead of himself, yet all the good will be limited to his own being, and he will speak the words which were spoken by the very Stilbo whom Epicurus criticizes in his letter. For Stilbo, after his country was captured and his children and his wife lost, as he emerged from the general desolation alone and yet happy, spoke as follows to Demetrius, called Sacker of Cities because of the destruction he brought upon them, in answer to the question whether he had lost anything: "I have all my goods with me!" 19. There is a brave and stout-hearted man for you! The enemy conquered, but Stilbo conquered his conqueror. "I have lost nothing!" Aye, he forced Demetrius to wonder whether he himself had conquered after all. "My goods are all with me!" In other words, he deemed nothing that might be taken from him to be a

good.

We marvel at certain animals because they can pass through fire and suffer no bodily harm; but how much more marvellous is a man who has marched forth unhurt and unscathed through fire and sword and devastation! Do you understand now how much easier it is to conquer a whole tribe than to conquer one *man*? This saying of Stilbo makes common ground with Stoicism; the Stoic also can carry his goods unimpaired through cities that have been burned to ashes; for he is self-sufficient. Such are the bounds which he sets to his own happiness.

20. But you must not think that our school alone can utter noble words; Epicurus himself, the reviler of Stilbo, spoke similar language; put it down to my credit, though I have already wiped out my debt for the present day. He says: "Whoever does not regard what he has as most ample wealth, is unhappy, though he be master of the whole world." Or, if the following seems to you a more suitable phrase, – for we must try to render the meaning and not the mere words: "A man may rule the world and still be unhappy, if he does not feel that he is supremely happy." 21. In order, however, that you may know that these sentiments are universal, suggested, of course, by Nature, you will find in one of the comic poets this verse;

Unblest is he who thinks himself unblest.

or what does your condition matter, if it is bad in your own eyes?

22. You may say; "What then? If yonder man, rich by base means, and yonder man, lord of many but slave of more, shall call themselves happy, will their own opinion make them happy?" It matters not what one says, but what one feels; also, not how one feels on one particular day, but how one feels at all times. There is no reason, however, why you should fear that this great privilege will fall into unworthy hands; only the wise man is pleased with his own. Folly is ever troubled with weariness of itself. Farewell.

X. On Living to Oneself

1. Yes, I do not change my opinion: avoid the many, avoid the few, avoid even the individual. I know of no one with whom I should be willing to have you shared. And see what an opinion of you I have; for I dare to trust you with your own self. Crates, they say, the disciple of the very Stilbo whom I mentioned in a former letter, noticed a young man walking by himself, and asked him what he was doing all alone. "I am communing with myself," replied the youth. "Pray be careful, then," said Crates, "and take good heed; you are communing with a bad man!"

2. When persons are in mourning, or fearful about something, we are accustomed to watch them that we may prevent them from making a wrong use of their loneliness. No thoughtless person ought to be left alone; in such cases he only plans folly, and heaps up future dangers for himself or for others; he brings into play his base desires; the mind displays what fear or shame used to repress; it whets his boldness, stirs his passions, and goads his anger. And finally, the only benefit that solitude confers, – the habit of trusting no man, and of fearing no witnesses, – is lost to the fool; for he betrays himself.

Mark therefore what my hopes are for you, – nay, rather, what I am promising myself, inasmuch as hope is merely the title of an uncertain blessing: I do not know any person with whom I should prefer you to associate rather than yourself. 3. I remember in what a great-souled way you hurled forth certain phrases, and how full of strength they were! I immediately congratulated myself and said: "These words did not come from the edge of the lips; these utterances have a solid foundation. This man is not one of the many; he has regard for his real welfare." 4. Speak, and live, in this way; see to it that nothing keeps you down. As for your former prayers, you may dispense the gods from answering them; offer new prayers; pray for a sound mind and for good health, first of soul and then of body. And of course you should offer those prayers frequently. Call boldly upon God; you will not be asking him for that which belongs to another.

5. But I must, as is my custom, send a little gift along with this

letter. It is a true saying which I have found in Athenodorus: “Know that thou art freed from all desires when thou hast reached such a point that thou prayest to God for nothing except what thou canst pray for openly.” But how foolish men are now! They whisper the basest of prayers to heaven; but if anyone listens, they are silent at once. That which they are unwilling for men to know, they communicate to God. Do you not think, then, that some such wholesome advice as this could be given you: “Live among men as if God beheld you; speak with God as if men were listening”? Farewell.

XI. On the Blush of Modesty

1. Your friend and I have had a conversation. He is a man of ability; his very first words showed what spirit and understanding he possesses, and what progress he has already made. He gave me a foretaste, and he will not fail to answer thereto. For he spoke not from forethought, but was suddenly caught off his guard. When he tried to collect himself, he could scarcely banish that hue of modesty, which is a good sign in a young man; the blush that spread over his face seemed so to rise from the depths. And I feel sure that his habit of blushing will stay with him after he has strengthened his character, stripped off all his faults, and become wise. For by no wisdom can natural weaknesses of the body be removed. That which is implanted and inborn can be toned down by training, but not overcome. 2. The steadiest speaker, when before the public, often breaks into a perspiration, as if he had wearied or over-heated himself; some tremble in the knees when they rise to speak; I know of some whose teeth chatter, whose tongues falter, whose lips quiver. Training and experience can never shake off this habit; nature exerts her own power and through such a weakness makes her presence known even to the strongest. 3. I know that the blush, too, is a habit of this sort, spreading suddenly over the faces of the most dignified men. It is, indeed more prevalent in youth, because of the warmer blood and the sensitive countenance; nevertheless, both seasoned men and aged men are affected by it. Some are most dangerous when they redden, as if they were letting all their sense of shame escape. 4. Sulla, when the blood mantled his cheeks, was in his fiercest mood. Pompey had the most sensitive cast of countenance; he always blushed in the presence of a gathering, and especially at a public assembly. Fabianus also, I remember, reddened when he appeared as a witness before the senate; and his embarrassment became him to a remarkable degree. 5. Such a habit is not due to mental weakness, but to the novelty of a situation; an inexperienced person is not necessarily confused, but is usually affected, because he slips into this habit by natural tendency of the body. Just as certain men are full-blooded, so others are of a quick and mobile blood, that rushes to

the face at once.

6. As I remarked, Wisdom can never remove this habit; for if she could rub out all our faults, she would be mistress of the universe. Whatever is assigned to us by the terms of our birth and the blend in our constitutions, will stick with us, no matter how hard or how long the soul may have tried to master itself. And we cannot forbid these feelings any more than we can summon them. 7. Actors in the theatre, who imitate the emotions, who portray fear and nervousness, who depict sorrow, imitate bashfulness by hanging their heads, lowering their voices, and keeping their eyes fixed and rooted upon the ground. They cannot, however, muster a blush; for the blush cannot be prevented or acquired. Wisdom will not assure us of a remedy, or give us help against it; it comes or goes unbidden, and is a law unto itself.

8. But my letter calls for its closing sentence. Hear and take to heart this useful and wholesome motto: “Cherish some man of high character, and keep him ever before your eyes, living as if he were watching you, and ordering all your actions as if he beheld them.” 9. Such, my dear Lucilius, is the counsel of Epicurus; he has quite properly given us a guardian and an attendant. We can get rid of most sins, if we have a witness who stands near us when we are likely to go wrong. The soul should have someone whom it can respect, – one by whose authority it may make even its inner shrine more hallowed. Happy is the man who can make others better, not merely when he is in their company, but even when he is in their thoughts! And happy also is he who can so revere a man as to calm and regulate himself by calling him to mind! One who can so revere another, will soon be himself worthy of reverence. 10. Choose therefore a Cato; or, if Cato seems too severe a model, choose some Laelius, a gentler spirit. Choose a master whose life, conversation, and soul-expressing face have satisfied you; picture him always to yourself as your protector or your pattern. For we must indeed have someone according to whom we may regulate our characters; you can never straighten that which is crooked unless you use a ruler. Farewell.

XII. On Old Age

1. Wherever I turn, I see evidences of my advancing years. I visited lately my country-place, and protested against the money which was spent on the tumble-down building. My bailiff maintained that the flaws were not due to his own carelessness; "he was doing everything possible, but the house was old." And this was the house which grew under my own hands! What has the future in store for me, if stones of my own age are already crumbling? 2. I was angry, and I embraced the first opportunity to vent my spleen in the bailiff's presence. "It is clear," I cried, "that these plane-trees are neglected; they have no leaves. Their branches are so gnarled and shrivelled; the boles are so rough and unkempt! This would not happen, if someone loosened the earth at their feet, and watered them." The bailiff swore by my protecting deity that "he was doing everything possible, and never relaxed his efforts, but those trees were old." Between you and me, I had planted those trees myself, I had seen them in their first leaf. 3. Then I turned to the door and asked: "Who is that broken-down dotard? You have done well to place him at the entrance; for he is outward bound. Where did you get him? What pleasure did it give you to take up for burial some other man's dead?" But the slave said: "Don't you know me, sir? I am Felicio; you used to bring me little images. My father was Philositus the steward, and I am your pet slave." "The man is clean crazy," I remarked. "Has my pet slave become a little boy again? But it is quite possible; his teeth are just dropping out."

4. I owe it to my country-place that my old age became apparent whithersoever I turned. Let us cherish and love old age; for it is full of pleasure if one knows how to use it. Fruits are most welcome when almost over; youth is most charming at its close; the last drink delights the toper, the glass which souses him and puts the finishing touch on his drunkenness. 5. Each pleasure reserves to the end the greatest delights which it contains. Life is most delightful when it is on the downward slope, but has not yet reached the abrupt decline. And I myself believe that the period which stands, so to speak, on the edge of the roof, possesses pleasures of its own. Or else the very fact

of our not wanting pleasures has taken the place of the pleasures themselves. How comforting it is to have tired out one's appetites, and to have done with them! 6. "But," you say, "it is a nuisance to be looking death in the face!" Death, however, should be looked in the face by young and old alike. We are not summoned according to our rating on the censor's list. Moreover, no one is so old that it would be improper for him to hope for another day of existence. And one day, mind you, is a stage on life's journey.

Our span of life is divided into parts; it consists of large circles enclosing smaller. One circle embraces and bounds the rest; it reaches from birth to the last day of existence. The next circle limits the period of our young manhood. The third confines all of childhood in its circumference. Again, there is, in a class by itself, the year; it contains within itself all the divisions of time by the multiplication of which we get the total of life. The month is bounded by a narrower ring. The smallest circle of all is the day; but even a day has its beginning and its ending, its sunrise and its sunset. 7. Hence Heraclitus, whose obscure style gave him his surname, remarked: "One day is equal to every day." Different persons have interpreted the saying in different ways. Some hold that days are equal in number of hours, and this is true; for if by "day" we mean twenty-four hours' time, all days must be equal, inasmuch as the night acquires what the day loses. But others maintain that one day is equal to all days through resemblance, because the very longest space of time possesses no element which cannot be found in a single day, – namely, light and darkness, – and even to eternity day makes these alternations more numerous, not different when it is shorter and different again when it is longer. 8. Hence, every day ought to be regulated as if it closed the series, as if it rounded out and completed our existence.

Pacuvius, who by long occupancy made Syria his own, used to hold a regular burial sacrifice in his own honour, with wine and the usual funeral feasting, and then would have himself carried from the dining-room to his chamber, while eunuchs applauded and sang in Greek to a musical accompaniment: "He has lived his life, he has lived his life!" 9. Thus Pacuvius had himself carried out to burial every day. Let us, however, do from a good motive what he used to

do from a debased motive; let us go to our sleep with joy and gladness; let us say:

I have lived; the course which Fortune set for me
Is finished.

And if God is pleased to add another day, we should welcome it with glad hearts. That man is happiest, and is secure in his own possession of himself, who can await the morrow without apprehension. When a man has said: "I have lived!", every morning he arises he receives a bonus.

10. But now I ought to close my letter. "What?" you say; "shall it come to me without any little offering? "Be not afraid; it brings something, – nay, more than something, a great deal. For what is more noble than the following saying of which I make this letter the bearer: "It is wrong to live under constraint; but no man is constrained to live under constraint." Of course not. On all sides lie many short and simple paths to freedom; and let us thank God that no man can be kept in life. We may spurn the very constraints that hold us. 11. "Epicurus," you reply, "uttered these words; what are you doing with another's property?" Any truth, I maintain, is my own property. And I shall continue to heap quotations from Epicurus upon you, so that all persons who swear by the words of another, and put a value upon the speaker and not upon the thing spoken, may understand that the best ideas are common property. Farewell.

XIII. On Groundless Fears

1. I know that you have plenty of spirit; for even before you began to equip yourself with maxims which were wholesome and potent to overcome obstacles, you were taking pride in your contest with Fortune; and this is all the more true, now that you have grappled with Fortune and tested your powers. For our powers can never inspire in us implicit faith in ourselves except when many difficulties have confronted us on this side and on that, and have occasionally even come to close quarters with us. It is only in this way that the true spirit can be tested, – the spirit that will never consent to come under the jurisdiction of things external to ourselves. 2. This is the touchstone of such a spirit; no prizefighter can go with high spirits into the strife if he has never been beaten black and blue; the only contestant who can confidently enter the lists is the man who has seen his own blood, who has felt his teeth rattle beneath his opponent's fist, who has been tripped and felt the full force of his adversary's charge, who has been downed in body but not in spirit, one who, as often as he falls, rises again with greater defiance than ever. 3. So then, to keep up my figure, Fortune has often in the past got the upper hand of you, and yet you have not surrendered, but have leaped up and stood your ground still more eagerly. For manliness gains much strength by being challenged; nevertheless, if you approve, allow me to offer some additional safeguards by which you may fortify yourself.

4. There are more things, Lucilius, likely to frighten us than there are to crush us; we suffer more often in imagination than in reality. I am not speaking with you in the Stoic strain but in my milder style. For it is our Stoic fashion to speak of all those things, which provoke cries and groans, as unimportant and beneath notice; but you and I must drop such great-sounding words, although, heaven knows, they are true enough. What I advise you to do is, not to be unhappy before the crisis comes; since it may be that the dangers before which you paled as if they were threatening you, will never come upon you; they certainly have not yet come. 5. Accordingly, some things torment us more than they ought; some torment us before they ought;

and some torment us when they ought not to torment us at all. We are in the habit of exaggerating, or imagining, or anticipating, sorrow.

The first of these three faults may be postponed for the present, because the subject is under discussion and the case is still in court, so to speak. That which I should call trifling, you will maintain to be most serious; for of course I know that some men laugh while being flogged, and that others wince at a box on the ear. We shall consider later whether these evils derive their power from their own strength, or from our own weakness.

6. Do me the favour, when men surround you and try to talk you into believing that you are unhappy, to consider not what you hear but what you yourself feel, and to take counsel with your feelings and question yourself independently, because you know your own affairs better than anyone else does. Ask: "Is there any reason why these persons should condole with me? Why should they be worried or even fear some infection from me, as if troubles could be transmitted? Is there any evil involved, or is it a matter merely of ill report, rather than an evil?" Put the question voluntarily to yourself: "Am I tormented without sufficient reason, am I morose, and do I convert what is not an evil into what is an evil?" 7. You may retort with the question: "How am I to know whether my sufferings are real or imaginary?" Here is the rule for such matters: we are tormented either by things present, or by things to come, or by both. As to things present, the decision is easy. Suppose that your person enjoys freedom and health, and that you do not suffer from any external injury. As to what may happen to it in the future, we shall see later on. To-day there is nothing wrong with it. 8. "But," you say, "something will happen to it." First of all, consider whether your proofs of future trouble are sure. For it is more often the case that we are troubled by our apprehensions, and that we are mocked by that mocker, rumour, which is wont to settle wars, but much more often settles individuals. Yes, my dear Lucilius; we agree too quickly with what people say. We do not put to the test those things which cause our fear; we do not examine into them; we blench and retreat just like soldiers who are forced to abandon their camp because of a dust-cloud raised by stampeding cattle, or are thrown into a panic by the

spreading of some unauthenticated rumour. 9. And somehow or other it is the idle report that disturbs us most. For truth has its own definite boundaries, but that which arises from uncertainty is delivered over to guesswork and the irresponsible license of a frightened mind. That is why no fear is so ruinous and so uncontrollable as panic fear. For other fears are groundless, but this fear is witless.

10. Let us, then, look carefully into the matter. It is likely that some troubles will befall us; but it is not a present fact. How often has the unexpected happened! How often has the expected never come to pass! And even though it is ordained to be, what does it avail to run out to meet your suffering? You will suffer soon enough, when it arrives; so look forward meanwhile to better things. 11. What shall you gain by doing this? Time. There will be many happenings meanwhile which will serve to postpone, or end, or pass on to another person, the trials which are near or even in your very presence. A fire has opened the way to flight. Men have been let down softly by a catastrophe. Sometimes the sword has been checked even at the victim's throat. Men have survived their own executioners. Even bad fortune is fickle. Perhaps it will come, perhaps not; in the meantime it is not. So look forward to better things.

12. The mind at times fashions for itself false shapes of evil when there are no signs that point to any evil; it twists into the worst construction some word of doubtful meaning; or it fancies some personal grudge to be more serious than it really is, considering not how angry the enemy is, but to what lengths he may go if he is angry. But life is not worth living, and there is no limit to our sorrows, if we indulge our fears to the greatest possible extent; in this matter, let prudence help you, and condemn with a resolute spirit even when it is in plain sight. If you cannot do this, counter one weakness with another, and temper your fear with hope. There is nothing so certain among these objects of fear that it is not more certain still that things we dread sink into nothing and that things we hope for mock us.

13. Accordingly, weigh carefully your hopes as well as your fears, and whenever all the elements are in doubt, decide in your own

favour; believe what you prefer. And if fear wins a majority of the votes, incline in the other direction anyhow, and cease to harass your soul, reflecting continually that most mortals, even when no troubles are actually at hand or are certainly to be expected in the future, become excited and disquieted. No one calls a halt on himself, when he begins to be urged ahead; nor does he regulate his alarm according to the truth. No one says; "The author of the story is a fool, and he who has believed it is a fool, as well as he who fabricated it." We let ourselves drift with every breeze; we are frightened at uncertainties, just as if they were certain. We observe no moderation. The slightest thing turns the scales and throws us forthwith into a panic.

14. But I am ashamed either to admonish you sternly or to try to beguile you with such mild remedies. Let another say. "Perhaps the worst will not happen." You yourself must say. "Well, what if it does happen? Let us see who wins! Perhaps it happens for my best interests; it may be that such a death will shed credit upon my life." Socrates was ennobled by the hemlock draught. Wrench from Cato's hand his sword, the vindicator of liberty, and you deprive him of the greatest share of his glory. 15. I am exhorting you far too long, since you need reminding rather than exhortation. The path on which I am leading you is not different from that on which your nature leads you; you were born to such conduct as I describe. Hence there is all the more reason why you should increase and beautify the good that is in you.

16. But now, to close my letter, I have only to stamp the usual seal upon it, in other words, to commit thereto some noble message to be delivered to you: "The fool, with all his other faults, has this also, he is always getting ready to live." Reflect, my esteemed Lucilius, what this saying means, and you will see how revolting is the fickleness of men who lay down every day new foundations of life, and begin to build up fresh hopes even at the brink of the grave. 17. Look within your own mind for individual instances; you will think of old men who are preparing themselves at that very hour for a political career, or for travel, or for business. And what is baser than getting ready to live when you are already old? I should not name the author of this motto, except that it is somewhat unknown to fame and is not one of

those popular sayings of Epicurus which I have allowed myself to praise and to appropriate. Farewell.

XIV. On the Reasons for Withdrawing from the World

1. I confess that we all have an inborn affection for our body; I confess that we are entrusted with its guardianship. I do not maintain that the body is not to be indulged at all; but I maintain that we must not be slaves to it. He will have many masters who makes his body his master, who is over-fearful in its behalf, who judges everything according to the body. 2. We should conduct ourselves not as if we ought to live for the body, but as if we could not live without it. Our too great love for it makes us restless with fears, burdens us with cares, and exposes us to insults. Virtue is held too cheap by the man who counts his body too dear. We should cherish the body with the greatest care; but we should also be prepared, when reason, self-respect, and duty demand the sacrifice, to deliver it even to the flames.

3. Let us, however, in so far as we can, avoid discomforts as well as dangers, and withdraw to safe ground, by thinking continually how we may repel all objects of fear. If I am not mistaken, there are three main classes of these: we fear want, we fear sickness, and we fear the troubles which result from the violence of the stronger. 4. And of all these, that which shakes us most is the dread which hangs over us from our neighbour's ascendancy; for it is accompanied by great outcry and uproar. But the natural evils which I have mentioned, – want and sickness, steal upon us silently with no shock of terror to the eye or to the ear. The other kind of evil comes, so to speak, in the form of a huge parade. Surrounding it is a retinue of swords and fire and chains and a mob of beasts to be let loose upon the disembowelled entrails of men. 5. Picture to yourself under this head the prison, the cross, the rack, the hook, and the stake which they drive straight through a man until it protrudes from his throat. Think of human limbs torn apart by chariots driven in opposite directions, of the terrible shirt smeared and interwoven with inflammable materials, and of all the other contrivances devised by cruelty, in addition to those which I have mentioned! 6. It is not

surprising, then, if our greatest terror is of such a fate; for it comes in many shapes and its paraphernalia are terrifying. For just as the torturer accomplishes more in proportion to the number of instruments which he displays, – indeed, the spectacle overcomes those who would have patiently withstood the suffering, – similarly, of all the agencies which coerce and master our minds, the most effective are those which can make a display. Those other troubles are of course not less serious; I mean hunger, thirst, ulcers of the stomach, and fever that parches our very bowels. They are, however, secret; they have no bluster and no heralding; but these, like huge arrays of war, prevail by virtue of their display and their equipment.

7. Let us, therefore, see to it that we abstain from giving offence. It is sometimes the people that we ought to fear; or sometimes a body of influential oligarchs in the Senate, if the method of governing the State is such that most of the business is done by that body; and sometimes individuals equipped with power by the people and against the people. It is burdensome to keep the friendship of all such persons; it is enough not to make enemies of them. So the wise man will never provoke the anger of those in power; nay, he will even turn his course, precisely as he would turn from a storm if he were steering a shi. When you travelled to Sicily, you crossed the Straits. The reckless pilot scorned the blustering South Wind, – the wind which roughens the Sicilian Sea and forces it into choppy currents; he sought not the shore on the left, but the strand hard by the place where Charybdis throws the seas into confusion. Your more careful pilot, however, questions those who know the locality as to the tides and the meaning of the clouds; he holds his course far from that region notorious for its swirling waters. Our wise man does the same he shuns a strong man who may be injurious to him, making a point of not seeming to avoid him, because an important part of one's safety lies in not seeking safety openly; for what one avoids, one condemns,

9. We should therefore look about us, and see how we may protect ourselves from the mob. And first of all, we should have no cravings like theirs; for rivalry results in strife. Again, let us possess nothing that can be snatched from us to the great profit of a plotting foe. Let there be as little booty as possible on your person. No one sets out to

shed the blood of his fellow-men for the sake of bloodshed, – at any rate very few. More murderers speculate on their profits than give vent to hatred. If you are empty-handed, the highwayman passes you by: even along an infested road, the poor may travel in peace. ¹⁰ Next, we must follow the old adage and avoid three things with special care: hatred, jealousy, and scorn. And wisdom alone can show you how this may be done. It is hard to observe a mean; we must be chary of letting the fear of jealousy lead us into becoming objects of scorn, lest, when we choose not to stamp others down, we let them think that they can stamp us down. The power to inspire fear has caused many men to be in fear. Let us withdraw ourselves in every way; for it is as harmful to be scorned as to be admired.

11. One must therefore take refuge in philosophy; this pursuit, not only in the eyes of good men, but also in the eyes of those who are even moderately bad, is a sort of protecting emblem. For speechmaking at the bar, or any other pursuit that claims the people's attention, wins enemies for a man; but philosophy is peaceful and minds her own business. Men cannot scorn her; she is honoured by every profession, even the vilest among them. Evil can never grow so strong, and nobility of character can never be so plotted against, that the name of philosophy shall cease to be worshipful and sacred.

Philosophy itself, however should be practised with calmness and moderation. ¹² “Very well, then,” you retort, “do you regard the philosophy of Marcus Cato as moderate? Cato's voice strove to check a civil war. Cato parted the swords of maddened chieftains. When some fell foul of Pompey and others fell foul of Caesar, Cato defied both parties at once!” ¹³ Nevertheless, one may well question whether, in those days, a wise man ought to have taken any part in public affairs, and ask: “What do you mean, Marcus Cato? It is not now a question of freedom; long since has freedom gone to rack and ruin. The question is, whether it is Caesar or Pompey who controls the State. Why, Cato, should you take sides in that dispute? It is no business of yours; a tyrant is being selected. What does it concern you who conquers? The better man may win; but the winner is bound to be the worse man.” I have referred to Cato's final rôle. But even in previous years the wise man was not permitted to intervene in such plundering of the state; for what could Cato do but raise his voice

and utter unavailing words? At one time he was “bustled” by the mob and spat upon and forcibly removed from the forum and marked for exile; at another, he was taken straight to prison from the senate-chamber.

14. However, we shall consider later whether the wise man ought to give his attention to politics; meanwhile, I beg you to consider those Stoics who, shut out from public life, have withdrawn into privacy for the purpose of improving men’s existence and framing laws for the human race without incurring the displeasure of those in power. The wise man will not upset the customs of the people, nor will he invite the attention of the populace by any novel ways of living.

15. “What then? Can one who follows out this Plan be safe in any case?” I cannot guarantee you this any more than I can guarantee good health in the case of a man who observes moderation; although, as a matter of fact, good health results from such moderation. Sometimes a vessel perishes in harbour; but what do you think happens on the open sea? And how much more beset with danger that man would be, who even in his leisure is not secure, if he were busily working at many things! Innocent persons sometimes perish; who would deny that? But the guilty perish more frequently. A soldier’s skill is not at fault if he receives the death-blow through his armour. 16. And finally, the wise man regards the reason for all his actions, but not the results. The beginning is in our own power; fortune decides the issue, but I do not allow her to pass sentence upon myself. You may say: “But she can inflict a measure of suffering and of trouble.” The highwayman does not pass sentence when he slays.

17. Now you are stretching forth your hand for the daily gift. Golden indeed will be the gift with which I shall load you; and, inasmuch as we have mentioned gold, let me tell you how its use and enjoyment may bring you greater pleasure. “He who needs riches least, enjoys riches most.” “Author’s name, please!” you say. Now, to show you how generous I am, it is my intent to praise the dicta of other schools. The phrase belongs to Epicurus, or Metrodorus, or some one of that particular thinking-sho. But what difference does it make who spoke the words? They were uttered for the world. He

who craves riches feels fear on their account. No man, however, enjoys a blessing that brings anxiety; he is always trying to add a little more. While he puzzles over increasing his wealth, he forgets how to use it. He collects his accounts, he wears out the pavement in the forum, he turns over his ledger, – in short, he ceases to be master and becomes a steward. Farewell.

XV. On Brawn and Brains

1. The old Romans had a custom which survived even into my lifetime. They would add to the opening words of a letter: "If you are well, it is well; I also am well." Persons like ourselves would do well to say, "If you are studying philosophy, it is well." For this is just what "being well" means. Without philosophy the mind is sickly, and the body, too, though it may be very powerful, is strong only as that of a madman or a lunatic is strong. 2. This, then, is the sort of health you should primarily cultivate; the other kind of health comes second, and will involve little effort, if you wish to be well physically. It is indeed foolish, my dear Lucilius, and very unsuitable for a cultivated man, to work hard over developing the muscles and broadening the shoulders and strengthening the lungs. For although your heavy feeding produce good results and your sinews grow solid, you can never be a match, either in strength or in weight, for a first-class bull. Besides, by overloading the body with food you strangle the soul and render it less active. Accordingly, limit the flesh as much as possible, and allow free play to the spirit. 3. Many inconveniences beset those who devote themselves to such pursuits. In the first place, they have their exercises, at which they must work and waste their life-force and render it less fit to bear a strain or the severer studies. Second, their keen edge is dulled by heavy eating. Besides, they must take orders from slaves of the vilest stamp, – men who alternate between the oil-flask and the flagon, whose day passes satisfactorily if they have got up a good perspiration and quaffed, to make good what they have lost in sweat, huge draughts of liquor which will sink deeper because of their fasting. Drinking and sweating, – it's the life of a dyspeptic!

4. Now there are short and simple exercises which tire the body rapidly, and so save our time; and time is something of which we ought to keep strict account. These exercises are running, brandishing weights, and jumping, – high-jumping or broad-jumping, or the kind which I may call, "the Priest's dance," or, in slighting terms, "the clothes-cleaner's jump." Select for practice any one of these, and you will find it plain and easy. 5. But whatever you do,

come back soon from body to mind. The mind must be exercised both day and night, for it is nourished by moderate labour. and this form of exercise need not be hampered by cold or hot weather, or even by old age. Cultivate that good which improves with the years.

6. Of course I do not command you to be always bending over your books and your writing materials; the mind must have a change, – but a change of such a kind that it is not unnerved, but merely unbent. Riding in a litter shakes up the body, and does not interfere with study: one may read, dictate, converse, or listen to another; nor does walking prevent any of these things.

7. You need not scorn voice-culture; but I forbid you to practise raising and lowering your voice by scales and specific intonations. What if you should next propose to take lessons in walking! If you consult the sort of person whom starvation has taught new tricks, you will have someone to regulate your steps, watch every mouthful as you eat, and go to such lengths as you yourself, by enduring him and believing in him, have encouraged his effrontery to go. “What, then?” you will ask; “is my voice to begin at the outset with shouting and straining the lungs to the utmost?” No; the natural thing is that it be aroused to such a pitch by easy stages, just as persons who are wrangling begin with ordinary conversational tones and then pass to shouting at the top of their lungs. No speaker cries “Help me, citizens!” at the outset of his speech.

8. Therefore, whenever your spirit’s impulse prompts you, raise a hubbub, now in louder now in milder tones, according as your voice, as well as your spirit, shall suggest to you, when you are moved to such a performance. Then let your voice, when you rein it in and call it back to earth, come down gently, not collapse; it should trail off in tones half way between high and low, and should not abruptly drop from its raving in the uncouth manner of countrymen. For our purpose is, not to give the voice exercise, but to make it give us exercise.

9. You see, I have relieved you of no slight bother; and I shall throw in a little complementary present, – it is Greek, too. Here is the proverb; it is an excellent one: “The fool’s life is empty of gratitude and full of fears; its course lies wholly toward the future.” “Who uttered these words?” you say. The same writer whom I mentioned before. And what sort of life do you think is meant by the fool’s life?

That of Baba and Isio? No; he means our own, for we are plunged by our blind desires into ventures which will harm us, but certainly will never satisfy us; for if we could be satisfied with anything, we should have been satisfied long ago; nor do we reflect how pleasant it is to demand nothing, how noble it is to be contented and not to be dependent upon Fortune. ¹⁰ Therefore continually remind yourself, Lucilius, how many ambitions you have attained. When you see many ahead of you, think how many are behind! If you would thank the gods, and be grateful for your past life, you should contemplate how many men you have outstripped. But what have you to do with the others? You have outstripped yourself.

¹¹ Fix a limit which you will not even desire to pass, should you have the power. At last, then, away with all these treacherous goods! They look better to those who hope for them than to those who have attained them. If there were anything substantial in them, they would sooner or later satisfy you; as it is, they merely rouse the drinkers' thirst. Away with fripperies which only serve for show! As to what the future's uncertain lot has in store, why should I demand of Fortune that she give rather than demand of myself that I should not crave? And why should I crave? Shall I heap up my winnings, and forget that man's lot is unsubstantial? For what end should I toil? Lo, to-day is the last; if not, it is near the last. Farewell.

XVI. On Philosophy, the Guide of Life

1. It is clear to you, I am sure, Lucilius, that no man can live a happy life, or even a supportable life, without the study of wisdom; you know also that a happy life is reached when our wisdom is brought to completion, but that life is at least endurable even when our wisdom is only begun. This idea, however, clear though it is, must be strengthened and implanted more deeply by daily reflection; it is more important for you to keep the resolutions you have already made than to go on and make noble ones. You must persevere, must develop new strength by continuous study, until that which is only a good inclination becomes a good settled purpose. 2. Hence you no longer need to come to me with much talk and protestations; I know that you have made great progress. I understand the feelings which prompt your words; they are not feigned or specious words. Nevertheless I shall tell you what I think, – that at present I have hopes for you, but not yet perfect trust. And I wish that you would adopt the same attitude towards yourself; there is no reason why you should put confidence in yourself too quickly and readily. Examine yourself; scrutinize and observe yourself in divers ways; but mark, before all else, whether it is in philosophy or merely in life itself that you have made progress. 3. Philosophy is no trick to catch the public; it is not devised for show. It is a matter, not of words, but of facts. It is not pursued in order that the day may yield some amusement before it is spent, or that our leisure may be relieved of a tedium that irks us. It moulds and constructs the soul; it orders our life, guides our conduct, shows us what we should do and what we should leave undone; it sits at the helm and directs our course as we waver amid uncertainties. Without it, no one can live fearlessly or in peace of mind. Countless things that happen every hour call for advice; and such advice is to be sought in philosophy.

4. Perhaps someone will say: “How can philosophy help me, if Fate exists? Of what avail is philosophy, if God rules the universe? Of what avail is it, if Chance governs everything? For not only is it impossible to change things that are determined, but it is also impossible to plan beforehand against what is undetermined; either

God has forestalled my plans, and decided what I am to do, or else Fortune gives no free play to my plans.” 5. Whether the truth, Lucilius, lies in one or in all of these views, we must be philosophers; whether Fate binds us down by an inexorable law, or whether God as arbiter of the universe has arranged everything, or whether Chance drives and tosses human affairs without method, philosophy ought to be our defence. She will encourage us to obey God cheerfully, but Fortune defiantly; she will teach us to follow God and endure Chance. 6. But it is not my purpose now to be led into a discussion as to what is within our own control, – if foreknowledge is supreme, or if a chain of fated events drags us along in its clutches, or if the sudden and the unexpected play the tyrant over us; I return now to my warning and my exhortation, that you should not allow the impulse of your spirit to weaken and grow cold. Hold fast to it and establish it firmly, in order that what is now impulse may become a habit of the mind.

7. If I know you well, you have already been trying to find out, from the very beginning of my letter, what little contribution it brings to you. Sift the letter, and you will find it. You need not wonder at any genius of mine; for as yet I am lavish only with other men’s property. – But why did I say “other men”? Whatever is well said by anyone is mine. This also is a saying of Epicurus: “If you live according to nature, you will never be poor; if you live according to opinion, you will never be rich.” 8. Nature’s wants are slight; the demands of opinion are boundless. Suppose that the property of many millionaires is heaped up in your possession. Assume that fortune carries you far beyond the limits of a private income, decks you with gold, clothes you in purple, and brings you to such a degree of luxury and wealth that you can bury the earth under your marble floors; that you may not only possess, but tread upon, riches. Add statues, paintings, and whatever any art has devised for the luxury; you will only learn from such things to crave still greater.

9. Natural desires are limited; but those which spring from false opinion can have no stopping-point. The false has no limits. When you are travelling on a road, there must be an end; but when astray, your wanderings are limitless. Recall your steps, therefore, from idle things, and when you would know whether that which you seek is

based upon a natural or upon a misleading desire, consider whether it can stop at any definite point. If you find, after having travelled far, that there is a more distant goal always in view, you may be sure that this condition is contrary to nature. Farewell.

XVII. On Philosophy and Riches

1. Cast away everything of that sort, if you are wise; nay, rather that you may be wise; strive toward a sound mind at top speed and with your whole strength. If any bond holds you back, untie it, or sever it. "But," you say, "my estate delays me; I wish to make such disposition of it that it may suffice for me when I have nothing to do, lest either poverty be a burden to me, or I myself a burden to others."

2. You do not seem, when you say this, to know the strength and power of that good which you are considering. You do indeed grasp the all important thing, the great benefit which philosophy confers, but you do not yet discern accurately its various functions, nor do you yet know how great is the help we receive from philosophy in everything, everywhere, – how, (to use Cicero's language,) it not only succours us in the greatest matters but also descends to the smallest. Take my advice; call wisdom into consultation; she will advise you not to sit for ever at your ledger.

3. Doubtless, your object, what you wish to attain by such postponement of your studies, is that poverty may not have to be feared by you. But what if it is something to be desired? Riches have shut off many a man from the attainment of wisdom; poverty is unburdened and free from care. When the trumpet sounds, the poor man knows that he is not being attacked; when there is a cry of "Fire," he only seeks a way of escape, and does not ask what he can save; if the poor man must go to sea, the harbour does not resound, nor do the wharves bustle with the retinue of one individual. No throng of slaves surrounds the poor man, – slaves for whose mouths the master must covet the fertile crops of regions beyond the sea.

4. It is easy to fill a few stomachs, when they are well trained and crave nothing else but to be filled. Hunger costs but little; squeamishness costs much. Poverty is contented with fulfilling pressing needs.

Why, then, should you reject Philosophy as a comrade? 5. Even the rich man copies her ways when he is in his senses. If you wish to have leisure for your mind, either be a poor man, or resemble a poor man. Study cannot be helpful unless you take pains to live simply; and living simply is voluntary poverty. Away, then, with all excuses

like: "I have not yet enough; when I have gained the desired amount, then I shall devote myself wholly to philosophy." And yet this ideal, which you are putting off and placing second to other interests, should be secured first of all; you should begin with it. You retort: "I wish to acquire something to live on." Yes, but learn while you are acquiring it; for if anything forbids you to live nobly, nothing forbids you to die nobly. 6. There is no reason why poverty should call us away from philosophy, – no, nor even actual want. For when hastening after wisdom, we must endure even hunger. Men have endured hunger when their towns were besieged, and what other reward for their endurance did they obtain than that they did not fall under the conqueror's power? How much greater is the promise of the prize of everlasting liberty, and the assurance that we need fear neither God nor man! Even though we starve, we must reach that goal. 7. Armies have endured all manner of want, have lived on roots, and have resisted hunger by means of food too revolting to mention. All this they have suffered to gain a kingdom, and, – what is more marvellous, – to gain a kingdom that will be another's. Will any man hesitate to endure poverty, in order that he may free his mind from madness?

Therefore one should not seek to lay up riches first; one may attain to philosophy, however, even without money for the journey. 8. It is indeed so. After you have come to possess all other things, shall you then wish to possess wisdom also? Is philosophy to be the last requisite in life, – a sort of supplement? Nay, your plan should be this: be a philosopher now, whether you have anything or not, – for if you have anything, how do you know that you have not too much already? – but if you have nothing, seek understanding first, before anything else. 9. "But," you say, "I shall lack the necessities of life." In the first place, you cannot lack them; because nature demands but little, and the wise man suits his needs to nature. But if the utmost pinch of need arrives, he will quickly take leave of life and cease being a trouble to himself. If, however, his means of existence are meagre and scanty, he will make the best of them, without being anxious or worried about anything more than the bare necessities; he will do justice to his belly and his shoulders; with free and happy spirit he will laugh at the bustling of rich men, and the flurried ways

of those who are hastening after wealth, ¹⁰. and say: "Why of your own accord postpone your real life to the distant future? Shall you wait for some interest to fall due, or for some income on your merchandise, or for a place in the will of some wealthy old man, when you can be rich here and now. Wisdom offers wealth in ready money, and pays it over to those in whose eyes she has made wealth superfluous." These remarks refer to other men; you are nearer the rich class. Change the age in which you live, and you have too much. But in every age, what is enough remains the same.

11. I might close my letter at this point, if I had not got you into bad habits. One cannot greet Parthian royalty without bringing a gift; and in your case I cannot say farewell without paying a price. But what of it? I shall borrow from Epicurus: "The acquisition of riches has been for many men, not an end, but a change, of troubles." ¹². I do not wonder. For the fault is not in the wealth, but in the mind itself. That which had made poverty a burden to us, has made riches also a burden. Just as it matters little whether you lay a sick man on a wooden or on a golden bed, for whithersoever he be moved he will carry his malady with him; so one need not care whether the diseased mind is bestowed upon riches or upon poverty. His malady goes with the man. Farewell.

XVIII. On Festivals and Fasting

1. It is the month of December, and yet the city is at this very moment in a sweat. License is given to the general merrymaking. Everything resounds with mighty preparations, – as if the Saturnalia differed at all from the usual business day! So true it is that the difference is nil, that I regard as correct the remark of the man who said: “Once December was a month; now it is a year.”

2. If I had you with me, I should be glad to consult you and find out what you think should be done, – whether we ought to make no change in our daily routine, or whether, in order not to be out of sympathy with the ways of the public, we should dine in gayer fashion and doff the toga. As it is now, we Romans have changed our dress for the sake of pleasure and holiday-making, though in former times that was only customary when the State was disturbed and had fallen on evil days. 3. I am sure that, if I know you aright, playing the part of an umpire you would have wished that we should be neither like the liberty-capped throng in all ways, nor in all ways unlike them; unless, perhaps, this is just the season when we ought to lay down the law to the soul, and bid it be alone in refraining from pleasures just when the whole mob has let itself go in pleasures; for this is the surest proof which a man can get of his own constancy, if he neither seeks the things which are seductive and allure him to luxury, nor is led into them. 4. It shows much more courage to remain dry and sober when the mob is drunk and vomiting; but it shows greater self-control to refuse to withdraw oneself and to do what the crowd does, but in a different way, – thus neither making oneself conspicuous nor becoming one of the crowd. For one may keep holiday without extravagance.

5. I am so firmly determined, however, to test the constancy of your mind that, drawing from the teachings of great men, I shall give you also a lesson: Set aside a certain number of days, during which you shall be content with the scantiest and cheapest fare, with coarse and rough dress, saying to yourself the while: “Is this the condition that I feared?” 6. It is precisely in times of immunity from care that the soul should toughen itself beforehand for occasions of greater

stress, and it is while Fortune is kind that it should fortify itself against her violence. In days of peace the soldier performs manoeuvres, throws up earthworks with no enemy in sight, and wearies himself by gratuitous toil, in order that he may be equal to unavoidable toil. If you would not have a man flinch when the crisis comes, train him before it comes. Such is the course which those men have followed who, in their imitation of poverty, have every month come almost to want, that they might never recoil from what they had so often rehearsed.

7. You need not suppose that I mean meals like Timon's, or "paupers' huts," or any other device which luxurious millionaires use to beguile the tedium of their lives. Let the pallet be a real one, and the coarse cloak; let the bread be hard and grimy. Endure all this for three or four days at a time, sometimes for more, so that it may be a test of yourself instead of a mere hobby. Then, I assure you, my dear Lucilius, you will leap for joy when filled with a pennyworth of food, and you will understand that a man's peace of mind does not depend upon Fortune; for, even when angry she grants enough for our needs.

8. There is no reason, however, why you should think that you are doing anything great; for you will merely be doing what many thousands of slaves and many thousands of poor men are doing every day. But you may credit yourself with this item, – that you will not be doing it under compulsion, and that it will be as easy for you to endure it permanently as to make the experiment from time to time. Let us practise our strokes on the "dummy"; let us become intimate with poverty, so that Fortune may not catch us off our guard. We shall be rich with all the more comfort, if we once learn how far poverty is from being a burden.

9. Even Epicurus, the teacher of pleasure, used to observe stated intervals, during which he satisfied his hunger in niggardly fashion; he wished to see whether he thereby fell short of full and complete happiness, and, if so, by what amount he fell short, and whether this amount was worth purchasing at the price of great effort. At any rate, he makes such a statement in the well known letter written to Polyaenus in the archonship of Charinus. Indeed, he boasts that he himself lived on less than a penny, but that Metrodorus, whose progress was not yet so great, needed a whole penny. 10. Do you think

that there can be fullness on such fare? Yes, and there is pleasure also, – not that shifty and fleeting Pleasure which needs a fillip now and then, but a pleasure that is steadfast and sure. For though water, barley-meal, and crusts of barley-bread, are not a cheerful diet, yet it is the highest kind of Pleasure to be able to derive pleasure from this sort of food, and to have reduced one's needs to that modicum which no unfairness of Fortune can snatch away. 11. Even prison fare is more generous; and those who have been set apart for capital punishment are not so meanly fed by the man who is to execute them. Therefore, what a noble soul must one have, to descend of one's own free will to a diet which even those who have been sentenced to death have not to fear! This is indeed forestalling the spearthrusts of Fortune.

12. So begin, my dear Lucilius, to follow the custom of these men, and set apart certain days on which you shall withdraw from your business and make yourself at home with the scantiest fare. Establish business relations with poverty.

Dare, O my friend, to scorn the sight of wealth,
And mould thyself to kinship with thy God.

13. For he alone is in kinship with God who has scorned wealth. Of course I do not forbid you to possess it, but I would have you reach the point at which you possess it dauntlessly; this can be accomplished only by persuading yourself that you can live happily without it as well as with it, and by regarding riches always as likely to elude you.

14. But now I must begin to fold up my letter. "Settle your debts first," you cry. Here is a draft on Epicurus; he will pay down the sum: "Ungoverned anger begets madness." You cannot help knowing the truth of these words, since you have had not only slaves, but also enemies. 15. But indeed this emotion blazes out against all sorts of persons; it springs from love as much as from hate, and shows itself not less in serious matters than in jest and sport. And it makes no difference how important the provocation may be, but into what kind of soul it penetrates. Similarly with fire; it does not matter how great is the flame, but what it falls upon. For solid timbers have repelled a

very great fire; conversely, dry and easily inflammable stuff nourishes the slightest spark into a conflagration. So it is with anger, my dear Lucilius; the outcome of a mighty anger is madness, and hence anger should be avoided, not merely that we may escape excess, but that we may have a healthy mind. Farewell.

XIX. On Worldliness and Retirement

1. I leap for joy whenever I receive letters from you. For they fill me with hope; they are now not mere assurances concerning you, but guarantees. And I beg and pray you to proceed in this course; for what better request could I make of a friend than one which is to be made for his own sake? If possible, withdraw yourself from all the business of which you speak; and if you cannot do this, tear yourself away. We have dissipated enough of our time already – let us in old age begin to pack up our baggage. 2. Surely there is nothing in this that men can begrudge us. We have spent our lives on the high seas; let us die in harbour. Not that I would advise you to try to win fame by your retirement; one's retirement should neither be paraded nor concealed. Not concealed, I say, for I shall not go so far in urging you as to expect you to condemn all men as mad and then seek out for yourself a hiding-place and oblivion; rather make this your business, that your retirement be not conspicuous, though it should be obvious. 3. In the second place, while those whose choice is unhampered from the start will deliberate on that other question, whether they wish to pass their lives in obscurity, in your case there is not a free choice. Your ability and energy have thrust you into the work of the world; so have the charm of your writings and the friendships you have made with famous and notable men. Renown has already taken you by storm. You may sink yourself into the depths of obscurity and utterly hide yourself; yet your earlier acts will reveal you. 4. You cannot keep lurking in the dark; much of the old gleam will follow you wherever you fly.

Peace you can claim for yourself without being disliked by anyone, without any sense of loss, and without any pangs of spirit. For what will you leave behind you that you can imagine yourself reluctant to leave? Your clients? But none of these men courts you for yourself; they merely court something from you. People used to hunt friends, but now they hunt pelf; if a lonely old man changes his will, the morning-caller transfers himself to another door. Great things cannot be bought for small sums; so reckon up whether it is preferable to leave your own true self, or merely some of your

belongings. 5. Would that you had had the privilege of growing old amid the limited circumstances of your origin, and that fortune had not raised you to such heights! You were removed far from the sight of wholesome living by your swift rise to prosperity, by your province, by your position as procurator, and by all that such things promise; you will next acquire more important duties and after them still more. And what will be the result? 6. Why wait until there is nothing left for you to crave? That time will never come. We hold that there is a succession of causes, from which fate is woven; similarly, you may be sure, there is a succession in our desires; for one begins where its predecessor ends. You have been thrust into an existence which will never of itself put an end to your wretchedness and your slavery. Withdraw your chafed neck from the yoke; it is better that it should be cut off once for all, than galled for ever. 7. If you retreat to privacy, everything will be on a smaller scale, but you will be satisfied abundantly; in your present condition, however, there is no satisfaction in the plenty which is heaped upon you on all sides. Would you rather be poor and sated, or rich and hungry? Prosperity is not only greedy, but it also lies exposed to the greed of others. And as long as nothing satisfies you, you yourself cannot satisfy others.

8. “But,” you say, “how can I take my leave?” Any way you please. Reflect how many hazards you have ventured for the sake of money, and how much toil you have undertaken for a title! You must dare something to gain leisure, also, – or else grow old amid the worries of procuratorships abroad and subsequently of civil duties at home, living in turmoil and in ever fresh floods of responsibilities, which no man has ever succeeded in avoiding by unobtrusiveness or by seclusion of life. For what bearing on the case has your personal desire for a secluded life? Your position in the world desires the opposite! What if, even now, you allow that position to grow greater? But all that is added to your successes will be added to your fears. 9. At this point I should like to quote a saying of Maecenas, who spoke the truth when he stood on the very summit: “There’s thunder even on the loftiest peaks.” If you ask me in what book these words are found, they occur in the volume entitled *Prometheus*. He simply meant to say that these lofty peaks have their tops surrounded

with thunder-storms. But is any power worth so high a price that a man like you would ever, in order to obtain it, adopt a style so debauched as that? Maecenas was indeed a man of parts, who would have left a great pattern for Roman oratory to follow, had his good fortune not made him effeminate, – nay, had it not emasculated him! An end like his awaits you also, unless you forthwith shorten sail and, – as Maecenas was not willing to do until it was too late, – hug the shore!

10. This saying of Maecenas's might have squared my account with you; but I feel sure, knowing you, that you will get out an injunction against me, and that you will be unwilling to accept payment of my debt in such crude and debased currency. However that may be, I shall draw on the account of Epicurus. He says: "You must reflect carefully beforehand with whom you are to eat and drink, rather than what you are to eat and drink. For a dinner of meats without the company of a friend is like the life of a lion or a wolf." 11. This privilege will not be yours unless you withdraw from the world; otherwise, you will have as guests only those whom your slave-secretary sorts out from the throng of callers. It is, however, a mistake to select your friend in the reception-hall or to test him at the dinner-table. The most serious misfortune for a busy man who is overwhelmed by his possessions is, that he believes men to be his friends when he himself is not a friend to them, and that he deems his favours to be effective in winning friends, although, in the case of certain men, the more they owe, the more they hate. A trifling debt makes a man your debtor; a large one makes him an enemy. 12. "What," you say, "do not kindnesses establish friendships?" They do, if one has had the privilege of choosing those who are to receive them, and if they are placed judiciously, instead of being scattered broadcast.

Therefore, while you are beginning to call your mind your own, meantime apply this maxim of the wise: consider that it is more important who receives a thing, than what it is he receives. Farewell.

XX. On Practising what you Preach

1. If you are in good health and if you think yourself worthy of becoming at last your own master, I am glad. For the credit will be mine, if I can drag you from the floods in which you are being buffeted without hope of emerging. This, however, my dear Lucilius, I ask and beg of you, on your part, that you let wisdom sink into your soul, and test your progress, not by mere speech or writings, but by stoutness of heart and decrease of desire. Prove your words by your deeds.

2. Far different is the purpose of those who are speech-making and trying to win the approbation of a throng of hearers, far different that of those who allure the ears of young men and idlers by many-sided or fluent argumentation; philosophy teaches us to act, not to speak; it exacts of every man that he should live according to his own standards, that his life should not be out of harmony with his words, and that, further, his inner life should be of one hue and not out of harmony with all his activities. This, I say, is the highest duty and the highest proof of wisdom, – that deed and word should be in accord, that a man should be equal to himself under all conditions, and always the same.

“But,” you reply, “who can maintain this standard?” Very few, to be sure; but there are some. It is indeed a hard undertaking, and I do not say that the philosopher can always keep the same pace. But he can always travel the same path. 3. Observe yourself, then, and see whether your dress and your house are inconsistent, whether you treat yourself lavishly and your family meanly, whether you eat frugal dinners and yet build luxurious houses. You should lay hold, once for all, upon a single norm to live by, and should regulate your whole life according to this norm. Some men restrict themselves at home, but strut with swelling port before the public; such discordance is a fault, and it indicates a wavering mind which cannot yet keep its balance. 4. And I can tell you, further, whence arise this unsteadiness and disagreement of action and purpose; it is because no man resolves upon what he wishes, and, even if he has done so, he does not persist in it, but jumps the track; not only does he change,

but he returns and slips back to the conduct which he has abandoned and abjured. 5. Therefore, to omit the ancient definitions of wisdom and to include the whole manner of human life, I can be satisfied with the following: "What is wisdom? Always desiring the same things, and always refusing the same things." You may be excused from adding the little proviso, – that what you wish, should be right; since no man can always be satisfied with the same thing, unless it is right.

6. For this reason men do not know what they wish, except at the actual moment of wishing; no man ever decided once and for all to desire or to refuse. Judgment varies from day to day, and changes to the opposite, making many a man pass his life in a kind of game. Press on, therefore, as you have begun; perhaps you will be led to perfection, or to a point which you alone understand is still short of perfection.

7. "But what," you say, "will become of my crowded household without a household income?" If you stop supporting that crowd, it will support itself; or perhaps you will learn by the bounty of poverty what you cannot learn by your own bounty. Poverty will keep for you your true and tried friends; you will be rid of the men who were not seeking you for yourself, but for something which you have. Is it not true, however, that you should love poverty, if only for this single reason, – that it will show you those by whom you are loved? O when will that time come, when no one shall tell lies to compliment you! 8. Accordingly, let your thoughts, your efforts, your desires, help to make you content with your own self and with the goods that spring from yourself; and commit all your other prayers to God's keeping! What happiness could come closer home to you? Bring yourself down to humble conditions, from which you cannot be ejected and in order that you may do so with greater alacrity, the contribution contained in this letter shall refer to that subject; I shall bestow it upon you forthwith.

9. Although you may look askance, Epicurus will once again be glad to settle my indebtedness: "Believe me, your words will be more imposing if you sleep on a cot and wear rags. For in that case you will not be merely saying them; you will be demonstrating their truth." I, at any rate, listen in a different spirit to the utterances of our

friend Demetrius, after I have seen him reclining without even a cloak to cover him, and, more than this, without rugs to lie upon. He is not only a teacher of the truth, but a witness to the truth. 10. "May not a man, however, despise wealth when it lies in his very pocket?" Of course; he also is great-souled, who sees riches heaped up round him and, after wondering long and deeply because they have come into his possession, smiles, and hears rather than feels that they are his. It means much not to be spoiled by intimacy with riches; and he is truly great who is poor amidst riches. 11. "Yes, but I do not know," you say, "how the man you speak of will endure poverty, if he falls into it suddenly." Nor do I, Epicurus, know whether the poor man you speak of will despise riches, should he suddenly fall into them; accordingly, in the case of both, it is the mind that must be appraised, and we must investigate whether your man is pleased with his poverty, and whether my man is displeased with his riches. Otherwise, the cot-bed and the rags are slight proof of his good intentions, if it has not been made clear that the person concerned endures these trials not from necessity but from preference.

12. It is the mark, however, of a noble spirit not to precipitate oneself into such things on the ground that they are better, but to practise for them on the ground that they are thus easy to endure. And they are easy to endure, Lucilius; when, however, you come to them after long rehearsal, they are even pleasant; for they contain a sense of freedom from care, – and without this nothing is pleasant. 13. I hold it essential, therefore, to do as I have told you in a letter that great men have often done: to reserve a few days in which we may prepare ourselves for real poverty by means of fancied poverty. There is all the more reason for doing this, because we have been steeped in luxury and regard all duties as hard and onerous. Rather let the soul be roused from its sleep and be prodded, and let it be reminded that nature has prescribed very little for us. No man is born rich. Every man, when he first sees light, is commanded to be content with milk and rags. Such is our beginning, and yet kingdoms are all too small for us! Farewell.

XXI. On the Renown which my Writings will Bring you

1. Do you conclude that you are having difficulties with those men about whom you wrote to me? Your greatest difficulty is with yourself; for you are your own stumbling-block. You do not know what you want. You are better at approving the right course than at following it out. You see where the true happiness lies, but you have not the courage to attain it. Let me tell you what it is that hinders you, inasmuch as you do not of yourself discern it.

2. You think that this condition, which you are to abandon, is one of importance, and after resolving upon that ideal state of calm into which you hope to pass, you are held back by the lustre of your present life, from which it is your intention to depart, just as if you were about to fall into a state of filth and darkness. This is a mistake, Lucilius; to go from your present life into the other is a promotion. There is the same difference between these two lives as there is between mere brightness and real light; the latter has a definite source within itself, the other borrows its radiance; the one is called forth by an illumination coming from the outside, and anyone who stands between the source and the object immediately turns the latter into a dense shadow; but the other has a glow that comes from within.

It is your own studies that will make you shine and will render you eminent, Allow me to mention the case of Epicurus. 3. He was writing to Idomeneus and trying to recall him from a showy existence to sure and steadfast renown. Idomeneus was at that time a minister of state who exercised a rigorous authority and had important affairs in hand. "If," said Epicurus, "you are attracted by fame, my letters will make you more renowned than all the things which you cherish and which make you cherished." 4. Did Epicurus speak falsely? Who would have known of Idomeneus, had not the philosopher thus engraved his name in those letters of his? All the grandees and satraps, even the king himself, who was petitioned for the title which Idomeneus sought, are sunk in deep oblivion. Cicero's

letters keep the name of Atticus from perishing. It would have profited Atticus nothing to have an Agrippa for a son-in-law, a Tiberius for the husband of his grand-daughter, and a Drusus Caesar for a great-grandson; amid these mighty names his name would never be spoken, had not Cicero bound him to himself. 5. The deep flood of time will roll over us; some few great men will raise their heads above it, and, though destined at the last to depart into the same realms of silence, will battle against oblivion and maintain their ground for long.

That which Epicurus could promise his friend, this I promise you, Lucilius. I shall find favour among later generations; I can take with me names that will endure as long as mine. Our poet Vergil promised an eternal name to two heroes, and is keeping his promise:

Blest heroes twain! If power my song possess,
The record of your names shall never be
Erased from out the book of Time, while yet
Aeneas' tribe shall keep the Capitol,
That rock immovable, and Roman sire
Shall empire hold.

6. Whenever men have been thrust forward by fortune, whenever they have become part and parcel of another's influence, they have found abundant favour, their houses have been thronged, only so long as they themselves have kept their position; when they themselves have left it, they have slipped at once from the memory of men. But in the case of innate ability, the respect in which it is held increases, and not only does honour accrue to the man himself, but whatever has attached itself to his memory is passed on from one to another.

7. In order that Idomeneus may not be introduced free of charge into my letter, he shall make up the indebtedness from his own account. It was to him that Epicurus addressed the well-known saying urging him to make Pythocles rich, but not rich in the vulgar and equivocal way. "If you wish," said he, "to make Pythocles rich, do not add to his store of money, but subtract from his desires." 8. This idea is too clear to need explanation, and too clever to need

reinforcement. There is, however, one point on which I would warn you, – not to consider that this statement applies only to riches; its value will be the same, no matter how you apply it. “If you wish to make Pythocles honourable, do not add to his honours, but subtract from his desires”; “if you wish Pythocles to have pleasure for ever, do not add to his pleasures, but subtract from his desires”; “if you wish to make Pythocles an old man, filling his life to the full, do not add to his years, but subtract from his desires.”⁹ There is no reason why you should hold that these words belong to Epicurus alone; they are public property. I think we ought to do in philosophy as they are wont to do in the Senate: when someone has made a motion, of which I approve to a certain extent, I ask him to make his motion in two parts, and I vote for the part which I approve. So I am all the more glad to repeat the distinguished words of Epicurus, in order that I may prove to those who have recourse to him through a bad motive, thinking that they will have in him a screen for their own vices, that they must live honourably, no matter what school they follow.

10. Go to his Garden and read the motto carved there:

“Stranger, here you will do well to tarry; here our highest good is pleasure.”

The care-taker of that abode, a kindly host, will be ready for you; he will welcome you with barley-meal and serve you water also in abundance, with these words: “Have you not been well entertained?” “This garden,” he says, “does not whet your appetite; it quenches it. Nor does it make you more thirsty with every drink; it slakes the thirst by a natural cure, a cure that demands no fee. This is the ‘pleasure’ in which I have grown old.”

11. In speaking with you, however, I refer to those desires which refuse alleviation, which must be bribed to cease. For in regard to the exceptional desires, which may be postponed, which may be chastened and checked, I have this one thought to share with you: a pleasure of that sort is according to our nature, but it is not according to our needs; one owes nothing to it; whatever is expended upon it is a free gift. The belly will not listen to advice; it makes demands, it importunes. And yet it is not a troublesome creditor; you can send it away at small cost, provided only that you give it what you owe, not merely all you are able to give. Farewell.

XXII. On the Futility of Half-Way Measures

1. You understand by this time that you must withdraw yourself from those showy and depraved pursuits; but you still wish to know how this may be accomplished. There are certain things which can be pointed out only by someone who is present. The physician cannot prescribe by letter the proper time for eating or bathing; he must feel the pulse. There is an old adage about gladiators, – that they plan their fight in the ring; as they intently watch, something in the adversary's glance, some movement of his hand, even some slight bending of his body, gives a warning. 2. We can formulate general rules and commit them to writing, as to what is usually done, or ought to be done; such advice may be given, not only to our absent friends, but also to succeeding generations. In regard, however, to that second question, – when or how your plan is to be carried out, – no one will advise at long range; we must take counsel in the presence of the actual situation. 3. You must be not only present in the body, but watchful in mind, if you would avail yourself of the fleeting opportunity. Accordingly, look about you for the opportunity; if you see it, grasp it, and with all your energy and with all your strength devote yourself to this task – to rid yourself of those business duties.

Now listen carefully to the opinion which I shall offer; it is my opinion that you should withdraw either from that kind of existence, or else from existence altogether. But I likewise maintain that you should take a gentle path, that you may loosen rather than cut the knot which you have bungled so badly in tying, – provided that if there shall be no other way of loosening it, you may actually cut it. No man is so faint-hearted that he would rather hang in suspense for ever than drop once for all. 4. Meanwhile, – and this is of first importance, – do not hamper yourself; be content with the business into which you have lowered yourself, or, as you prefer to have people think, have tumbled. There is no reason why you should be struggling on to something further; if you do, you will lose all grounds of excuse, and men will see that it was not a tumble. The usual explanation which men offer is wrong: "I was compelled to do

it. Suppose it was against my will; I had to do it.” But no one is compelled to pursue prosperity at top speed; it means something to call a halt, – even if one does not offer resistance, – instead of pressing eagerly after favouring fortune. 5. Shall you then be put out with me, if I not only come to advise you, but also call in others to advise you, – wiser heads than my own, men before whom I am wont to lay any problem upon which I am pondering? Read the letter of Epicurus which appears on this matter; it is addressed to Idomeneus. The writer asks him to hasten as fast as he can, and beat a retreat before some stronger influence comes between and takes from him the liberty to withdraw. 6. But he also adds that one should attempt nothing except at the time when it can be attempted suitably and seasonably. Then, when the long-sought occasion comes, let him be up and doing. Epicurus forbids us to doze when we are meditating escape; he bids us hope for a safe release from even the hardest trials, provided that we are not in too great a hurry before the time, nor too dilatory when the time arrives.

7. Now, I suppose, you are looking for a Stoic motto also. There is really no reason why anyone should slander that school to you on the ground of its rashness; as a matter of fact, its caution is greater than its courage. You are perhaps expecting the sect to utter such words as these: “It is base to flinch under a burden. Wrestle with the duties which you have once undertaken. No man is brave and earnest if he avoids danger, if his spirit does not grow with the very difficulty of his task.” 8. Words like these will indeed be spoken to you, if only your perseverance shall have an object that is worth while, if only you will not have to do or to suffer anything unworthy of a good man; besides, a good man will not waste himself upon mean and discreditable work or be busy merely for the sake of being busy. Neither will he, as you imagine, become so involved in ambitious schemes that he will have continually to endure their ebb and flow. Nay, when he sees the dangers, uncertainties, and hazards in which he was formerly tossed about, he will withdraw, – not turning his back to the foe, but falling back little by little to a safe position. 9. From business, however, my dear Lucilius, it is easy to escape, if only you will despise the rewards of business. We are held back and kept from escaping by thoughts like these: “What then? Shall I leave

behind me these great prospects? Shall I depart at the very time of harvest? Shall I have no slaves at my side? no retinue for my litter? no crowd in my reception room?"

Hence men leave such advantages as these with reluctance; they love the reward of their hardships, but curse the hardships themselves. ¹⁰ Men complain about their ambitions as they complain about their mistresses; in other words, if you penetrate their real feelings, you will find, not hatred, but bickering. Search the minds of those who cry down what they have desired, who talk about escaping from things which they are unable to do without; you will comprehend that they are lingering of their own free will in a situation which they declare they find it hard and wretched to endure. ¹¹ It is so, my dear Lucilius; there are a few men whom slavery holds fast, but there are many more who hold fast to slavery.

If, however, you intend to be rid of this slavery; if freedom is genuinely pleasing in your eyes; and if you seek counsel for this one purpose, – that you may have the good fortune to accomplish this purpose without perpetual annoyance, – how can the whole company of Stoic thinkers fail to approve your course? Zeno, Chrysippus, and all their kind will give you advice that is temperate, honourable, and suitable. ¹² But if you keep turning round and looking about, in order to see how much you may carry away with you, and how much money you may keep to equip yourself for the life of leisure, you will never find a way out. No man can swim ashore and take his baggage with him. Rise to a higher life, with the favour of the gods; but let it not be favour of such a kind as the gods give to men when with kind and genial faces they bestow magnificent ills, justified in so doing by the one fact that the things which irritate and torture have been bestowed in answer to prayer.

¹³ I was just putting the seal upon this letter; but it must be broken again, in order that it may go to you with its customary contribution, bearing with it some noble word. And lo, here is one that occurs to my mind; I do not know whether its truth or its nobility of utterance is the greater. "Spoken by whom?" you ask. By Epicurus; for I am still appropriating other men's belongings. ¹⁴ The words are: "Everyone goes out of life just as if he had but lately entered it." Take anyone off his guard, young, old, or middle-aged; you will find

that all are equally afraid of death, and equally ignorant of life. No one has anything finished, because we have kept putting off into the future all our undertakings. No thought in the quotation given above pleases me more than that it taunts old men with being infants. 15. "No one," he says, "leaves this world in a different manner from one who has just been born." That is not true; for we are worse when we die than when we were born; but it is our fault, and not that of Nature. Nature should scold us, saying: "What does this mean? I brought you into the world without desires or fears, free from superstition, treachery and the other curses. Go forth as you were when you entered!"

16. A man has caught the message of wisdom, if he can die as free from care as he was at birth; but as it is we are all a-flutter at the approach of the dreaded end. Our courage fails us, our cheeks blanch; our tears fall, though they are unavailing. But what is baser than to fret at the very threshold of peace? 17. The reason, however is, that we are stripped of all our goods, we have jettisoned our cargo of life and are in distress; for no part of it has been packed in the hold; it has all been heaved overboard and has drifted away. Men do not care how nobly they live, but only how long, although it is within the reach of every man to live nobly, but within no man's power to live long. Farewell.

XXIII. On the True Joy which Comes from Philosophy

1. Do you suppose that I shall write you how kindly the winter season has dealt with us, – a short season and a mild one, – or what a nasty spring we are having, – cold weather out of season, – and all the other trivialities which people write when they are at a loss for topics of conversation? No; I shall communicate something which may help both you and myself. And what shall this “something” be, if not an exhortation to soundness of mind? Do you ask what is the foundation of a sound mind? It is, not to find joy in useless things. I said that it was the foundation; it is really the pinnacle. 2. We have reached the heights if we know what it is that we find joy in and if we have not placed our happiness in the control of externals. The man who is goaded ahead by hope of anything, though it be within reach, though it be easy of access, and though his ambitions have never played him false, is troubled and unsure of himself. 3. Above all, my dear Lucilius, make this your business: learn how to feel joy.

Do you think that I am now robbing you of many pleasures when I try to do away with the gifts of chance, when I counsel the avoidance of hope, the sweetest thing that gladdens our hearts? Quite the contrary; I do not wish you ever to be deprived of gladness. I would have it born in your house; and it is born there, if only it be inside of you. Other objects of cheer do not fill a man’s bosom; they merely smooth his brow and are inconstant, – unless perhaps you believe that he who laughs has joy. The very soul must be happy and confident, lifted above every circumstance.

4. Real joy, believe me, is a stern matter. Can one, do you think, despise death with a care-free countenance, or with a “blithe and gay” expression, as our young dandies are accustomed to say? Or can one thus open his door to poverty, or hold the curb on his pleasures, or contemplate the endurance of pain? He who ponders these things in his heart is indeed full of joy; but it is not a cheerful joy. It is just this joy, however, of which I would have you become the owner; for it will never fail you when once you have found its source. 5. The

yield of poor mines is on the surface; those are really rich whose veins lurk deep, and they will make more bountiful returns to him who delves unceasingly. So too those baubles which delight the common crowd afford but a thin pleasure, laid on as a coating, and even joy that is only plated lacks a real basis. But the joy of which I speak, that to which I am endeavouring to lead you, is something solid, disclosing itself the more fully as you penetrate into it. 6. Therefore I pray you, my dearest Lucilius, do the one thing that can render you really happy: cast aside and trample under foot all the things that glitter outwardly and are held out to you by another or as obtainable from another; look toward the true good, and rejoice only in that which comes from your own store. And what do I mean by “from your own store”? I mean from your very self, that which is the best part of you. The frail body, also, even though we can accomplish nothing without it, is to be regarded as necessary rather than as important; it involves us in vain pleasures, short-lived, and soon to be regretted, which, unless they are reined in by extreme self-control, will be transformed into the opposite. This is what I mean: pleasure, unless it has been kept within bounds, tends to rush headlong into the abyss of sorrow.

But it is hard to keep within bounds in that which you believe to be good. The real good may be coveted with safety. 7. Do you ask me what this real good is, and whence it derives? I will tell you: it comes from a good conscience, from honourable purposes, from right actions, from contempt of the gifts of chance, from an even and calm way of living which treads but one path. For men who leap from one purpose to another, or do not even leap but are carried over by a sort of hazard, – how can such wavering and unstable persons possess any good that is fixed and lasting? 8. There are only a few who control themselves and their affairs by a guiding purpose; the rest do not proceed; they are merely swept along, like objects afloat in a river. And of these objects, some are held back by sluggish waters and are transported gently; others are torn along by a more violent current; some, which are nearest the bank, are left there as the current slackens; and others are carried out to sea by the onrush of the stream. Therefore, we should decide what we wish, and abide by the decision.

9. Now is the time for me to pay my debt. I can give you a saying of your friend Epicurus and thus clear this letter of its obligation. "It is bothersome always to be beginning life." Or another, which will perhaps express the meaning better: "They live ill who are always beginning to live." 10. You are right in asking why; the saying certainly stands in need of a commentary. It is because the life of such persons is always incomplete. But a man cannot stand prepared for the approach of death if he has just begun to live. We must make it our aim already to have lived long enough. No one deems that he has done so, if he is just on the point of planning his life. 11. You need not think that there are few of this kind; practically everyone is of such a stamp. Some men, indeed, only begin to live when it is time for them to leave off living. And if this seems surprising to you, I shall add that which will surprise you still more: Some men have left off living before they have begun. Farewell.

XXIV. On Despising Death

1. You write me that you are anxious about the result of a lawsuit, with which an angry opponent is threatening you; and you expect me to advise you to picture to yourself a happier issue, and to rest in the allurements of hope. Why, indeed, is it necessary to summon trouble, – which must be endured soon enough when it has once arrived, or to anticipate trouble and ruin the present through fear of the future? It is indeed foolish to be unhappy now because you may be unhappy at some future time. 2. But I shall conduct you to peace of mind by another route: if you would put off all worry, assume that what you fear may happen will certainly happen in any event; whatever the trouble may be, measure it in your own mind, and estimate the amount of your fear. You will thus understand that what you fear is either insignificant or short-lived. 3. And you need not spend a long time in gathering illustrations which will strengthen you; every epoch has produced them. Let your thoughts travel into any era of Roman or foreign history, and there will throng before you notable examples of high achievement or of high endeavour.

If you lose this case, can anything more severe happen to you than being sent into exile or led to prison? Is there a worse fate that any man may fear than being burned or being killed? Name such penalties one by one, and mention the men who have scorned them; one does not need to hunt for them, – it is simply a matter of selection. 4. Sentence of conviction was borne by Rutilius as if the injustice of the decision were the only thing which annoyed him. Exile was endured by Metellus with courage, by Rutilius even with gladness; for the former consented to come back only because his country called him; the latter refused to return when Sulla summoned him, – and nobody in those days said “No” to Sulla! Socrates in prison discoursed, and declined to flee when certain persons gave him the opportunity; he remained there, in order to free mankind from the fear of two most grievous things, death and imprisonment. 5. Mucius put his hand into the fire. It is painful to be burned; but how much more painful to inflict such suffering upon oneself! Here was a man of no learning, not primed to face death and pain by any words

of wisdom, and equipped only with the courage of a soldier, who punished himself for his fruitless daring; he stood and watched his own right hand falling away piecemeal on the enemy's brazier, nor did he withdraw the dissolving limb, with its uncovered bones, until his foe removed the fire. He might have accomplished something more successful in that camp, but never anything more brave. See how much keener a brave man is to lay hold of danger than a cruel man is to inflict it: Porsenna was more ready to pardon Mucius for wishing to slay him than Mucius to pardon himself for failing to slay Porsenna!

6. "Oh," say you, "those stories have been droned to death in all the schools; pretty soon, when you reach the topic 'On Despising Death,' you will be telling me about Cato." But why should I not tell you about Cato, how he read Plato's book on that last glorious night, with a sword laid at his pillow? He had provided these two requisites for his last moments, – the first, that he might have the will to die, and the second, that he might have the means. So he put his affairs in order, – as well as one could put in order that which was ruined and near its end, – and thought that he ought to see to it that no one should have the power to slay or the good fortune to save Cato. 7. Drawing the sword, – which he had kept unstained from all bloodshed against the final day, he cried: "Fortune, you have accomplished nothing by resisting all my endeavours. I have fought, till now, for my country's freedom, and not for my own, I did not strive so doggedly to be free, but only to live among the free. Now, since the affairs of mankind are beyond hope, let Cato be withdrawn to safety." 8. So saying, he inflicted a mortal wound upon his body. After the physicians had bound it up, Cato had less blood and less strength, but no less courage; angered now not only at Caesar but also at himself, he rallied his unarmed hands against his wound, and expelled, rather than dismissed, that noble soul which had been so defiant of all worldly power.

9. I am not now heaping up these illustrations for the purpose of exercising my wit, but for the purpose of encouraging you to face that which is thought to be most terrible. And I shall encourage you all the more easily by showing that not only resolute men have despised that moment when the soul breathes its last, but that certain

persons, who were craven in other respects, have equalled in this regard the courage of the bravest. Take, for example, Scipio, the father-in-law of Gnaeus Pompeius: he was driven back upon the African coast by a head-wind and saw his ship in the power of the enemy. He therefore pierced his body with a sword; and when they asked where the commander was, he replied: "All is well with the commander." ¹⁰ These words brought him up to the level of his ancestors and suffered not the glory which fate gave to the Scipios in Africa to lose its continuity. It was a great deed to conquer Carthage, but a greater deed to conquer death. "All is well with the commander!" Ought a general to die otherwise, especially one of Cato's generals? ¹¹ I shall not refer you to history, or collect examples of those men who throughout the ages have despised death; for they are very many. Consider these times of ours, whose enervation and over-refinement call forth our complaints; they nevertheless will include men of every rank, of every lot in life, and of every age, who have cut short their misfortunes by death.

Believe me, Lucilius; death is so little to be feared that through its good offices nothing is to be feared. ¹² Therefore, when your enemy threatens, listen unconcernedly. Although your conscience makes you confident, yet, since many things have weight which are outside your case, both hope for that which is utterly just, and prepare yourself against that which is utterly unjust. Remember, however, before all else, to strip things of all that disturbs and confuses, and to see what each is at bottom; you will then comprehend that they contain nothing fearful except the actual fear. ¹³ That you see happening to boys happens also to ourselves, who are only slightly bigger boys: when those whom they love, with whom they daily associate, with whom they play, appear with masks on, the boys are frightened out of their wits. We should strip the mask, not only from men, but from things, and restore to each object its own aspect.

¹⁴ "Why dost thou hold up before my eyes swords, fires, and a throng of executioners raging about thee? Take away all that vain show, behind which thou lurkest and scarest fools! Ah! thou art naught but Death, whom only yesterday a manservant of mine and a maid-servant did despise! Why dost thou again unfold and spread before me, with all that great display, the whip and the rack? Why

are those engines of torture made ready, one for each several member of the body, and all the other innumerable machines for tearing a man apart piecemeal? Away with all such stuff, which makes us numb with terror! And thou, silence the groans the cries, and the bitter shrieks ground out of the victim as he is torn on the rack! Forsooth thou art naught but Pain, scorned by yonder gout-ridden wretch, endured by yonder dyspeptic in the midst of his dainties, borne bravely by the girl in travail. Slight thou art, if I can bear thee; short thou art if I cannot bear thee!”

15. Ponder these words which you have often heard and often uttered. Moreover, prove by the result whether that which you have heard and uttered is true. For there is a very disgraceful charge often brought against our school, – that we deal with the words, and not with the deeds, of philosophy.

What, have you only at this moment learned that death is hanging over your head, at this moment exile, at this moment grief? You were born to these perils. Let us think of everything that can happen as something which will happen. 16. I know that you have really done what I advise you to do; I now warn you not to drown your soul in these petty anxieties of yours; if you do, the soul will be dulled and will have too little vigour left when the time comes for it to arise. Remove the mind from this case of yours to the case of men in general. Say to yourself that our petty bodies are mortal and frail; pain can reach them from other sources than from wrong or the might of the stronger. Our pleasures themselves become torments; banquets bring indigestion, carousals paralysis of the muscles and palsy, sensual habits affect the feet, the hands, and every joint of the body.

17. I may become a poor man; I shall then be one among many. I may be exiled; I shall then regard myself as born in the place to which I shall be sent. They may put me in chains. What then? Am I free from bonds now? Behold this clogging burden of a body, to which nature has fettered me! “I shall die,” you say; you mean to say “I shall cease to run the risk of sickness; I shall cease to run the risk of imprisonment; I shall cease to run the risk of death.” 18. I am not so foolish as to go through at this juncture the arguments which Epicurus harps upon, and say that the terrors of the world below are

idle, – that Ixion does not whirl round on his wheel, that Sisyphus does not shoulder his stone uphill, that a man's entrails cannot be restored and devoured every day; no one is so childish as to fear Cerberus, or the shadows, or the spectral garb of those who are held together by naught but their unfleshed bones. Death either annihilates us or strips us bare. If we are then released, there remains the better part, after the burden has been withdrawn; if we are annihilated, nothing remains; good and bad are alike removed.

19. Allow me at this point to quote a verse of yours, first suggesting that, when you wrote it, you meant it for yourself no less than for others. It is ignoble to say one thing and mean another; and how much more ignoble to write one thing and mean another! I remember one day you were handling the well-known commonplace, – that we do not suddenly fall on death, but advance towards it by slight degrees; we die every day. 20. For every day a little of our life is taken from us; even when we are growing, our life is on the wane. We lose our childhood, then our boyhood, and then our youth. Counting even yesterday, all past time is lost time; the very day which we are now spending is shared between ourselves and death. It is not the last drop that empties the water-clock, but all that which previously has flowed out; similarly, the final hour when we cease to exist does not of itself bring death; it merely of itself completes the death-process. We reach death at that moment, but we have been a long time on the way. 21. In describing this situation, you said in your customary, style (for you are always impressive, but never more pungent than when you are putting the truth in appropriate words):

Not single is the death which comes; the death
Which takes us off is but the last of all.

I prefer that you should read your own words rather than my letter; for then it will be clear to you that this death, of which we are afraid, is the last but not the only death. 22. I see what you are looking for; you are asking what I have packed into my letter, what inspiriting saying from some master-mind, what useful precept. So I shall send you something dealing with this very subject which has been under discussion. Epicurus upbraids those who crave, as much

as those who shrink from, death: "It is absurd," he says, "to run towards death because you are tired of life, when it is your manner of life that has made you run towards death." ²³ And in another passage: "What is so absurd as to seek death, when it is through fear of death that you have robbed your life of peace?" And you may add a third statement, of the same stamp: "Men are so thoughtless, nay, so mad, that some, through fear of death, force themselves to die."

24. Whichever of these ideas you ponder, you will strengthen your mind for the endurance alike of death and of life. For we need to be warned and strengthened in both directions, – not to love or to hate life overmuch; even when reason advises us to make an end of it, the impulse is not to be adopted without reflection or at headlong speed.

25. The grave and wise man should not beat a hasty retreat from life; he should make a becoming exit. And above all, he should avoid the weakness which has taken possession of so many, – the lust for death. For just as there is an unreflecting tendency of the mind towards other things, so, my dear Lucilius, there is an unreflecting tendency towards death; this often seizes upon the noblest and most spirited men, as well as upon the craven and the abject. The former despise life; the latter find it irksome.

26. Others also are moved by a satiety of doing and seeing the same things, and not so much by a hatred of life as because they are cloyed with it. We slip into this condition, while philosophy itself pushes us on, and we say; "How long must I endure the same things? Shall I continue to wake and sleep, be hungry and be cloyed, shiver and perspire? There is an end to nothing; all things are connected in a sort of circle; they flee and they are pursued. Night is close at the heels of day, day at the heels of night; summer ends in autumn, winter rushes after autumn, and winter softens into spring; all nature in this way passes, only to return. I do nothing new; I see nothing new; sooner or later one sickens of this, also." There are many who think that living is not painful, but superfluous. Farewell.

XXV. On Reformation

1. With regard to these two friends of ours, we must proceed along different lines; the faults of the one are to be corrected, the other's are to be crushed out. I shall take every liberty; for I do not love this one if I am unwilling to hurt his feelings. "What," you say, "do you expect to keep a forty-year-old ward under your tutelage? Consider his age, how hardened it now is, and past handling!" 2. Such a man cannot be re-shaped; only young minds are moulded." I do not know whether I shall make progress; but I should prefer to lack success rather than to lack faith. You need not despair of curing sick men even when the disease is chronic, if only you hold out against excess and force them to do and submit to many things against their will. As regards our other friend I am not sufficiently confident, either, except for the fact that he still has sense of shame enough to blush for his sins. This modesty should be fostered; so long as it endures in his soul, there is some room for hope. But as for this veteran of yours, I think we should deal more carefully with him, that he may not become desperate about himself. 3. There is no better time to approach him than now, when he has an interval of rest and seems like one who has corrected his faults. Others have been cheated by this interval of virtue on his part, but he does not cheat me. I feel sure that these faults will return, as it were, with compound interest, for just now, I am certain, they are in abeyance but not absent. I shall devote some time to the matter, and try to see whether or not something can be done.

4. But do you yourself, as indeed you are doing, show me that you are stout-hearted; lighten your baggage for the march. None of our possessions is essential. Let us return to the law of nature; for then riches are laid up for us. The things which we actually need are free for all, or else cheap; nature craves only bread and water. No one is poor according to this standard; when a man has limited his desires within these bounds, he can challenge the happiness of Jove himself, as Epicurus says. I must insert in this letter one or two more of his sayings: 5. "Do everything as if Epicurus were watching you." There is no real doubt that it is good for one to have appointed a guardian

over oneself, and to have someone whom you may look up to, someone whom you may regard as a witness of your thoughts. It is, indeed, nobler by far to live as you would live under the eyes of some good man, always at your side; but nevertheless I am content if you only act, in whatever you do, as you would act if anyone at all were looking on; because solitude prompts us to all kinds of evil. 6. And when you have progressed so far that you have also respect for yourself, you may send away your attendant; but until then, set as a guard over yourself the authority of some man, whether your choice be the great Cato or Scipio, or Laelius, – or any man in whose presence even abandoned wretches would check their bad impulses. Meantime, you are engaged in making of yourself the sort of person in whose company you would not dare to sin. When this aim has been accomplished and you begin to hold yourself in some esteem, I shall gradually allow you to do what Epicurus, in another passage, suggests: “The time when you should most of all withdraw into yourself is when you are forced to be in a crowd.”

7. You ought to make yourself of a different stamp from the multitude. Therefore, while it is not yet safe to withdraw into solitude, seek out certain individuals; for everyone is better off in the company of somebody or other, – no matter who, – than in his own company alone. “The time when you should most of all withdraw into yourself is when you are forced to be in a crowd.” Yes, provided that you are a good, tranquil, and self-restrained man; otherwise, you had better withdraw into a crowd in order to get away from your self. Alone, you are too close to a rascal. Farewell.

XXVI. On Old Age and Death

1. I was just lately telling you that I was within sight of old age. I am now afraid that I have left old age behind me. For some other word would now apply to my years, or at any rate to my body; since old age means a time of life that is weary rather than crushed. You may rate me in the worn-out class, – of those who are nearing the end.

2. Nevertheless, I offer thanks to myself, with you as witness; for I feel that age has done no damage to my mind, though I feel its effects on my constitution. Only my vices, and the outward aids to these vices, have reached senility; my mind is strong and rejoices that it has but slight connexion with the body. It has laid aside the greater part of its load. It is alert; it takes issue with me on the subject of old age; it declares that old age is its time of bloom. 3. Let me take it at its word, and let it make the most of the advantages it possesses. The mind bids me do some thinking and consider how much of this peace of spirit and moderation of character I owe to wisdom and how much to my time of life; it bids me distinguish carefully what I cannot do and what I do not want to do. . . . For why should one complain or regard it as a disadvantage, if powers which ought to come to an end have failed? 4. “But,” you say, “it is the greatest possible disadvantage to be worn out and to die off, or rather, if I may speak literally, to melt away! For we are not suddenly smitten and laid low; we are worn away, and every day reduces our powers to a certain extent.”

But is there any better end to it all than to glide off to one’s proper haven, when nature slips the cable? Not that there is anything painful in a shock and a sudden departure from existence; it is merely because this other way of departure is easy, – a gradual withdrawal. I, at any rate, as if the test were at hand and the day were come which is to pronounce its decision concerning all the years of my life, watch over myself and commune thus with myself: 5. “The showing which we have made up to the present time, in word or deed, counts for nothing. All this is but a trifling and deceitful pledge of our spirit, and is wrapped in much charlatanism. I shall leave it to Death to determine what progress I have made. Therefore with no faint heart I

am making ready for the day when, putting aside all stage artifice and actor's rouge, I am to pass judgment upon myself, – whether I am merely declaiming brave sentiments, or whether I really feel them; whether all the bold threats I have uttered against fortune are a pretence and a farce. 6. Put aside the opinion of the world; it is always wavering and always takes both sides. Put aside the studies which you have pursued throughout your life; Death will deliver the final judgment in your case. This is what I mean: your debates and learned talks, your maxims gathered from the teachings of the wise, your cultured conversation, – all these afford no proof of the real strength of your soul. Even the most timid man can deliver a bold speech. What you have done in the past will be manifest only at the time when you draw your last breath. I accept the terms; I do not shrink from the decision.” 7. This is what I say to myself, but I would have you think that I have said it to you also. You are younger; but what does that matter? There is no fixed count of our years. You do not know where death awaits you; so be ready for it everywhere.

8. I was just intending to stop, and my hand was making ready for the closing sentence; but the rites are still to be performed and the travelling money for the letter disbursed. And just assume that I am not telling where I intend to borrow the necessary sum; you know upon whose coffers I depend. Wait for me but a moment, and I will pay you from my own account; meanwhile, Epicurus will oblige me with these words: “Think on death,” or rather, if you prefer the phrase, on “migration to heaven.” 9. The meaning is clear, – that it is a wonderful thing to learn thoroughly how to die. You may deem it superfluous to learn a text that can be used only once; but that is just the reason why we ought to think on a thing. When we can never prove whether we really know a thing, we must always be learning it. 10. “Think on death.” In saying this, he bids us think on freedom. He who has learned to die has unlearned slavery; he is above any external power, or, at any rate, he is beyond it. What terrors have prisons and bonds and bars for him? His way out is clear. There is only one chain which binds us to life, and that is the love of life. The chain may not be cast off, but it may be rubbed away, so that, when necessity shall demand, nothing may retard or hinder us from being ready to do at once that which at some time we are bound to do.

Farewell.

XXVII. On the Good which Abides

1. "What," say you, "are you giving me advice? Indeed, have you already advised yourself, already corrected your own faults? Is this the reason why you have leisure to reform other men?" No, I am not so shameless as to undertake to cure my fellow-men when I am ill myself. I am, however, discussing with you troubles which concern us both, and sharing the remedy with you, just as if we were lying ill in the same hospital. Listen to me, therefore, as you would if I were talking to myself. I am admitting you to my inmost thoughts, and am having it out with myself, merely making use of you as my pretext. 2. I keep crying out to myself: "Count your years, and you will be ashamed to desire and pursue the same things you desired in your boyhood days. Of this one thing make sure against your dying day, – let your faults die before you die. Away with those disordered pleasures, which must be dearly paid for; it is not only those which are to come that harm me, but also those which have come and gone. Just as crimes, even if they have not been detected when they were committed, do not allow anxiety to end with them; so with guilty pleasures, regret remains even after the pleasures are over. They are not substantial, they are not trustworthy; even if they do not harm us, they are fleeting. 3. Cast about rather for some good which will abide. But there can be no such good except as the soul discovers it for itself within itself. Virtue alone affords everlasting and peace-giving joy; even if some obstacle arise, it is but like an intervening cloud, which floats beneath the sun but never prevails against it."

4. When will it be your lot to attain this joy? Thus far, you have indeed not been sluggish, but you must quicken your pace. Much toil remains; to confront it, you must yourself lavish all your waking hours, and all your efforts, if you wish the result to be accomplished. This matter cannot be delegated to someone else. 5. The other kind of literary activity admits of outside assistance. Within our own time there was a certain rich man named Calvisius Sabinus; he had the bank-account and the brains of a freedman. I never saw a man whose good fortune was a greater offence against propriety. His memory was so faulty that he would sometimes forget the name of

Ulysses, or Achilles, or Priam, – names which we know as well as we know those of our own attendants. No major-domo in his dotage, who cannot give men their right names, but is compelled to invent names for them, – no such man, I say, calls off the names of his master's tribesmen so atrociously as Sabinus used to call off the Trojan and Achaean heroes. But none the less did he desire to appear learned. 6. So he devised this short cut to learning: he paid fabulous prices for slaves, – one to know Homer by heart and another to know Hesiod; he also delegated a special slave to each of the nine lyric poets. You need not wonder that he paid high prices for these slaves; if he did not find them ready to hand he had them made to order. After collecting this retinue, he began to make life miserable for his guests; he would keep these fellows at the foot of his couch, and ask them from time to time for verses which he might repeat, and then frequently break down in the middle of a word. 7. Satelli^{us} Quadratus, a feeder, and consequently a fawner, upon addle-pated millionaires, and also (for this quality goes with the other two) a flouter of them, suggested to Sabinus that he should have philologists to gather up the bits. Sabinus remarked that each slave cost him one hundred thousand sesterces; Satelli^{us} replied: "You might have bought as many book-cases for a smaller sum." But Sabinus held to the opinion that what any member of his household knew, he himself knew also. 8. This same Satelli^{us} began to advise Sabinus to take wrestling lessons, – sickly, pale, and thin as he was, Sabinus answered: "How can I? I can scarcely stay alive now." "Don't say that, I implore you," replied the other, "consider how many perfectly healthy slaves you have!" No man is able to borrow or buy a sound mind; in fact, as it seems to me, even though sound minds were for sale, they would not find buyers. Depraved minds, however, are bought and sold every day.

9. But let me pay off my debt and say farewell: "Real wealth is poverty adjusted to the law of Nature." Epicurus has this saying in various ways and contexts; but it can never be repeated too often, since it can never be learned too well. For some persons the remedy should be merely prescribed; in the case of others, it should be forced down their throats. Farewell.

XXVIII. On Travel as a Cure for Discontent

1. Do you suppose that you alone have had this experience? Are you surprised, as if it were a novelty, that after such long travel and so many changes of scene you have not been able to shake off the gloom and heaviness of your mind? You need a change of soul rather than a change of climate. Though you may cross vast spaces of sea, and though, as our Vergil remarks,

Lands and cities are left astern,

your faults will follow you whithersoever you travel. 2. Socrates made the same remark to one who complained; he said: "Why do you wonder that globe-trotting does not help you, seeing that you always take yourself with you? The reason which set you wandering is ever at your heels." What pleasure is there in seeing new lands? Or in surveying cities and spots of interest? All your bustle is useless. Do you ask why such flight does not help you? It is because you flee along with yourself. You must lay aside the burdens of the mind; until you do this, no place will satisfy you. 3. Reflect that your present behaviour is like that of the prophetess whom Vergil describes: she is excited and goaded into fury, and contains within herself much inspiration that is not her own:

The priestess raves, if haply she may shake
The great god from her heart.

You wander hither and yon, to rid yourself of the burden that rests upon you, though it becomes more troublesome by reason of your very restlessness, just as in a ship the cargo when stationary makes no trouble, but when it shifts to this side or that, it causes the vessel to heel more quickly in the direction where it has settled. Anything you do tells against you, and you hurt yourself by your very unrest; for you are shaking up a sick man.

4. That trouble once removed, all change of scene will become pleasant; though you may be driven to the uttermost ends of the earth, in whatever corner of a savage land you may find yourself, that place, however forbidding, will be to you a hospitable abode. The

person you are matters more than the place to which you go; for that reason we should not make the mind a bondsman to any one place. Live in this belief: "I am not born for any one corner of the universe; this whole world is my country." 5. If you saw this fact clearly, you would not be surprised at getting no benefit from the fresh scenes to which you roam each time through weariness of the old scenes. For the first would have pleased you in each case, had you believed it wholly yours. As it is, however, you are not journeying; you are drifting and being driven, only exchanging one place for another, although that which you seek, – to live well, – is found everywhere. 6. Can there be any spot so full of confusion as the Forum? Yet you can live quietly even there, if necessary. Of course, if one were allowed to make one's own arrangements, I should flee far from the very sight and neighbourhood of the Forum. For just as pestilential places assail even the strongest constitution, so there are some places which are also unwholesome for a healthy mind which is not yet quite sound, though recovering from its ailment. 7. I disagree with those who strike out into the midst of the billows and, welcoming a stormy existence, wrestle daily in hardihood of soul with life's problems. The wise man will endure all that, but will not choose it; he will prefer to be at peace rather than at war. It helps little to have cast out your own faults if you must quarrel with those of others. 8. Says one: "There were thirty tyrants surrounding Socrates, and yet they could not break his spirit"; but what does it matter how many masters a man has? "Slavery" has no plural; and he who has scorned it is free, – no matter amid how large a mob of over-lords he stands.

9. It is time to stop, but not before I have paid duty. "The knowledge of sin is the beginning of salvation." This saying of Epicurus seems to me to be a noble one. For he who does not know that he has sinned does not desire correction; you must discover yourself in the wrong before you can reform yourself. 10. Some boast of their faults. Do you think that the man has any thought of mending his ways who counts over his vices as if they were virtues? Therefore, as far as possible, prove yourself guilty, hunt up charges against yourself; play the part, first of accuser, then of judge, last of intercessor. At times be harsh with yourself. Farewell.

XXIX. On the Critical Condition of Marcellinus

1. You have been inquiring about our friend Marcellinus and you desire to know how he is getting along. He seldom comes to see me, for no other reason than that he is afraid to hear the truth, and at present he is removed from my danger of hearing it; for one must not talk to a man unless he is willing to listen. That is why it is often doubted whether Diogenes and the other Cynics, who employed an indiscriminating freedom of speech and offered advice to any who came in their way, ought to have pursued such a plan. 2. For what if one should chide the deaf or those who are speechless from birth or by illness? But you answer: "Why should I spare words? They cost nothing. I cannot know whether I shall help the man to whom I give advice; but I know well that I shall help someone if I advise many. I must scatter this advice by the handful. It is impossible that one who tries often should not sometime succeed."

3. This very thing, my dear Lucilius, is, I believe, exactly what a great-souled man ought not to do; his influence is weakened; it has too little effect upon those whom it might have set right if it had not grown so stale. The archer ought not to hit the mark only sometimes; he ought to miss it only sometimes. That which takes effect by chance is not an art. Now wisdom is an art; it should have a definite aim, choosing only those who will make progress, but withdrawing from those whom it has come to regard as hopeless, – yet not abandoning them too soon, and just when the case is becoming hopeless trying drastic remedies.

4. As to our friend Marcellinus, I have not yet lost hope. He can still be saved, but the helping hand must be offered soon. There is indeed danger that he may pull his helper down; for there is in him a native character of great vigour, though it is already inclining to wickedness. Nevertheless I shall brave this danger and be bold enough to show him his faults. 5. He will act in his usual way; he will have recourse to his wit, – the wit that can call forth smiles even from mourners. He will turn the jest, first against himself, and then against me. He will forestall every word which I am about to utter. He will quiz our philosophic systems; he will accuse philosophers of

accepting doles, keeping mistresses, and indulging their appetites. He will point out to me one philosopher who has been caught in adultery, another who haunts the cafes, and another who appears at court. 6. He will bring to my notice Aristo, the philosopher of Marcus Lepidus, who used to hold discussions in his carriage; for that was the time which he had taken for editing his researches, so that Scaurus said of him when asked to what school he belonged: "At any rate, he isn't one of the Walking Philosophers." Julius Graecinus, too, a man of distinction, when asked for an opinion on the same point, replied: "I cannot tell you; for I don't know what he does when dismounted," as if the query referred to a chariot-gladiator. 7. It is mountebanks of that sort, for whom it would be more creditable to have left philosophy alone than to traffic in her, whom Marcellinus will throw in my teeth. But I have decided to put up with taunts; he may stir my laughter, but I perchance shall stir him to tears; or, if he persist in his jokes, I shall rejoice, so to speak, in the midst of sorrow, because he is blessed with such a merry sort of lunacy. But that kind of merriment does not last long. Observe such men, and you will note that within a short space of time they laugh to excess and rage to excess. 8. It is my plan to approach him and to show him how much greater was his worth when many thought it less. Even though I shall not root out his faults, I shall put a check upon them; they will not cease, but they will stop for a time; and perhaps they will even cease, if they get the habit of stopping. This is a thing not to be despised, since to men who are seriously stricken the blessing of relief is a substitute for health. 9. So while I prepare myself to deal with Marcellinus, do you in the meantime, who are able, and who understand whence and whither you have made your way, and who for that reason have an inkling of the distance yet to go, regulate your character, rouse your courage, and stand firm in the face of things which have terrified you. Do not count the number of those who inspire fear in you. Would you not regard as foolish one who was afraid of a multitude in a place where only one at a time could pass? Just so, there are not many who have access to you to slay you, though there are many who threaten you with death. Nature has so ordered it that, as only one has given you life, so only one will take it away.

10. If you had any shame, you would have let me off from paying the last instalment. Still, I shall not be niggardly either, but shall discharge my debts to the last penny and force upon you what I still owe: "I have never wished to cater to the crowd; for what I know, they do not approve, and what they approve, I do not know." 11. "Who said this?" you ask, as if you were ignorant whom I am pressing into service; it is Epicurus. But this same watchword rings in your ears from every sect, – Peripatetic, Academic, Stoic, Cynic. For who that is pleased by virtue can please the crowd? It takes trickery to win popular approval; and you must needs make yourself like unto them; they will withhold their approval if they do not recognise you as one of themselves. However, what you think of yourself is much more to the point than what others think of you. The favour of ignoble men can be won only by ignoble means. 12. What benefit, then, will that vaunted philosophy confer, whose praises we sing, and which, we are told, is to be preferred to every art and every possession? Assuredly, it will make you prefer to please yourself rather than the populace, it will make you weigh, and not merely count, men's judgments, it will make you live without fear of gods or men, it will make you either overcome evils or end them. Otherwise, if I see you applauded by popular acclamation, if your entrance upon the scene is greeted by a roar of cheering and clapping, marks of distinction meet only for actors, – if the whole state, even the women and children, sing your praises, how can I help pitying you? For I know what pathway leads to such popularity. Farewell.

XXX. On Conquering the Conqueror

1. I have beheld Aufidius Bassus, that noble man, shattered in health and wrestling with his years. But they already bear upon him so heavily that he cannot be raised up; old age has settled down upon him with great, – yes, with its entire, weight. You know that his body was always delicate and sapless. For a long time he has kept it in hand, or, to speak more correctly, has kept it together; of a sudden it has collapsed. 2. Just as in a ship that springs a leak, you can always stop the first or the second fissure, but when many holes begin to open and let in water, the gaping hull cannot be saved; similarly, in an old man's body, there is a certain limit up to which you can sustain and prop its weakness. But when it comes to resemble a decrepit building, when every joint begins to spread and while one is being repaired another falls apart, – then it is time for a man to look about him and consider how he may get out.

3. But the mind of our friend Bassus is active. Philosophy bestows this boon upon us; it makes us joyful in the very sight of death, strong and brave no matter in what state the body may be, cheerful and never failing though the body fail us. A great pilot can sail even when his canvas is rent; if his ship be dismantled, he can yet put in trim what remains of her hull and hold her to her course. This is what our friend Bassus is doing; and he contemplates his own end with the courage and countenance which you would regard as undue indifference in a man who so contemplated another's.

4. This is a great accomplishment, Lucilius, and one which needs long practice to learn, – to depart calmly when the inevitable hour arrives. Other kinds of death contain an ingredient of hope: a disease comes to an end; a fire is quenched; falling houses have set down in safety those whom they seemed certain to crush; the sea has cast ashore unharmed those whom it had engulfed, by the same force through which it drew them down; the soldier has drawn back his sword from the very neck of his doomed foe. But those whom old age is leading away to death have nothing to hope for; old age alone grants no reprieve. No ending, to be sure, is more painless; but there is none more lingering.

5. Our friend Bassus seemed to me to be attending his own funeral, and laying out his own body for burial, and living almost as if he had survived his own death, and bearing with wise resignation his grief at his own departure. For he talks freely about death, trying hard to persuade us that if this process contains any element of discomfort or of fear, it is the fault of the dying person, and not of death itself; also, that there is no more inconvenience at the actual moment than there is after it is over. 6. "And it is just as insane," he adds, "for a man to fear what will not happen to him, as to fear what he will not feel if it does happen." Or does anyone imagine it to be possible that the agency by which feeling is removed can be itself felt? "Therefore," says Bassus, "death stands so far beyond all evil that it is beyond all fear of evils."

7. I know that all this has often been said and should be often repeated; but neither when I read them were such precepts so effective with me, nor when I heard them from the lips of those who were at a safe distance from the fear of the things which they declared were not to be feared. But this old man had the greatest weight with me when he discussed death and death was near. 8. For I must tell you what I myself think: I hold that one is braver at the very moment of death than when one is approaching death. For death, when it stands near us, gives even to inexperienced men the courage not to seek to avoid the inevitable. So the gladiator, who throughout the fight has been no matter how faint-hearted, offers his throat to his opponent and directs the wavering blade to the vital spot. But an end that is near at hand, and is bound to come, calls for tenacious courage of soul; this is a rarer thing, and none but the wise man can manifest it.

9. Accordingly, I listened to Bassus with the deepest pleasure; he was casting his vote concerning death and pointing out what sort of a thing it is when it is observed, so to speak, nearer at hand. I suppose that a man would have your confidence in a larger degree, and would have more weight with you, if he had come back to life and should declare from experience that there is no evil in death; and so, regarding the approach of death, those will tell you best what disquiet it brings who have stood in its path, who have seen it coming and have welcomed it. 10. Bassus may be included among

these men; and he had no wish to deceive us. He says that it is as foolish to fear death as to fear old age; for death follows old age precisely as old age follows youth. He who does not wish to die cannot have wished to live. For life is granted to us with the reservation that we shall die; to this end our path leads. Therefore, how foolish it is to fear it, since men simply await that which is sure, but fear only that which is uncertain! ¹¹. Death has its fixed rule, – equitable and unavoidable. Who can complain when he is governed by terms which include everyone? The chief part of equity, however, is equality.

But it is superfluous at the present time to plead Nature's cause; for she wishes our laws to be identical with her own; she but resolves that which she has compounded, and compounds again that which she has resolved. ¹². Moreover, if it falls to the lot of any man to be set gently adrift by old age, – not suddenly torn from life, but withdrawn bit by bit, oh, verily he should thank the gods, one and all, because, after he has had his fill, he is removed to a rest which is ordained for mankind, a rest that is welcome to the weary. You may observe certain men who crave death even more earnestly than others are wont to beg for life. And I do not know which men give us greater courage, – those who call for death, or those who meet it cheerfully and tranquilly, – for the first attitude is sometimes inspired by madness and sudden anger, the second is the calm which results from fixed judgment. Before now men have gone to meet death in a fit of rage; but when death comes to meet him, no one welcomes it cheerfully, except the man who has long since composed himself for death.

¹³. I admit, therefore, that I have visited this dear friend of mine more frequently on many pretexts, but with the purpose of learning whether I should find him always the same, and whether his mental strength was perhaps waning in company with his bodily powers. But it was on the increase, just as the joy of the charioteer is wont to show itself more clearly when he is on the seventh round of the course, and nears the prize. ¹⁴. Indeed, he often said, in accord with the counsels of Epicurus: "I hope, first of all, that there is no pain at the moment when a man breathes his last; but if there is, one will find an element of comfort in its very shortness. For no great pain

lasts long. And at all events, a man will find relief at the very time when soul and body are being torn asunder, even though the process be accompanied by excruciating pain, in the thought that after this pain is over he can feel no more pain. I am sure, however, that an old man's soul is on his very lips, and that only a little force is necessary to disengage it from the body. A fire which has seized upon a substance that sustains it needs water to quench it, or, sometimes, the destruction of the building itself; but the fire which lacks sustaining fuel dies away of its own accord."

15. I am glad to hear such words, my dear Lucilius, not as new to me, but as leading me into the presence of an actual fact. And what then? Have I not seen many men break the thread of life? I have indeed seen such men; but those have more weight with me who approach death without any loathing for life, letting death in, so to speak, and not pulling it towards them. 16. Bassus kept saying: "It is due to our own fault that we feel this torture, because we shrink from dying only when we believe that our end is near at hand." But who is not near death? It is ready for us in all places and at all times. "Let us consider," he went on to say, "when some agency of death seems imminent, how much nearer are other varieties of dying which are not feared by us." 17. A man is threatened with death by an enemy, but this form of death is anticipated by an attack of indigestion. And if we are willing to examine critically the various causes of our fear, we shall find that some exist, and others only seem to be. We do not fear death; we fear the thought of death. For death itself is always the same distance from us; wherefore, if it is to be feared at all, it is to be feared always. For what season of our life is exempt from death?

18. But what I really ought to fear is that you will hate this long letter worse than death itself; so I shall stop. Do you, however, always think on death in order that you may never fear it. Farewell.

XXXI. On Siren Songs

1. Now I recognize my Lucilius! He is beginning to reveal the character of which he gave promise. Follow up the impulse which prompted you to make for all that is best, treading under your feet that which is approved by the crowd. I would not have you greater or better than you planned; for in your case the mere foundations have covered a large extent of ground; only finish all that you have laid out, and take in hand the plans which you have had in mind. 2. In short, you will be a wise man, if you stop up your ears; nor is it enough to close them with wax; you need a denser stopple than that which they say Ulysses used for his comrades. The song which he feared was alluring, but came not from every side; the song, however, which you have to fear, echoes round you not from a single headland, but from every quarter of the world. Sail, therefore, not past one region which you mistrust because of its treacherous delights, but past every city. Be deaf to those who love you most of all; they pray for bad things with good intentions. And, if you would be happy, entreat the gods that none of their fond desires for you may be brought to pass. 3. What they wish to have heaped upon you are not really good things; there is only one good, the cause and the support of a happy life, – trust in oneself. But this cannot be attained, unless one has learned to despise toil and to reckon it among the things which are neither good nor bad. For it is not possible that a single thing should be bad at one time and good at another, at times light and to be endured, and at times a cause of dread. 4. Work is not a good. Then what is a good? I say, the scorning of work. That is why I should rebuke men who toil to no purpose. But when, on the other hand, a man is struggling towards honourable things, in proportion as he applies himself more and more, and allows himself less and less to be beaten or to halt, I shall recommend his conduct and shout my encouragement, saying: “By so much you are better! Rise, draw a fresh breath, and surmount that hill, if possible, at a single spurt!”

5. Work is the sustenance of noble minds. There is, then, no reason why, in accordance with that old vow of your parents, you should

pick and choose what fortune you wish should fall to your lot, or what you should pray for; besides, it is base for a man who has already travelled the whole round of highest honours to be still importuning the gods. What need is there of vows? Make yourself happy through your own efforts; you can do this, if once you comprehend that whatever is blended with virtue is good, and that whatever is joined to vice is bad. Just as nothing gleams if it has no light blended with it, and nothing is black unless it contains darkness or draws to itself something of dimness, and as nothing is hot without the aid of fire, and nothing cold without air; so it is the association of virtue and vice that makes things honourable or base.

6. What then is good? The knowledge of things. What is evil? The lack of knowledge of things. Your wise man, who is also a craftsman, will reject or choose in each case as it suits the occasion; but he does not fear that which he rejects, nor does he admire that which he chooses, if only he has a stout and unconquerable soul. I forbid you to be cast down or depressed. It is not enough if you do not shrink from work; ask for it. 7. "But," you say, "is not trifling and superfluous work, and work that has been inspired by ignoble causes, a bad sort of work?" No; no more than that which is expended upon noble endeavours, since the very quality that endures toil and rouses itself to hard and uphill effort, is of the spirit, which says: "Why do you grow slack? It is not the part of a man to fear sweat." 8. And besides this, in order that virtue may be perfect, there should be an even temperament and a scheme of life that is consistent with itself throughout; and this result cannot be attained without knowledge of things, and without the art which enables us to understand things human and things divine. That is the greatest good. If you seize this good, you begin to be the associate of the gods, and not their suppliant.

9. "But how," you ask, "does one attain that goal?" You do not need to cross the Pennine or Graian hills, or traverse the Candavian waste, or face the Syrtes, or Scylla, or Charybdis, although you have travelled through all these places for the bribe of a petty governorship; the journey for which nature has equipped you is safe and pleasant. She has given you such gifts that you may, if you do not prove false to them, rise level with God. 10. Your money,

however, will not place you on a level with God; for God has no property. Your bordered robe will not do this; for God is not clad in raiment; nor will your reputation, nor a display of self, nor a knowledge of your name wide-spread throughout the world; for no one has knowledge of God; many even hold him in low esteem, and do not suffer for so doing. The throng of slaves which carries your litter along the city streets and in foreign places will not help you; for this God of whom I speak, though the highest and most powerful of beings, carries all things on his own shoulders. Neither can beauty or strength make you blessed, for none of these qualities can withstand old age.

11. What we have to seek for, then, is that which does not each day pass more and more under the control of some power which cannot be withstood. And what is this? It is the soul, – but the soul that is upright, good, and great. What else could you call such a soul than a god dwelling as a guest in a human body? A soul like this may descend into a Roman knight just as well as into a freedman's son or a slave. For what is a Roman knight, or a freedmen's son, or a slave? They are mere titles, born of ambition or of wrong. One may leap to heaven from the very slums. Only rise

And mould thyself to kinship with thy God.

This moulding will not be done in gold or silver; an image that is to be in the likeness of God cannot be fashioned of such materials; remember that the gods, when they were kind unto men, were moulded in clay. Farewell.

XXXII. On Progress

1. I have been asking about you, and inquiring of everyone who comes from your part of the country, what you are doing, and where you are spending your time, and with whom. You cannot deceive me; for I am with you. Live just as if I were sure to get news of your doings, nay, as if I were sure to behold them. And if you wonder what particularly pleases me that I hear concerning you, it is that I hear nothing, that most of those whom I ask do not know what you are doing.

2. This is sound practice – to refrain from associating with men of different stamp and different aims. And I am indeed confident that you cannot be warped, that you will stick to your purpose, even though the crowd may surround and seek to distract you. What, then, is on my mind? I am not afraid lest they work a change in you; but I am afraid lest they may hinder your progress. And much harm is done even by one who holds you back, especially since life is so short; and we make it still shorter by our unsteadiness, by making ever fresh beginnings at life, now one and immediately another. We break up life into little bits, and fritter it away. 3. Hasten ahead, then, dearest Lucilius, and reflect how greatly you would quicken your speed if an enemy were at your back, or if you suspected the cavalry were approaching and pressing hard upon your steps as you fled. It is true; the enemy is indeed pressing upon you; you should therefore increase your speed and escape away and reach a safe position, remembering continually what a noble thing it is to round out your life before death comes, and then await in peace the remaining portion of your time, claiming nothing for yourself, since you are in possession of the happy life; for such a life is not made happier for being longer. 4. O when shall you see the time when you shall know that time means nothing to you, when you shall be peaceful and calm, careless of the morrow, because you are enjoying your life to the full?

Would you know what makes men greedy for the future? It is because no one has yet found himself. Your parents, to be sure, asked other blessings for you; but I myself pray rather that you may despise

all those things which your parents wished for you in abundance. Their prayers plunder many another person, simply that you may be enriched. Whatever they make over to you must be removed from someone else. 5. I pray that you may get such control over yourself that your mind, now shaken by wandering thoughts, may at last come to rest and be steadfast, that it may be content with itself and, having attained an understanding of what things are truly good, – and they are in our possession as soon as we have this knowledge, – that it may have no need of added years. He has at length passed beyond all necessities – he has won his honourable discharge and is free, – who still lives after his life has been completed. Farewell.

XXXIII. On the Futility of Learning Maxims

1. You wish me to close these letters also, as I closed my former letters, with certain utterances taken from the chiefs of our school. But they did not interest themselves in choice extracts; the whole texture of their work is full of strength. There is unevenness, you know, when some objects rise conspicuous above others. A single tree is not remarkable if the whole forest rises to the same height. 2. Poetry is crammed with utterances of this sort, and so is history. For this reason I would not have you think that these utterances belong to Epicurus. they are common property and are emphatically our own. They are, however, more noteworthy in Epicurus, because they appear at infrequent intervals and when you do not expect them, and because it is surprising that brave words should be spoken at any time by a man who made a practice of being effeminate. For that is what most persons maintain. In my own opinion, however, Epicurus is really a brave man, even though he did wear long sleeves. Fortitude, energy, and readiness for battle are to be found among the Persians, just as much as among men who have girded themselves up high.

3. Therefore, you need not call upon me for extracts and quotations; such thoughts as one may extract here and there in the works of other philosophers run through the whole body of our writings. Hence we have no "show-window goods," nor do we deceive the purchaser in such a way that, if he enters our shop, he will find nothing except that which is displayed in the window. We allow the purchasers themselves to get their samples from anywhere they please. 4. Suppose we should desire to sort out each separate motto from the general stock; to whom shall we credit them? To Zeno, Cleanthes, Chrysippus, Panaetius, or Posidonius? We Stoics are not subjects of a despot: each of us lays claim to his own freedom. With them, on the other hand, whatever Hermarchus says or Metrodorus, is ascribed to one source. In that brotherhood, everything that any man utters is spoken under the leadership and commanding authority of one alone. We cannot, I maintain, no matter how we try, pick out anything from so great a multitude of

things equally good.

Only the poor man counts his flock.

Wherever you direct your gaze, you will meet with something that might stand out from the rest, if the context in which you read it were not equally notable.

5. For this reason, give over hoping that you can skim, by means of epitomes, the wisdom of distinguished men. Look into their wisdom as a whole; study it as a whole. They are working out a plan and weaving together, line upon line, a masterpiece, from which nothing can be taken away without injury to the whole. Examine the separate parts, if you like, provided you examine them as parts of the man himself. She is not a beautiful woman whose ankle or arm is praised, but she whose general appearance makes you forget to admire her single attributes.

6. If you insist, however, I shall not be niggardly with you, but lavish; for there is a huge multitude of these passages; they are scattered about in profusion, – they do not need to be gathered together, but merely to be picked up. They do not drip forth occasionally; they flow continuously. They are unbroken and are closely connected. Doubtless they would be of much benefit to those who are still novices and worshipping outside the shrine; for single maxims sink in more easily when they are marked off and bounded like a line of verse. 7. That is why we give to children a proverb, or that which the Greeks call *Chria*, to be learned by heart; that sort of thing can be comprehended by the young mind, which cannot as yet hold more. For a man, however, whose progress is definite, to chase after choice extracts and to prop his weakness by the best known and the briefest sayings and to depend upon his memory, is disgraceful; it is time for him to lean on himself. He should make such maxims and not memorize them. For it is disgraceful even for an old man, or one who has sighted old age, to have a note-book knowledge. “This is what Zeno said.” But what have you yourself said? “This is the opinion of Cleanthes.” But what is your own opinion? How long shall you march under another man’s orders? Take command, and utter some word which posterity will remember. Put forth something from your own stock. 8. For this reason I hold that there is nothing of eminence in all such men as these, who never create anything

themselves, but always lurk in the shadow of others, playing the rôle of interpreters, never daring to put once into practice what they have been so long in learning. They have exercised their memories on other men's material. But it is one thing to remember, another to know. Remembering is merely safeguarding something entrusted to the memory; knowing, however, means making everything your own; it means not depending upon the copy and not all the time glancing back at the master. 9. "Thus said Zeno, thus said Cleanthes, indeed!" Let there be a difference between yourself and your book! How long shall you be a learner? From now on be a teacher as well! "But why," one asks, "should I have to continue hearing lectures on what I can read?" "The living voice," one replies, "is a great help." Perhaps, but not the voice which merely makes itself the mouthpiece of another's words, and only performs the duty of a reporter.

10. Consider this fact also. Those who have never attained their mental independence begin, in the first place, by following the leader in cases where everyone has deserted the leader; then, in the second place, they follow him in matters where the truth is still being investigated. However, the truth will never be discovered if we rest contented with discoveries already made. Besides, he who follows another not only discovers nothing but is not even investigating. 11. What then? Shall I not follow in the footsteps of my predecessors? I shall indeed use the old road, but if I find one that makes a shorter cut and is smoother to travel, I shall open the new road. Men who have made these discoveries before us are not our masters, but our guides. Truth lies open for all; it has not yet been monopolized. And there is plenty of it left even for posterity to discover. Farewell.

XXXIV. On a Promising Pupil

1. I grow in spirit and leap for joy and shake off my years and my blood runs warm again, whenever I understand, from your actions and your letters, how far you have outdone yourself; for as to the ordinary man, you left him in the rear long ago. If the farmer is pleased when his tree develops so that it bears fruit, if the shepherd takes pleasure in the increase of his flocks, if every man regards his pupil as though he discerned in him his own early manhood, – what, then, do you think are the feelings of those who have trained a mind and moulded a young idea, when they see it suddenly grown to maturity?

2. I claim you for myself; you are my handiwork. When I saw your abilities, I laid my hand upon you, I exhorted you, I applied the goad and did not permit you to march lazily, but roused you continually. And now I do the same; but by this time I am cheering on one who is in the race and so in turn cheers me on.

3. “What else do you want of me, then?” you ask; “the will is still mine.” Well, the will in this case is almost everything, and not merely the half, as in the proverb “A task once begun is half done.” It is more than half, for the matter of which we speak is determined by the soul. Hence it is that the larger part of goodness is the will to become good. You know what I mean by a good man? One who is complete, finished, – whom no constraint or need can render bad. 4. I see such a person in you, if only you go steadily on and bend to your task, and see to it that all your actions and words harmonize and correspond with each other and are stamped in the same mould. If a man’s acts are out of harmony, his soul is crooked. Farewell.

XXXV. On the Friendship of Kindred Minds

1. When I urge you so strongly to your studies, it is my own interest which I am consulting; I want your friendship, and it cannot fall to my lot unless you proceed, as you have begun, with the task of developing yourself. For now, although you love me, you are not yet my friend. "But," you reply, "are these words of different meaning?" Nay, more, they are totally unlike in meaning. A friend loves you, of course; but one who loves you is not in every case your friend. Friendship, accordingly, is always helpful, but love sometimes even does harm. Try to perfect yourself, if for no other reason, in order that you may learn how to love.

2. Hasten, therefore, in order that, while thus perfecting yourself for my benefit, you may not have learned perfection for the benefit of another. To be sure, I am already deriving some profit by imagining that we two shall be of one mind, and that whatever portion of my strength has yielded to age will return to me from your strength, although there is not so very much difference in our ages. 3. But yet I wish to rejoice in the accomplished fact. We feel a joy over those whom we love, even when separated from them, but such a joy is light and fleeting; the sight of a man, and his presence, and communion with him, afford something of living pleasure; this is true, at any rate, if one not only sees the man one desires, but the sort of man one desires. Give yourself to me, therefore, as a gift of great price, and, that you may strive the more, reflect that you yourself are mortal, and that I am old. 4. Hasten to find me, but hasten to find yourself first. Make progress, and, before all else, endeavour to be consistent with yourself. And when you would find out whether you have accomplished anything, consider whether you desire the same things today that you desired yesterday. A shifting of the will indicates that the mind is at sea, heading in various directions, according to the course of the wind. But that which is settled and solid does not wander from its place. This is the blessed lot of the completely wise man, and also, to a certain extent, of him who is progressing and has made some headway. Now what is the difference between these two classes of men? The one is in motion, to be sure,

but does not change its position; it merely tosses up and down where it is; the other is not in motion at all. Farewell.

XXXVI. On the Value of Retirement

1. Encourage your friend to despise stout-heartedly those who upbraid him because he has sought the shade of retirement and has abdicated his career of honours, and, though he might have attained more, has preferred tranquillity to them all. Let him prove daily to these detractors how wisely he has looked out for his own interests. Those whom men envy will continue to march past him; some will be pushed out of the ranks, and others will fall. Prosperity is a turbulent thing; it torments itself. It stirs the brain in more ways than one, goading men on to various aims, – some to power, and others to high living. Some it puffs up; others it slackens and wholly enervates.

2. “But,” the retort comes, “so-and-so carries his prosperity well.” Yes; just as he carries his liquor. So you need not let this class of men persuade you that one who is besieged by the crowd is happy; they run to him as crowds rush for a pool of water, rendering it muddy while they drain it. But you say: “Men call our friend a trifler and a sluggard.” There are men, you know, whose speech is awry, who use the contrary terms. They called him happy; what of it? Was he happy? 3. Even the fact that to certain persons he seems a man of a very rough and gloomy cast of mind, does not trouble me. Aristo used to say that he preferred a youth of stern disposition to one who was a jolly fellow and agreeable to the crowd. “For,” he added, “wine which, when new, seemed harsh and sour, becomes good wine; but that which tasted well at the vintage cannot stand age.” So let them call him stern and a foe to his own advancement, it is just this sternness that will go well when it is aged, provided only that he continues to cherish virtue and to absorb thoroughly the studies which make for culture, – not those with which it is sufficient for a man to sprinkle himself, but those in which the mind should be steeped. 4. Now is the time to learn. “What? Is there any time when a man should not learn?” By no means; but just as it is creditable for every age to study, so it is not creditable for every age to be instructed. An old man learning his A B C is a disgraceful and absurd object; the young man must store up, the old man must use. You will therefore be doing a thing most helpful to yourself if you make this

friend of yours as good a man as possible; those kindnesses, they tell us, are to be both sought for and bestowed, which benefit the giver no less than the receiver; and they are unquestionably the best kind.

5. Finally, he has no longer any freedom in the matter; he has pledged his word. And it is less disgraceful to compound with a creditor than to compound with a promising future. To pay his debt of money, the business man must have a prosperous voyage, the farmer must have fruitful fields and kindly weather; but the debt which your friend owes can be completely paid by mere goodwill. 6. Fortune has no jurisdiction over character. Let him so regulate his character that in perfect peace he may bring to perfection that spirit within him which feels neither loss nor gain, but remains in the same attitude, no matter how things fall out. A spirit like this, if it is heaped with worldly goods, rises superior to its wealth; if, on the other hand, chance has stripped him of a part of his wealth, or even all, it is not impaired.

7. If your friend had been born in Parthia, he would have begun, when a child, to bend the bow; if in Germany, he would forthwith have been brandishing his slender spear; if he had been born in the days of our forefathers, he would have learned to ride a horse and smite his enemy hand to hand. These are the occupations which the system of each race recommends to the individual, – yes, prescribes for him. 8. To what, then, shall this friend of yours devote his attention? I say, let him learn that which is helpful against all weapons, against every kind of foe, – contempt of death; because no one doubts that death has in it something that inspires terror, so that it shocks even our souls, which nature has so moulded that they love their own existence; for otherwise there would be no need to prepare ourselves, and to whet our courage, to face that towards which we should move with a sort of voluntary instinct, precisely as all men tend to preserve their existence. 9. No man learns a thing in order that, if necessity arises, he may lie down with composure upon a bed of roses; but he steels his courage to this end, that he may not surrender his plighted faith to torture, and that, if need be, he may some day stay out his watch in the trenches, even though wounded, without even leaning on his spear; because sleep is likely to creep over men who support themselves by any prop whatsoever.

In death there is nothing harmful; for there must exist something to which it is harmful. 10. And yet, if you are possessed by so great a craving for a longer life, reflect that none of the objects which vanish from our gaze and are re-absorbed into the world of things, from which they have come forth and are soon to come forth again, is annihilated; they merely end their course and do not perish. And death, which we fear and shrink from, merely interrupts life, but does not steal it away; the time will return when we shall be restored to the light of day; and many men would object to this, were they not brought back in forgetfulness of the past.

11. But I mean to show you later, with more care, that everything which seems to perish merely changes. Since you are destined to return, you ought to depart with a tranquil mind. Mark how the round of the universe repeats its course; you will see that no star in our firmament is extinguished, but that they all set and rise in alternation. Summer has gone, but another year will bring it again; winter lies low, but will be restored by its own proper months; night has overwhelmed the sun, but day will soon rout the night again. The wandering stars retrace their former courses; a part of the sky is rising unceasingly, and a part is sinking. 12. One word more, and then I shall stop; infants, and boys, and those who have gone mad, have no fear of death, and it is most shameful if reason cannot afford us that peace of mind to which they have been brought by their folly. Farewell.

XXXVII. On Allegiance to Virtue

1. You have promised to be a good man; you have enlisted under oath; that is the strongest chain which will hold you to a sound understanding. Any man will be but mocking you, if he declares that this is an effeminate and easy kind of soldiering. I will not have you deceived. The word of this most honourable compact are the same as the words of that most disgraceful one, to wit: "Through burning, imprisonment, or death by the sword." 2. From the men who hire out their strength for the arena, who eat and drink what they must pay for with their blood, security is taken that they will endure such trials even though they be unwilling; from you, that you will endure them willingly and with alacrity. The gladiator may lower his weapon and test the pity of the people; but you will neither lower your weapon nor beg for life. You must die erect and unyielding. Moreover, what profit is it to gain a few days or a few years? There is no discharge for us from the moment we are born.

3. "Then how can I free myself?" you ask. You cannot escape necessities, but you can overcome them

By force a way is made.

And this way will be afforded you by philosophy. Betake yourself therefore to philosophy if you would be safe, untroubled, happy, in fine, if you wish to be, – and that is most important, – free. There is no other way to attain this end. 4. Folly is low, abject, mean, slavish, and exposed to many of the cruellest passions. These passions, which are heavy taskmasters, sometimes ruling by turns, and sometimes together, can be banished from you by wisdom, which is the only real freedom. There is but one path leading thither, and it is a straight path; you will not go astray. Proceed with steady step, and if you would have all things under your control, put yourself under the control of reason; if reason becomes your ruler, you will become ruler over many. You will learn from her what you should undertake, and how it should be done; you will not blunder into things. 5. You can show me no man who knows how he began to crave that which he craves. He has not been led to that pass by forethought; he has been driven to it by impulse. Fortune attacks us as often as we attack

Fortune. It is disgraceful, instead of proceeding ahead, to be carried along, and then suddenly, amid the whirlpool of events, to ask in a dazed way: "How did I get into this condition?" Farewell.

XXXVIII. On Quiet Conversation

1. You are right when you urge that we increase our mutual traffic in letters. But the greatest benefit is to be derived from conversation, because it creeps by degrees into the soul. Lectures prepared beforehand and spouted in the presence of a throng have in them more noise but less intimacy. Philosophy is good advice; and no one can give advice at the top of his lungs. Of course we must sometimes also make use of these harangues, if I may so call them, when a doubting member needs to be spurred on; but when the aim is to make a man learn and not merely to make him wish to learn, we must have recourse to the low-toned words of conversation. They enter more easily, and stick in the memory; for we do not need many words, but, rather, effective words.

2. Words should be scattered like seed; no matter how small the seed may be, if it has once found favourable ground, it unfolds its strength and from an insignificant thing spreads to its greatest growth. Reason grows in the same way; it is not large to the outward view, but increases as it does its work. Few words are spoken; but if the mind has truly caught them, they come into their strength and spring up. Yes, precepts and seeds have the same quality; they produce much, and yet they are slight things. Only, as I said, let a favourable mind receive and assimilate them. Then of itself the mind also will produce bounteously in its turn, giving back more than it has received. Farewell.

XXXIX. On Noble Aspirations

1. I shall indeed arrange for you, in careful order and narrow compass, the notes which you request. But consider whether you may not get more help from the customary method than from that which is now commonly called a “breviary,” though in the good old days, when real Latin was spoken, it was called a “summary.” The former is more necessary to one who is learning a subject, the latter to one who knows it. For the one teaches, the other stirs the memory. But I shall give you abundant opportunity for both. A man like you should not ask me for this authority or that; he who furnishes a voucher for his statements argues himself unknown. 2. I shall therefore write exactly what you wish, but I shall do it in my own way; until then, you have many authors whose works will presumably keep your ideas sufficiently in order. Pick up the list of the philosophers; that very act will compel you to wake up, when you see how many men have been working for your benefit. You will desire eagerly to be one of them yourself, for this is the most excellent quality that the noble soul has within itself, that it can be roused to honourable things.

No man of exalted gifts is pleased with that which is low and mean; the vision of great achievement summons him and uplifts him. 3. Just as the flame springs straight into the air and cannot be cabined or kept down any more than it can repose in quiet, so our soul is always in motion, and the more ardent it is, the greater its motion and activity. But happy is the man who has given it this impulse toward better things! He will place himself beyond the jurisdiction of chance; he will wisely control prosperity; he will lessen adversity, and will despise what others hold in admiration. 4. It is the quality of a great soul to scorn great things and to prefer that which is ordinary rather than that which is too great. For the one condition is useful and life-giving; but the other does harm just because it is excessive. Similarly, too rich a soil makes the grain fall flat, branches break down under too heavy a load, excessive productiveness does not bring fruit to ripeness. This is the case with the soul also; for it is ruined by uncontrolled prosperity, which is used not only to the

detriment of others, but also to the detriment of itself. 5. What enemy was ever so insolent to any opponent as are their pleasures to certain men? The only excuse that we can allow for the incontinence and mad lust of these men is the fact that they suffer the evils which they have inflicted upon others. And they are rightly harassed by this madness, because desire must have unbounded space for its excursions, if it transgresses nature's mean. For this has its bounds, but waywardness and the acts that spring from wilful lust are without boundaries. 6. Utility measures our needs; but by what standard can you check the superfluous? It is for this reason that men sink themselves in pleasures, and they cannot do without them when once they have become accustomed to them, and for this reason they are most wretched, because they have reached such a pass that what was once superfluous to them has become indispensable. And so they are the slaves of their pleasures instead of enjoying them; they even love their own ills, – and that is the worst ill of all! Then it is that the height of unhappiness is reached, when men are not only attracted, but even pleased, by shameful things, and when there is no longer any room for a cure, now that those things which once were vices have become habits. Farewell.

XL. On the Proper Style for a Philosopher's Discourse

1. I thank you for writing to me so often; for you are revealing your real self to me in the only way you can. I never receive a letter from you without being in your company forthwith. If the pictures of our absent friends are pleasing to us, though they only refresh the memory and lighten our longing by a solace that is unreal and unsubstantial, how much more pleasant is a letter, which brings us real traces, real evidences, of an absent friend! For that which is sweetest when we meet face to face is afforded by the impress of a friend's hand upon his letter, – recognition.

2. You write me that you heard a lecture by the philosopher Serapio, when he landed at your present place of residence. “He is wont,” you say, “to wrench up his words with a mighty rush, and he does not let them flow forth one by one, but makes them crowd and dash upon each other. For the words come in such quantity that a single voice is inadequate to utter them.” I do not approve of this in a philosopher; his speech, like his life, should be composed; and nothing that rushes headlong and is hurried is well ordered. That is why, in Homer, the rapid style, which sweeps down without a break like a snow-squall, is assigned to the younger speaker; from the old man eloquence flows gently, sweeter than honey.

3. Therefore, mark my words; that forceful manner of speech, rapid and copious, is more suited to a mountebank than to a man who is discussing and teaching an important and serious subject. But I object just as strongly that he should drip out his words as that he should go at top speed; he should neither keep the ear on the stretch, nor deafen it. For that poverty-stricken and thin-spun style also makes the audience less attentive because they are weary of its stammering slowness; nevertheless, the word which has been long awaited sinks in more easily than the word which flits past us on the wing. Finally, people speak of “handing down” precepts to their pupils; but one is not “handing down” that which eludes the gras. Besides, speech that deals with the truth should be unadorned and

plain. This popular style has nothing to do with the truth; its aim is to impress the common herd, to ravish heedless ears by its speed; it does not offer itself for discussion, but snatches itself away from discussion. But how can that speech govern others which cannot itself be governed? May I not also remark that all speech which is employed for the purpose of healing our minds, ought to sink into us? Remedies do not avail unless they remain in the system.

5. Besides, this sort of speech contains a great deal of sheer emptiness; it has more sound than power. My terrors should be quieted, my irritations soothed, my illusions shaken off, my indulgences checked, my greed rebuked. And which of these cures can be brought about in a hurry? What physician can heal his patient on a flying visit? May I add that such a jargon of confused and ill-chosen words cannot afford pleasure, either? 6. No; but just as you are well satisfied, in the majority of cases, to have seen through tricks which you did not think could possibly be done, so in the case of these word-gymnasts to have heard them once is amply sufficient. For what can a man desire to learn or to imitate in them? What is he to think of their souls, when their speech is sent into the charge in utter disorder, and cannot be kept in hand? 7. Just as, when you run down hill, you cannot stop at the point where you had decided to stop, but your steps are carried along by the momentum of your body and are borne beyond the place where you wished to halt; so this speed of speech has no control over itself, nor is it seemly for philosophy; since philosophy should carefully place her words, not fling them out, and should proceed step by step.

8. "What then?" you say; "should not philosophy sometimes take a loftier tone?" Of course she should; but dignity of character should be preserved, and this is stripped away by such violent and excessive force. Let philosophy possess great forces, but kept well under control; let her stream flow unceasingly, but never become a torrent. And I should hardly allow even to an orator a rapidity of speech like this, which cannot be called back, which goes lawlessly ahead; for how could it be followed by jurors, who are often inexperienced and untrained? Even when the orator is carried away by his desire to show off his powers, or by uncontrollable emotion, even then he should not quicken his pace and heap up words to an extent greater

than the ear can endure.

9. You will be acting rightly, therefore, if you do not regard those men who seek how much they may say, rather than how they shall say it, and if for yourself you choose, provided a choice must be made, to speak as Publius Vinicius the stammerer does. When Asellius was asked how Vinicius spoke, he replied: “Gradually”! (It was a remark of Geminus Varius, by the way: “I don’t see how you can call that man ‘eloquent’; why, he can’t get out three words together.”) Why, then, should you not choose to speak as Vinicius does? 10. Though of course some wag may cross your path, like the person who said, when Vinicius was dragging out his words one by one, as if he were dictating and not speaking. “Say, haven’t you anything to say?” And yet that were the better choice, for the rapidity of Quintus Haterius, the most famous orator of his age, is, in my opinion, to be avoided by a man of sense. Haterius never hesitated, never paused; he made only one start, and only one stop.

11. However, I suppose that certain styles of speech are more or less suitable to nations also; in a Greek you can put up with the unrestrained style, but we Romans, even when writing, have become accustomed to separate our words. And our compatriot Cicero, with whom Roman oratory sprang into prominence, was also a slow pacer. The Roman language is more inclined to take stock of itself, to weigh, and to offer something worth weighing. 12. Fabianius, a man noteworthy because of his life, his knowledge, and, less important than either of these, his eloquence also, used to discuss a subject with dispatch rather than with haste; hence you might call it ease rather than speed. I approve this quality in the wise man; but I do not demand it; only let his speech proceed unhampered, though I prefer that it should be deliberately uttered rather than spouted.

13. However, I have this further reason for frightening you away from the latter malady, namely, that you could only be successful in practising this style by losing your sense of modesty; you would have to rub all shame from your countenance, and refuse to hear yourself speak. For that heedless flow will carry with it many expressions which you would wish to criticize. 14. And, I repeat, you could not attain it and at the same time preserve your sense of shame. Moreover, you would need to practise every day, and transfer your

attention from subject matter to words. But words, even if they came to you readily and flowed without any exertion on your part, yet would have to be kept under control. For just as a less ostentatious gait becomes a philosopher, so does a restrained style of speech, far removed from boldness. Therefore, the ultimate kernel of my remarks is this: I bid you be slow of speech. Farewell

XLI. On the God within Us

1. You are doing an excellent thing, one which will be wholesome for you, if, as you write me, you are persisting in your effort to attain sound understanding; it is foolish to pray for this when you can acquire it from yourself. We do not need to uplift our hands towards heaven, or to beg the keeper of a temple to let us approach his idol's ear, as if in this way our prayers were more likely to be heard. God is near you, he is with you, he is within you. 2. This is what I mean, Lucilius: a holy spirit indwells within us, one who marks our good and bad deeds, and is our guardian. As we treat this spirit, so are we treated by it. Indeed, no man can be good without the help of God. Can one rise superior to fortune unless God helps him to rise? He it is that gives noble and upright counsel. In each good man

A god doth dwell, but what god know we not.

3. If ever you have come upon a grove that is full of ancient trees which have grown to an unusual height, shutting out a view of the sky by a veil of pleached and intertwining branches, then the loftiness of the forest, the seclusion of the spot, and your marvel at the thick unbroken shade in the midst of the open spaces, will prove to you the presence of deity. Or if a cave, made by the deep crumbling of the rocks, holds up a mountain on its arch, a place not built with hands but hollowed out into such spaciousness by natural causes, your soul will be deeply moved by a certain intimation of the existence of God. We worship the sources of mighty rivers; we erect altars at places where great streams burst suddenly from hidden sources; we adore springs of hot water as divine, and consecrate certain pools because of their dark waters or their immeasurable depth. 4. If you see a man who is unterrified in the midst of dangers, untouched by desires, happy in adversity, peaceful amid the storm, who looks down upon men from a higher plane, and views the gods on a footing of equality, will not a feeling of reverence for him steal over you, will you not say: "This quality is too great and too lofty to be regarded as resembling this petty body in which it dwells? A divine power has descended upon that man." 5. When a soul rises superior to other souls, when it is under control, when it passes

through every experience as if it were of small account, when it smiles at our fears and at our prayers, it is stirred by a force from heaven. A thing like this cannot stand upright unless it be propped by the divine. Therefore, a greater part of it abides in that place from whence it came down to earth. Just as the rays of the sun do indeed touch the earth, but still abide at the source from which they are sent; even so the great and hallowed soul, which has come down in order that we may have a nearer knowledge of divinity, does indeed associate with us, but still cleaves to its origin; on that source it depends, thither it turns its gaze and strives to go, and it concerns itself with our doings only as a being superior to ourselves.

6. What, then, is such a soul? One which is resplendent with no external good, but only with its own. For what is more foolish than to praise in a man the qualities which come from without? And what is more insane than to marvel at characteristics which may at the next instant be passed on to someone else? A golden bit does not make a better horse. The lion with gilded mane, in process of being trained and forced by weariness to endure the decoration, is sent into the arena in quite a different way from the wild lion whose spirit is unbroken; the latter, indeed, bold in his attack, as nature wished him to be, impressive because of his wild appearance, – and it is his glory that none can look upon him without fear, – is favoured in preference to the other lion, that languid and gilded brute.

7. No man ought to glory except in that which is his own. We praise a vine if it makes the shoots teem with increase, if by its weight it bends to the ground the very poles which hold its fruit; would any man prefer to this vine one from which golden grapes and golden leaves hang down? In a vine the virtue peculiarly its own is fertility; in man also we should praise that which is his own. Suppose that he has a retinue of comely slaves and a beautiful house, that his farm is large and large his income; none of these things is in the man himself; they are all on the outside. 8. Praise the quality in him which cannot be given or snatched away, that which is the peculiar property of the man. Do you ask what this is? It is soul, and reason brought to perfection in the soul. For man is a reasoning animal. Therefore, man's highest good is attained, if he has fulfilled the good for which nature designed him at birth. 9. And what is it which this reason

demands of him? The easiest thing in the world, – to live in accordance with his own nature. But this is turned into a hard task by the general madness of mankind; we push one another into vice. And how can a man be recalled to salvation, when he has none to restrain him, and all mankind to urge him on? Farewell.

XLII. On Values

1. Has that friend of yours already made you believe that he is a good man? And yet it is impossible in so short a time for one either to become good or be known as such. Do you know what kind of man I now mean when I speak of “a good man”? I mean one of the second grade, like your friend. For one of the first class perhaps springs into existence, like the phoenix, only once in five hundred years. And it is not surprising, either, that greatness develops only at long intervals; Fortune often brings into being commonplace powers, which are born to please the mob; but she holds up for our approval that which is extraordinary by the very fact that she makes it rare.

2. This man, however, of whom you spoke, is still far from the state which he professes to have reached. And if he knew what it meant to be “a good man,” he would not yet believe himself such; perhaps he would even despair of his ability to become good. “But,” you say, “he thinks ill of evil men.” Well, so do evil men themselves; and there is no worse penalty for vice than the fact that it is dissatisfied with itself and all its fellows. 3. “But he hates those who make an ungoverned use of great power suddenly acquired.” I retort that he will do the same thing as soon as he acquires the same powers. In the case of many men, their vices, being powerless, escape notice; although, as soon as the persons in question have become satisfied with their own strength, the vices will be no less daring than those which prosperity has already disclosed. 4. These men simply lack the means whereby they may unfold their wickedness. Similarly, one can handle even a poisonous snake while it is stiff with cold; the poison is not lacking; it is merely numbed into inaction. In the case of many men, their cruelty, ambition, and indulgence only lack the favour of Fortune to make them dare crimes that would match the worst. That their wishes are the same you will in a moment discover, in this way: give them the power equal to their wishes.

5. Do you remember how, when you declared that a certain person was under your influence, I pronounced him fickle and a bird of passage, and said that you held him not by the foot but merely by a

wing? Was I mistaken? You grasped him only by a feather; he left it in your hands and escaped. You know what an exhibition he afterwards made of himself before you, how many of the things he attempted were to recoil upon his own head. He did not see that in endangering others he was tottering to his own downfall. He did not reflect how burdensome were the objects which he was bent upon attaining, even if they were not superfluous.

6. Therefore, with regard to the objects which we pursue, and for which we strive with great effort, we should note this truth; either there is nothing desirable in them, or the undesirable is preponderant. Some objects are superfluous; others are not worth the price we pay for them. But we do not see this clearly, and we regard things as free gifts when they really cost us very dear. 7. Our stupidity may be clearly proved by the fact that we hold that “buying” refers only to the objects for which we pay cash, and we regard as free gifts the things for which we spend our very selves. These we should refuse to buy, if we were compelled to give in payment for them our houses or some attractive and profitable estate; but we are eager to attain them at the cost of anxiety, of danger, and of lost honour, personal freedom, and time; so true it is that each man regards nothing as cheaper than himself.

8. Let us therefore act, in all our plans and conduct, just as we are accustomed to act whenever we approach a huckster who has certain wares for sale; let us see how much we must pay for that which we crave. Very often the things that cost nothing cost us the most heavily; I can show you many objects the quest and acquisition of which have wrested freedom from our hands. We should belong to ourselves, if only these things did not belong to us.

9. I would therefore have you reflect thus, not only when it is a question of gain, but also when it is a question of loss. “This object is bound to perish.” Yes, it was a mere extra; you will live without it just as easily as you have lived before. If you have possessed it for a long time, you lose it after you have had your fill of it; if you have not possessed it long, then you lose it before you have become wedded to it. “You will have less money.” Yes, and less trouble. 10. “Less influence.” Yes, and less envy. Look about you and note the things that drive us mad, which we lose with a flood of tears; you

will perceive that it is not the loss that troubles us with reference to these things, but a notion of loss. No one feels that they have been lost, but his mind tells him that it has been so. He that owns himself has lost nothing. But how few men are blessed with ownership of self! Farewell.

XLIII. On the Relativity of Fame

1. Do you ask how the news reached me, and who informed me, that you were entertaining this idea, of which you had said nothing to a single soul? It was that most knowing of persons, – gossip. “What,” you say, “am I such a great personage that I can stir up gossip?” Now there is no reason why you should measure yourself according to this part of the world; have regard only to the place where you are dwelling. 2. Any point which rises above adjacent points is great, at the spot where it rises. For greatness is not absolute; comparison increases it or lessens it. A ship which looms large in the river seems tiny when on the ocean. A rudder which is large for one vessel, is small for another.

3. So you in your province are really of importance, though you scorn yourself. Men are asking what you do, how you dine, and how you sleep, and they find out, too; hence there is all the more reason for your living circumspectly. Do not, however, deem yourself truly happy until you find that you can live before men’s eyes, until your walls protect but do not hide you; although we are apt to believe that these walls surround us, not to enable us to live more safely, but that we may sin more secretly. 4. I shall mention a fact by which you may weigh the worth of a man’s character: you will scarcely find anyone who can live with his door wide open. It is our conscience, not our pride, that has put doorkeepers at our doors; we live in such a fashion that being suddenly disclosed to view is equivalent to being caught in the act. What profits it, however, to hide ourselves away, and to avoid the eyes and ears of men? 5. A good conscience welcomes the crowd, but a bad conscience, even in solitude, is disturbed and troubled. If your deeds are honourable, let everybody know them; if base, what matters it that no one knows them, as long as you yourself know them? How wretched you are if you despise such a witness! Farewell.

XLIV. On Philosophy and Pedigrees

1. You are again insisting to me that you are a nobody, and saying that nature in the first place, and fortune in the second, have treated you too scurvily, and this in spite of the fact that you have it in your power to separate yourself from the crowd and rise to the highest human happiness! If there is any good in philosophy, it is this, – that it never looks into pedigrees. All men, if traced back to their original source, spring from the gods. 2. You are a Roman knight, and your persistent work promoted you to this class; yet surely there are many to whom the fourteen rows are barred; the senate-chamber is not open to all; the army, too, is scrupulous in choosing those whom it admits to toil and danger. But a noble mind is free to all men; according to this test, we may all gain distinction. Philosophy neither rejects nor selects anyone; its light shines for all. 3. Socrates was no aristocrat. Cleanthes worked at a well and served as a hired man watering a garden. Philosophy did not find Plato already a nobleman; it made him one. Why then should you despair of becoming able to rank with men like these? They are all your ancestors, if you conduct yourself in a manner worthy of them; and you will do so if you convince yourself at the outset that no man outdoes you in real nobility. 4. We have all had the same number of forefathers; there is no man whose first beginning does not transcend memory. Plato says: “Every king springs from a race of slaves, and every slave has had kings among his ancestors.” The flight of time, with its vicissitudes, has jumbled all such things together, and Fortune has turned them upside down. 5. Then who is well-born? He who is by nature well fitted for virtue. That is the one point to be considered; otherwise, if you hark back to antiquity, every one traces back to a date before which there is nothing. From the earliest beginnings of the universe to the present time, we have been led forward out of origins that were alternately illustrious and ignoble. A hall full of smoke-begrimed busts does not make the nobleman. No past life has been lived to lend us glory, and that which has existed before us is not ours; the soul alone renders us noble, and it may rise superior to Fortune out of any earlier condition, no matter what that condition

has been.

6. Suppose, then, that you were not that Roman knight, but a freedman, you might nevertheless by your own efforts come to be the only free man amid a throng of gentlemen. "How?" you ask. Simply by distinguishing between good and bad things without patterning your opinion from the populace. You should look, not to the source from which these things come, but to the goal towards which they tend. If there is anything that can make life happy, it is good on its own merits; for it cannot degenerate into evil. 7. Where, then, lies the mistake, since all men crave the happy life? It is that they regard the means for producing happiness as happiness itself, and, while seeking happiness, they are really fleeing from it. For although the sum and substance of the happy life is unalloyed freedom from care, and though the secret of such freedom is unshaken confidence, yet men gather together that which causes worry, and, while travelling life's treacherous road, not only have burdens to bear, but even draw burdens to themselves; hence they recede farther and farther from the achievement of that which they seek, and the more effort they expend, the more they hinder themselves and are set back. This is what happens when you hurry through a maze; the faster you go, the worse you are entangled. Farewell.

XLV. On Sophistical Argumentation

1. You complain that in your part of the world there is a scant supply of books. But it is quality, rather than quantity, that matters; a limited list of reading benefits; a varied assortment serves only for delight. He who would arrive at the appointed end must follow a single road and not wander through many ways. What you suggest is not travelling; it is mere tramping.

2. "But," you say, "I should rather have you give me advice than books." Still, I am ready to send you all the books I have, to ransack the whole storehouse. If it were possible, I should join you there myself; and were it not for the hope that you will soon complete your term of office, I should have imposed upon myself this old man's journey; no Scylla or Charybdis or their storied straits could have frightened me away. I should not only have crossed over, but should have been willing to swim over those waters, provided that I could greet you and judge in your presence how much you had grown in spirit.

3. Your desire, however, that I should dispatch to you my own writings does not make me think myself learned, any more than a request for my picture would flatter my beauty. I know that it is due to your charity rather than to your judgment. And even if it is the result of judgment, it was charity that forced the judgment upon you.

4. But whatever the quality of my works may be, read them as if I were still seeking, and were not aware of, the truth, and were seeking it obstinately, too. For I have sold myself to no man; I bear the name of no master. I give much credit to the judgment of great men; but I claim something also for my own. For these men, too, have left to us, not positive discoveries, but problems whose solution is still to be sought. They might perhaps have discovered the essentials, had they not sought the superfluous also. 5. They lost much time in quibbling about words and in sophistical argumentation; all that sort of thing exercises the wit to no purpose. We tie knots and bind up words in double meanings, and then try to untie them.

Have we leisure enough for this? Do we already know how to live, or die? We should rather proceed with our whole souls towards

the point where it is our duty to take heed lest things, as well as words, deceive us. 6. Why, pray, do you discriminate between similar words, when nobody is ever deceived by them except during the discussion? It is things that lead us astray: it is between things that you must discriminate. We embrace evil instead of good; we pray for something opposite to that which we have prayed for in the past. Our prayers clash with our prayers, our plans with our plans. 7. How closely flattery resembles friendship! It not only apes friendship, but outdoes it, passing it in the race; with wide-open and indulgent ears it is welcomed and sinks to the depths of the heart, and it is pleasing precisely wherein it does harm. Show me how I may be able to see through this resemblance! An enemy comes to me full of compliments, in the guise of a friend. Vices creep into our hearts under the name of virtues, rashness lurks beneath the appellation of bravery, moderation is called sluggishness, and the coward is regarded as prudent; there is great danger if we go astray in these matters. So stamp them with special labels.

8. Then, too, the man who is asked whether he has horns on his head is not such a fool as to feel for them on his forehead, nor again so silly or dense that you can persuade him by means of argumentation, no matter how subtle, that he does not know the facts. Such quibbles are just as harmlessly deceptive as the juggler's cup and dice, in which it is the very trickery that pleases me. But show me how the trick is done, and I have lost my interest therein. And I hold the same opinion about these tricky word-plays; for by what other name can one call such sophistries? Not to know them does no harm, and mastering them does no good. 9. At any rate, if you wish to sift doubtful meanings of this kind, teach us that the happy man is not he whom the crowd deems happy, namely, he into whose coffers mighty sums have flowed, but he whose possessions are all in his soul, who is upright and exalted, who spurns inconstancy, who sees no man with whom he wishes to change places, who rates men only at their value as men, who takes Nature for his teacher, conforming to her laws and living as she commands, whom no violence can deprive of his possessions, who turns evil into good, is unerring in judgment, unshaken, unafraid, who may be moved by force but never moved to distraction, whom Fortune when she hurls at him with all

her might the deadliest missile in her armoury, may graze, though rarely, but never wound. For Fortune's other missiles, with which she vanquishes mankind in general, rebound from such a one, like hail which rattles on the roof with no harm to the dweller therein, and then melts away.

10. Why do you bore me with that which you yourself call the "liar fallacy," about which so many books have been written? Come now, suppose that my whole life is a lie; prove that to be wrong and, if you are sharp enough, bring that back to the truth. At present it holds things to be essential of which the greater part is superfluous. And even that which is not superfluous is of no significance in respect to its power of making one fortunate and blest. For if a thing be necessary, it does not follow that it is a good. Else we degrade the meaning of "good," if we apply that name to bread and barley-porridge and other commodities without which we cannot live. 11. The good must in every case be necessary; but that which is necessary is not in every case a good, since certain very paltry things are indeed necessary. No one is to such an extent ignorant of the noble meaning of the word "good," as to debase it to the level of these humdrum utilities.

12. What, then? Shall you not rather transfer your efforts to making it clear to all men that the search for the superfluous means a great outlay of time, and that many have gone through life merely accumulating the instruments of life? Consider individuals, survey men in general; there is none whose life does not look forward to the morrow. 13. "What harm is there in this," you ask? Infinite harm; for such persons do not live, but are preparing to live. They postpone everything. Even if we paid strict attention, life would soon get ahead of us; but as we are now, life finds us lingering and passes us by as if it belonged to another, and though it ends on the final day, it perishes every day.

But I must not exceed the bounds of a letter, which ought not to fill the reader's left hand. So I shall postpone to another day our case against the hair-splitters, those over-subtle fellows who make argumentation supreme instead of subordinate. Farewell.

XLVI. On a New Book by Lucilius

1. I received the book of yours which you promised me. I opened it hastily with the idea of glancing over it at leisure; for I meant only to taste the volume. But by its own charm the book coaxed me into traversing it more at length. You may understand from this fact how eloquent it was; for it seemed to be written in the smooth style, and yet did not resemble your handiwork or mine, but at first sight might have been ascribed to Titus Livius or to Epicurus. Moreover, I was so impressed and carried along by its charm that I finished it without any postponement. The sunlight called to me, hunger warned, and clouds were lowering; but I absorbed the book from beginning to end.

2. I was not merely pleased; I rejoiced. So full of wit and spirit it was! I should have added “force,” had the book contained moments of repose, or had it risen to energy only at intervals. But I found that there was no burst of force, but an even flow, a style that was vigorous and chaste. Nevertheless I noticed from time to time your sweetness, and here and there that mildness of yours. Your style is lofty and noble; I want you to keep to this manner and this direction. Your subject also contributed something; for this reason you should choose productive topics, which will lay hold of the mind and arouse it.

3. I shall discuss the book more fully after a second perusal; meantime, my judgment is somewhat unsettled, just as if I had heard it read aloud, and had not read it myself. You must allow me to examine it also. You need not be afraid; you shall hear the truth. Lucky fellow, to offer a man no opportunity to tell you lies at such long range! Unless perhaps, even now, when excuses for lying are taken away, custom serves as an excuse for our telling each other lies! Farewell.

XLVII. On Master and Slave

1. I am glad to learn, through those who come from you, that you live on friendly terms with your slaves. This befits a sensible and well-educated man like yourself. "They are slaves," people declare. Nay, rather they are men. "Slaves!" No, comrades. "Slaves!" No, they are unpretentious friends. "Slaves!" No, they are our fellow-slaves, if one reflects that Fortune has equal rights over slaves and free men alike.

2. That is why I smile at those who think it degrading for a man to dine with his slave. But why should they think it degrading? It is only because purse-proud etiquette surrounds a householder at his dinner with a mob of standing slaves. The master eats more than he can hold, and with monstrous greed loads his belly until it is stretched and at length ceases to do the work of a belly; so that he is at greater pains to discharge all the food than he was to stuff it down.

3. All this time the poor slaves may not move their lips, even to speak. The slightest murmur is repressed by the rod; even a chance sound, – a cough, a sneeze, or a hiccup, – is visited with the lash. There is a grievous penalty for the slightest breach of silence. All night long they must stand about, hungry and dumb.

4. The result of it all is that these slaves, who may not talk in their master's presence, talk about their master. But the slaves of former days, who were permitted to converse not only in their master's presence, but actually with him, whose mouths were not stitched up tight, were ready to bare their necks for their master, to bring upon their own heads any danger that threatened him; they spoke at the feast, but kept silence during torture. 5. Finally, the saying, in allusion to this same high-handed treatment, becomes current: "As many enemies as you have slaves." They are not enemies when we acquire them; we make them enemies.

I shall pass over other cruel and inhuman conduct towards them; for we maltreat them, not as if they were men, but as if they were beasts of burden. When we recline at a banquet, one slave mops up the disgorged food, another crouches beneath the table and gathers up the left-overs of the tipsy guests. 6. Another carves the priceless

game birds; with unerring strokes and skilled hand he cuts choice morsels along the breast or the rump. Hapless fellow, to live only for the purpose of cutting fat capons correctly – unless, indeed, the other man is still more unhappy than he, who teaches this art for pleasure's sake, rather than he who learns it because he must. 7. Another, who serves the wine, must dress like a woman and wrestle with his advancing years; he cannot get away from his boyhood; he is dragged back to it; and though he has already acquired a soldier's figure, he is kept beardless by having his hair smoothed away or plucked out by the roots, and he must remain awake throughout the night, dividing his time between his master's drunkenness and his lust; in the chamber he must be a man, at the feast a boy. 8. Another, whose duty it is to put a valuation on the guests, must stick to his task, poor fellow, and watch to see whose flattery and whose immodesty, whether of appetite or of language, is to get them an invitation for to-morrow. Think also of the poor purveyors of food, who note their masters' tastes with delicate skill, who know what special flavours will sharpen their appetite, what will please their eyes, what new combinations will rouse their cloyed stomachs, what food will excite their loathing through sheer satiety, and what will stir them to hunger on that particular day. With slaves like these the master cannot bear to dine; he would think it beneath his dignity to associate with his slave at the same table! Heaven forbid!

But how many masters is he creating in these very men! 9. I have seen standing in the line, before the door of Callistus, the former master, of Callistus; I have seen the master himself shut out while others were welcomed, – the master who once fastened the "For Sale" ticket on Callistus and put him in the market along with the good-for-nothing slaves. But he has been paid off by that slave who was shuffled into the first lot of those on whom the crier practises his lungs; the slave, too, in his turn has cut his name from the list and in his turn has adjudged him unfit to enter his house. The master sold Callistus, but how much has Callistus made his master pay for!

10. Kindly remember that he whom you call your slave sprang from the same stock, is smiled upon by the same skies, and on equal terms with yourself breathes, lives, and dies. It is just as possible for you to see in him a free-born man as for him to see in you a slave. As

a result of the massacres in Marius's day, many a man of distinguished birth, who was taking the first steps toward senatorial rank by service in the army, was humbled by fortune, one becoming a shepherd, another a caretaker of a country cottage. Despise, then, if you dare, those to whose estate you may at any time descend, even when you are despising them.

11. I do not wish to involve myself in too large a question, and to discuss the treatment of slaves, towards whom we Romans are excessively haughty, cruel, and insulting. But this is the kernel of my advice: Treat your inferiors as you would be treated by your betters. And as often as you reflect how much power you have over a slave, remember that your master has just as much power over you. 12. "But I have no master," you say. You are still young; perhaps you will have one. Do you not know at what age Hecuba entered captivity, or Croesus, or the mother of Darius, or Plato, or Diogenes?

13. Associate with your slave on kindly, even on affable, terms; let him talk with you, plan with you, live with you. I know that at this point all the exquisites will cry out against me in a body; they will say: "There is nothing more debasing, more disgraceful, than this." But these are the very persons whom I sometimes surprise kissing the hands of other men's slaves. 14. Do you not see even this, how our ancestors removed from masters everything invidious, and from slaves everything insulting? They called the master "father of the household," and the slaves "members of the household," a custom which still holds in the mime. They established a holiday on which masters and slaves should eat together, – not as the only day for this custom, but as obligatory on that day in any case. They allowed the slaves to attain honours in the household and to pronounce judgment; they held that a household was a miniature commonwealth.

15. "Do you mean to say," comes the retort, "that I must seat all my slaves at my own table?" No, not any more than that you should invite all free men to it. You are mistaken if you think that I would bar from my table certain slaves whose duties are more humble, as, for example, yonder muleteer or yonder herdsman; I propose to value them according to their character, and not according to their duties. Each man acquires his character for himself, but accident assigns his duties. Invite some to your table because they deserve the honor, and

others that they may come to deserve it. For if there is any slavish quality in them as the result of their low associations, it will be shaken off by intercourse with men of gentler breeding. ¹⁶ You need not, my dear Lucilius, hunt for friends only in the forum or in the Senate-house; if you are careful and attentive, you will find them at home also. Good material often stands idle for want of an artist; make the experiment, and you will find it so. As he is a fool who, when purchasing a horse, does not consider the animal's points, but merely his saddle and bridle; so he is doubly a fool who values a man from his clothes or from his rank, which indeed is only a robe that clothes us.

17. "He is a slave." His soul, however, may be that of a freeman. "He is a slave." But shall that stand in his way? Show me a man who is not a slave; one is a slave to lust, another to greed, another to ambition, and all men are slaves to fear. I will name you an ex-consul who is slave to an old hag, a millionaire who is slave to a serving-maid; I will show you youths of the noblest birth in serfdom to pantomime players! No servitude is more disgraceful than that which is self-imposed.

You should therefore not be deterred by these finicky persons from showing yourself to your slaves as an affable person and not proudly superior to them; they ought to respect you rather than fear you. ¹⁸ Some may maintain that I am now offering the liberty-cap to slaves in general and toppling down lords from their high estate, because I bid slaves respect their masters instead of fearing them. They say: "This is what he plainly means: slaves are to pay respect as if they were clients or early-morning callers!" Anyone who holds this opinion forgets that what is enough for a god cannot be too little for a master. Respect means love, and love and fear cannot be mingled. ¹⁹ So I hold that you are entirely right in not wishing to be feared by your slaves, and in lashing them merely with the tongue; only dumb animals need the thong.

That which annoys us does not necessarily injure us; but we are driven into wild rage by our luxurious lives, so that whatever does not answer our whims arouses our anger. ²⁰ We don the temper of kings. For they, too, forgetful alike of their own strength and of other men's weakness, grow white-hot with rage, as if they had received an

injury, when they are entirely protected from danger of such injury by their exalted station. They are not unaware that this is true, but by finding fault they seize upon opportunities to do harm; they insist that they have received injuries, in order that they may inflict them.

21. I do not wish to delay you longer; for you need no exhortation. This, among other things, is a mark of good character: it forms its own judgments and abides by them; but badness is fickle and frequently changing, not for the better, but for something different. Farewell.

XLVIII. On Quibbling as Unworthy of the Philosopher

1. In answer to the letter which you wrote me while travelling, – a letter as long as the journey itself, – I shall reply later. I ought to go into retirement, and consider what sort of advice I should give you. For you yourself, who consult me, also reflected for a long time whether to do so; how much more, then, should I myself reflect, since more deliberation is necessary in settling than in propounding a problem! And this is particularly true when one thing is advantageous to you and another to me. Am I speaking again in the guise of an Epicurean? 2. But the fact is, the same thing is advantageous to me which is advantageous to you; for I am not your friend unless whatever is at issue concerning you is my concern also. Friendship produces between us a partnership in all our interests. There is no such thing as good or bad fortune for the individual; we live in common. And no one can live happily who has regard to himself alone and transforms everything into a question of his own utility; you must live for your neighbour, if you would live for yourself. 3. This fellowship, maintained with scrupulous care, which makes us mingle as men with our fellow-men and holds that the human race have certain rights in common, is also of great help in cherishing the more intimate fellowship which is based on friendship, concerning which I began to speak above. For he that has much in common with a fellow-man will have all things in common with a friend.

4. And on this point, my excellent Lucilius, I should like to have those subtle dialecticians of yours advise me how I ought to help a friend, or how a fellow man, rather than tell me in how many ways the word “friend” is used, and how many meanings the word “man” possesses. Lo, Wisdom and Folly are taking opposite sides. Which shall I join? Which party would you have me follow? On that side, “man” is the equivalent of “friend”; on the other side, “friend” is not the equivalent of “man.” The one wants a friend for his own advantage; the other wants to make himself an advantage to his

friend. What *you* have to offer me is nothing but distortion of words and splitting of syllables. 5. It is clear that unless I can devise some very tricky premisses and by false deductions tack on to them a fallacy which springs from the truth, I shall not be able to distinguish between what is desirable and what is to be avoided! I am ashamed! Old men as we are, dealing with a problem so serious, we make play of it!

6. “‘Mouse’ is a syllable. Now a mouse eats its cheese; therefore, a syllable eats cheese.” Suppose now that I cannot solve this problem; see what peril hangs over my head as a result of such ignorance! What a scrape I shall be in! Without doubt I must beware, or some day I shall be catching syllables in a mousetrap, or, if I grow careless, a book may devour my cheese! Unless, perhaps, the following syllogism is shrewder still: “‘Mouse’ is a syllable. Now a syllable does not eat cheese. Therefore a mouse does not eat cheese.”

7. What childish nonsense! Do we knit our brows over this sort of problem? Do we let our beards grow long for this reason? Is this the matter which we teach with sour and pale faces?

Would you really know what philosophy offers to humanity? Philosophy offers counsel. Death calls away one man, and poverty chafes another; a third is worried either by his neighbour’s wealth or by his own. So-and-so is afraid of bad luck; another desires to get away from his own good fortune. Some are ill-treated by men, others by the gods. 8. Why, then, do you frame for me such games as these? It is no occasion for jest; you are retained as counsel for unhappy mankind. You have promised to help those in peril by sea, those in captivity, the sick and the needy, and those whose heads are under the poised axe. Whither are you straying? What are you doing?

This friend, in whose company you are jesting, is in fear. Help him, and take the noose from about his neck. Men are stretching out imploring hands to you on all sides; lives ruined and in danger of ruin are begging for some assistance; men’s hopes, men’s resources, depend upon you. They ask that you deliver them from all their restlessness, that you reveal to them, scattered and wandering as they are, the clear light of truth. 9. Tell them what nature has made necessary, and what superfluous; tell them how simple are the laws that she has laid down, how pleasant and unimpeded life is for those

who follow these laws, but how bitter and perplexed it is for those who have put their trust in opinion rather than in nature.

I should deem your games of logic to be of some avail in relieving men's burdens, if you could first show me what part of these burdens they will relieve. What among these games of yours banishes lust? Or controls it? Would that I could say that they were merely of no profit! They are positively harmful. I can make it perfectly clear to you whenever you wish, that a noble spirit when involved in such subtleties is impaired and weakened. ¹⁰ I am ashamed to say what weapons they supply to men who are destined to go to war with fortune, and how poorly they equip them! Is this the path to the greatest good? Is philosophy to proceed by such claptrap and by quibbles which would be a disgrace and a reproach even for expounders of the law? For what else is it that you men are doing, when you deliberately ensnare the person to whom you are putting questions, than making it appear that the man has lost his case on a technical error? But just as the judge can reinstate those who have lost a suit in this way, so philosophy has reinstated these victims of quibbling to their former condition. ¹¹ Why do you men abandon your mighty promises, and, after having assured me in high-sounding language that you will permit the glitter of gold to dazzle my eyesight no more than the gleam of the sword, and that I shall, with mighty steadfastness, spurn both that which all men crave and that which all men fear, why do you descend to the ABC's of scholastic pedants? What is your answer?

Is this the path to heaven?

For that is exactly what philosophy promises to me, that I shall be made equal to God. For this I have been summoned, for this purpose have I come. Philosophy, keep your promise!

¹² Therefore, my dear Lucilius, withdraw yourself as far as possible from these exceptions and objections of so-called philosophers. Frankness, and simplicity beseem true goodness. Even if there were many years left to you, you would have had to spend them frugally in order to have enough for the necessary things; but as it is, when your time is so scant, what madness it is to learn superfluous things! Farewell.

XLIX. On the Shortness of Life

1. A man is indeed lazy and careless, my dear Lucilius, if he is reminded of a friend only by seeing some landscape which stirs the memory; and yet there are times when the old familiar haunts stir up a sense of loss that has been stored away in the soul, not bringing back dead memories, but rousing them from their dormant state, just as the sight of a lost friend's favourite slave, or his cloak, or his house, renews the mourner's grief, even though it has been softened by time.

Now, lo and behold, Campania, and especially Naples and your beloved Pompeii, struck me, when I viewed them, with a wonderfully fresh sense of longing for you. You stand in full view before my eyes. I am on the point of parting from you. I see you choking down your tears and resisting without success the emotions that well up at the very moment when you try to check them. I seem to have lost you but a moment ago. For what is not "but a moment ago" when one begins to use the memory? 2. It was but a moment ago that I sat, as a lad, in the school of the philosopher Sotion, but a moment ago that I began to plead in the courts, but a moment ago that I lost the desire to plead, but a moment ago that I lost the ability. Infinitely swift is the flight of time, as those see more clearly who are looking backwards. For when we are intent on the present, we do not notice it, so gentle is the passage of time's headlong flight. 3. Do you ask the reason for this? All past time is in the same place; it all presents the same aspect to us, it lies together. Everything slips into the same abyss. Besides, an event which in its entirety is of brief compass cannot contain long intervals. The time which we spend in living is but a point, nay, even less than a point. But this point of time, infinitesimal as it is, nature has mocked by making it seem outwardly of longer duration; she has taken one portion thereof and made it infancy, another childhood, another youth, another the gradual slope, so to speak, from youth to old age, and old age itself is still another. How many steps for how short a climb! 4. It was but a moment ago that I saw you off on your journey; and yet this "moment ago" makes up a goodly share of our existence, which is so

brief, we should reflect, that it will soon come to an end altogether. In other years time did not seem to me to go so swiftly; now, it seems fast beyond belief, perhaps, because I feel that the finish-line is moving closer to me, or it may be that I have begun to take heed and reckon up my losses.

5. For this reason I am all the more angry that some men claim the major portion of this time for superfluous things, – time which, no matter how carefully it is guarded, cannot suffice even for necessary things. Cicero declared that if the number of his days were doubled, he should not have time to read the lyric poets. And you may rate the dialecticians in the same class; but they are foolish in a more melancholy way. The lyric poets are avowedly frivolous; but the dialecticians believe that they are themselves engaged upon serious business. 6. I do not deny that one must cast a glance at dialectic; but it ought to be a mere glance, a sort of greeting from the threshold, merely that one may not be deceived, or judge these pursuits to contain any hidden matters of great worth.

Why do you torment yourself and lose weight over some problem which it is more clever to have scorned than to solve? When a soldier is undisturbed and travelling at his ease, he can hunt for trifles along his way; but when the enemy is closing in on the rear, and a command is given to quicken the pace, necessity makes him throw away everything which he picked up in moments of peace and leisure. 7. I have no time to investigate disputed inflections of words, or to try my cunning upon them.

Behold the gathering clans, the fast-shut gates,
And weapons whetted ready for the war.

I need a stout heart to hear without flinching this din of battle which sounds round about. 8. And all would rightly think me mad if, when graybeards and women were heaping up rocks for the fortifications, when the armour-clad youths inside the gates were awaiting, or even demanding, the order for a sally, when the spears of the foemen were quivering in our gates and the very ground was rocking with mines and subterranean passages, – I say, they would rightly think me mad if I were to sit idle, putting such petty posers as

this: "What you have not lost, you have. But you have not lost any horns. Therefore, you have horns," or other tricks constructed after the model of this piece of sheer silliness. 9. And yet I may well seem in your eyes no less mad, if I spend my energies on that sort of thing; for even now I am in a state of siege. And yet, in the former case it would be merely a peril from the outside that threatened me, and a wall that sundered me from the foe; as it is now, death-dealing perils are in my very presence. I have no time for such nonsense; a mighty undertaking is on my hands. What am I to do? Death is on my trail, and life is fleeting away; 10. teach me something with which to face these troubles. Bring it to pass that I shall cease trying to escape from death, and that life may cease to escape from me. Give me courage to meet hardships; make me calm in the face of the unavoidable. Relax the straitened limits of the time which is allotted me. Show me that the good in life does not depend upon life's length, but upon the use we make of it; also, that it is possible, or rather usual, for a man who has lived long to have lived too little. Say to me when I lie down to sleep: "You may not wake again!" And when I have waked: "You may not go to sleep again!" Say to me when I go forth from my house: "You may not return!" And when I return: "You may never go forth again!" 11. You are mistaken if you think that only on an ocean voyage there is a very slight space between life and death. No, the distance between is just as narrow everywhere. It is not everywhere that death shows himself so near at hand; yet everywhere he is as near at hand.

Rid me of these shadowy terrors; then you will more easily deliver to me the instruction for which I have prepared myself. At our birth nature made us teachable, and gave us reason, not perfect, but capable of being perfected. 12. Discuss for me justice, duty, thrift, and that twofold purity, both the purity which abstains from another's person, and that which takes care of one's own self. If you will only refuse to lead me along by-paths, I shall more easily reach the goal at which I am aiming. For, as the tragic poet says:

The language of truth is simple.

We should not, therefore, make that language intricate; since there is nothing less fitting for a soul of great endeavour than such crafty cleverness. Farewell.

L. On our Blindness and its Cure

1. I received your letter many months after you had posted it; accordingly, I thought it useless to ask the carrier what you were busied with. He must have a particularly good memory if he can remember that! But I hope by this time you are living in such a way that I can be sure what it is you are busied with, no matter where you may be. For what else are you busied with except improving yourself every day, laying aside some error, and coming to understand that the faults which you attribute to circumstances are in yourself? We are indeed apt to ascribe certain faults to the place or to the time; but those faults will follow us, no matter how we change our place.

2. You know Harpaste, my wife's female clown; she has remained in my house, a burden incurred from a legacy. I particularly disapprove of these freaks; whenever I wish to enjoy the quips of a clown, I am not compelled to hunt far; I can laugh at myself. Now this clown suddenly became blind. The story sounds incredible, but I assure you that it is true: she does not know that she is blind. She keeps asking her attendant to change her quarters; she says that her apartments are too dark.

3. You can see clearly that that which makes us smile in the case of Harpaste happens to all the rest of us; nobody understands that he is himself greedy, or that he is covetous. Yet the blind ask for a guide, while we wander without one, saying: "I am not self-seeking; but one cannot live at Rome in any other way. I am not extravagant, but mere living in the city demands a great outlay. It is not my fault that I have a choleric disposition, or that I have not settled down to any definite scheme of life; it is due to my youth." 4. Why do we deceive ourselves? The evil that afflicts us is not external, it is within us, situated in our very vitals; for that reason we attain soundness with all the more difficulty, because we do not know that we are diseased.

Suppose that we have begun the cure; when shall we throw off all these diseases, with all their virulence? At present, we do not even consult the physician, whose work would be easier if he were called in when the complaint was in its early stages. The tender and the

inexperienced minds would follow his advice if he pointed out the right way. 5. No man finds it difficult to return to nature, except the man who has deserted nature. We blush to receive instruction in sound sense; but, by Heaven, if we think it base to seek a teacher of this art, we should also abandon any hope that so great a good could be instilled into us by mere chance.

No, we must work. To tell the truth, even the work is not great, if only, as I said, we begin to mould and reconstruct our souls before they are hardened by sin. But I do not despair even of a hardened sinner. 6. There is nothing that will not surrender to persistent treatment, to concentrated and careful attention; however much the timber may be bent, you can make it straight again. Heat unbends curved beams, and wood that grew naturally in another shape is fashioned artificially according to our needs. How much more easily does the soul permit itself to be shaped, pliable as it is and more yielding than any liquid! For what else is the soul than air in a certain state? And you see that air is more adaptable than any other matter, in proportion as it is rarer than any other.

7. There is nothing, Lucilius, to hinder you from entertaining good hopes about us, just because we are even now in the grip of evil, or because we have long been possessed thereby. There is no man to whom a good mind comes before an evil one. It is the evil mind that gets first hold on all of us. Learning virtue means unlearning vice. 8. We should therefore proceed to the task of freeing ourselves from faults with all the more courage because, when once committed to us, the good is an everlasting possession; virtue is not unlearned. For opposites find difficulty in clinging where they do not belong, therefore they can be driven out and hustled away; but qualities that come to a place which is rightfully theirs abide faithfully. Virtue is according to nature; vice is opposed to it and hostile. 9. But although virtues, when admitted, cannot depart and are easy to guard, yet the first steps in the approach to them are toilsome, because it is characteristic of a weak and diseased mind to fear that which is unfamiliar. The mind must, therefore, be forced to make a beginning; from then on, the medicine is not bitter; for just as soon as it is curing us it begins to give pleasure. One enjoys other cures only after health is restored, but a draught of philosophy is at the same moment

wholesome and pleasant. Farewell.

LI. On Baiae and Morals

1. Every man does the best he can, my dear Lucilius! You over there have Etna, that lofty and most celebrated mountain of Sicily; (although I cannot make out why Messala, – or was it Valgius? for I have been reading in both, – has called it “unique,” inasmuch as many regions belch forth fire, not merely the lofty ones where the phenomenon is more frequent, – presumably because fire rises to the greatest possible height, – but low-lying places also.) As for myself, I do the best I can; I have had to be satisfied with Baiae; and I left it the day after I reached it; for Baiae is a place to be avoided, because, though it has certain natural advantages, luxury has claimed it for her own exclusive resort. 2. “What then,” you say, “should any place be singled out as an object of aversion?” Not at all. But just as, to the wise and upright man, one style of clothing is more suitable than another, without his having an aversion for any particular colour, but because he thinks that some colours do not befit one who has adopted the simple life; so there are places also, which the wise man or he who is on the way toward wisdom will avoid as foreign to good morals. 3. Therefore, if he is contemplating withdrawal from the world, he will not select Canopus (although Canopus does not keep any man from living simply), nor Baiae either; for both places have begun to be resorts of vice. At Canopus luxury pampers itself to the utmost degree; at Baiae it is even more lax, as if the place itself demanded a certain amount of licence.

4. We ought to select abodes which are wholesome not only for the body but also for the character. Just as I do not care to live in a place of torture, neither do I care to live in a cafe. To witness persons wandering drunk along the beach, the riotous revelling of sailing parties, the lakes a-din with choral song, and all the other ways in which luxury, when it is, so to speak, released from the restraints of law not merely sins, but blazons its sins abroad, – why must I witness all this? 5. We ought to see to it that we flee to the greatest possible distance from provocations to vice. We should toughen our minds, and remove them far from the allurements of pleasure. A single winter relaxed Hannibal’s fibre; his pampering in Campania

took the vigour out of that hero who had triumphed over Alpine snows. He conquered with his weapons, but was conquered by his vices. 6. We too have a war to wage, a type of warfare in which there is allowed no rest or furlough. To be conquered, in the first place, are pleasures, which, as you see, have carried off even the sternest characters. If a man has once understood how great is the task which he has entered upon, he will see that there must be no dainty or effeminate conduct. What have I to do with those hot baths or with the sweating-room where they shut in the dry steam which is to drain your strength? Perspiration should flow only after toil.

7. Suppose we do what Hannibal did, – check the course of events, give up the war, and give over our bodies to be coddled. Every one would rightly blame us for our untimely sloth, a thing fraught with peril even for the victor, to say nothing of one who is only on the way to victory. And we have even less right to do this than those followers of the Carthaginian flag; for our danger is greater than theirs if we slacken, and our toil is greater than theirs even if we press ahead. 8. Fortune is fighting against me, and I shall not carry out her commands. I refuse to submit to the yoke; nay rather, I shake off the yoke that is upon me, – an act which demands even greater courage. The soul is not to be pampered; surrendering to pleasure means also surrendering to pain, surrendering to toil, surrendering to poverty. Both ambition and anger will wish to have the same rights over me as pleasure, and I shall be torn asunder, or rather pulled to pieces, amid all these conflicting passions. 9. I have set freedom before my eyes; and I am striving for that reward. And what is freedom, you ask? It means not being a slave to any circumstance, to any constraint, to any chance; it means compelling Fortune to enter the lists on equal terms. And on the day when I know that I have the upper hand, her power will be naught. When I have death in my own control, shall I take orders from her?

10. Therefore, a man occupied with such reflections should choose an austere and pure dwelling-place. The spirit is weakened by surroundings that are too pleasant, and without a doubt one's place of residence can contribute towards impairing its vigour. Animals whose hoofs are hardened on rough ground can travel any road; but when they are fattened on soft marshy meadows their hoofs are soon

worn out. The bravest soldier comes from rock-ribbed regions; but the town-bred and the home-bred are sluggish in action. The hand which turns from the plough to the sword never objects to toil; but your sleek and well-dressed dandy quails at the first cloud of dust. 11. Being trained in a rugged country strengthens the character and fits it for great undertakings. It was more honourable in Scipio to spend his exile at Liternum, than at Baiae; his downfall did not need a setting so effeminate. Those also into whose hands the rising fortunes of Rome first transferred the wealth of the state, Gaius Marius, Gnaeus Pompey, and Caesar, did indeed build villas near Baiae; but they set them on the very tops of the mountains. This seemed more soldier-like, to look down from a lofty height upon lands spread far and wide below. Note the situation, position, and type of building which they chose; you will see that they were not country-places, – they were camps. 12. Do you suppose that Cato would ever have dwelt in a pleasure-palace, that he might count the lewd women as they sailed past, the many kinds of barges painted in all sorts of colours, the roses which were wafted about the lake, or that he might listen to the nocturnal brawls of serenaders? Would he not have preferred to remain in the shelter of a trench thrown up by his own hands to serve for a single night? Would not anyone who is a man have his slumbers broken by a war-trumpet rather than by a chorus of serenaders?

13. But I have been haranguing against Baiae long enough; although I never could harangue often enough against vice. Vice, Lucilius, is what I wish you to proceed against, without limit and without end. For it has neither limit nor end. If any vice rend your heart, cast it away from you; and if you cannot be rid of it in any other way, pluck out your heart also. Above all, drive pleasures from your sight. Hate them beyond all other things, for they are like the bandits whom the Egyptians call “lovers,” who embrace us only to garrotte us. Farewell.

LII. On Choosing our Teachers

1. What is this force, Lucilius, that drags us in one direction when we are aiming in another, urging us on to the exact place from which we long to withdraw? What is it that wrestles with our spirit, and does not allow us to desire anything once for all? We veer from plan to plan. None of our wishes is free, none is unqualified, none is lasting.

2. "But it is the fool," you say, "who is inconsistent; nothing suits him for long." But how or when can we tear ourselves away from this folly? No man by himself has sufficient strength to rise above it; he needs a helping hand, and some one to extricate him.

3. Epicurus remarks that certain men have worked their way to the truth without any one's assistance, carving out their own passage. And he gives special praise to these, for their impulse has come from within, and they have forged to the front by themselves. Again, he says, there are others who need outside help, who will not proceed unless someone leads the way, but who will follow faithfully. Of these, he says, Metrodorus was one; this type of man is also excellent, but belongs to the second grade. We ourselves are not of that first class, either; we shall be well treated if we are admitted into the second. Nor need you despise a man who can gain salvation only with the assistance of another; the will to be saved means a great deal, too.

4. You will find still another class of man, – and a class not to be despised, – who can be forced and driven into righteousness, who do not need a guide as much as they require someone to encourage and, as it were, to force them along. This is the third variety. If you ask me for a man of this pattern also, Epicurus tells us that Hermarchus was such. And of the two last-named classes, he is more ready to congratulate the one, but he feels more respect for the other; for although both reached the same goal, it is a greater credit to have brought about the same result with the more difficult material upon which to work.

5. Suppose that two buildings have been erected, unlike as to their foundations, but equal in height and in grandeur. One is built on faultless ground, and the process of erection goes right ahead. In the

other case, the foundations have exhausted the building materials, for they have been sunk into soft and shifting ground and much labour has been wasted in reaching the solid rock. As one looks at both of them, one sees clearly what progress the former has made but the larger and more difficult part of the latter is hidden. 6. So with men's dispositions; some are pliable and easy to manage, but others have to be laboriously wrought out by hand, so to speak, and are wholly employed in the making of their own foundations. I should accordingly deem more fortunate the man who has never had any trouble with himself; but the other, I feel, has deserved better of himself, who has won a victory over the meanness of his own nature, and has not gently led himself, but has wrestled his way, to wisdom.

7. You may be sure that this refractory nature, which demands much toil, has been implanted in us. There are obstacles in our path; so let us fight, and call to our assistance some helpers. "Whom," you say, "shall I call upon? Shall it be this man or that?" There is another choice also open to you; you may go to the ancients; for they have the time to help you. We can get assistance not only from the living, but from those of the past. 8. Let us choose, however, from among the living, not men who pour forth their words with the greatest glibness, turning out commonplaces and holding, as it were, their own little private exhibitions, – not these, I say, but men who teach us by their lives, men who tell us what we ought to do and then prove it by practice, who show us what we should avoid, and then are never caught doing that which they have ordered us to avoid.

Choose as a guide one whom you will admire more when you see him act than when you hear him speak. 9. Of course I would not prevent you from listening also to those philosophers who are wont to hold public meetings and discussions, provided they appear before the people for the express purpose of improving themselves and others, and do not practise their profession for the sake of self-seeking. For what is baser than philosophy courting applause? Does the sick man praise the surgeon while he is operating? 10. In silence and with reverent awe submit to the cure. Even though you cry applause, I shall listen to your cries as if you were groaning when your sores were touched. Do you wish to bear witness that you are attentive, that you are stirred by the grandeur of the subject? You

may do this at the proper time; I shall of course allow you to pass judgment and cast a vote as to the better course. Pythagoras made his pupils keep silence for five years; do you think that they had the right on that account to break out immediately into applause?

11. How mad is he who leaves the lecture-room in a happy frame of mind simply because of applause from the ignorant! Why do you take pleasure in being praised by men whom you yourself cannot praise? Fabianus used to give popular talks, but his audience listened with self-control. Occasionally a loud shout of praise would burst forth, but it was prompted by the greatness of his subject, and not by the sound of oratory that slipped forth pleasantly and softly. 12. There should be a difference between the applause of the theatre and the applause of the school; and there is a certain decency even in bestowing praise. If you mark them carefully, all acts are always significant, and you can gauge character by even the most trifling signs. The lecherous man is revealed by his gait, by a movement of the hand, sometimes by a single answer, by his touching his head with a finger, by the shifting of his eye. The scamp is shown up by his laugh; the madman by his face and general appearance. These qualities become known by certain marks; but you can tell the character of every man when you see how he gives and receives praise. 13. The philosopher's audience, from this corner and that, stretch forth admiring hands, and sometimes the adoring crowd almost hang over the lecturer's head. But, if you really understand, that is not praise; it is merely applause. These outcries should be left for the arts which aim to please the crowd; let philosophy be worshipped in silence. 14. Young men, indeed, must sometimes have free play to follow their impulses, but it should only be at times when they act from impulse, and when they cannot force themselves to be silent. Such praise as that gives a certain kind of encouragement to the hearers themselves, and acts as a spur to the youthful mind. But let them be roused to the matter, and not to the style; otherwise, eloquence does them harm, making them enamoured of itself, and not of the subject.

15. I shall postpone this topic for the present; it demands a long and special investigation, to show how the public should be addressed, what indulgences should be allowed to a speaker on a

public occasion, and what should be allowed to the crowd itself in the presence of the speaker. There can be no doubt that philosophy has suffered a loss, now that she has exposed her charms for sale. But she can still be viewed in her sanctuary, if her exhibitor is a priest and not a pedlar. Farewell.

LIII. On the Faults of the Spirit

1. You can persuade me into almost anything now, for I was recently persuaded to travel by water. We cast off when the sea was lazily smooth; the sky, to be sure, was heavy with nasty clouds, such as usually break into rain or squalls. Still, I thought that the few miles between Puteoli and your dear Parthenope might be run off in quick time, despite the uncertain and lowering sky. So, in order to get away more quickly, I made straight out to sea for Nesis, with the purpose of cutting across all the inlets. 2. But when we were so far out that it made little difference to me whether I returned or kept on, the calm weather, which had enticed me, came to naught. The storm had not yet begun, but the ground-swell was on, and the waves kept steadily coming faster. I began to ask the pilot to put me ashore somewhere; he replied that the coast was rough and a bad place to land, and that in a storm he feared a lee shore more than anything else. 3. But I was suffering too grievously to think of the danger, since a sluggish seasickness which brought no relief was racking me, the sort that upsets the liver without clearing it. Therefore I laid down the law to my pilot, forcing him to make for the shore, willy-nilly. When we drew near, I did not wait for things to be done in accordance with Vergil's orders, until

Prow faced seawards

or

Anchor plunged from bow;

I remembered my profession as a veteran devotee of cold water, and, clad as I was in my cloak, let myself down into the sea, just as a cold-water bather should. 4. What do you think my feelings were, scrambling over the rocks, searching out the path, or making one for myself? I understood that sailors have good reason to fear the land. It is hard to believe what I endured when I could not endure myself; you may be sure that the reason why Ulysses was shipwrecked on every possible occasion was not so much because the sea-god was angry with him from his birth; he was simply subject to seasickness. And in the future I also, if I must go anywhere by sea, shall only reach my destination in the twentieth year.

5. When I finally calmed my stomach (for you know that one does not escape seasickness by escaping from the sea) and refreshed my body with a rubdown, I began to reflect how completely we forget or ignore our failings, even those that affect the body, which are continually reminding us of their existence, – not to mention those which are more serious in proportion as they are more hidden. 6. A slight ague deceives us; but when it has increased and a genuine fever has begun to burn, it forces even a hardy man, who can endure much suffering, to admit that he is ill. There is pain in the foot, and a tingling sensation in the joints; but we still hide the complaint and announce that we have sprained a joint, or else are tired from over-exercise. Then the ailment, uncertain at first, must be given a name; and when it begins to swell the ankles also, and has made both our feet “right” feet, we are bound to confess that we have the gout. 7. The opposite holds true of diseases of the soul; the worse one is, the less one perceives it. You need not be surprised, my beloved Lucilius. For he whose sleep is light pursues visions during slumber, and sometimes, though asleep, is conscious that he is asleep; but sound slumber annihilates our very dreams and sinks the spirit down so deep that it has no perception of self. 8. Why will no man confess his faults? Because he is still in their grasp; only he who is awake can recount his dream, and similarly a confession of sin is a proof of sound mind.

Let us, therefore, rouse ourselves, that we may be able to correct our mistakes. Philosophy, however, is the only power that can stir us, the only power that can shake off our deep slumber. Devote yourself wholly to philosophy. You are worthy of her; she is worthy of you; greet one another with a loving embrace. Say farewell to all other interests with courage and frankness. Do not study philosophy merely during your spare time.

9. If you were ill, you would stop caring for your personal concerns, and forget your business duties; you would not think highly enough of any client to take active charge of his case during a slight abatement of your sufferings. You would try your hardest to be rid of the illness as soon as possible. What, then? Shall you not do the same thing now? Throw aside all hindrances and give up your time to getting a sound mind; for no man can attain it if he is

engrossed in other matters. Philosophy wields her own authority; she appoints her own time and does not allow it to be appointed for her. She is not a thing to be followed at odd times, but a subject for daily practice; she is mistress, and she commands our attendance. 10. Alexander, when a certain state promised him a part of its territory and half its entire property, replied: "I invaded Asia with the intention, not of accepting what you might give, but of allowing you to keep what I might leave." Philosophy likewise keeps saying to all occupations: "I do not intend to accept the time which you have left over, but I shall allow you to keep what I myself shall leave."

11. Turn to her, therefore, with all your soul, sit at her feet, cherish her; a great distance will then begin to separate you from other men. You will be far ahead of all mortals, and even the gods will not be far ahead of you. Do you ask what will be the difference between yourself and the gods? They will live longer. But, by my faith, it is the sign of a great artist to have confined a full likeness to the limits of a miniature. The wise man's life spreads out to him over as large a surface as does all eternity to a god. There is one point in which the sage has an advantage over the god; for a god is freed from terrors by the bounty of nature, the wise man by his own bounty. 12. What a wonderful privilege, to have the weaknesses of a man and the serenity of a god! The power of philosophy to blunt the blows of chance is beyond belief. No missile can settle in her body; she is well-protected and impenetrable. She spoils the force of some missiles and wards them off with the loose folds of her gown, as if they had no power to harm; others she dashes aside, and hurls them back with such force that they recoil upon the sender. Farewell.

LIV. On Asthma and Death

1. My ill-health had allowed me a long furlough, when suddenly it resumed the attack. "What kind of ill-health?" you say. And you surely have a right to ask; for it is true that no kind is unknown to me. But I have been consigned, so to speak, to one special ailment. I do not know why I should call it by its Greek name; for it is well enough described as "shortness of breath." Its attack is of very brief duration, like that of a squall at sea; it usually ends within an hour. Who indeed could breathe his last for long? 2. I have passed through all the ills and dangers of the flesh; but nothing seems to me more troublesome than this. And naturally so; for anything else may be called illness; but this is a sort of continued "last gasp." Hence physicians call it "practising how to die." For some day the breath will succeed in doing what it has so often essayed. 3. Do you think I am writing this letter in a merry spirit, just because I have escaped? It would be absurd to take delight in such supposed restoration to health, as it would be for a defendant to imagine that he had won his case when he had succeeded in postponing his trial. Yet in the midst of my difficult breathing I never ceased to rest secure in cheerful and brave thoughts.

4. "What?" I say to myself; "does death so often test me? Let it do so; I myself have for a long time tested death." "When?" you ask. Before I was born. Death is non-existence, and I know already what that means. What was before me will happen again after me. If there is any suffering in this state, there must have been such suffering also in the past, before we entered the light of day. As a matter of fact, however, we felt no discomfort then. 5. And I ask you, would you not say that one was the greatest of fools who believed that a lamp was worse off when it was extinguished than before it was lighted? We mortals also are lighted and extinguished; the period of suffering comes in between, but on either side there is a deep peace. For, unless I am very much mistaken, my dear Lucilius, we go astray in thinking that death only follows, when in reality it has both preceded us and will in turn follow us. Whatever condition existed before our birth, is death. For what does it matter whether you do not begin at

all, or whether you leave off, inasmuch as the result of both these states is non-existence?

6. I have never ceased to encourage myself with cheering counsels of this kind, silently, of course, since I had not the power to speak; then little by little this shortness of breath, already reduced to a sort of panting, came on at greater intervals, and then slowed down and finally stopped. Even by this time, although the gasping has ceased, the breath does not come and go normally; I still feel a sort of hesitation and delay in breathing. Let it be as it pleases, provided there be no sigh from the soul. 7. Accept this assurance from me – I shall never be frightened when the last hour comes; I am already prepared and do not plan a whole day ahead. But do you praise and imitate the man whom it does not irk to die, though he takes pleasure in living. For what virtue is there in going away when you are thrust out? And yet there is virtue even in this: I am indeed thrust out, but it is as if I were going away willingly. For that reason the wise man can never be thrust out, because that would mean removal from a place which he was unwilling to leave; and the wise man does nothing unwillingly. He escapes necessity, because he wills to do what necessity is about to force upon him. Farewell.

LV. On Vatia's Villa

1. I have just returned from a ride in my litter; and I am as weary as if I had walked the distance, instead of being seated. Even to be carried for any length of time is hard work, perhaps all the more so because it is an unnatural exercise; for Nature gave us legs with which to do our own walking, and eyes with which to do our own seeing. Our luxuries have condemned us to weakness; we have ceased to be able to do that which we have long declined to do. 2. Nevertheless, I found it necessary to give my body a shaking up, in order that the bile which had gathered in my throat, if that was my trouble, might be shaken out, or, if the very breath within me had become, for some reason, too thick, that the jolting, which I have felt was a good thing for me, might make it thinner. So I insisted on being carried longer than usual, along an attractive beach, which bends between Cumae and Servilius Vatia's country-house, shut in by the sea on one side and the lake on the other, just like a narrow path. It was packed firm under foot, because of a recent storm; since, as you know, the waves, when they beat upon the beach hard and fast, level it out; but a continuous period of fair weather loosens it, when the sand, which is kept firm by the water, loses its moisture.

3. As my habit is, I began to look about for something there that might be of service to me, when my eyes fell upon the villa which had once belonged to Vatia. So this was the place where that famous praetorian millionaire passed his old age! He was famed for nothing else than his life of leisure, and he was regarded as lucky only for that reason. For whenever men were ruined by their friendship with Asinius Gallus whenever others were ruined by their hatred of Sejanus, and later by their intimacy with him, – for it was no more dangerous to have offended him than to have loved him, – people used to cry out: “O Vatia, you alone know how to live!” 4. But what he knew was how to hide, not how to live; and it makes a great deal of difference whether your life be one of leisure or one of idleness. So I never drove past his country-place during Vatia's lifetime without saying to myself: “Here lies Vatia!”

But, my dear Lucilius, philosophy is a thing of holiness,

something to be worshipped, so much so that the very counterfeit pleases. For the mass of mankind consider that a person is at leisure who has withdrawn from society, is free from care, self-sufficient, and lives for himself; but these privileges can be the reward only of the wise man. Does he who is a victim of anxiety know how to live for himself? What? Does he even know (and that is of first importance) how to live at all? 5. For the man who has fled from affairs and from men, who has been banished to seclusion by the unhappiness which his own desires have brought upon him, who cannot see his neighbour more happy than himself, who through fear has taken to concealment, like a frightened and sluggish animal. – this person is not living for himself he is living for his belly, his sleep, and his lust, – and that is the most shameful thing in the world. He who lives for no one does not necessarily live for himself. Nevertheless, there is so much in steadfastness and adherence to one's purpose that even sluggishness, if stubbornly maintained, assumes an air of authority with us.

6. I could not describe the villa accurately; for I am familiar only with the front of the house, and with the parts which are in public view and can be seen by the mere passer-by. There are two grottoes, which cost a great deal of labour, as big as the most spacious hall, made by hand. One of these does not admit the rays of the sun, while the other keeps them until the sun sets. There is also a stream running through a grove of plane-trees, which draws for its supply both on the sea and on Lake Acheron; it intersects the grove just like a race-way and is large enough to support fish, although its waters are continually being drawn off. When the sea is calm, however, they do not use the stream, only touching the well-stocked waters when the storms give the fishermen a forced holiday. 7. But the most convenient thing about the villa is the fact that Baiae is next door, it is free from all the inconveniences of that resort, and yet enjoys its pleasures. I myself understand these attractions, and I believe that it is a villa suited to every season of the year. It fronts the west wind, which it intercepts in such a way that Baiae is denied it. So it seems that Vatia was no fool when he selected this place as the best in which to spend his leisure when it was already unfruitful and decrepit.

8. The place where one lives, however, can contribute little towards tranquillity; it is the mind which must make everything agreeable to itself. I have seen men despondent in a gay and lovely villa, and I have seen them to all appearance full of business in the midst of a solitude. For this reason you should not refuse to believe that your life is well-placed merely because you are not now in Campania. But why are you not there? Just let your thoughts travel, even to this place. 9. You may hold converse with your friends when they are absent, and indeed as often as you wish and for as long as you wish. For we enjoy this, the greatest of pleasures, all the more when we are absent from one another. For the presence of friends makes us fastidious; and because we can at any time talk or sit together, when once we have parted we give not a thought to those whom we have just beheld. 10. And we ought to bear the absence of friends cheerfully, just because everyone is bound to be often absent from his friends even when they are present. Include among such cases, in the first place, the nights spent apart, then the different engagements which each of two friends has, then the private studies of each and their excursions into the country, and you will see that foreign travel does not rob us of much. 11. A friend should be retained in the spirit; such a friend can never be absent. He can see every day whomsoever he desires to see.

I would therefore have you share your studies with me, your meals, and your walks. We should be living within too narrow limits if anything were barred to our thoughts. I see you, my dear Lucilius, and at this very moment I hear you; I am with you to such an extent that I hesitate whether I should not begin to write you notes instead of letters. Farewell.

LVI. On Quiet and Study

1. Beshrew me if I think anything more requisite than silence for a man who secludes himself in order to study! Imagine what a variety of noises reverberates about my ears! I have lodgings right over a bathing establishment. So picture to yourself the assortment of sounds, which are strong enough to make me hate my very powers of hearing! When your strenuous gentleman, for example, is exercising himself by flourishing leaden weights; when he is working hard, or else pretends to be working hard, I can hear him grunt; and whenever he releases his imprisoned breath, I can hear him panting in wheezy and high-pitched tones. Or perhaps I notice some lazy fellow, content with a cheap rubdown, and hear the crack of the pummelling hand on his shoulder, varying in sound according as the hand is laid on flat or hollow. Then, perhaps, a professional comes along, shouting out the score; that is the finishing touch. 2. Add to this the arresting of an occasional roisterer or pickpocket, the racket of the man who always likes to hear his own voice in the bathroom, or the enthusiast who plunges into the swimming-tank with unconscionable noise and splashing. Besides all those whose voices, if nothing else, are good, imagine the hair-plucker with his penetrating, shrill voice, – for purposes of advertisement, – continually giving it vent and never holding his tongue except when he is plucking the armpits and making his victim yell instead. Then the cakeseller with his varied cries, the sausageman, the confectioner, and all the vendors of food hawking their wares, each with his own distinctive intonation.

3. So you say: “What iron nerves or deadened ears, you must have, if your mind can hold out amid so many noises, so various and so discordant, when our friend Chrysippus is brought to his death by the continual good-morrows that greet him!” But I assure you that this racket means no more to me than the sound of waves or falling water; although you will remind me that a certain tribe once moved their city merely because they could not endure the din of a Nile cataract. 4. Words seem to distract me more than noises; for words demand attention, but noises merely fill the ears and beat upon them. Among the sounds that din round me without distracting, I include

passing carriages, a machinist in the same block, a saw-sharpener near by, or some fellow who is demonstrating with little pipes and flutes at the Trickling Fountain, shouting rather than singing.

5. Furthermore, an intermittent noise upsets me more than a steady one. But by this time I have toughened my nerves against all that sort of thing, so that I can endure even a boatswain marking the time in high-pitched tones for his crew. For I force my mind to concentrate, and keep it from straying to things outside itself; all outdoors may be bedlam, provided that there is no disturbance within, provided that fear is not wrangling with desire in my breast, provided that meanness and lavishness are not at odds, one harassing the other. For of what benefit is a quiet neighbourhood, if our emotions are in an uproar?

6. 'Twas night, and all the world was lulled to rest.

This is not true; for no real rest can be found when reason has not done the lulling. Night brings our troubles to the light, rather than banishes them; it merely changes the form of our worries. For even when we seek slumber, our sleepless moments are as harassing as the daytime. Real tranquillity is the state reached by an unperverted mind when it is relaxed. 7. Think of the unfortunate man who courts sleep by surrendering his spacious mansion to silence, who, that his ear may be disturbed by no sound, bids the whole retinue of his slaves be quiet and that whoever approaches him shall walk on tiptoe; he tosses from this side to that and seeks a fitful slumber amid his frettings! 8. He complains that he has heard sounds, when he has not heard them at all. The reason, you ask? His soul's in an uproar; it must be soothed, and its rebellious murmuring checked. You need not suppose that the soul is at peace when the body is still. Sometimes quiet means disquiet.

We must therefore rouse ourselves to action and busy ourselves with interests that are good, as often as we are in the grasp of an uncontrollable sluggishness. 9. Great generals, when they see that their men are mutinous, check them by some sort of labour or keep them busy with small forays. The much occupied man has no time for wantonness, and it is an obvious commonplace that the evils of leisure can be shaken off by hard work. Although people may often have thought that I sought seclusion because I was disgusted with

politics and regretted my hapless and thankless position, yet, in the retreat to which apprehension and weariness have driven me, my ambition sometimes develops afresh. For it is not because my ambition was rooted out that it has abated, but because it was wearied or perhaps even put out of temper by the failure of its plans.

10. And so with luxury, also, which sometimes seems to have departed, and then when we have made a profession of frugality, begins to fret us and, amid our economies, seeks the pleasures which we have merely left but not condemned. Indeed, the more stealthily it comes, the greater is its force. For all unconcealed vices are less serious; a disease also is farther on the road to being cured when it breaks forth from concealment and manifests its power. So with greed, ambition, and the other evils of the mind, – you may be sure that they do most harm when they are hidden behind a pretence of soundness.

11. Men think that we are in retirement, and yet we are not. For if we have sincerely retired, and have sounded the signal for retreat, and have scorned outward attractions, then, as I remarked above, no outward thing will distract us; no music of men or of birds can interrupt good thoughts, when they have once become steadfast and sure. 12. The mind which starts at words or at chance sounds is unstable and has not yet withdrawn into itself; it contains within itself an element of anxiety and rooted fear, and this makes one a prey to care, as our Vergil says:

I, whom of yore no dart could cause to flee,
Nor Greeks, with crowded lines of infantry.
Now shake at every sound, and fear the air,
Both for my child and for the load I bear.

13. This man in his first state is wise; he blenches neither at the brandished spear, nor at the clashing armour of the serried foe, nor at the din of the stricken city. This man in his second state lacks knowledge fearing for his own concerns, he pales at every sound; any cry is taken for the battle-shout and overthrows him; the slightest disturbance renders him breathless with fear. It is the load that makes him afraid. 14. Select anyone you please from among your favourites

of Fortune, trailing their many responsibilities, carrying their many burdens, and you will behold a picture of Vergil's hero, "fearing both for his child and for the load he bears."

You may therefore be sure that you are at peace with yourself, when no noise readies you, when no word shakes you out of yourself, whether it be of flattery or of threat, or merely an empty sound buzzing about you with unmeaning din. ¹⁵ "What then?" you say, "is it not sometimes a simpler matter just to avoid the uproar?" I admit this. Accordingly, I shall change from my present quarters. I merely wished to test myself and to give myself practice. Why need I be tormented any longer, when Ulysses found so simple a cure for his comrades even against the songs of the Sirens? Farewell.

LVII. On the Trials of Travel

1. When it was time for me to return to Naples from Baiae, I easily persuaded myself that a storm was raging, that I might avoid another trip by sea; and yet the road was so deep in mud, all the way, that I may be thought none the less to have made a voyage. On that day I had to endure the full fate of an athlete; the anointing with which we began was followed by the sand-sprinkle in the Naples tunnel. 2. No place could be longer than that prison; nothing could be dimmer than those torches, which enabled us, not to see amid the darkness, but to see the darkness. But, even supposing that there was light in the place, the dust, which is an oppressive and disagreeable thing even in the open air, would destroy the light; how much worse the dust is there, where it rolls back upon itself, and, being shut in without ventilation, blows back in the faces of those who set it going! So we endured two inconveniences at the same time, and they were diametrically different: we struggled both with mud and with dust on the same road and on the same day.

3. The gloom, however, furnished me with some food for thought; I felt a certain mental thrill, and a transformation unaccompanied by fear, due to the novelty and the unpleasantness of an unusual occurrence. Of course I am not speaking to you of myself at this point, because I am far from being a perfect person, or even a man of middling qualities; I refer to one over whom fortune has lost her control. Even such a man's mind will be smitten with a thrill and he will change colour. 4. For there are certain emotions, my dear Lucilius, which no courage can avoid; nature reminds courage how perishable a thing it is. And so he will contract his brow when the prospect is forbidding, will shudder at sudden apparitions, and will become dizzy when he stands at the edge of a high precipice and looks down. This is not fear; it is a natural feeling which reason cannot rout. 5. That is why certain brave men, most willing to shed their own blood, cannot bear to see the blood of others. Some persons collapse and faint at the sight of a freshly inflicted wound; others are affected similarly on handling or viewing an old wound which is festering. And others meet the sword-stroke more readily

than they see it dealt.

6. Accordingly, as I said, I experienced a certain transformation, though it could not be called confusion. Then at the first glimpse of restored daylight my good spirits returned without forethought or command. And I began to muse and think how foolish we are to fear certain objects to a greater or less degree, since all of them end in the same way. For what difference does it make whether a watchtower or a mountain crashes down upon us? No difference at all, you will find. Nevertheless, there will be some men who fear the latter mishap to a greater degree, though both accidents are equally deadly; so true it is that fear looks not to the effect, but to the cause of the effect. 7. Do you suppose that I am now referring to the Stoics, who hold that the soul of a man crushed by a great weight cannot abide, and is scattered forthwith, because it has not had a free opportunity to depart? That is not what I am doing; those who think thus are, in my opinion, wrong. 8. Just as fire cannot be crushed out, since it will escape round the edges of the body which overwhelms it; just as the air cannot be damaged by lashes and blows, or even cut into, but flows back about the object to which it gives place; similarly the soul, which consists of the subtlest particles, cannot be arrested or destroyed inside the body, but, by virtue of its delicate substance, it will rather escape through the very object by which it is being crushed. Just as lightning, no matter how widely it strikes and flashes, makes its return through a narrow opening, so the soul, which is still subtler than fire, has a way of escape through any part of the body. 9. We therefore come to this question, – whether the soul can be immortal. But be sure of this: if the soul survives the body after the body is crushed, the soul can in no wise be crushed out, precisely because it does not perish; for the rule of immortality never admits of exceptions, and nothing can harm that which is everlasting. Farewell.

LVIII. On Being

1. How scant of words our language is, nay, how poverty-stricken, I have not fully understood until to-day. We happened to be speaking of Plato, and a thousand subjects came up for discussion, which needed names and yet possessed none; and there were certain others which once possessed, but have since lost, their words because we were too nice about their use. But who can endure to be nice in the midst of poverty? 2. There is an insect, called by the Greeks *oestrus*, which drives cattle wild and scatters them all over their pasturing grounds; it used to be called *asilus* in our language, as you may believe on the authority of Vergil:-

Near Silarus groves, and eke Alburnus' shades
Of green-clad oak-trees flits an insect, named
Asilus by the Romans; in the Greek
The word is rendered *oestrus*. With a rough
And strident sound it buzzes and drives wild
The terror-stricken herds throughout the woods.

3. By which I infer that the word has gone out of use. And, not to keep you waiting too long, there were certain uncompounded words current, like *cernere ferro inter se*, as will be proved again by Vergil:-

Great heroes, born in various lands, had come
To *settle matters* mutually with the sword.

This “settling matters” we now express by *decernere*. The plain word has become obsolete. 4. The ancients used to say *iusso*, instead of *iussero*, in conditional clauses. You need not take my word, but you may turn again to Vergil:-

The other soldiers shall conduct the fight
With me, where I *shall bid*.

5. It is not in my purpose to show, by this array of examples, how

much time I have wasted on the study of language; I merely wish you to understand how many words, that were current in the works of Ennius and Accius, have become mouldy with age; while even in the case of Vergil, whose works are explored daily, some of his words have been filched away from us.

6. You will say, I suppose: "What is the purpose and meaning of this preamble?" I shall not keep you in the dark; I desire, if possible, to say the word *essentia* to you and obtain a favourable hearing. If I cannot do this, I shall risk it even though it put you out of humour. I have Cicero, as authority for the use of this word, and I regard him as a powerful authority. If you desire testimony of a later date, I shall cite Fabianus, careful of speech, cultivated, and so polished in style that he will suit even our nice tastes. For what can we do, my dear Lucilius? How otherwise can we find a word for that which the Greeks call οὐσία, something that is indispensable, something that is the natural substratum of everything? I beg you accordingly to allow me to use this word *essentia*. I shall nevertheless take pains to exercise the privilege, which you have granted me, with as sparing a hand as possible; perhaps I shall be content with the mere right. 7. Yet what good will your indulgence do me, if, lo and behold, I can in no wise express in Latin the meaning of the word which gave me the opportunity to rail at the poverty of our language? And you will condemn our narrow Roman limits even more, when you find out that there is a word of one syllable which I cannot translate. "What is this?" you ask. It is the word ὄν. You think me lacking in facility; you believe that the word is ready to hand, that it might be translated by *quod est*. I notice, however, a great difference; you are forcing me to render a noun by a verb. 8. But if I must do so, I shall render it by *quod est*. There are six ways in which Plato expresses this idea, according to a friend of ours, a man of great learning, who mentioned the fact to-day. And I shall explain all of them to you, if I may first point out that there is something called *genus* and something called *species*.

For the present, however, we are seeking the primary idea of *genus*, on which the others, the different *species*, depend, which is the source of all classification, the term under which universal ideas are embraced. And the idea of *genus* will be reached if we begin to

reckon back from particulars; for in this way we shall be conducted back to the primary notion. 9. Now “man” is a *species*, as Aristotle says; so is “horse,” or “dog.” We must therefore discover some common bond for all these terms, one which embraces them and holds them subordinate to itself. And what is this? It is “animal.” And so there begins to be a *genus* “animal,” including all these terms, “man,” “horse,” and “dog.” 10. But there are certain things which have life (*anima*) and yet are not “animals.” For it is agreed that plants and trees possess life, and that is why we speak of them as living and dying. Therefore the term “living things” will occupy a still higher place, because both animals and plants are included in this category. Certain objects, however, lack life, – such as rocks. There will therefore be another term to take precedence over “living things,” and that is “substance.” I shall classify “substance” by saying that all substances are either animate or inanimate. 11. But there is still something superior to “substance”; for we speak of certain things as possessing substance, and certain things as lacking substance. What, then, will be the term from which these things are derived? It is that to which we lately gave an inappropriate name, “that which exists.” For by using this term they will be divided into *species*, so that we can say: that which exists either possesses, or lacks, substance.

12. This, therefore, is what *genus* is, – the primary, original, and (to play upon the word) “general.” Of course there are the other *genera*: but they are “special” *genera*: “man” being, for example, a *genus*. For “man” comprises species: by nations, – Greek, Roman, Parthian; by colours, – white, black, yellow. The term comprises individuals also: Cato, Cicero, Lucretius. So “man” falls into the category *genus*, in so far as it includes many kinds; but in so far as it is subordinate to another term, it falls into the category *species*. But the *genus* “that which exists” is general, and has no term superior to it. It is the first term in the classification of things, and all things are included under it.

13. The Stoics would set ahead of this still another *genus*, even more primary; concerning which I shall immediately speak, after proving that the *genus* which has been discussed above, has rightly been placed first, being, as it is, capable of including everything. 14. I

therefore distribute “that which exists” into these two species, – things with, and things without, substance. There is no third class. And how do I distribute “substance”? By saying that it is either animate or inanimate. And how do I distribute the “animate”? By saying: “Certain things have mind, while others have only life.” Or the idea may be expressed as follows: “Certain things have the power of movement, of progress, of change of position, while others are rooted in the ground; they are fed and they grow only through their roots.” Again, into what species do I divide “animals”? They are either perishable or imperishable. 15. Certain of the Stoics regard the primary *genus* as the “something.” I shall add the reasons they give for their belief; they say: “in the order of nature some things exist, and other things do not exist. And even the things that do not exist are really part of the order of nature. What these are will readily occur to the mind, for example centaurs, giants, and all other figments of unsound reasoning, which have begun to have a definite shape, although they have no bodily consistency.”

16. But I now return to the subject which I promised to discuss for you, namely, how it is that Plato divides all existing things in six different ways. The first class of “that which exists” cannot be grasped by the sight or by the touch, or by any of the senses; but it can be grasped by the thought. Any generic conception, such as the generic idea “man,” does not come within the range of the eyes; but “man” in particular does; as, for example, Cicero, Cato. The term “animal” is not seen; it is grasped by thought alone. A particular animal, however, is seen, for example, a horse, a dog.

17. The second class of “things which exist,” according to Plato, is that which is prominent and stands out above everything else; this, he says, exists in a pre-eminent degree. The word “poet” is used indiscriminately, for this term is applied to all writers of verse; but among the Greeks it has come to be the distinguishing mark of a single individual. You know that Homer is meant when you hear men say “the poet.” What, then, is this pre-eminent Being? God, surely, one who is greater and more powerful than anyone else.

18. The third class is made up of those things which exist in the proper sense of the term; they are countless in number, but are situated beyond our sight. “What are these?” you ask. They are

Plato's own furniture, so to speak; he calls them "ideas," and from them all visible things are created, and according to their pattern all things are fashioned. They are immortal, unchangeable, inviolable. 19. And this "idea," or rather, Plato's conception of it, is as follows: "The 'idea' is the everlasting pattern of those things which are created by nature." I shall explain this definition, in order to set the subject before you in a clearer light: Suppose that I wish to make a likeness of you; I possess in your own person the pattern of this picture, wherefrom my mind receives a certain outline, which it is to embody in its own handiwork. That outward appearance, then, which gives me instruction and guidance, this pattern for me to imitate, is the "idea." Such patterns, therefore, nature possesses in infinite number, – of men, fish, trees, according to whose model everything that nature has to create is worked out.

20. In the fourth place we shall put "form." And if you would know what "form" means, you must pay close attention, calling Plato, and not me, to account for the difficulty of the subject. However, we cannot make fine distinctions without encountering difficulties. A moment ago I made use of the artist as an illustration. When the artist desired to reproduce Vergil in colours he would gaze upon Vergil himself. The "idea" was Vergil's outward appearance, and this was the pattern of the intended work. That which the artist draws from this "idea" and has embodied in his own work, is the "form." 21. Do you ask me where the difference lies? The former is the pattern; while the latter is the shape taken from the pattern and embodied in the work. Our artist follows the one, but the other he creates. A statue has a certain external appearance; this external appearance of the statue is the "form." And the pattern itself has a certain external appearance, by gazing upon which the sculptor has fashioned his statue; this is the "idea." If you desire a further distinction, I will say that the "form" is in the artist's work, the "idea" outside his work, and not only outside it, but prior to it.

22. The fifth class is made up of the things which exist in the usual sense of the term. These things are the first that have to do with us; here we have all such things as men, cattle, and things. In the sixth class goes all that which has a fictitious existence, like void, or time.

Whatever is concrete to the sight or touch, Plato does not include

among the things which he believes to be existent in the strict sense of the term. These things are the first that have to do with us: here we have all such things as men, cattle, and things. For they are in a state of flux, constantly diminishing or increasing. None of us is the same man in old age that he was in youth; nor the same on the morrow as on the day preceding. Our bodies are burned along like flowing waters; every visible object accompanies time in its flight; of the things which we see, nothing is fixed. Even I myself as I comment on this change, am changed myself. ²³ This is just what Heraclitus says: "We go down twice into the same river, and yet into a different river." For the stream still keeps the same name, but the water has already flowed past. Of course this is much more evident in rivers than in human beings. Still, we mortals are also carried past in no less speedy a course; and this prompts me to marvel at our madness in cleaving with great affection to such a fleeting thing as the body, and in fearing lest some day we may die, when every instant means the death of our previous condition. Will you not stop fearing lest that may happen once which really happens every day? ²⁴ So much for man, – a substance that flows away and falls, exposed to every influence; but the universe, too, immortal and enduring as it is, changes and never remains the same. For though it has within itself all that it has had, it has it in a different way from that in which it has had it; it keeps changing its arrangement.

²⁵ "Very well," say you, "what good shall I get from all this fine reasoning?" None, if you wish me to answer your question. Nevertheless, just as an engraver rests his eyes when they have long been under a strain and are weary, and calls them from their work, and "feasts" them, as the saying is; so we at times should slacken our minds and refresh them with some sort of entertainment. But let even your entertainment be work; and even from these various forms of entertainment you will select, if you have been watchful, something that may prove wholesome. ²⁶ That is my habit, Lucilius: I try to extract and render useful some element from every field of thought, no matter how far removed it may be from philosophy. Now what could be less likely to reform character than the subjects which we have been discussing? And how can I be made a better man by the "ideas" of Plato? What can I draw from them that will put a check on

my appetites? Perhaps the very thought, that all these things which minister to our senses, which arouse and excite us, are by Plato denied a place among the things that really exist. 27. Such things are therefore imaginary, and though they for the moment present a certain external appearance, yet they are in no case permanent or substantial; none the less, we crave them as if they were always to exist, or as if we were always to possess them.

We are weak, watery beings standing in the midst of unrealities; therefore let us turn our minds to the things that are everlasting. Let us look up to the ideal outlines of all things, that flit about on high, and to the God who moves among them and plans how he may defend from death that which he could not make imperishable because its substance forbade, and so by reason may overcome the defects of the body. 28. For all things abide, not because they are everlasting, but because they are protected by the care of him who governs all things; but that which was imperishable would need no guardian. The Master Builder keeps them safe, overcoming the weakness of their fabric by his own power. Let us despise everything that is so little an object of value that it makes us doubt whether it exists at all. 29. Let us at the same time reflect, seeing that Providence rescues from its perils the world itself, which is no less mortal than we ourselves, that to some extent our petty bodies can be made to tarry longer upon earth by our own providence, if only we acquire the ability to control and check those pleasures whereby the greater portion of mankind perishes. 30. Plato himself, by taking pains, advanced to old age. To be sure, he was the fortunate possessor of a strong and sound body (his very name was given him because of his broad chest); but his strength was much impaired by sea voyages and desperate adventures. Nevertheless, by frugal living, by setting a limit upon all that rouses the appetites, and by painstaking attention to himself, he reached that advanced age in spite of many hindrances. 31. You know, I am sure, that Plato had the good fortune, thanks to his careful living, to die on his birthday, after exactly completing his eighty-first year. For this reason wise men of the East, who happened to be in Athens at that time, sacrificed to him after his death, believing that his length of days was too full for a mortal man, since he had rounded out the perfect number of nine times nine. I do not

doubt that he would have been quite willing to forgo a few days from this total, as well as the sacrifice.

32. Frugal living can bring one to old age; and to my mind old age is not to be refused any more than is to be craved. There is a pleasure in being in one's own company as long as possible, when a man has made himself worth enjoying. The question, therefore, on which we have to record our judgment is, whether one should shrink from extreme old age and should hasten the end artificially, instead of waiting for it to come. A man who sluggishly awaits his fate is almost a coward, just as he is immoderately given to wine who drains the jar dry and sucks up even the dregs. 33. But we shall ask this question also: "Is the extremity of life the dregs, or is it the clearest and purest part of all, provided only that the mind is unimpaired, and the senses, still sound, give their support to the spirit, and the body is not worn out and dead before its time?" For it makes a great deal of difference whether a man is lengthening his life or his death. 34. But if the body is useless for service, why should one not free the struggling soul? Perhaps one ought to do this a little before the debt is due, lest, when it falls due, he may be unable to perform the act. And since the danger of living in wretchedness is greater than the danger of dying soon, he is a fool who refuses to stake a little time and win a hazard of great gain.

Few have lasted through extreme old age to death without impairment, and many have lain inert, making no use of themselves. How much more cruel, then, do you suppose it really is to have lost a portion of your life, than to have lost your right to end that life? 35. Do not hear me with reluctance, as if my statement applied directly to you, but weigh what I have to say. It is this, that I shall not abandon old age, if old age preserves me intact for myself, and intact as regards the better part of myself; but if old age begins to shatter my mind, and to pull its various faculties to pieces, if it leaves me, not life, but only the breath of life, I shall rush out of a house that is crumbling and tottering. 36. I shall not avoid illness by seeking death, as long as the illness is curable and does not impede my soul. I shall not lay violent hands upon myself just because I am in pain; for death under such circumstances is defeat. But if I find out that the pain must always be endured, I shall depart, not because of the pain

but because it will be a hindrance to me as regards all my reasons for living. He who dies just because he is in pain is a weakling, a coward; but he who lives merely to brave out this pain, is a fool.

37. But I am running on too long; and, besides, there is matter here to fill a day. And how can a man end his life, if he cannot end a letter? So farewell. This last word you will read with greater pleasure than all my deadly talk about death. Farewell.

LIX. On Pleasure and Joy

1. I received great pleasure from your letter; kindly allow me to use these words in their everyday meaning, without insisting upon their Stoic import. For we Stoics hold that pleasure is a vice. Very likely it is a vice; but we are accustomed to use the word when we wish to indicate a happy state of mind. 2. I am aware that if we test words by our formula, even pleasure is a thing of ill repute, and joy can be attained only by the wise. For “joy” is an elation of spirit, of a spirit which trusts in the goodness and truth of its own possessions. The common usage, however, is that we derive great “joy” from a friend’s position as consul, or from his marriage, or from the birth of his child; but these events, so far from being matters of joy, are more often the beginnings of sorrow to come. No, it is a characteristic of real joy that it never ceases, and never changes into its opposite.

3. Accordingly, when our Vergil speaks of

The evil joys of the mind,

his words are eloquent, but not strictly appropriate. For no “joy” can be evil. He has given the name “joy” to pleasures, and has thus expressed his meaning. For he has conveyed the idea that men take delight in their own evil. 4. Nevertheless, I was not wrong in saying that I received great “pleasure” from your letter; for although an ignorant man may derive “joy” if the cause be an honourable one, yet, since his emotion is wayward, and is likely soon to take another direction, I call it “pleasure”; for it is inspired by an opinion concerning a spurious good; it exceeds control and is carried to excess.

But, to return to the subject, let me tell you what delighted me in your letter. You have your words under control. You are not carried away by your language, or borne beyond the limits which you have determined upon. 5. Many writers are tempted by the charm of some alluring phrase to some topic other than that which they had set themselves to discuss. But this has not been so in your case; all your words are compact, and suited to the subject, You say all that you wish, and you mean still more than you say. This is a proof of the importance of your subject matter, showing that your mind, as well

as your words, contains nothing superfluous or bombastic.

6. I do, however, find some metaphors, not, indeed, daring ones, but the kind which have stood the test of use. I find similes also; of course, if anyone forbids us to use them, maintaining that poets alone have that privilege, he has not, apparently, read any of our ancient prose writers, who had not yet learned to affect a style that should win applause. For those writers, whose eloquence was simple and directed only towards proving their case, are full of comparisons; and I think that these are necessary, not for the same reason which makes them necessary for the poets, but in order that they may serve as props to our feebleness, to bring both speaker and listener face to face with the subject under discussion. 7. For example, I am at this very moment reading Sextius; he is a keen man, and a philosopher who, though he writes in Greek, has the Roman standard of ethics. One of his similes appealed especially to me, that of an army marching in hollow square, in a place where the enemy might be expected to appear from any quarter, ready for battle. "This," said he, "is just what the wise man ought to do; he should have all his fighting qualities deployed on every side, so that wherever the attack threatens, there his supports may be ready to hand and may obey the captain's command without confusion." This is what we notice in armies which serve under great leaders; we see how all the troops simultaneously understand their general's orders, since they are so arranged that a signal given by one man passes down the ranks of cavalry and infantry at the same moment. 8. This, he declares, is still more necessary for men like ourselves; for soldiers have often feared an enemy without reason, and the march which they thought most dangerous has in fact been most secure; but folly brings no repose, fear haunts it both in the van and in the rear of the column, and both flanks are in a panic. Folly is pursued, and confronted, by peril. It blenches at everything; it is unprepared; it is frightened even by auxiliary troops. But the wise man is fortified against all inroads; he is alert; he will not retreat before the attack of poverty, or of sorrow, or of disgrace, or of pain. He will walk undaunted both against them and among them.

9. We human beings are fettered and weakened by many vices; we have wallowed in them for a long time and it is hard for us to be

cleansed. We are not merely defiled; we are dyed by them. But, to refrain from passing from one figure to another, I will raise this question, which I often consider in my own heart: why is it that folly holds us with such an insistent grasp? It is, primarily, because we do not combat it strongly enough, because we do not struggle towards salvation with all our might; secondly, because we do not put sufficient trust in the discoveries of the wise, and do not drink in their words with open hearts; we approach this great problem in too trifling a spirit. ¹⁰ But how can a man learn, in the struggle against his vices, an amount that is enough, if the time which he gives to learning is only the amount left over from his vices? None of us goes deep below the surface. We skim the top only, and we regard the smattering of time spent in the search for wisdom as enough and to spare for a busy man. ¹¹ What hinders us most of all is that we are too readily satisfied with ourselves; if we meet with someone who calls us good men, or sensible men, or holy men, we see ourselves in his description, not content with praise in moderation, we accept everything that shameless flattery heaps upon us, as if it were our due. We agree with those who declare us to be the best and wisest of men, although we know that they are given to much lying. And we are so self-complacent that we desire praise for certain actions when we are especially addicted to the very opposite. Yonder person hears himself called “most gentle” when he is inflicting tortures, or “most generous” when he is engaged in looting, or “most temperate” when he is in the midst of drunkenness and lust. Thus it follows that we are unwilling to be reformed, just because we believe ourselves to be the best of men.

¹² Alexander was roaming as far as India, ravaging tribes that were but little known, even to their neighbours. During the blockade of a certain city, while he was reconnoitring the walls and hunting for the weakest spot in the fortifications, he was wounded by an arrow. Nevertheless, he long continued the siege, intent on finishing what he had begun. The pain of his wound, however, as the surface became dry and as the flow of blood was checked, increased; his leg gradually became numb as he sat his horse; and finally, when he was forced to withdraw, he exclaimed: “All men swear that I am the son of Jupiter, but this wound cries out that I am mortal.” ¹³ Let us also

act in the same way. Each man, according to his lot in life, is stultified by flattery. We should say to him who flatters us: "You call me a man of sense, but I understand how many of the things which I crave are useless, and how many of the things which I desire will do me harm. I have not even the knowledge, which satiety teaches to animals, of what should be the measure of my food or my drink. I do not yet know how much I can hold."

14. I shall now show you how you may know that you are not wise. The wise man is joyful, happy and calm, unshaken, he lives on a plane with the gods. Now go, question yourself; if you are never downcast, if your mind is not harassed by my apprehension, through anticipation of what is to come, if day and night your soul keeps on its even and unswerving course, upright and content with itself, then you have attained to the greatest good that mortals can possess. If, however, you seek pleasures of all kinds in all directions, you must know that you are as far short of wisdom as you are short of joy. Joy is the goal which you desire to reach, but you are wandering from the path, if you expect to reach your goal while you are in the midst of riches and official titles, – in other words, if you seek joy in the midst of cares, these objects for which you strive so eagerly, as if they would give you happiness and pleasure, are merely causes of grief.

15. All men of this stamp, I maintain, are pressing on in pursuit of joy, but they do not know where they may obtain a joy that is both great and enduring. One person seeks it in feasting and self-indulgence; another, in canvassing for honours and in being surrounded by a throng of clients; another, in his mistress; another, in idle display of culture and in literature that has no power to heal; all these men are led astray by delights which are deceptive and short-lived – like drunkenness for example, which pays for a single hour of hilarious madness by a sickness of many days, or like applause and the popularity of enthusiastic approval which are gained, and atoned for, at the cost of great mental disquietude.

16. Reflect, therefore, on this, that the effect of wisdom is a joy that is unbroken and continuous. The mind of the wise man is like the ultra-lunar firmament; eternal calm pervades that region. You have, then, a reason for wishing to be wise, if the wise man is never deprived of joy. This joy springs only from the knowledge that you

possess the virtues. None but the brave, the just, the self-restrained, can rejoice. ¹⁷. And when you query: "What do you mean? Do not the foolish and the wicked also rejoice?" I reply, no more than lions who have caught their prey. When men have wearied themselves with wine and lust, when night fails them before their debauch is done, when the pleasures which they have heaped upon a body that is too small to hold them begin to fester, at such times they utter in their wretchedness those lines of Vergil:

Thou knowest how, amid false-glittering joys.
We spent that last of nights.

18. Pleasure-lovers spend every night amid false-glittering joys, and just as if it were their last. But the joy which comes to the gods, and to those who imitate the gods, is not broken off, nor does it cease; but it would surely cease were it borrowed from without. Just because it is not in the power of another to bestow, neither is it subject to another's whims. That which Fortune has not given, she cannot take away. Farewell.

LX. On Harmful Prayers

1. I file a complaint, I enter a suit, I am angry. Do you still desire what your nurse, your guardian, or your mother, have prayed for in your behalf? Do you not yet understand what evil they prayed for? Alas, how hostile to us are the wishes of our own folk! And they are all the more hostile in proportion as they are more completely fulfilled. It is no surprise to me, at my age, that nothing but evil attends us from our early youth; for we have grown up amid the curses invoked by our parents. And may the gods give ear to our cry also, uttered in our own behalf, – one which asks no favours!

2. How long shall we go on making demands upon the gods, as if we were still unable to support ourselves? How long shall we continue to fill with grain the market-places of our great cities? How long must the people gather it in for us? How long shall many ships convey the requisites for a single meal, bringing them from no single sea? The bull is filled when he feeds over a few acres; and one forest is large enough for a herd of elephants. Man, however, draws sustenance both from the earth and from the sea. 3. What, then? Did nature give us bellies so insatiable, when she gave us these puny bodies, that we should outdo the hugest and most voracious animals in greed? Not at all. How small is the amount which will satisfy nature? A very little will send her away contented. It is not the natural hunger of our bellies that costs us dear, but our solicitous cravings. 4. Therefore those who, as Sallust puts it, “hearken to their bellies,” should be numbered among the animals, and not among men; and certain men, indeed, should be numbered, not even among the animals, but among the dead. He really lives who is made use of by many; he really lives who makes use of himself. Those men, however, who creep into a hole and grow torpid are no better off in their homes than if they were in their tombs. Right there on the marble lintel of the house of such a man you may inscribe his name, for he has died before he is dead. Farewell.

LXI. On Meeting Death Cheerfully

1. Let us cease to desire that which we have been desiring. I, at least, am doing this: in my old age I have ceased to desire what I desired when a boy. To this single end my days and my nights are passed; this is my task, this the object of my thoughts, – to put an end to my chronic ills. I am endeavouring to live every day as if it were a complete life. I do not indeed snatch it up as if it were my last; I do regard it, however, as if it might even be my last. 2. The present letter is written to you with this in mind as if death were about to call me away in the very act of writing. I am ready to depart, and I shall enjoy life just because I am not over-anxious as to the future date of my departure.

Before I became old I tried to live well; now that I am old, I shall try to die well; but dying well means dying gladly. See to it that you never do anything unwillingly. 3. That which is bound to be a necessity if you rebel, is not a necessity if you desire it. This is what I mean: he who takes his orders gladly, escapes the bitterest part of slavery, – doing what one does not want to do. The man who does something under orders is not unhappy; he is unhappy who does something against his will. Let us therefore so set our minds in order that we may desire whatever is demanded of us by circumstances, and above all that we may reflect upon our end without sadness. 4. We must make ready for death before we make ready for life. Life is well enough furnished, but we are too greedy with regard to its furnishings; something always seems to us lacking, and will always seem lacking. To have lived long enough depends neither upon our years nor upon our days, but upon our minds. I have lived, my dear friend Lucilius, long enough. I have had my fill; I await death. Farewell.

LXII. On Good Company

1. We are deceived by those who would have us believe that a multitude of affairs blocks their pursuit of liberal studies; they make a pretence of their engagements, and multiply them, when their engagements are merely with themselves. As for me, Lucilius, my time is free; it is indeed free, and wherever I am, I am master of myself. For I do not surrender myself to my affairs, but loan myself to them, and I do not hunt out excuses for wasting my time. And wherever I am situated, I carry on my own meditations and ponder in my mind some wholesome thought. 2. When I give myself to my friends, I do not withdraw from my own company, nor do I linger with those who are associated with me through some special occasion or some case which arises from my official position. But I spend my time in the company of all the best; no matter in what lands they may have lived, or in what age, I let my thoughts fly to them. 3. Demetrius, for instance, the best of men, I take about with me, and, leaving the wearers of purple and fine linen, I talk with him, half-naked as he is, and hold him in high esteem. Why should I not hold him in high esteem? I have found that he lacks nothing. It is in the power of any man to despise all things, but of no man to possess all things. The shortest cut to riches is to despise riches. Our friend Demetrius, however, lives not merely as if he has learned to despise all things, but as if he has handed them over for others to possess. Farewell.

LXIII. On Grief for Lost Friends

1. I am grieved to hear that your friend Flaccus is dead, but I would not have you sorrow more than is fitting. That you should not mourn at all I shall hardly dare to insist; and yet I know that it is the better way. But what man will ever be so blessed with that ideal steadfastness of soul, unless he has already risen far above the reach of Fortune? Even such a man will be stung by an event like this, but it will be only a sting. We, however, may be forgiven for bursting into tears, if only our tears have not flowed to excess, and if we have checked them by our own efforts. Let not the eyes be dry when we have lost a friend, nor let them overflow. We may weep, but we must not wail.

2. Do you think that the law which I lay down for you is harsh, when the greatest of Greek poets has extended the privilege of weeping to one day only, in the lines where he tells us that even Niobe took thought of food? Do you wish to know the reason for lamentations and excessive weeping? It is because we seek the proofs of our bereavement in our tears, and do not give way to sorrow, but merely parade it. No man goes into mourning for his own sake. Shame on our ill-timed folly! There is an element of self-seeking even in our sorrow.

3. "What," you say, "am I to forget my friend?" It is surely a short-lived memory that you vouchsafe to him, if it is to endure only as long as your grief; presently that brow of yours will be smoothed out in laughter by some circumstance, however casual. It is to a time no more distant than this that I put off the soothing of every regret, the quieting of even the bitterest grief. As soon as you cease to observe yourself, the picture of sorrow which you have contemplated will fade away; at present you are keeping watch over your own suffering. But even while you keep watch it slips away from you, and the sharper it is, the more speedily it comes to an end.

4. Let us see to it that the recollection of those whom we have lost becomes a pleasant memory to us. No man reverts with pleasure to any subject which he will not be able to reflect upon without pain. So too it cannot but be that the names of those whom we have loved and

lost come back to us with a sort of sting; but there is a pleasure even in this sting. 5. For, as my friend Attalus used to say: "The remembrance of lost friends is pleasant in the same way that certain fruits have an agreeably acid taste, or as in extremely old wines it is their very bitterness that pleases us. Indeed, after a certain lapse of time, every thought that gave pain is quenched, and the pleasure comes to us unalloyed." 6. If we take the word of Attalus for it, "to think of friends who are alive and well is like enjoying a meal of cakes and honey; the recollection of friends who have passed away gives a pleasure that is not without a touch of bitterness. Yet who will deny that even these things, which are bitter and contain an element of sourness, do serve to arouse the stomach?" 7. For my part, I do not agree with him. To me, the thought of my dead friends is sweet and appealing. For I have had them as if I should one day lose them; I have lost them as if I have them still.

Therefore, Lucilius, act as befits your own serenity of mind, and cease to put a wrong interpretation on the gifts of Fortune. Fortune has taken away, but Fortune has given. 8. Let us greedily enjoy our friends, because we do not know how long this privilege will be ours. Let us think how often we shall leave them when we go upon distant journeys, and how often we shall fail to see them when we tarry together in the same place; we shall thus understand that we have lost too much of their time while they were alive. 9. But will you tolerate men who are most careless of their friends, and then mourn them most abjectly, and do not love anyone unless they have lost him? The reason why they lament too unrestrainedly at such times is that they are afraid lest men doubt whether they really have loved; all too late they seek for proofs of their emotions. 10. If we have other friends, we surely deserve ill at their hands and think ill of them, if they are of so little account that they fail to console us for the loss of one. If, on the other hand, we have no other friends, we have injured ourselves more than Fortune has injured us; since Fortune has robbed us of one friend, but we have robbed ourselves of every friend whom we have failed to make. 11. Again, he who has been unable to love more than one, has had none too much love even for that one. If a man who has lost his one and only tunic through robbery chooses to bewail his plight rather than look about him for some way to escape the cold, or

for something with which to cover his shoulders, would you not think him an utter fool?

You have buried one whom you loved; look about for someone to love. It is better to replace your friend than to weep for him. ¹² What I am about to add is, I know, a very hackneyed remark, but I shall not omit it simply because it is a common phrase: a man ends his grief by the mere passing of time, even if he has not ended it of his own accord. But the most shameful cure for sorrow, in the case of a sensible man, is to grow weary of sorrowing. I should prefer you to abandon grief, rather than have grief abandon you; and you should stop grieving as soon as possible, since, even if you wish to do so, it is impossible to keep it up for a long time. ¹³ Our forefathers have enacted that, in the case of women, a year should be the limit for mourning; not that they needed to mourn for so long, but that they should mourn no longer. In the case of men, no rules are laid down, because to mourn at all is not regarded as honourable. For all that, what woman can you show me, of all the pathetic females that could scarcely be dragged away from the funeral-pile or torn from the corpse, whose tears have lasted a whole month? Nothing becomes offensive so quickly as grief; when fresh, it finds someone to console it and attracts one or another to itself; but after becoming chronic, it is ridiculed, and rightly. For it is either assumed or foolish.

¹⁴ He who writes these words to you is no other than I, who wept so excessively for my dear friend Annaeus Serenus that, in spite of my wishes, I must be included among the examples of men who have been overcome by grief. To-day, however, I condemn this act of mine, and I understand that the reason why I lamented so greatly was chiefly that I had never imagined it possible for his death to precede mine. The only thought which occurred to my mind was that he was the younger, and much younger, too, – as if the Fates kept to the order of our ages!

¹⁵ Therefore let us continually think as much about our own mortality as about that of all those we love. In former days I ought to have said: “My friend Serenus is younger than I; but what does that matter? He would naturally die after me, but he may precede me.” It was just because I did not do this that I was unprepared when Fortune dealt me the sudden blow. Now is the time for you to reflect,

not only that all things are mortal, but also that their mortality is subject to no fixed law. Whatever can happen at any time can happen to-day. ¹⁶ Let us therefore reflect, my beloved Lucilius, that we shall soon come to the goal which this friend, to our own sorrow, has reached. And perhaps, if only the tale told by wise men is true and there is a bourne to welcome us, then he whom we think we have lost has only been sent on ahead. Farewell.

LXIV. On the Philosopher's Task

1. Yesterday you were with us. You might complain if I said "yesterday" merely. This is why I have added "with us." For, so far as I am concerned, you are always with me. Certain friends had happened in, on whose account a somewhat brighter fire was laid, – not the kind that generally bursts from the kitchen chimneys of the rich and scares the watch, but the moderate blaze which means that guests have come. 2. Our talk ran on various themes, as is natural at a dinner; it pursued no chain of thought to the end, but jumped from one topic to another. We then had read to us a book by Quintus Sextius the Elder. He is a great man, if you have any confidence in my opinion, and a real Stoic, though he himself denies it. 3. Ye Gods, what strength and spirit one finds in him! This is not the case with all philosophers; there are some men of illustrious name whose writings are sapless. They lay down rules, they argue, and they quibble; they do not infuse spirit simply because they have no spirit. But when you come to read Sextius you will say: "He is alive; he is strong; he is free; he is more than a man; he fills me with a mighty confidence before I close his book." 4. I shall acknowledge to you the state of mind I am in when I read his works: I want to challenge every hazard; I want to cry: "Why keep me waiting, Fortune? Enter the lists! Behold, I am ready for you!" I assume the spirit of a man who seeks where he may make trial of himself where he may show his worth:

And fretting 'mid the unwarlike flocks he prays
Some foam-flecked boar may cross his path, or else
A tawny lion stalking down the hills.

5. I want something to overcome, something on which I may test my endurance. For this is another remarkable quality that Sextius possesses: he will show you the grandeur of the happy life and yet will not make you despair of attaining it; you will understand that it is on high, but that it is accessible to him who has the will to seek it.

6. And virtue herself will have the same effect upon you, of

making you admire her and yet hope to attain her. In my own case, at any rate the very contemplation of wisdom takes much of my time; I gaze upon her with bewilderment, just as I sometimes gaze upon the firmament itself, which I often behold as if I saw it for the first time. 7. Hence I worship the discoveries of wisdom and their discoverers; to enter, as it were, into the inheritance of many predecessors is a delight. It was for me that they laid up this treasure; it was for me that they toiled. But we should play the part of a careful householder; we should increase what we have inherited. This inheritance shall pass from me to my descendants larger than before. Much still remains to do, and much will always remain, and he who shall be born a thousand ages hence will not be barred from his opportunity of adding something further. 8. But even if the old masters have discovered everything, one thing will be always new, – the application and the scientific study and classification of the discoveries made by others. Assume that prescriptions have been handed down to us for the healing of the eyes; there is no need of my searching for others in addition; but for all that, these prescriptions must be adapted to the particular disease and to the particular stage of the disease. Use this prescription to relieve granulation of the eyelids, that to reduce the swelling of the lids, this to prevent sudden pain or a rush of tears, that to sharpen the vision. Then compound these several prescriptions, watch for the right time of their application, and supply the proper treatment in each case.

The cures for the spirit also have been discovered by the ancients; but it is our task to learn the method and the time of treatment. 9. Our predecessors have worked much improvement, but have not worked out the problem. They deserve respect, however, and should be worshipped with a divine ritual. Why should I not keep statues of great men to kindle my enthusiasm, and celebrate their birthdays? Why should I not continually greet them with respect and honour? The reverence which I owe to my own teachers I owe in like measure to those teachers of the human race, the source from which the beginnings of such great blessings have flowed. 10. If I meet a consul or a praetor, I shall pay him all the honour which his post of honour is wont to receive: I shall dismount, uncover, and yield the road. What, then? Shall I admit into my soul with less than the highest

marks of respect Marcus Cato, the Elder and the Younger, Laelius the Wise, Socrates and Plato, Zeno and Cleanthes? I worship them in very truth, and always rise to do honour to such noble names. Farewell.

LXV. On the First Cause

1. I shared my time yesterday with ill health; it claimed for itself all the period before noon; in the afternoon, however, it yielded to me. And so I first tested my spirit by reading; then, when reading was found to be possible, I dared to make more demands upon the spirit, or perhaps I should say, to make more concessions to it. I wrote a little, and indeed with more concentration than usual, for I am struggling with a difficult subject and do not wish to be downed. In the midst of this, some friends visited me, with the purpose of employing force and of restraining me, as if I were a sick man indulging in some excess. 2. So conversation was substituted for writing; and from this conversation I shall communicate to you the topic which is still the subject of debate; for we have appointed you referee. You have more of a task on your hands than you suppose, for the argument is threefold.

Our Stoic philosophers, as you know, declare that there are two things in the universe which are the source of everything, – namely, cause and matter. Matter lies sluggish, a substance ready for any use, but sure to remain unemployed if no one sets it in motion. Cause, however, by which we mean reason, moulds matter and turns it in whatever direction it will, producing thereby various concrete results. Accordingly, there must be, in the case of each thing, that from which it is made, and, next, an agent by which it is made. The former is its material, the latter its cause.

3. All art is but imitation of nature; therefore, let me apply these statements of general principles to the things which have to be made by man. A statue, for example, has afforded matter which was to undergo treatment at the hands of the artist, and has had an artist who was to give form to the matter. Hence, in the case of the statue, the material was bronze, the cause was the workman. And so it goes with all things, – they consist of that which is made and of the maker. 4. The Stoics believe in one cause only – the maker; but Aristotle thinks that the word “cause” can be used in three ways: “The first cause,” he says, “is the actual matter, without which nothing can be created. The second is the workman. The third is the form, which is impressed

upon every work, – a statue, for example.” This last is what Aristotle calls the *idos*. “There is, too,” says he, “a fourth, – the purpose of the work as a whole.” 5. Now I shall show you what this last means. Bronze is the “first cause” of the statue, for it could never have been made unless there had been something from which it could be cast and moulded. The “second cause” is the artist; for without the skilled hands of a workman that bronze could not have been shaped to the outlines of the statue. The “third cause” is the form, inasmuch as our statue could never be called The Lance-Bearer or The Boy Binding his Hair had not this special shape been stamped upon it. The “fourth cause” is the purpose of the work. For if this purpose had not existed, the statue would not have been made. 6. Now what is this purpose? It is that which attracted the artist which he followed when he made the statue. It may have been money, if he has made it for sale; or renown, if he has worked for reputation; or religion, if he has wrought it as a gift for a temple. Therefore this also is a cause contributing towards the making of the statue; or do you think that we should avoid including, among the causes of a thing which has been made, that element without which the thing in question would not have been made?

7. To these four Plato adds a fifth cause, – the pattern which he himself calls the “idea”; for it is this that the artist gazed upon when he created the work which he had decided to carry out. Now it makes no difference whether he has this pattern outside himself, that he may direct his glance to it, or within himself, conceived and placed there by himself. God has within himself these patterns of all things, and his mind comprehends the harmonies and the measures of the whole totality of things which are to be carried out; he is filled with these shapes which Plato calls the “ideas,” – imperishable, unchangeable, not subject to decay. And therefore, though men die, humanity itself, or the idea of man, according to which man is moulded, lasts on, and though men toil and perish, it suffers no change. 8. Accordingly, there are five causes, as Plato says: the material, the agent, the make-up, the model, and the end in view. Last comes the result of all these. Just as in the case of the statue, – to go back to the figure with which we began, – the material is the bronze, the agent is the artist, the make-up is the form which is adapted to the material, the model is

the pattern imitated by the agent, the end in view is the purpose in the maker's mind, and, finally, the result of all these is the statue itself. 9. The universe also, in Plato's opinion, possesses all these elements. The agent is God; the source, matter; the form, the shape and the arrangement of the visible world. The pattern is doubtless the model according to which God has made this great and most beautiful creation. 10. The purpose is his object in so doing. Do you ask what God's purpose is? It is goodness. Plato, at any rate, says: "What was God's reason for creating the world? God is good, and no good person is grudging of anything that is good. Therefore, God made it the best world possible." Hand down your opinion, then, O judge; state who seems to you to say what is truest, and not who says what is absolutely true. For to do that is as far beyond our ken as truth itself.

11. This throng of causes, defined by Aristotle and by Plato, embraces either too much or too little. For if they regard as "causes" of an object that is to be made everything without which the object cannot be made, they have named too few. Time must be included among the causes; for nothing can be made without time. They must also include place; for if there be no place where a thing can be made, it will not be made. And motion too; nothing is either made or destroyed without motion. There is no art without motion, no change of any kind. 12. Now, however, I am searching for the first, the general cause; this must be simple, inasmuch as matter, too, is simple. Do we ask what cause is? It is surely Creative Reason, – in other words, God. For those elements to which you referred are not a great series of independent causes; they all hinge on one alone, and that will be the creative cause. 13. Do you maintain that form is a cause? This is only what the artist stamps upon his work; it is part of a cause, but not the cause. Neither is the pattern a cause, but an indispensable tool of the cause. His pattern is as indispensable to the artist as the chisel or the file; without these, art can make no progress. But for all that, these things are neither parts of the art, nor causes of it. 14. "Then," perhaps you will say, "the purpose of the artist, that which leads him to undertake to create something, is the cause." It may be a cause; it is not, however, the efficient cause, but only an accessory cause. But there are countless accessory causes;

what we are discussing is the general cause. Now the statement of Plato and Aristotle is not in accord with their usual penetration, when they maintain that the whole universe, the perfectly wrought work, is a cause. For there is a great difference between a work and the cause of a work.

15. Either give your opinion, or, as is easier in cases of this kind, declare that the matter is not clear and call for another hearing. But you will reply: "What pleasure do you get from wasting your time on these problems, which relieve you of none of your emotions, rout none of your desires?" So far as I am concerned, I treat and discuss them as matters which contribute greatly toward calming the spirit, and I search myself first, and then the world about me. 16. And not even now am I, as you think, wasting my time. For all these questions, provided that they be not chopped up and torn apart into such unprofitable refinements, elevate and lighten the soul, which is weighted down by a heavy burden and desires to be freed and to return to the elements of which it was once a part. For this body of ours is a weight upon the soul and its penance; as the load presses down the soul is crushed and is in bondage, unless philosophy has come to its assistance and has bid it take fresh courage by contemplating the universe, and has turned it from things earthly to things divine. There it has its liberty, there it can roam abroad; meantime it escapes the custody in which it is bound, and renews its life in heaven. 17. Just as skilled workmen, who have been engaged upon some delicate piece of work which wearies their eyes with straining, if the light which they have is niggardly or uncertain, go forth into the open air and in some park devoted to the people's recreation delight their eyes in the generous light of day; so the soul, imprisoned as it has been in this gloomy and darkened house, seeks the open sky whenever it can, and in the contemplation of the universe finds rest.

18. The wise man, the seeker after wisdom, is bound closely, indeed, to his body, but he is an absentee so far as his better self is concerned, and he concentrates his thoughts upon lofty things. Bound, so to speak, to his oath of allegiance, he regards the period of life as his term of service. He is so trained that he neither loves nor hates life; he endures a mortal lot, although he knows that an ampler

lot is in store for him. 19. Do you forbid me to contemplate the universe? Do you compel me to withdraw from the whole and restrict me to a part? May I not ask what are the beginnings of all things, who moulded the universe, who took the confused and conglomerate mass of sluggish matter, and separated it into its parts? May I not inquire who is the Master-Builder of this universe, how the mighty bulk was brought under the control of law and order, who gathered together the scattered atoms, who separated the disordered elements and assigned an outward form to elements that lay in one vast shapelessness? Or whence came all the expanse of light? And whether is it fire, or even brighter than fire? 20. Am I not to ask these questions? Must I be ignorant of the heights whence I have descended? Whether I am to see this world but once, or to be born many times? What is my destination afterwards? What abode awaits my soul on its release from the laws of slavery among men? Do you forbid me to have a share in heaven? In other words, do you bid me live with my head bowed down? 21. No, I am above such an existence; I was born to a greater destiny than to be a mere chattel of my body, and I regard this body as nothing but a chain which manacles my freedom. Therefore, I offer it as a sort of buffer to fortune, and shall allow no wound to penetrate through to my soul. For my body is the only part of me which can suffer injury. In this dwelling, which is exposed to peril, my soul lives free. 22. Never shall this flesh drive me to feel fear or to assume any pretence that is unworthy of a good man. Never shall I lie in order to honour this petty body. When it seems proper, I shall sever my connexion with it. And at present, while we are bound together, our alliance shall nevertheless not be one of equality; the soul shall bring all quarrels before its own tribunal. To despise our bodies is sure freedom.

23. To return to our subject; this freedom will be greatly helped by the contemplation of which we were just speaking. All things are made up of matter and of God; God controls matter, which encompasses him and follows him as its guide and leader. And that which creates, in other words, God, is more powerful and precious than matter, which is acted upon by God. 24. God's place in the universe corresponds to the soul's relation to man. World-matter corresponds to our mortal body; therefore let the lower serve the

higher. Let us be brave in the face of hazards. Let us not fear wrongs, or wounds, or bonds, or poverty. And what is death? It is either the end, or a process of change. I have no fear of ceasing to exist; it is the same as not having begun. Nor do I shrink from changing into another state, because I shall, under no conditions, be as cramped as I am now. Farewell.

LXVI. On Various Aspects of Virtue

1. I have just seen my former school-mate Claranus for the first time in many years. You need not wait for me to add that he is an old man; but I assure you that I found him hale in spirit and sturdy, although he is wrestling with a frail and feeble body. For Nature acted unfairly when she gave him a poor domicile for so rare a soul; or perhaps it was because she wished to prove to us that an absolutely strong and happy mind can lie hidden under any exterior. Be that as it may, Claranus overcomes all these hindrances, and by despising his own body has arrived at a stage where he can despise other things also. 2. The poet who sang

Worth shows more pleasing in a form that's fair,

is, in my opinion, mistaken. For virtue needs nothing to set it off; it is its own great glory, and it hallows the body in which it dwells. At any rate, I have begun to regard Claranus in a different light; he seems to me handsome, and as well-setup in body as in mind. 3. A great man can spring from a hovel; so can a beautiful and great soul from an ugly and insignificant body. For this reason Nature seems to me to breed certain men of this stamp with the idea of proving that virtue springs into birth in any place whatever. Had it been possible for her to produce souls by themselves and naked, she would have done so; as it is, Nature does a still greater thing, for she produces certain men who, though hampered in their bodies, none the less break through the obstruction. 4. I think Claranus has been produced as a pattern, that we might be enabled to understand that the soul is not disfigured by the ugliness of the body, but rather the opposite, that the body is beautified by the comeliness of the soul.

Now, though Claranus and I have spent very few days together, we have nevertheless had many conversations, which I will at once pour forth and pass on to you. 5. The first day we investigated this problem: how can goods be equal if they are of three kinds? For certain of them, according to our philosophical tenets, are primary, such as joy, peace, and the welfare of one's country. Others are of the second order, moulded in an unhappy material, such as the endurance of suffering, and self-control during severe illness. We

shall pray outright for the goods of the first class; for the second class we shall pray only if the need shall arise. There is still a third variety, as, for example, a modest gait, a calm and honest countenance, and a bearing that suits the man of wisdom. 6. Now how can these things be equal when we compare them, if you grant that we ought to pray for the one and avoid the other? If we would make distinctions among them, we had better return to the First Good, and consider what its nature is: the soul that gazes upon truth, that is skilled in what should be sought and what should be avoided, establishing standards of value not according to opinion, but according to nature, – the soul that penetrates the whole world and directs its contemplating gaze upon all its Phenomena, paying strict attention to thoughts and actions, equally great and forceful, superior alike to hardships and blandishments, yielding itself to neither extreme of fortune, rising above all blessings and tribulations, absolutely beautiful, perfectly equipped with grace as well as with strength, healthy and sinewy, unruffled, undismayed, one which no violence can shatter, one which acts of chance can neither exalt nor depress, – a soul like this is virtue itself. 7. There you have its outward appearance, if it should ever come under a single view and show itself once in all its completeness. But there are many aspects of it. They unfold themselves according as life varies and as actions differ; but virtue itself does not become less or greater. For the Supreme Good cannot diminish, nor may virtue retrograde; rather is it transformed, now into one quality and now into another, shaping itself according to the part which it is to play. 8. Whatever it has touched it brings into likeness with itself, and dyes with its own colour. It adorns our actions, our friendships, and sometimes entire households which it has entered and set in order. Whatever it has handled it forthwith makes lovable, notable, admirable.

Therefore the power and the greatness of virtue cannot rise to greater heights, because increase is denied to that which is superlatively great. You will find nothing straighter than the straight, nothing truer than the truth, and nothing more temperate than that which is temperate. 9. Every virtue is limitless; for limits depend upon definite measurements. Constancy cannot advance further, any more than fidelity, or truthfulness, or loyalty. What can be added to

that which is perfect? Nothing otherwise that was not perfect to which something has been added. Nor can anything be added to virtue, either, for if anything can be added thereto, it must have contained a defect. Honour, also, permits of no addition; for it is honourable because of the very qualities which I have mentioned. What then? Do you think that propriety, justice, lawfulness, do not also belong to the same type, and that they are kept within fixed limits? The ability to increase is proof that a thing is still imperfect.

10. The good, in every instance, is subject to these same laws. The advantage of the state and that of the individual are yoked together; indeed it is as impossible to separate them as to separate the commendable from the desirable. Therefore, virtues are mutually equal; and so are the works of virtue, and all men who are so fortunate as to possess these virtues. 11. But, since the virtues of plants and of animals are perishable, they are also frail and fleeting and uncertain. They spring up, and they sink down again, and for this reason they are not rated at the same value; but to human virtues only one rule applies. For right reason is single and of but one kind. Nothing is more divine than the divine, or more heavenly than the heavenly. 12. Mortal things decay, fall, are worn out, grow up, are exhausted, and replenished. Hence, in their case, in view of the uncertainty of their lot, there is inequality; but of things divine the nature is one. Reason, however, is nothing else than a portion of the divine spirit set in a human body. If reason is divine, and the good in no case lacks reason, then the good in every case is divine. And furthermore, there is no distinction between things divine; hence there is none between goods, either. Therefore it follows that joy and a brave unyielding endurance of torture are equal goods; for in both there is the same greatness of soul relaxed and cheerful in the one case, in the other combative and braced for action. 13. What? Do you not think that the virtue of him who bravely storms the enemy's stronghold is equal to that of him who endures a siege with the utmost patience? Great is Scipio when he invests Numantia, and constrains and compels the hands of an enemy, whom he could not conquer, to resort to their own destruction. Great also are the souls of the defenders – men who know that, as long as the path to death lies open, the blockade is not complete, men who breathe their last in the

arms of liberty. In like manner, the other virtues are also equal as compared with one another: tranquillity, simplicity, generosity, constancy, equanimity, endurance. For underlying them all is a single virtue – that which renders the soul straight and unswerving.

14. “What then,” you say; “is there no difference between joy and unyielding endurance of pain?” None at all, as regards the virtues themselves; very great, however, in the circumstances in which either of these two virtues is displayed. In the one case, there is a natural relaxation and loosening of the soul; in the other there is an unnatural pain. Hence these circumstances, between which a great distinction can be drawn, belong to the category of indifferent things, but the virtue shown in each case is equal. 15. Virtue is not changed by the matter with which it deals; if the matter is hard and stubborn, it does not make the virtue worse; if pleasant and joyous, it does not make it better. Therefore, virtue necessarily remains equal. For, in each case, what is done is done with equal uprightness, with equal wisdom, and with equal honour. Hence the states of goodness involved are equal, and it is impossible for a man to transcend these states of goodness by conducting himself better, either the one man in his joy, or the other amid his suffering. And two goods, neither of which can possibly be better, are equal. 16. For if things which are extrinsic to virtue can either diminish or increase virtue, then that which is honourable ceases to be the only good. If you grant this, honour has wholly perished. And why? Let me tell you: it is because no act is honourable that is done by an unwilling agent, that is compulsory. Every honourable act is voluntary. Alloy it with reluctance, complaints, cowardice, or fear, and it loses its best characteristic – self-approval. That which is not free cannot be honourable; for fear means slavery. 17. The honourable is wholly free from anxiety and is calm; if it ever objects, laments, or regards anything as an evil, it becomes subject to disturbance and begins to flounder about amid great confusion. For on one side the semblance of right calls to it, on the other the suspicion of evil drags it back, therefore, when a man is about to do something honourable, he should not regard any obstacles as evils, even though he regard them as inconvenient, but he should will to do the deed, and do it willingly. For every honourable act is done without commands or compulsion; it is

unalloyed and contains no admixture of evil.

18. I know what you may reply to me at this point: "Are you trying to make us believe that it does not matter whether a man feels joy, or whether he lies upon the rack and tires out his torturer?" I might say in answer: "Epicurus also maintains that the wise man, though he is being burned in the bull of Phalaris, will cry out: 'Tis pleasant, and concerns me not at all.'" Why need you wonder, if I maintain that he who reclines at a banquet and the victim who stoutly withstands torture possess equal goods, when Epicurus maintains a thing that is harder to believe, namely, that it is pleasant to be roasted in this way? 19. But the reply which I do make, is that there is great difference between joy and pain; if I am asked to choose, I shall seek the former and avoid the latter. The former is according to nature, the latter contrary to it. So long as they are rated by this standard, there is a great gulf between; but when it comes to a question of the virtue involved, the virtue in each case is the same, whether it comes through joy or through sorrow. 20. Vexation and pain and other inconveniences are of no consequence, for they are overcome by virtue. Just as the brightness of the sun dims all lesser lights, so virtue, by its own greatness, shatters and overwhelms all pains, annoyances, and wrongs; and wherever its radiance reaches, all lights which shine without the help of virtue are extinguished; and inconveniences, when they come in contact with virtue, play no more important a part than does a storm-cloud at sea.

21. This can be proved to you by the fact that the good man will hasten unhesitatingly to any noble deed; even though he be confronted by the hangman, the torturer, and the stake, he will persist, regarding not what he must suffer, but what he must do; and he will entrust himself as readily to an honourable deed as he would to a good man; he will consider it advantageous to himself, safe, propitious. And he will hold the same view concerning an honourable deed, even though it be fraught with sorrow and hardship, as concerning a good man who is poor or wasting away in exile. 22. Come now, contrast a good man who is rolling in wealth with a man who has nothing, except that in himself he has all things; they will be equally good, though they experience unequal fortune. This same standard, as I have remarked, is to be applied to things as

well as to men; virtue is just as praiseworthy if it dwells in a sound and free body, as in one which is sickly or in bondage. 23. Therefore, as regards your own virtue also, you will not praise it any more, if fortune has favoured it by granting you a sound body, than if fortune has endowed you with a body that is crippled in some member, since that would mean rating a master low because he is dressed like a slave. For all those things over which Chance holds sway are chattels, money, person, position; they are weak, shifting, prone to perish, and of uncertain tenure. On the other hand, the works of virtue are free and unsubdued, neither more worthy to be sought when fortune treats them kindly, nor less worthy when any adversity weighs upon them.

24. Now friendship in the case of men corresponds to desirability in the case of things. You would not, I fancy, love a good man if he were rich any more than if he were poor, nor would you love a strong and muscular person more than one who was slender and of delicate constitution. Accordingly, neither will you seek or love a good thing that is mirthful and tranquil more than one that is full of perplexity and toil. 25. Or, if you do this, you will, in the case of two equally good men, care more for him who is neat and well-groomed than for him who is dirty and unkempt. You would next go so far as to care more for a good man who is sound in all his limbs and without blemish, than for one who is weak or purblind; and gradually your fastidiousness would reach such a point that, of two equally just and prudent men, you would choose him who has long curling hair! Whenever the virtue in each one is equal, the inequality in their other attributes is not apparent. For all other things are not parts, but merely accessories. 26. Would any man judge his children so unfairly as to care more for a healthy son than for one who was sickly, or for a tall child of unusual stature more than for one who was short or of middling height? Wild beasts show no favouritism among their offspring; they lie down in order to suckle all alike; birds make fair distribution of their food. Ulysses hastens back to the rocks of his Ithaca as eagerly as Agamemnon speeds to the kingly walls of Mycenae. For no man loves his native land because it is great; he loves it because it is his own.

27. And what is the purpose of all this? That you may know that

virtue regards all her works in the same light, as if they were her children, showing equal kindness to all, and still deeper kindness to those which encounter hardships; for even parents lean with more affection towards those of their offspring for whom they feel pity. Virtue, too, does not necessarily love more deeply those of her works which she beholds in trouble and under heavy burdens, but, like good parents, she gives them more of her fostering care.

28. Why is no good greater than any other good? It is because nothing can be more fitting than that which is fitting, and nothing more level than that which is level. You cannot say that one thing is more equal to a given object than another thing; hence also nothing is more honourable than that which is honourable. 29. Accordingly, if all the virtues are by nature equal, the three varieties of goods are equal. This is what I mean: there is an equality between feeling joy with self-control and suffering pain with self-control. The joy in the one case does not surpass in the other the steadfastness of soul that gulps down the groan when the victim is in the clutches of the torturer; goods of the first kind are desirable, while those of the second are worthy of admiration; and in each case they are none the less equal, because whatever inconvenience attaches to the latter is compensated by the qualities of the good, which is so much greater. 30. Any man who believes them to be unequal is turning away from the virtues themselves and is surveying mere externals; true goods have the same weight and the same width. The spurious sort contain much emptiness; hence, when they are weighed in the balance, they are found wanting, although they look imposing and grand to the gaze.

31. Yes, my dear Lucilius, the good which true reason approves is solid and everlasting; it strengthens the spirit and exalts it, so that it will always be on the heights; but those things which are thoughtlessly praised, and are goods in the opinion of the mob merely puff us up with empty joy. And again, those things which are feared as if they were evils merely inspire trepidation in men's minds, for the mind is disturbed by the semblance of danger, just as animals are disturbed. 32. Hence it is without reason that both these things distract and sting the spirit; the one is not worthy of joy, nor the other of fear. It is reason alone that is unchangeable, that holds fast to its decisions. For reason is not a slave to the senses, but a ruler

over them. Reason is equal to reason, as one straight line to another; therefore virtue also is equal to virtue. Virtue is nothing else than right reason. All virtues are reasons. Reasons are reasons, if they are right reasons. If they are right, they are also equal. ³³ As reason is, so also are actions; therefore all actions are equal. For since they resemble reason, they also resemble each other. Moreover, I hold that actions are equal to each other in so far as they are honourable and right actions. There will be, of course, great differences according as the material varies, as it becomes now broader and now narrower, now glorious and now base, now manifold in scope and now limited. However, that which is best in all these cases is equal; they are all honourable. ³⁴ In the same way, all good men, in so far as they are good, are equal. There are, indeed, differences of age, one is older, another younger; of body, – one is comely, another is ugly; of fortune, – this man is rich, that man poor, this one is influential, powerful, and well-known to cities and peoples, that man is unknown to most, and is obscure. But all, in respect of that wherein they are good, are equal. ³⁵ The senses do not decide upon things good and evil; they do not know what is useful and what is not useful. They cannot record their opinion unless they are brought face to face with a fact; they can neither see into the future nor recollect the past; and they do not know what results from what. But it is from such knowledge that a sequence and succession of actions is woven, and a unity of life is created, – a unity which will proceed in a straight course. Reason, therefore, is the judge of good and evil; that which is foreign and external she regards as dross, and that which is neither good nor evil she judges as merely accessory, insignificant and trivial. For all her good resides in the soul.

³⁶ But there are certain goods which reason regards as primary, to which she addresses herself purposely; these are, for example, victory, good children, and the welfare of one's country. Certain others she regards as secondary; these become manifest only in adversity, – for example, equanimity in enduring severe illness or exile. Certain goods are indifferent; these are no more according to nature than contrary to nature, as, for example, a discreet gait and a sedate posture in a chair. For sitting is an act that is not less according to nature than standing or walking. ³⁷ The two kinds of

goods which are of a higher order are different; the primary are according to nature, – such as deriving joy from the dutiful behaviour of one's children and from the well-being of one's country. The secondary are contrary to nature, – such as fortitude in resisting torture or in enduring thirst when illness makes the vitals feverish. 38. "What then," you say; "can anything that is contrary to nature be a good?" Of course not; but that in which this good takes its rise is sometimes contrary to nature. For being wounded, wasting away over a fire, being afflicted with bad health, – such things are contrary to nature; but it is in accordance with nature for a man to preserve an indomitable soul amid such distresses. 39. To explain my thought briefly, the material with which a good is concerned is sometimes contrary to nature, but a good itself never is contrary, since no good is without reason, and reason is in accordance with nature.

"What, then," you ask, "is reason?" It is copying nature. "And what," you say, "is the greatest good that man can possess?" It is to conduct oneself according to what nature wills. 40. "There is no doubt," says the objector, "that peace affords more happiness when it has not been assailed than when it has been recovered at the cost of great slaughter." "There is no doubt also," he continues, "that health which has not been impaired affords more happiness than health which has been restored to soundness by means of force, as it were, and by endurance of suffering, after serious illnesses that threaten life itself. And similarly there will be no doubt that joy is a greater good than a soul's struggle to endure to the bitter end the torments of wounds or burning at the stake." 41. By no means. For things that result from hazard admit of wide distinctions, since they are rated according to their usefulness in the eyes of those who experience them, but with regard to goods, the only point to be considered is that they are in agreement with nature; and this is equal in the case of all goods. When at a meeting of the Senate we vote in favour of someone's motion, it cannot be said, "A. is more in accord with the motion than B." All alike vote for the same motion. I make the same statement with regard to virtues, – they are all in accord with nature; and I make it with regard to goods also, – they are all in accord with nature. 42. One man dies young, another in old age, and still another in infancy, having enjoyed nothing more than a mere glimpse out

into life. They have all been equally subject to death, even though death has permitted the one to proceed farther along the pathway of life, has cut off the life of the second in his flower, and has broken off the life of the third at its very beginning. ⁴³ Some get their release at the dinner-table. Others extend their sleep into the sleep of death. Some are blotted out during dissipation. Now contrast with these persons individuals who have been pierced by the sword, or bitten to death by snakes, or crushed in ruins, or tortured piecemeal out of existence by the prolonged twisting of their sinews. Some of these departures may be regarded as better, some as worse; but the act of dying is equal in all. The methods of ending life are different; but the end is one and the same. Death has no degrees of greater or less; for it has the same limit in all instances, – the finishing of life.

⁴⁴ The same thing holds true, I assure you, concerning goods; you will find one amid circumstances of pure pleasure, another amid sorrow and bitterness. The one controls the favours of fortune; the other overcomes her onslaughts. Each is equally a good, although the one travels a level and easy road, and the other a rough road. And the end of them all is the same – they are goods, they are worthy of praise, they accompany virtue and reason. Virtue makes all the things that it acknowledges equal to one another. ⁴⁵ You need not wonder that this is one of our principles; we find mentioned in the works of Epicurus two goods, of which his Supreme Good, or blessedness, is composed, namely, a body free from pain and a soul free from disturbance. These goods, if they are complete, do not increase; for how can that which is complete increase? The body is, let us suppose, free from pain; what increase can there be to this absence of pain? The soul is composed and calm; what increase can there be to this tranquillity? ⁴⁶ Just as fair weather, purified into the purest brilliancy, does not admit of a still greater degree of clearness; so, when a man takes care of his body and of his soul, weaving the texture of his good from both, his condition is perfect, and he has found the consummation of his prayers, if there is no commotion in his soul or pain in his body. Whatever delights fall to his lot over and above these two things do not increase his Supreme Good; they merely season it, so to speak, and add spice to it. For the absolute good of man's nature is satisfied with peace in the body and peace in

the soul. 47. I can show you at this moment in the writings of Epicurus a graded list of goods just like that of our own school. For there are some things, he declares, which he prefers should fall to his lot, such as bodily rest free from all inconvenience, and relaxation of the soul as it takes delight in the contemplation of its own goods. And there are other things which, though he would prefer that they did not happen, he nevertheless praises and approves, for example, the kind of resignation, in times of ill-health and serious suffering, to which I alluded a moment ago, and which Epicurus displayed on that last and most blessed day of his life. For he tells us that he had to endure excruciating agony from a diseased bladder and from an ulcerated stomach, so acute that it permitted no increase of pain; "and yet," he says, "that day was none the less happy." And no man can spend such a day in happiness unless he possesses the Supreme Good.

48. We therefore find mentioned, even by Epicurus, those goods which one would prefer not to experience; which, however, because circumstances have decided thus, must be welcomed and approved and placed on a level with the highest goods. We cannot say that the good which has rounded out a happy life, the good for which Epicurus rendered thanks in the last words he uttered, is not equal to the greatest. 49. Allow me, excellent Lucilius, to utter a still bolder word: if any goods could be greater than others, I should prefer those which seem harsh to those which are mild and alluring, and should pronounce them greater. For it is more of an accomplishment to break one's way through difficulties than to keep joy within bounds.

50. It requires the same use of reason, I am fully aware, for a man to endure prosperity well and also to endure misfortune bravely. What man may be just as brave who sleeps in front of the ramparts without fear of danger when no enemy attacks the camp, as the man who, when the tendons of his legs have been severed, holds himself up on his knees and does not let fall his weapons; but it is to the blood-stained soldier returning from the front that men cry: "Well done, thou hero!" And therefore I should bestow greater praise upon those goods that have stood trial and show courage, and have fought it out with fortune. 51. Should I hesitate whether to give greater praise to the maimed and shrivelled hand of Mucius than to the uninjured hand of the bravest man in the world? There stood Mucius, despising the

enemy and despising the fire, and watched his hand as it dripped blood over the fire on his enemy's altar, until Porsenna, envying the fame of the hero whose punishment he was advocating, ordered the fire to be removed against the will of the victim.

52. Why should I not reckon this good among the primary goods, and deem it in so far greater than those other goods which are unattended by danger and have made no trial of fortune, as it is a rarer thing to have overcome a foe with a hand lost than with a hand armed? "What then?" you say; "shall you desire this good for yourself?" Of course I shall. For this is a thing that a man cannot achieve unless he can also desire it. 53. Should I desire, instead, to be allowed to stretch out my limbs for my slaves to massage, or to have a woman, or a man changed into the likeness of a woman, pull my finger-joints? I cannot help believing that Mucius was all the more lucky because he manipulated the flames as calmly as if he were holding out his hand to the manipulator. He had wiped out all his previous mistakes; he finished the war unarmed and maimed; and with that stump of a hand he conquered two kings. Farewell.

LXVII. On Ill-Health and Endurance of Suffering

1. If I may begin with a commonplace remark, spring is gradually disclosing itself; but though it is rounding into summer, when you would expect hot weather, it has kept rather cool, and one cannot yet be sure of it. For it often slides back into winter weather. Do you wish to know how uncertain it still is? I do not yet trust myself to a bath which is absolutely cold; even at this time I break its chill. You may say that this is no way to show the endurance either of heat or of cold; very true, dear Lucilius, but at my time of life one is at length contented with the natural chill of the body. I can scarcely thaw out in the middle of summer. Accordingly, I spend most of the time bundled up; 2. and I thank old age for keeping me fastened to my bed. Why should I not thank old age on this account? That which I ought not to wish to do, I lack the ability to do. Most of my converse is with books. Whenever your letters arrive, I imagine that I am with you, and I have the feeling that I am about to speak my answer, instead of writing it. Therefore let us together investigate the nature of this problem of yours, just as if we were conversing with one another.

3. You ask me whether every good is desirable. You say: "If it is a good to be brave under torture, to go to the stake with a stout heart, to endure illness with resignation, it follows that these things are desirable. But I do not see that any of them is worth praying for. At any rate I have as yet known of no man who has paid a vow by reason of having been cut to pieces by the rod, or twisted out of shape by the gout, or made taller by the rack." 4. My dear Lucilius, you must distinguish between these cases; you will then comprehend that there is something in them that is to be desired. I should prefer to be free from torture; but if the time comes when it must be endured, I shall desire that I may conduct myself therein with bravery, honour, and courage. Of course I prefer that war should not occur; but if war does occur, I shall desire that I may nobly endure the wounds, the starvation, and all that the exigency of war brings. Nor am I so mad as to crave illness; but if I must suffer illness, I shall desire that I may do nothing which shows lack of restraint, and nothing that is

unmanly. The conclusion is, not that hardships are desirable, but that virtue is desirable, which enables us patiently to endure hardships.

5. Certain of our school, think that, of all such qualities, a stout endurance is not desirable, – though not to be deprecated either – because we ought to seek by prayer only the good which is unalloyed, peaceful, and beyond the reach of trouble. Personally, I do not agree with them. And why? First, because it is impossible for anything to be good without being also desirable. Because, again, if virtue is desirable, and if nothing that is good lacks virtue, then everything good is desirable. And, lastly, because a brave endurance even under torture is desirable. 6. At this point I ask you: is not bravery desirable? And yet bravery despises and challenges danger. The most beautiful and most admirable part of bravery is that it does not shrink from the stake, advances to meet wounds, and sometimes does not even avoid the spear, but meets it with opposing breast. If bravery is desirable, so is patient endurance of torture; for this is a part of bravery. Only sift these things, as I have suggested; then there will be nothing which can lead you astray. For it is not mere endurance of torture, but brave endurance, that is desirable. I therefore desire that “brave” endurance; and this is virtue.

7. “But,” you say, “who ever desired such a thing for himself?” Some prayers are open and outspoken, when the requests are offered specifically; other prayers are indirectly expressed, when they include many requests under one title. For example, I desire a life of honour. Now a life of honour includes various kinds of conduct; it may include the chest in which Regulus was confined, or the wound of Cato which was torn open by Cato’s own hand, or the exile of Rutilius, or the cup of poison which removed Socrates from gaol to heaven. Accordingly, in praying for a life of honour, I have prayed also for those things without which, on some occasions, life cannot be honourable

8. O thrice and four times blest were they

Who underneath the lofty walls of Troy
Met happy death before their parents’ eyes!

What does it matter whether you offer this prayer for some

individual, or admit that it was desirable in the past? 9. Decius sacrificed himself for the State; he set spurs to his horse and rushed into the midst of the foe, seeking death. The second Decius, rivalling his father's valour, reproducing the words which had become sacred and already household words, dashed into the thickest of the fight, anxious only that his sacrifice might bring omen of success, and regarding a noble death as a thing to be desired. Do you doubt, then, whether it is best to die glorious and performing some deed of valour? 10. When one endures torture bravely, one is using all the virtues. Endurance may perhaps be the only virtue that is on view and most manifest; but bravery is there too, and endurance and resignation and long-suffering are its branches. There, too, is foresight; for without foresight no plan can be undertaken; it is foresight that advises one to bear as bravely as possible the things one cannot avoid. There also is steadfastness, which cannot be dislodged from its position, which the wrench of no force can cause to abandon its purpose. There is the whole inseparable company of virtues; every honourable act is the work of one single virtue, but it is in accordance with the judgment of the whole council. And that which is approved by all the virtues, even though it seems to be the work of one alone, is desirable.

11. What? Do you think that those things only are desirable which come to us amid pleasure and ease, and which we bedeck our doors to welcome? There are certain goods whose features are forbidding. There are certain prayers which are offered by a throng, not of men who rejoice, but of men who bow down reverently and worship. Was it not in this fashion, think you, that Regulus prayed that he might reach Carthage? Clothe yourself with a hero's courage, and withdraw for a little space from the opinions of the common man. Form a proper conception of the image of virtue, a thing of exceeding beauty and grandeur; this image is not to be worshipped by us with incense or garlands, but with sweat and blood. 13. Behold Marcus Cato, laying upon that hallowed breast his unspotted hands, and tearing apart the wounds which had not gone deep enough to kill him! Which, pray, shall you say to him: "I hope all will be as you wish," and "I am grieved," or shall it be "Good fortune in your undertaking!"?

14. In this connexion I think of our friend Demetrius, who calls an

easy existence, untroubled by the attacks of Fortune, a “Dead Sea.” If you have nothing to stir you up and rouse you to action, nothing which will test your resolution by its threats and hostilities; if you recline in unshaken comfort, it is not tranquillity; it is merely a flat calm. ¹⁵ The Stoic Attalus was wont to say: “I should prefer that Fortune keep me in her camp rather than in the lap of luxury. If I am tortured, but bear it bravely, all is well; if I die, but die bravely, it is also well.” Listen to Epicurus; he will tell you that it is actually pleasant. I myself shall never apply an effeminate word to an act so honourable and austere. If I go to the stake, I shall go unbeaten. ¹⁶ Why should I not regard this as desirable – not because the fire, burns me, but because it does not overcome me? Nothing is more excellent or more beautiful than virtue; whatever we do in obedience to her orders is both good and desirable. Farewell.

LXVIII. On Wisdom and Retirement

1. I fall in with your plan; retire and conceal yourself in repose. But at the same time conceal your retirement also. In doing this, you may be sure that you will be following the example of the Stoics, if not their precept. But you will be acting according to their precept also; you will thus satisfy both yourself and any Stoic you please. 2. We Stoics do not urge men to take up public life in every case, or at all times, or without any qualification. Besides, when we have assigned to our wise man that field of public life which is worthy of him, – in other words, the universe, – he is then not apart from public life, even if he withdraws; nay, perhaps he has abandoned only one little corner thereof and has passed over into greater and wider regions; and when he has been set in the heavens, he understands how lowly was the place in which he sat when he mounted the curule chair or the judgment-seat. Lay this to heart, that the wise man is never more active in affairs than when things divine as well as things human have come within his ken.

3. I now return to the advice which I set out to give you, – that you keep your retirement in the background. There is no need to fasten a placard upon yourself with the words: “Philosopher and Quietist.” Give your purpose some other name; call it ill-health and bodily weakness, or mere laziness. To boast of our retirement is but idle self-seeking. 4. Certain animals hide themselves from discovery by confusing the marks of their foot-prints in the neighbourhood of their lairs. You should do the same. Otherwise, there will always be someone dogging your footsteps. Many men pass by that which is visible, and peer after things hidden and concealed; a locked room invites the thief. Things which lie in the open appear cheap; the house-breaker passes by that which is exposed to view. This is the way of the world, and the way of all ignorant men: they crave to burst in upon hidden things. It is therefore best not to vaunt one’s retirement. 5. It is, however, a sort of vaunting to make too much of one’s concealment and of one’s withdrawal from the sight of men. So-and-so has gone into his retreat at Tarentum; that other man has shut himself up at Naples; this third person for many years has not

crossed the threshold of his own house. To advertise one's retirement is to collect a crowd. 6. When you withdraw from the world your business is to talk with yourself, not to have men talk about you. But what shall you talk about? Do just what people are fond of doing when they talk about their neighbours, – speak ill of yourself when by yourself; then you will become accustomed both to speak and to hear the truth. Above all, however, ponder that which you come to feel is your greatest weakness. 7. Each man knows best the defects of his own body. And so one relieves his stomach by vomiting, another props it up by frequent eating, another drains and purges his body by periodic fasting. Those whose feet are visited by pain abstain either from wine or from the bath. In general, men who are careless in other respects go out of their way to relieve the disease which frequently afflicts them. So it is with our souls; there are in them certain parts which are, so to speak, on the sick-list, and to these parts the cure must be applied.

8. What, then, am I myself doing with my leisure? I am trying to cure my own sores. If I were to show you a swollen foot, or an inflamed hand, or some shrivelled sinews in a withered leg, you would permit me to lie quiet in one place and to apply lotions to the diseased member. But my trouble is greater than any of these, and I cannot show it to you. The abscess, or ulcer, is deep within my breast. Pray, pray, do not commend me, do not say: "What a great man! He has learned to despise all things; condemning the madnesses of man's life, he has made his escape!" I have condemned nothing except myself. 9. There is no reason why you should desire to come to me for the sake of making progress. You are mistaken if you think that you will get any assistance from this quarter; it is not a physician that dwells here, but a sick man. I would rather have you say, on leaving my presence: "I used to think him a happy man and a learned one, and I had pricked up my ears to hear him; but I have been defrauded. I have seen nothing, heard nothing which I craved and which I came back to hear." If you feel thus, and speak thus, some progress has been made. I prefer you to pardon rather than envy my retirement.

10. Then you say: "Is it retirement, Seneca, that you are recommending to me? You will soon be falling back upon the

maxims of Epicurus!" I do recommend retirement to you, but only that you may use it for greater and more beautiful activities than those which you have resigned; to knock at the haughty doors of the influential, to make alphabetical lists of childless old men, to wield the highest authority in public life, – this kind of power exposes you to hatred, is short-lived, and, if you rate it at its true value, is tawdry.

11. One man shall be far ahead of me as regards his influence in public life, another in salary as an army officer and in the position which results from this, another in the throng of his clients; but it is worth while to be outdone by all these men, provided that I myself can outdo Fortune. And I am no match for her in the throng; she has the greater backing.

12. Would that in earlier days you had been minded to follow this purpose! Would that we were not discussing the happy life in plain view of death! But even now let us have no delay. For now we can take the word of experience, which tells us that there are many superfluous and hostile things; for this we should long since have taken the word of reason. 13. Let us do what men are wont to do when they are late in setting forth, and wish to make up for lost time by increasing their speed – let us ply the spur. Our time of life is the best possible for these pursuits; for the period of boiling and foaming is now past. The faults that were uncontrolled in the first fierce heat of youth are now weakened, and but little further effort is needed to extinguish them.

14. "And when," you ask, "will that profit you which you do not learn until your departure, and how will it profit you?" Precisely in this way, that I shall depart a better man. You need not think, however, that any time of life is more fitted to the attainment of a sound mind than that which has gained the victory over itself by many trials and by long and oft-repeated regret for past mistakes, and, its passions assuaged, has reached a state of health. This is indeed the time to have acquired this good; he who has attained wisdom in his old age, has attained it by his years. Farewell.

LXIX. On Rest and Restlessness

1. I do not like you to change your headquarters and scurry about from one place to another. My reasons are, – first, that such frequent flitting means an unsteady spirit. And the spirit cannot through retirement grow into unity unless it has ceased from its inquisitiveness and its wanderings. To be able to hold your spirit in check, you must first stop the runaway flight of the body. 2. My second reason is, that the remedies which are most helpful are those which are not interrupted. You should not allow your quiet, or the oblivion to which you have consigned your former life, to be broken into. Give your eyes time to unlearn what they have seen, and your ears to grow accustomed to more wholesome words. Whenever you stir abroad you will meet, even as you pass from one place to another, things that will bring back your old cravings. 3. Just as he who tries to be rid of an old love must avoid every reminder of the person once held dear (for nothing grows again so easily as love), similarly, he who would lay aside his desire for all the things which he used to crave so passionately, must turn away both eyes and ears from the objects which he has abandoned. The emotions soon return to the attack; 4. at every turn they will notice before their eyes an object worth their attention. There is no evil that does not offer inducements. Avarice promises money; luxury, a varied assortment of pleasures; ambition, a purple robe and applause, and the influence which results from applause, and all that influence can do. 5. Vices tempt you by the rewards which they offer; but in the life of which I speak, you must live without being paid. Scarcely will a whole lifetime suffice to bring our vices into subjection and to make them accept the yoke, swollen as they are by long-continued indulgence; and still less, if we cut into our brief span by any interruptions. Even constant care and attention can scarcely bring any one undertaking to full completion. 6. If you will give ear to my advice, ponder and practise this, – how to welcome death, or even, if circumstances commend that course, to invite it. There is no difference whether death comes to us, or whether we go to death. Make yourself believe that all ignorant men are wrong when they say: “It is a beautiful

thing to die one's own death." But there is no man who does not die his own death. What is more, you may reflect on this thought: No one dies except on his own day. You are throwing away none of your own time; for what you leave behind does not belong to you. Farewell.

LXX. On the Proper Time to Slip the Cable

1. After a long space of time I have seen your beloved Pompeii. I was thus brought again face to face with the days of my youth. And it seemed to me that I could still do, nay, had only done a short time ago, all the things which I did there when a young man. 2. We have sailed past life, Lucilius, as if we were on a voyage, and just as when at sea, to quote from our poet Vergil,

Lands and towns are left astern,

even so, on this journey where time flies with the greatest speed, we put below the horizon first our boyhood and then our youth, and then the space which lies between young manhood and middle age and borders on both, and next, the best years of old age itself. Last of all, we begin to sight the general bourne of the race of man. 3. Fools that we are, we believe this bourne to be a dangerous reef; but it is the harbour, where we must some day put in, which we may never refuse to enter; and if a man has reached this harbour in his early years, he has no more right to complain than a sailor who has made a quick voyage. For some sailors, as you know, are tricked and held back by sluggish winds, and grow weary and sick of the slow-moving calm; while others are carried quickly home by steady gales.

4. You may consider that the same thing happens to us: life has carried some men with the greatest rapidity to the harbour, the harbour they were bound to reach even if they tarried on the way, while others it has fretted and harassed. To such a life, as you are aware, one should not always cling. For mere living is not a good, but living well. Accordingly, the wise man will live as long as he ought, not as long as he can. 5. He will mark in what place, with whom, and how he is to conduct his existence, and what he is about to do. He always reflects concerning the quality, and not the quantity, of his life. As soon as there are many events in his life that give him trouble and disturb his peace of mind, he sets himself free. And this privilege is his, not only when the crisis is upon him, but as soon as Fortune seems to be playing him false; then he looks about carefully and sees whether he ought, or ought not, to end his life on that account. He holds that it makes no difference to him whether his

taking-off be natural or self-inflicted, whether it comes later or earlier. He does not regard it with fear, as if it were a great loss; for no man can lose very much when but a dribble remains. ⁶ It is not a question of dying earlier or later, but of dying well or ill. And dying well means escape from the danger of living ill.

That is why I regard the words of the well-known Rhodian as most unmanly. This person was thrown into a cage by his tyrant, and fed there like some wild animal. And when a certain man advised him to end his life by fasting, he replied: "A man may hope for anything while he has life." ⁷ This may be true; but life is not to be purchased at any price. No matter how great or how well-assured certain rewards may be I shall not strive to attain them at the price of a shameful confession of weakness. Shall I reflect that Fortune has all power over one who lives, rather than reflect that she has no power over one who knows how to die? ⁸ There are times, nevertheless, when a man, even though certain death impends and he knows that torture is in store for him, will refrain from lending a hand to his own punishment, to himself, however, he would lend a hand. It is folly to die through fear of dying. The executioner is upon you; wait for him. Why anticipate him? Why assume the management of a cruel task that belongs to another? Do you grudge your executioner his privilege, or do you merely relieve him of his task? ⁹ Socrates might have ended his life by fasting; he might have died by starvation rather than by poison. But instead of this he spent thirty days in prison awaiting death, not with the idea "everything may happen," or "so long an interval has room for many a hope" but in order that he might show himself submissive to the laws and make the last moments of Socrates an edification to his friends. What would have been more foolish than to scorn death, and yet fear poison?

¹⁰ Scribonia, a woman of the stern old type, was an aunt of Drusus Libo. This young man was as stupid as he was well born, with higher ambitions than anyone could have been expected to entertain in that epoch, or a man like himself in any epoch at all. When Libo had been carried away ill from the senate-house in his litter, though certainly with a very scanty train of followers, – for all his kinsfolk undutifully deserted him, when he was no longer a

criminal but a corpse, – he began to consider whether he should commit suicide, or await death. Scribonia said to him: “What pleasure do you find in doing another man’s work?” But he did not follow her advice; he laid violent hands upon himself. And he was right, after all; for when a man is doomed to die in two or three days at his enemy’s pleasure, he is really “doing another man’s work” if he continues to live.

11. No general statement can be made, therefore, with regard to the question whether, when a power beyond our control threatens us with death, we should anticipate death, or await it. For there are many arguments to pull us in either direction. If one death is accompanied by torture, and the other is simple and easy, why not snatch the latter? Just as I shall select my ship when I am about to go on a voyage or my house when I propose to take a residence, so I shall choose my death when I am about to depart from life. 12. Moreover, just as a long-drawn out life does not necessarily mean a better one, so a long-drawn-out death necessarily means a worse one. There is no occasion when the soul should be humoured more than at the moment of death. Let the soul depart as it feels itself impelled to go; whether it seeks the sword, or the halter, or some drought that attacks the veins, let it proceed and burst the bonds of its slavery. Every man ought to make his life acceptable to others besides himself, but his death to himself alone. The best form of death is the one we like. 13. Men are foolish who reflect thus: “One person will say that my conduct was not brave enough; another, that I was too headstrong; a third, that a particular kind of death would have betokened more spirit.” What you should really reflect is: “I have under consideration a purpose with which the talk of men has no concern!” Your sole aim should be to escape from Fortune as speedily as possible; otherwise, there will be no lack of persons who will think ill of what you have done.

14. You can find men who have gone so far as to profess wisdom and yet maintain that one should not offer violence to one’s own life, and hold it accursed for a man to be the means of his own destruction; we should wait, say they, for the end decreed by nature. But one who says this does not see that he is shutting off the path to freedom. The best thing which eternal law ever ordained was that it

allowed to us one entrance into life, but many exits. 15. Must I await the cruelty either of disease or of man, when I can depart through the midst of torture, and shake off my troubles? This is the one reason why we cannot complain of life; it keeps no one against his will. Humanity is well situated, because no man is unhappy except by his own fault. Live, if you so desire; if not, you may return to the place whence you came. 16. You have often been cupped in order to relieve headaches. You have had veins cut for the purpose of reducing your weight. If you would pierce your heart, a gaping wound is not necessary – a lancet will open the way to that great freedom, and tranquillity can be purchased at the cost of a pin-prick.

What, then, is it which makes us lazy and sluggish? None of us reflects that some day he must depart from this house of life; just so old tenants are kept from moving by fondness for a particular place and by custom, even in spite of ill-treatment. 17. Would you be free from the restraint of your body? Live in it as if you were about to leave it. Keep thinking of the fact that some day you will be deprived of this tenure; then you will be more brave against the necessity of departing. But how will a man take thought of his own end, if he craves all things without end? 18. And yet there is nothing so essential for us to consider. For our training in other things is perhaps superfluous. Our souls have been made ready to meet poverty; but our riches have held out. We have armed ourselves to scorn pain; but we have had the good fortune to possess sound and healthy bodies, and so have never been forced to put this virtue to the test. We have taught ourselves to endure bravely the loss of those we love; but Fortune has preserved to us all whom we loved. 19. It is in this one matter only that the day will come which will require us to test our training.

You need not think that none but great men have had the strength to burst the bonds of human servitude; you need not believe that this cannot be done except by a Cato, – Cato, who with his hand dragged forth the spirit which he had not succeeded in freeing by the sword. Nay, men of the meanest lot in life have by a mighty impulse escaped to safety, and when they were not allowed to die at their own convenience, or to suit themselves in their choice of the instruments of death, they have snatched up whatever was lying ready to hand,

and by sheer strength have turned objects which were by nature harmless into weapons of their own. 20. For example, there was lately in a training-school for wild-beast gladiators a German, who was making ready for the morning exhibition; he withdrew in order to relieve himself, – the only thing which he was allowed to do in secret and without the presence of a guard. While so engaged, he seized the stick of wood, tipped with a sponge, which was devoted to the vilest uses, and stuffed it, just as it was, down his throat; thus he blocked up his windpipe, and choked the breath from his body. That was truly to insult death! 21. Yes, indeed; it was not a very elegant or becoming way to die; but what is more foolish than to be over-nice about dying? What a brave fellow! He surely deserved to be allowed to choose his fate! How bravely he would have wielded a sword! With what courage he would have hurled himself into the depths of the sea, or down a precipice! Cut off from resources on every hand, he yet found a way to furnish himself with death, and with a weapon for death. Hence you can understand that nothing but the will need postpone death. Let each man judge the deed of this most zealous fellow as he likes, provided we agree on this point, – that the foulest death is preferable to the fairest slavery.

22. Inasmuch as I began with an illustration taken from humble life I shall keep on with that sort. For men will make greater demands upon themselves, if they see that death can be despised even by the most despised class of men. The Catos, the Scipios, and the others whose names we are wont to hear with admiration, we regard as beyond the sphere of imitation; but I shall now prove to you that the virtue of which I speak is found as frequently in the gladiators' training-school as among the leaders in a civil war. 23. Lately a gladiator, who had been sent forth to the morning exhibition, was being conveyed in a cart along with the other prisoners; nodding as if he were heavy with sleep, he let his head fall over so far that it was caught in the spokes; then he kept his body in position long enough to break his neck by the revolution of the wheel. So he made his escape by means of the very wagon which was carrying him to his punishment.

24. When a man desires to burst forth and take his departure, nothing stands in his way. It is an open space in which Nature guards

us. When our plight is such as to permit it, we may look about us for an easy exit. If you have many opportunities ready to hand, by means of which you may liberate yourself, you may make a selection and think over the best way of gaining freedom; but if a chance is hard to find, instead of the best, snatch the next best, even though it be something unheard of, something new. If you do not lack the courage, you will not lack the cleverness, to die. 25. See how even the lowest class of slave, when suffering goads him on, is aroused and discovers a way to deceive even the most watchful guards! He is truly great who not only has given himself the order to die, but has also found the means.

I have promised you, however, some more illustrations drawn from the same games. 26. During the second event in a sham sea-fight one of the barbarians sank deep into his own throat a spear which had been given him for use against his foe. "Why, oh why," he said, "have I not long ago escaped from all this torture and all this mockery? Why should I be armed and yet wait for death to come?" This exhibition was all the more striking because of the lesson men learn from it that dying is more honourable than killing.

27. What then? If such a spirit is possessed by abandoned and dangerous men, shall it not be possessed also by those who have trained themselves to meet such contingencies by long meditation, and by reason, the mistress of all things? It is reason which teaches us that fate has various ways of approach, but the same end, and that it makes no difference at what point the inevitable event begins. 28. Reason, too, advises us to die, if we may, according to our taste; if this cannot be, she advises us to die according to our ability, and to seize upon whatever means shall offer itself for doing violence to ourselves. It is criminal to "live by robbery"; but, on the other hand, it is most noble to "die by robbery." Farewell.

LXXI. On the Supreme Good

1. You are continually referring special questions to me, forgetting that a vast stretch of sea sunders us. Since, however, the value of advice depends mostly on the time when it is given, it must necessarily result that by the time my opinion on certain matters reaches you, the opposite opinion is the better. For advice conforms to circumstances; and our circumstances are carried along, or rather whirled along. Accordingly, advice should be produced at short notice; and even this is too late; it should “grow while we work,” as the saying is. And I propose to show you how you may discover the method.

2. As often as you wish to know what is to be avoided or what is to be sought, consider its relation to the Supreme Good, to the purpose of your whole life. For whatever we do ought to be in harmony with this; no man can set in order the details unless he has already set before himself the chief purpose of his life. The artist may have his colours all prepared, but he cannot produce a likeness unless he has already made up his mind what he wishes to paint. The reason we make mistakes is because we all consider the parts of life, but never life as a whole. 3. The archer must know what he is seeking to hit; then he must aim and control the weapon by his skill. Our plans miscarry because they have no aim. When a man does not know what harbour he is making for, no wind is the right wind. Chance must necessarily have great influence over our lives, because we live by chance. 4. It is the case with certain men, however, that they do not know that they know certain things. Just as we often go searching for those who stand beside us, so we are apt to forget that the goal of the Supreme Good lies near us.

To infer the nature of this Supreme Good, one does not need many words or any round-about discussion; it should be pointed out with the forefinger, so to speak, and not be dissipated into many parts. For what good is there in breaking it up into tiny bits, when you can say: the Supreme Good is that which is honourable? Besides (and you may be still more surprised at this), that which is honourable is the only good; all other goods are alloyed and debased.

5. If you once convince yourself of this, and if you come to love virtue devotedly (for mere loving is not enough), anything that has been touched by virtue will be fraught with blessing and prosperity for you, no matter how it shall be regarded by others. Torture, if only, as you lie suffering, you are more calm in mind than your very torturer; illness, if only you curse not Fortune and yield not to the disease – in short, all those things which others regard as ills will become manageable and will end in good, if you succeed in rising above them.

Let this once be clear, that there is nothing good except that which is honourable, and all hardships will have a just title to the name of “goods,” when once virtue has made them honourable. 6. Many think that we Stoics are holding out expectations greater than our human lot admits of; and they have a right to think so. For they have regard to the body only. But let them turn back to the soul, and they will soon measure man by the standard of God. Rouse yourself, most excellent Lucilius, and leave off all this word-play of the philosophers, who reduce a most glorious subject to a matter of syllables, and lower and wear out the soul by teaching fragments; then you will become like the men who discovered these precepts, instead of those who by their teaching do their best to make philosophy seem difficult rather than great.

7. Socrates, who recalled the whole of philosophy to rules of conduct, and asserted that the highest wisdom consisted in distinguishing between good and evil, said: “Follow these rules, if my words carry weight with you, in order that you may be happy; and let some men think you even a fool. Allow any man who so desires to insult you and work you wrong; but if only virtue dwells with you, you will suffer nothing. If you wish to be happy, if you would be in good faith a good man let one person or another despise you.” No man can accomplish this unless he has come to regard all goods as equal, for the reason that no good exists without that which is honourable, and that which is honourable is in every case equal. 8. You may say: “What then? Is there no difference between Cato’s being elected praetor and his failure at the polls? Or whether Cato is conquered or conqueror in the battle-line of Pharsalia? And when Cato could not be defeated, though his party met defeat, was not this

goodness of his equal to that which would have been his if he had returned victorious to his native land and arranged a peace?" Of course it was; for it is by the same virtue that evil fortune is overcome and good fortune is controlled. Virtue however, cannot be increased or decreased; its stature is uniform. 9. "But," you will object, "Gnaeus Pompey will lose his army; the patricians, those noblest patterns of the State's creation, and the front-rank men of Pompey's party, a senate under arms, will be routed in a single engagement; the ruins of that great oligarchy will be scattered all over the world; one division will fall in Egypt, another in Africa, and another in Spain! And the poor State will not be allowed even the privilege of being ruined once for all!" 10. Yes, all this may happen; Juba's familiarity with every position in his own kingdom may be of no avail to him, of no avail the resolute bravery of his people when fighting for their king; even the men of Utica, crushed by their troubles, may waver in their allegiance; and the good fortune which ever attended men of the name of Scipio may desert Scipio in Africa. But long ago destiny "saw to it that Cato should come to no harm."

11. "He was conquered in spite of it all!" Well, you may include this among Cato's "failures"; Cato will bear with an equally stout heart anything that thwarts him of his victory, as he bore that which thwarted him of his praetorship. The day whereon he failed of election, he spent in play; the night wherein he intended to die, he spent in reading. He regarded in the same light both the loss of his praetorship and the loss of his life; he had convinced himself that he ought to endure anything which might happen. 12. Why should he not suffer, bravely and calmly, a change in the government? For what is free from the risk of change? Neither earth, nor sky, nor the whole fabric of our universe, though it be controlled by the hand of God. It will not always preserve its present order; it will be thrown from its course in days to come. 13. All things move in accord with their appointed times; they are destined to be born, to grow, and to be destroyed. The stars which you see moving above us, and this seemingly immovable earth to which we cling and on which we are set, will be consumed and will cease to exist. There is nothing that does not have its old age; the intervals are merely unequal at which Nature sends forth all these things towards the same goal. Whatever

is will cease to be, and yet it will not perish, but will be resolved into its elements. 14. To our minds, this process means perishing, for we behold only that which is nearest; our sluggish mind, under allegiance to the body, does not penetrate to bourns beyond. Were it not so, the mind would endure with greater courage its own ending and that of its possessions, if only it could hope that life and death, like the whole universe about us, go by turns, that whatever has been put together is broken up again, that whatever has been broken up is put together again, and that the eternal craftsmanship of God, who controls all things is working at this task.

15. Therefore the wise man will say just what a Marcus Cato would say, after reviewing his past life: "The whole race of man, both that which is and that which is to be, is condemned to die. Of all the cities that at any time have held sway over the world, and of all that have been the splendid ornaments of empires not their own, men shall some day ask where they were, and they shall be swept away by destructions of various kinds; some shall be ruined by wars, others shall be wasted away by inactivity and by the kind of peace which ends in sloth, or by that vice which is fraught with destruction even for mighty dynasties, – luxury. All these fertile plains shall be buried out of sight by a sudden overflowing of the sea, or a slipping of the soil, as it settles to lower levels, shall draw them suddenly into a yawning chasm. Why then should I be angry or feel sorrow, if I precede the general destruction by a tiny interval of time?" 16. Let great souls comply with God's wishes, and suffer unhesitatingly whatever fate the law of the universe ordains; for the soul at death is either sent forth into a better life, destined to dwell with deity amid greater radiance and calm, or else, at least, without suffering any harm to itself, it will be mingled with nature again, and will return to the universe.

Therefore Cato's honourable death was no less a good than his honourable life, since virtue admits of no stretching. Socrates used to say that verity and virtue were the same. Just as truth does not grow, so neither does virtue grow; for it has its due proportions and is complete. 17. You need not, therefore, wonder that goods are equal, both those which are to be deliberately chosen, and those which circumstances have imposed. For if you once adopt the view that

they are unequal, deeming, for instance, a brave endurance of torture as among the lesser goods, you will be including it among the evils also; you will pronounce Socrates unhappy in his prison, Cato unhappy when he reopens his wounds with more courage than he allowed in inflicting them, and Regulus the most ill-starred of all when he pays the penalty for keeping his word even with his enemies. And yet no man, even the most effeminate person in the world, has ever dared to maintain such an opinion. For though such persons deny that a man like Regulus is happy, yet for all that they also deny that he is wretched. 18. The earlier Academics do indeed admit that a man is happy even amid such tortures, but do not admit that he is completely or fully happy. With this view we cannot in any wise agree; for unless a man is happy, he has not attained the Supreme Good; and the good which is supreme admits of no higher degree, if only virtue exists within this man, and if adversity does not impair his virtue, and if, though the body be injured, the virtue abides unharmed. And it does abide. For I understand virtue to be high-spirited and exalted, so that it is aroused by anything that molests it. 19. This spirit, which young men of noble breeding often assume, when they are so deeply stirred by the beauty of some honourable object that they despise all the gifts of chance, is assuredly infused in us and communicated to us by wisdom. Wisdom will bring the conviction that there is but one good – that which is honourable; that this can neither be shortened nor extended, any more than a carpenter's rule, with which straight lines are tested, can be bent. Any change in the rule means spoiling the straight line. 20. Applying, therefore, this same figure to virtue, we shall say: virtue also is straight, and admits of no bending. What can be made more tense than a thing which is already rigid? Such is virtue, which passes judgment on everything, but nothing passes judgment on virtue. And if this rule, virtue, cannot itself be made more straight, neither can the things created by virtue be in one case straighter and in another less straight. For they must necessarily correspond to virtue; hence they are equal.

21. "What," you say, "do you call reclining at a banquet and submitting to torture equally good?" Does this seem surprising to you? You may be still more surprised at the following, – that

reclining at a banquet is an evil, while reclining on the rack is a good, if the former act is done in a shameful, and the latter in an honourable manner. It is not the material that makes these actions good or bad; it is the virtue. All acts in which virtue has disclosed itself are of the same measure and value. 22. At this moment the man who measures the souls of all men by his own is shaking his fist in my face because I hold that there is a parity between the goods involved in the case of one who passes sentence honourably, and of one who suffers sentence honourably; or because I hold that there is a parity between the goods of one who celebrates a triumph, and of one who, unconquered in spirit, is carried before the victor's chariot. For such critics think that whatever they themselves cannot do, is not done; they pass judgment on virtue in the light of their own weaknesses. 23. Why do you marvel if it helps a man, and on occasion even pleases him, to be burned, wounded, slain, or bound in prison? To a luxurious man, a simple life is a penalty; to a lazy man, work is punishment; the dandy pities the diligent man; to the slothful, studies are torture. Similarly, we regard those things with respect to which we are all infirm of disposition, as hard and beyond endurance, forgetting what a torment it is to many men to abstain from wine or to be routed from their beds at break of day. These actions are not essentially difficult; it is we ourselves that are soft and flabby. 24. We must pass judgment concerning great matters with greatness of soul; otherwise, that which is really our fault will seem to be their fault. So it is that certain objects which are perfectly straight, when sunk in water appear to the onlooker as bent or broken off. It matters not only what you see, but with what eyes you see it; our souls are too dull of vision to perceive the truth. 25. But give me an unspoiled and sturdy-minded young man; he will pronounce more fortunate one who sustains on unbending shoulders the whole weight of adversity, who stands out superior to Fortune. It is not a cause for wonder that one is not tossed about when the weather is calm; reserve your wonderment for cases where a man is lifted up when all others sink, and keeps his footing when all others are prostrate.

26. What element of evil is there in torture and in the other things which we call hardships? It seems to me that there is this evil, – that the mind sags, and bends, and collapses. But none of these things can

happen to the sage; he stands erect under any load. Nothing can subdue him; nothing that must be endured annoys him. For he does not complain that he has been struck by that which can strike any man. He knows his own strength; he knows that he was born to carry burdens. 27. I do not withdraw the wise man from the category of man, nor do I deny to him the sense of pain as though he were a rock that has no feelings at all. I remember that he is made up of two parts: the one part is irrational, – it is this that may be bitten, burned, or hurt; the other part is rational, – it is this which holds resolutely to opinions, is courageous, and unconquerable. In the latter is situated man's Supreme Good. Before this is completely attained, the mind wavers in uncertainty; only when it is fully achieved is the mind fixed and steady. 28. And so when one has just begun, or is on one's way to the heights and is cultivating virtue, or even if one is drawing near the perfect good but has not yet put the finishing touch upon it, one will retrograde at times and there will be a certain slackening of mental effort. For such a man has not yet traversed the doubtful ground; he is still standing in slippery places. But the happy man, whose virtue is complete, loves himself most of all when his bravery has been submitted to the severest test, and when he not only, endures but welcomes that which all other men regard with fear, if it is the price which he must pay for the performance of a duty which honour imposes, and he greatly prefers to have men say of him: "how much more noble!" rather than "how much more lucky!"

29. And now I have reached the point to which your patient waiting summons me. You must not think that our human virtue transcends nature; the wise man will tremble, will feel pain, will turn pale, For all these are sensations of the body. Where, then, is the abode of utter distress, of that which is truly an evil? In the other part of us, no doubt, if it is the mind that these trials drag down, force to a confession of its servitude, and cause to regret its existence. 30. The wise man, indeed, overcomes Fortune by his virtue, but many who profess wisdom are sometimes frightened by the most unsubstantial threats. And at this stage it is a mistake on our part to make the same demands upon the wise man and upon the learner. I still exhort myself to do that which I recommend; but my exhortations are not yet followed. And even if this were the case, I should not have these

principles so ready for practice, or so well trained, that they would rush to my assistance in every crisis. ³¹ Just as wool takes up certain colours at once, while there are others which it will not absorb unless it is soaked and steeped in them many times; so other systems of doctrine can be immediately applied by men's minds after once being accepted, but this system of which I speak, unless it has gone deep and has sunk in for a long time, and has not merely coloured but thoroughly permeated the soul, does not fulfil any of its promises. ³² The matter can be imparted quickly and in very few words: "Virtue is the only good; at any rate there is no good without virtue; and virtue itself is situated in our nobler part, that is, the rational part." And what will this virtue be? A true and never-swerving judgment. For therefrom will spring all mental impulses, and by its agency every external appearance that stirs our impulses will be clarified. ³³ It will be in keeping with this judgment to judge all things that have been coloured by virtue as goods, and as equal goods.

Bodily goods are, to be sure, good for the body; but they are not absolutely good. There will indeed be some value in them; but they will possess no genuine merit, for they will differ greatly; some will be less, others greater. ³⁴ And we are constrained to acknowledge that there are great differences among the very followers of wisdom. One man has already made so much progress that he dares to raise his eyes and look Fortune in the face, but not persistently, for his eyes soon drop, dazzled by her overwhelming splendour; another has made so much progress that he is able to match glances with her, – that is, unless he has already reached the summit and is full of confidence. ³⁵ That which is short of perfection must necessarily be unsteady, at one time progressing, at another slipping or growing faint; and it will surely slip back unless it keeps struggling ahead; for if a man slackens at all in zeal and faithful application, he must retrograde. No one can resume his progress at the point where he left off. ³⁶ Therefore let us press on and persevere. There remains much more of the road than we have put behind us; but the greater part of progress is the desire to progress.

I fully understand what this task is. It is a thing which I desire, and I desire it with all my heart. I see that you also have been

aroused and are hastening with great zeal towards infinite beauty. Let us, then, hasten; only on these terms will life be a boon to us; otherwise, there is delay, and indeed disgraceful delay, while we busy ourselves with revolting things. Let us see to it that all time belongs to us. This, however, cannot be unless first of all our own selves begin to belong to us. ³⁷ And when will it be our privilege to despise both kinds of fortune? When will it be our privilege, after all the passions have been subdued and brought under our own control, to utter the words "I have conquered!"? Do you ask me whom I have conquered? Neither the Persians, nor the far-off Medes, nor any warlike race that lies beyond the Dahae; not these, but greed, ambition, and the fear of death that has conquered the conquerors of the world. Farewell.

LXXII. On Business as the Enemy of Philosophy

1. The subject concerning which you question me was once clear to my mind, and required no thought, so thoroughly had I mastered it. But I have not tested my memory of it for some time, and therefore it does not readily come back to me. I feel that I have suffered the fate of a book whose rolls have stuck together by disuse; my mind needs to be unrolled, and whatever has been stored away there ought to be examined from time to time, so that it may be ready for use when occasion demands. Let us therefore put this subject off for the present; for it demands much labour and much care. As soon as I can hope to stay for any length of time in the same place, I shall then take your question in hand. 2. For there are certain subjects about which you can write even while travelling in a gig, and there are also subjects which need a study-chair, and quiet, and seclusion. Nevertheless I ought to accomplish something even on days like these, – days which are fully employed, and indeed from morning till night. For there is never a moment when fresh employments will not come along; we sow them, and for this reason several spring up from one. Then, too, we keep adjourning our own cases by saying: “As soon as I am done with this, I shall settle down to hard work,” or: “If I ever set this troublesome matter in order, I shall devote myself to study.”

3. But the study of philosophy is not to be postponed until you have leisure; everything else is to be neglected in order that we may attend to philosophy, for no amount of time is long enough for it, even though our lives be prolonged from boyhood to the uttermost bounds of time allotted to man. It makes little difference whether you leave philosophy out altogether or study it intermittently; for it does not stay as it was when you dropped it, but, because its continuity has been broken, it goes back to the position in which it was at the beginning, like things which fly apart when they are stretched taut. We must resist the affairs which occupy our time; they must not be untangled, but rather put out of the way. Indeed, there is no time that is unsuitable for helpful studies; and yet many a man fails to study amid the very circumstances which make study necessary. 4. He says:

“Something will happen to hinder me.” No, not in the case of the man whose spirit, no matter what his business may be, is happy and alert. It is those who are still short of perfection whose happiness can be broken off; the joy of a wise man, on the other hand, is a woven fabric, rent by no chance happening and by no change of fortune; at all times and in all places he is at peace. For his joy depends on nothing external and looks for no boon from man or fortune. His happiness is something within himself; it would depart from his soul if it entered in from the outside; it is born there. 5. Sometimes an external happening reminds him of his mortality, but it is a light blow, and merely grazes the surface of his skin. Some trouble, I repeat, may touch him like a breath of wind, but that Supreme Good of his is unshaken. This is what I mean: there are external disadvantages, like pimples and boils that break out upon a body which is normally strong and sound; but there is no deep-seated malady. 6. The difference, I say, between a man of perfect wisdom and another who is progressing in wisdom is the same as the difference between a healthy man and one who is convalescing from a severe and lingering illness, for whom “health” means only a lighter attack of his disease. If the latter does not take heed, there is an immediate relapse and a return to the same old trouble; but the wise man cannot slip back, or slip into any more illness at all. For health of body is a temporary matter which the physician cannot guarantee, even though he has restored it; nay, he is often roused from his bed to visit the same patient who summoned him before. The mind, however, once healed, is healed for good and all.

7. I shall tell you what I mean by health: if the mind is content with its own self; if it has confidence in itself; if it understands that all those things for which men pray, all the benefits which are bestowed and sought for, are of no importance in relation to a life of happiness; under such conditions it is sound. For anything that can be added to is imperfect; anything that can suffer loss is not lasting; but let the man whose happiness is to be lasting, rejoice in what is truly his own. Now all that which the crowd gapes after, ebbs and flows. Fortune gives us nothing which we can really own. But even these gifts of Fortune please us when reason has tempered and blended them to our taste; for it is reason which makes acceptable to us even

external goods that are disagreeable to use if we absorb them too greedily. 8. Attalus used to employ the following simile: “Did you ever see a dog snapping with wide-open jaws at bits of bread or meat which his master tosses to him? Whatever he catches, he straightway swallows whole, and always opens his jaws in the hope of something more. So it is with ourselves; we stand expectant, and whatever Fortune has thrown to us we forthwith bolt, without any real pleasure, and then stand alert and frantic for something else to snatch.” But it is not so with the wise man; he is satisfied. Even if something falls to him, he merely accepts it carelessly and lays it aside. 9. The happiness that he enjoys is supremely great, is lasting, is his own. Assume that a man has good intentions, and has made progress, but is still far from the heights; the result is a series of ups and downs; he is now raised to heaven, now brought down to earth. For those who lack experience and training, there is no limit to the downhill course; such a one falls into the Chaos of Epicurus, – empty and boundless. 10. There is still a third class of men, – those who toy with wisdom, – they have not indeed touched it, but yet are in sight of it, and have it, so to speak, within striking distance. They are not dashed about, nor do they drift back either; they are not on dry land, but are already in port.

11. Therefore, considering the great difference between those on the heights and those in the depths, and seeing that even those in the middle are pursued by an ebb and flow peculiar to their state and pursued also by an enormous risk of returning to their degenerate ways, we should not give ourselves up to matters which occupy our time. They should be shut out; if they once gain an entrance, they will bring in still others to take their places. Let us resist them in their early stages. It is better that they shall never begin than that they shall be made to cease. Farewell.

LXXIII. On Philosophers and Kings

1. It seems to me erroneous to believe that those who have loyally dedicated themselves to philosophy are stubborn and rebellious, scorers of magistrates or kings or of those who control the administration of public affairs. For, on the contrary, no class of man is so popular with the philosopher as the ruler is; and rightly so, because rulers bestow upon no men a greater privilege than upon those who are allowed to enjoy peace and leisure. 2. Hence, those who are greatly profited, as regards their purpose of right living, by the security of the State, must needs cherish as a father the author of this good; much more so, at any rate, than those restless persons who are always in the public eye, who owe much to the ruler, but also expect much from him, and are never so generously loaded with favours that their cravings, which grow by being supplied, are thoroughly satisfied. And yet he whose thoughts are of benefits to come has forgotten the benefits received; and there is no greater evil in covetousness than its ingratitude. 3. Besides, no man in public life thinks of the many whom he has outstripped; he thinks rather of those by whom he is outstripped. And these men find it less pleasing to see many behind them than annoying to see anyone ahead of them. That is the trouble with every sort of ambition; it does not look back. Nor is it ambition alone that is fickle, but also every sort of craving, because it always begins where it ought to end.

4. But that other man, upright and pure, who has left the senate and the bar and all affairs of state, that he may retire to nobler affairs, cherishes those who have made it possible for him to do this in security; he is the only person who returns spontaneous thanks to them, the only person who owes them a great debt without their knowledge. Just as a man honours and reveres his teachers, by whose aid he has found release from his early wanderings, so the sage honours these men, also, under whose guardianship he can put his good theories into practice. 5. But you answer: "Other men too are protected by a king's personal power." Perfectly true. But just as, out of a number of persons who have profited by the same stretch of calm weather, a man deems that his debt to Neptune is greater if his

cargo during that voyage has been more extensive and valuable, and just as the vow is paid with more of a will by the merchant than by the passenger, and just as, from among the merchants themselves, heartier thanks are uttered by the dealer in spices, purple fabrics, and objects worth their weight in gold, than by him who has gathered cheap merchandise that will be nothing but ballast for his ship; similarly, the benefits of this peace, which extends to all, are more deeply appreciated by those who make good use of it.

6. For there are many of our toga-clad citizens to whom peace brings more trouble than war. Or do those, think you, owe as much as we do for the peace they enjoy, who spend it in drunkenness, or in lust, or in other vices which it were worth even a war to interrupt? No, not unless you think that the wise man is so unfair as to believe that as an individual he owes nothing in return for the advantages which he enjoys with all the rest. I owe a great debt to the sun and to the moon; and yet they do not rise for me alone. I am personally beholden to the seasons and to the god who controls them, although in no respect have they been apportioned for my benefit. 7. The foolish greed of mortals makes a distinction between possession and ownership, and believes that it has ownership in nothing in which the general public has a share. But our philosopher considers nothing more truly his own than that which he shares in partnership with all mankind. For these things would not be common property, as indeed they are, unless every individual had his quota; even a joint interest based upon the slightest share makes one a partner. 8. Again, the great and true goods are not divided in such a manner that each has but a slight interest; they belong in their entirety to each individual. At a distribution of grain men receive only the amount that has been promised to each person; the banquet and the meat-dole, or all else that a man can carry away with him, are divided into parts. These goods, however, are indivisible, – I mean peace and liberty, – and they belong in their entirety to all men just as much as they belong to each individual.

9. Therefore the philosopher thinks of the person who makes it possible for him to use and enjoy these things, of the person who exempts him when the state's dire need summons to arms, to sentry duty, to the defence of the walls, and to the manifold exactions of

war; and he gives thanks to the helmsman of his state. This is what philosophy teaches most of all, – honourably to avow the debt of benefits received, and honourably to pay them; sometimes, however, the acknowledgment itself constitutes payment. ¹⁰ Our philosopher will therefore acknowledge that he owes a large debt to the ruler who makes it possible, by his management and foresight, for him to enjoy rich leisure, control of his own time, and a tranquillity uninterrupted by public employments.

Shepherd! a god this leisure gave to me,
For he shall be my god eternally.

¹¹. And if even such leisure as that of our poet owes a great debt to its author, though its greatest boon is this:

As thou canst see,

He let me turn my cattle out to feed,
And play what fancy pleased on rustic reed;

how highly are we to value this leisure of the philosopher, which is spent among the gods, and makes us gods? ¹² Yes, this is what I mean, Lucilius; and I invite you to heaven by a short cut.

Sextius used to say that Jupiter had no more power than the good man. Of course, Jupiter has more gifts which he can offer to mankind; but when you are choosing between two good men, the richer is not necessarily the better, any more than, in the case of two pilots of equal skill in managing the tiller, you would call him the better whose ship is larger and more imposing. ¹³ In what respect is Jupiter superior to our good man? His goodness lasts longer; but the wise man does not set a lower value upon himself, just because his virtues are limited by a briefer span. Or take two wise men; he who has died at a greater age is not happier than he whose virtue has been limited to fewer years: similarly, a god has no advantage over a wise man in point of happiness, even though he has such an advantage in point of years. That virtue is not greater which lasts longer. ¹⁴ Jupiter possesses all things, but he has surely given over the possession of them to others; the only use of them which belongs to him is this: he is the cause of their use to all men. The wise man surveys and scorns all the possessions of others as calmly as does Jupiter, and regards

himself with the greater esteem because, while Jupiter cannot make use of them, he, the wise man, does not wish to do so. ¹⁵ Let us therefore believe Sextius when he shows us the path of perfect beauty, and cries: "This is 'the way to the stars'; this is the way, by observing thrift, self-restraint, and courage!"

The gods are not disdainful or envious; they open the door to you; they lend a hand as you climb. ¹⁶ Do you marvel that man goes to the gods? God comes to men; nay, he comes nearer, – he comes into men. No mind that has not God, is good. Divine seeds are scattered throughout our mortal bodies; if a good husbandman receives them, they spring up in the likeness of their source and of a parity with those from which they came. If, however, the husbandman be bad, like a barren or marshy soil, he kills the seeds, and causes tares to grow up instead of wheat. Farewell.

LXXIV. On Virtue as a Refuge from Worldly Distractions

1. Your letter has given me pleasure, and has roused me from sluggishness. It has also prompted my memory, which has been for some time slack and nerveless.

You are right, of course, my dear Lucilius, in deeming the chief means of attaining the happy life to consist in the belief that the only good lies in that which is honourable. For anyone who deems other things to be good, puts himself in the power of Fortune, and goes under the control of another; but he who has in every case defined the good by the honourable, is happy with an inward happiness.

2. One man is saddened when his children die; another is anxious when they become ill; a third is embittered when they do something disgraceful, or suffer a taint in their reputation. One man, you will observe, is tortured by passion for his neighbour's wife, another by passion for his own. You will find men who are completely upset by failure to win an election, and others who are actually plagued by the offices which they have won. 3. But the largest throng of unhappy men among the host of mortals are those whom the expectation of death, which threatens them on every hand, drives to despair. For there is no quarter from which death may not approach. Hence, like soldiers scouting in the enemy's country, they must look about in all directions, and turn their heads at every sound; unless the breast be rid of this fear, one lives with a palpitating heart. 4. You will readily recall those who have been driven into exile and dispossessed of their property. You will also recall (and this is the most serious kind of destitution) those who are poor in the midst of their riches. You will recall men who have suffered shipwreck, or those whose sufferings resemble shipwreck; for they were untroubled and at ease, when the anger or perhaps the envy of the populace, – a missile most deadly to those in high places, – dismantled them like a storm which is wont to rise when one is most confident of continued calm, or like a sudden stroke of lightning which even causes the region round about it to tremble. For just as anyone who stands near the bolt is stunned and

resembles one who is struck so in these sudden and violent mishaps, although but one person is overwhelmed by the disaster, the rest are overwhelmed by fear, and the possibility that they may suffer makes them as downcast as the actual sufferer.

5. Every man is troubled in spirit by evils that come suddenly upon his neighbour. Like birds, who cower even at the whirr of an empty sling, we are distracted by mere sounds as well as by blows. No man therefore can be happy if he yields himself up to such foolish fancies. For nothing brings happiness unless it also brings calm; it is a bad sort of existence that is spent in apprehension. 6. Whoever has largely surrendered himself to the power of Fortune has made for himself a huge web of disquietude, from which he cannot get free; if one would win a way to safety, there is but one road, – to despise externals and to be contented with that which is honourable. For those who regard anything as better than virtue, or believe that there is any good except virtue, are spreading their arms to gather in that which Fortune tosses abroad, and are anxiously awaiting her favours. 7. Picture now to yourself that Fortune is holding a festival, and is showering down honours, riches, and influence upon this mob of mortals; some of these gifts have already been torn to pieces in the hands of those who try to snatch them, others have been divided up by treacherous partnerships, and still others have been seized to the great detriment of those into whose possession they have come. Certain of these favours have fallen to men while they were absent-minded; others have been lost to their seekers because they were snatching too eagerly for them, and, just because they are greedily seized upon, have been knocked from their hands. There is not a man among them all, however, – even he who has been lucky in the booty which has fallen to him, – whose joy in his spoil has lasted until the morrow.

The most sensible man, therefore, as soon as he sees the dole being brought in, runs from the theatre; for he knows that one pays a high price for small favours. No one will grapple with him on the way out, or strike him as he departs; the quarrelling takes place where the prizes are. 8. Similarly with the gifts which Fortune tosses down to us; wretches that we are, we become excited, we are torn asunder, we wish that we had many hands, we look back now in this

direction and now in that. All too slowly, as it seems, are the gifts thrown in our direction; they merely excite our cravings, since they can reach but few and are awaited by all. 9. We are keen to intercept them as they fall down. We rejoice if we have laid hold of anything; and some have been mocked by the idle hope of laying hold; we have either paid a high price for worthless plunder with some disadvantage to ourselves, or else have been defrauded and are left in the lurch. Let us therefore withdraw from a game like this, and give way to the greedy rabble; let them gaze after such "goods," which hang suspended above them, and be themselves still more in suspense.

10. Whoever makes up his mind to be happy should conclude that the good consists only in that which is honourable. For if he regards anything else as good, he is, in the first place, passing an unfavourable judgment upon Providence because of the fact that upright men often suffer misfortunes, and that the time which is allotted to us is but short and scanty, if you compare it with the eternity which is allotted to the universe.

11. It is a result of complaints like these that we are unappreciative in our comments upon the gifts of heaven; we complain because they are not always granted to us, because they are few and unsure and fleeting. Hence we have not the will either to live or to die; we are possessed by hatred of life, by fear of death. Our plans are all at sea, and no amount of prosperity can satisfy us. And the reason for all this is that we have not yet attained to that good which is immeasurable and unsurpassable, in which all wishing on our part must cease, because there is no place beyond the highest. 12. Do you ask why virtue needs nothing? Because it is pleased with what it has, and does not lust after that which it has not. Whatever is enough is abundant in the eyes of virtue.

Dissent from this judgment, and duty and loyalty will not abide. For one who desires to exhibit these two qualities must endure much that the world calls evil; we must sacrifice many things to which we are addicted, thinking them to be goods. 13. Gone is courage, which should be continually testing itself; gone is greatness of soul, which cannot stand out clearly unless it has learned to scorn as trivial everything that the crowd covets as supremely important; and gone is

kindness and the repaying of kindness, if we fear toil, if we have acknowledged anything to be more precious than loyalty, if our eyes are fixed upon anything except the best.

14. But to pass these questions by: either these so-called goods are not goods, or else man is more fortunate than God, because God has no enjoyment of the things which are given to us. For lust pertains not to God, nor do elegant banquets, nor wealth, nor any of the things that allure mankind and lead him on through the influence of degrading pleasure. Therefore, it is, either not incredible that there are goods which God does not possess, or else the very fact that God does not possess them is in itself a proof that these things are not goods. 15. Besides, many things which are wont to be regarded as goods are granted to animals in fuller measure than to men. Animals eat their food with better appetite, are not in the same degree weakened by sexual indulgence, and have a greater and more uniform constancy in their strength. Consequently, they are much more fortunate than man. For there is no wickedness, no injury to themselves, in their way of living. They enjoy their pleasures and they take them more often and more easily, without any of the fear that results from shame or regret.

16. This being so, you should consider whether one has a right to call anything good in which God is outdone by man. Let us limit the Supreme Good to the soul; it loses its meaning if it is taken from the best part of us and applied to the worst, that is, if it is transferred to the senses; for the senses are more active in dumb beasts. The sum total of our happiness must not be placed in the flesh; the true goods are those which reason bestows, substantial and eternal; they cannot fall away, neither can they grow less or be diminished. 17. Other things are goods according to opinion, and though they are called by the same name as the true goods, the essence of goodness is not in them. Let us therefore call them “advantages,” and, to use our technical term, “preferred” things. Let us, however, recognize that they are our chattels, not parts of ourselves; and let us have them in our possession, but take heed to remember that they are outside ourselves. Even though they are in our possession, they are to be reckoned as things subordinate and poor, the possession of which gives no man a right to plume himself. For what is more foolish than

being self-complacent about something which one has not accomplished by one's own efforts? 18. Let everything of this nature be added to us, and not stick fast to us, so that, if it is withdrawn, it may come away without tearing off any part of us. Let us use these things, but not boast of them, and let us use them sparingly, as if they were given for safe-keeping and will be withdrawn. Anyone who does not employ reason in his possession of them never keeps them long; for prosperity of itself, if uncontrolled by reason, overwhelms itself. If anyone has put his trust in goods that are most fleeting, he is soon bereft of them, and, to avoid being bereft, he suffers distress. Few men have been permitted to lay aside prosperity gently. The rest all fall, together with the things amid which they have come into eminence, and they are weighted down by the very things which had before exalted them. 19. For this reason foresight must be brought into play, to insist upon a limit or upon frugality in the use of these things, since license overthrows and destroys its own abundance. That which has no limit has never endured, unless reason, which sets limits, has held it in check. The fate of many cities will prove the truth of this; their sway has ceased at the very prime because they were given to luxury, and excess has ruined all that had been won by virtue. We should fortify ourselves against such calamities. But no wall can be erected against Fortune which she cannot take by storm; let us strengthen our inner defences. If the inner part be safe, man can be attacked, but never captured.

Do you wish to know what this weapon of defence is? 20. It is the ability to refrain from chafing over whatever happens to one, of knowing that the very agencies which seem to bring harm are working for the preservation of the world, and are a part of the scheme for bringing to fulfilment the order of the universe and its functions. Let man be pleased with whatever has pleased God; let him marvel at himself and his own resources for this very reason, that he cannot be overcome, that he has the very powers of evil subject to his control, and that he brings into subjection chance and pain and wrong by means of that strongest of powers – reason. 21. Love reason! The love of reason will arm you against the greatest hardships. Wild beasts dash against the hunter's spear through love of their young, and it is their wildness and their unpremeditated

onrush that keep them from being tamed; often a desire for glory has stirred the mind of youth to despise both sword and stake; the mere vision and semblance of virtue impel certain men to a self-imposed death. In proportion as reason is stouter and steadier than ally of these emotions, so much the more forcefully will she make her way through the midst of utter terrors and dangers.

22. Men say to us: "You are mistaken if you maintain that nothing is a good except that which is honourable; a defence like this will not make you safe from Fortune and free from her assaults. For you maintain that dutiful children, and a well-governed country, and good parents, are to be reckoned as goods; but you cannot see these dear objects in danger and be yourself at ease. Your calm will be disturbed by a siege conducted against your country, by the death of your children, or by the enslaving of your parents." 23. I will first state what we Stoics usually reply to these objectors, and then will add what additional answer should, in my opinion, be given.

The situation is entirely different in the case of goods whose loss entails some hardship substituted in their place; for example, when good health is impaired there is a change to ill-health; when the eye is put out, we are visited with blindness; we not only lose our speed when our leg-muscles are cut, but infirmity takes the place of speed. But no such danger is involved in the case of the goods to which we referred a moment ago. And why if I have lost a good friend, I have no false friend whom I must endure in his place; nor if I have buried a dutiful son, must I face in exchange unfilial conduct. 24. In the second place, this does not mean to me the taking-off of a friend or of a child; it is the mere taking-off of their bodies. But a good can be lost in only one way, by changing into what is bad; and this is impossible according to the law of nature, because every virtue, and every work of virtue, abides uncorrupted. Again, even if friends have perished, or children of approved goodness who fulfil their father's prayers for them, there is something that can fill their place. Do you ask what this is? It is that which had made them good in the first place, namely, virtue. 25. Virtue suffers no space in us to be unoccupied; it takes possession of the whole soul and removes all sense of loss. It alone is sufficient; for the strength and beginnings of all goods exist in virtue herself. What does it matter if running water

is cut off and flows away, as long as the fountain from which it has flowed is unharmed? You will not maintain that a man's life is more just if his children are unharmed than if they have passed away, nor yet better appointed, nor more intelligent, nor more honourable; therefore, no better, either. The addition of friends does not make one wiser, nor does their taking away make one more foolish; therefore, not happier or more wretched, either. As long as your virtue is unharmed, you will not feel the loss of anything that has been withdrawn from you. 26. You may say, "Come now; is not a man happier when girt about with a large company of friends and children?" Why should this be so? For the Supreme Good is neither impaired nor increased thereby; it abides within its own limits, no matter how Fortune has conducted herself. Whether a long old age falls to one's lot, or whether the end comes on this side of old age – the measure of the Supreme Good is unvaried, in spite of the difference in years.

27. Whether you draw a larger or a smaller circle, its size affects its area, not its shape. One circle may remain as it is for a long time while you may contract the other forthwith, or even merge it completely with the sand in which it was drawn; yet each circle has had the same shape. That which is straight is not judged by its size, or by its number, or by its duration; it can no more be made longer than it can be made shorter. Scale down the honourable life as much as you like from the full hundred years, and reduce it to a single day; it is equally honourable. 28. Sometimes virtue is widespread, governing kingdoms, cities, and provinces, creating laws, developing friendships, and regulating the duties that hold good between relatives and children; at other times it is limited by the narrow bounds of poverty, exile, or bereavement. But it is no smaller when it is reduced from prouder heights to a private station, from a royal palace to a humble dwelling, or when from a general and broad jurisdiction it is gathered into the narrow limits of a private house or a tiny corner. 29. Virtue is just as great, even when it has retreated within itself and is shut in on all sides. For its spirit is no less great and upright, its sagacity no less complete, its justice no less inflexible. It is, therefore, equally happy. For happiness has its abode in one place only, namely, in the mind itself, and is noble, steadfast,

and calm; and this state cannot be attained without a knowledge of things divine and human.

30. The other answer, which I promised to make to your objection, follows from this reasoning. The wise man is not distressed by the loss of children or of friends. For he endures their death in the same spirit in which he awaits his own. And he fears the one as little as he grieves for the other. For the underlying principle of virtue is conformity; all the works of virtue are in harmony and agreement with virtue itself. But this harmony is lost if the soul, which ought to be uplifted, is cast down by grief or a sense of loss. It is ever a dishonour for a man to be troubled and fretted, to be numbed when there is any call for activity. For that which is honourable is free from care and untrammelled, is unafraid, and stands girt for action. 31. “What,” you ask, “will the wise man experience no emotion like disturbance of spirit? Will not his features change colour, his countenance be agitated, and his limbs grow cold? And there are other things which we do, not under the influence of the will, but unconsciously and as the result of a sort of natural impulse.” I admit that this is true; but the sage will retain the firm belief that none of these things is evil, or important enough to make a healthy mind break down. 32. Whatever shall remain to be done virtue can do with courage and readiness. For anyone would admit that it is a mark of folly to do in a slothful and rebellious spirit whatever one has to do, or to direct the body in one direction and the mind in another, and thus to be torn between utterly conflicting emotions. For folly is despised precisely because of the things for which she vaunts and admires herself, and she does not do gladly even those things in which she prides herself. But if folly fears some evil, she is burdened by it in the very moment of awaiting it, just as if it had actually come, – already suffering in apprehension whatever she fears she may suffer. 33. Just as in the body symptoms of latent ill-health precede the disease – there is, for example, a certain weak sluggishness, a lassitude which is not the result of any work, a trembling, and a shivering that pervades the limbs, – so the feeble spirit is shaken by its ills a long time before it is overcome by them. It anticipates them, and totters before its time.

But what is greater madness than to be tortured by the future and

not to save your strength for the actual suffering, but to invite and bring on wretchedness? If you cannot be rid of it, you ought at least to postpone it. ³⁴ Will you not understand that no man should be tormented by the future? The man who has been told that he will have to endure torture fifty years from now is not disturbed thereby, unless he has leaped over the intervening years, and has projected himself into the trouble that is destined to arrive a generation later. In the same way, souls that enjoy being sick and that seize upon excuses for sorrow are saddened by events long past and effaced from the records. Past and future are both absent; we feel neither of them. But there can be no pain except as the result of what you feel. Farewell.

LXXV. On the Diseases of the Soul

1. You have been complaining that my letters to you are rather carelessly written. Now who talks carefully unless he also desires to talk affectedly? I prefer that my letters should be just what my conversation would be if you and I were sitting in one another's company or taking walks together, spontaneous and easy; for my letters have nothing strained or artificial about them. 2. If it were possible, I should prefer to show, rather than speak, my feelings. Even if I were arguing a point, I should not stamp my foot, or toss my arms about, or raise my voice; but I should leave that sort of thing to the orator, and should be content to have conveyed my feelings to you without having either embellished them or lowered their dignity. 3. I should like to convince you entirely of this one fact, – that I feel whatever I say, that I not only feel it, but am wedded to it. It is one sort of kiss which a man gives his mistress and another which he gives his children; yet in the father's embrace also, holy and restrained as it is, plenty of affection is disclosed.

I prefer, however, that our conversation on matters so important should not be meagre and dry; for even philosophy does not renounce the company of cleverness. One should not, however, bestow very much attention upon mere words. 4. Let this be the kernel of my idea: let us say what we feel, and feel what we say; let speech harmonize with life. That man has fulfilled his promise who is the same person both when you see him and when you hear him. 5. We shall not fail to see what sort of man he is and how large a man he is, if only he is one and the same. Our words should aim not to please, but to help. If, however, you can attain eloquence without painstaking, and if you either are naturally gifted or can gain eloquence at slight cost, make the most of it and apply it to the noblest uses. But let it be of such a kind that it displays facts rather than itself. It and the other arts are wholly concerned with cleverness; but our business here is the soul.

6. A sick man does not call in a physician who is eloquent; but if it so happens that the physician who can cure him likewise discourses elegantly about the treatment which is to be followed, the patient will

take it in good part. For all that, he will not find any reason to congratulate himself on having discovered a physician who is eloquent. For the case is no different from that of a skilled pilot who is also handsome. 7. Why do you tickle my ears? Why do you entertain me? There is other business at hand; I am to be cauterized, operated upon, or put on a diet. That is why you were summoned to treat me!

You are required to cure a disease that is chronic and serious, – one which affects the general weal. You have as serious a business on hand as a physician has during a plague. Are you concerned about words? Rejoice this instant if you can cope with *things*. When shall you learn all that there is to learn? When shall you so plant in your mind that which you have learned, that it cannot escape? When shall you put it all into practice? For it is not sufficient merely to commit these things to memory, like other matters; they must be practically tested. He is not happy who only knows them, but he who does them. 8. You reply: “What? Are there no degrees of happiness below your ‘happy’ man? Is there a sheer descent immediately below wisdom?” I think not. For though he who makes progress is still numbered with the fools, yet he is separated from them by a long interval. Among the very persons who are making progress there are also great spaces intervening. They fall into three classes, as certain philosophers believe. 9. First come those who have not yet attained wisdom but have already gained a place near by. Yet even that which is not far away is still outside. These, if you ask me, are men who have already laid aside all passions and vices, who have learned what things are to be embraced; but their assurance is not yet tested. They have not yet put their good into practice, yet from now on they cannot slip back into the faults which they have escaped. They have already arrived at a point from which there is no slipping back, but they are not yet aware of the fact; as I remember writing in another letter, “They are ignorant of their knowledge.” It has now been vouchsafed to them to enjoy their good, but not yet to be sure of it. 10. Some define this class, of which I have been speaking, – a class of men who are making progress, – as having escaped the diseases of the mind, but not yet the passions, and as still standing upon slippery ground; because no one is beyond the dangers of evil except him who has

cleared himself of it wholly. But no one has so cleared himself except the man who has adopted wisdom in its stead.

11. I have often before explained the difference between the diseases of the mind and its passions. And I shall remind you once more: the diseases are hardened and chronic vices, such as greed and ambition; they have enfolded the mind in too close a grip, and have begun to be permanent evils thereof. To give a brief definition: by “disease” we mean a persistent perversion of the judgment, so that things which are mildly desirable are thought to be highly desirable. Or, if you prefer, we may define it thus: to be too zealous in striving for things which are only mildly desirable or not desirable at all, or to value highly things which ought to be valued but slightly or valued not at all. 12. “Passions” are objectionable impulses of the spirit, sudden and vehement; they have come so often, and so little attention has been paid to them, that they have caused a state of disease; just as a catarrh, when there has been but a single attack and the catarrh has not yet become habitual, produces a cough, but causes consumption when it has become regular and chronic. Therefore we may say that those who have made most progress are beyond the reach of the “diseases”; but they still feel the “passions” even when very near perfection.

13. The second class is composed of those who have laid aside both the greatest ills of the mind and its passions, but yet are not in assured possession of immunity. For they can still slip back into their former state. 14. The third class are beyond the reach of many of the vices and particularly of the great vices, but not beyond the reach of all. They have escaped avarice, for example, but still feel anger; they no longer are troubled by lust, but are still troubled by ambition; they no longer have desire, but they still have fear. And just because they fear, although they are strong enough to withstand certain things, there are certain things to which they yield; they scorn death, but are in terror of pain.

15. Let us reflect a moment on this topic. It will be well with us if we are admitted to this class. The second stage is gained by great good fortune with regard to our natural gifts and by great and unceasing application to study. But not even the third type is to be despised. Think of the host of evils which you see about you; behold

how there is no crime that is not exemplified, how far wickedness advances every day, and how prevalent are sins in home and commonwealth. You will see, therefore, that we are making a considerable gain, if we are not numbered among the basest.

16. "But as for me," you say, "I hope that it is in me to rise to a higher rank than that!" I should pray, rather than promise, that we may attain this; we have been forestalled. We hasten towards virtue while hampered by vices. I am ashamed to say it; but we worship that which is honourable only in so far as we have time to spare. But what a rich reward awaits us if only we break off the affairs which forestall us and the evils that cling to us with utter tenacity! 17. Then neither desire nor fear shall rout us. Undisturbed by fears, unspoiled by pleasures, we shall be afraid neither of death nor of the gods; we shall know that death is no evil and that the gods are not powers of evil. That which harms has no greater power than that which receives harm, and things which are utterly good have no power at all to harm. 18. There await us, if ever we escape from these low dregs to that sublime and lofty height, peace of mind and, when all error has been driven out, perfect liberty. You ask what this freedom is? It means not fearing either men or gods; it means not craving wickedness or excess; it means possessing supreme power over oneself And it is a priceless good to be master of oneself. Farewell.

LXXVI. On Learning Wisdom in Old Age

1. You have been threatening me with your enmity, if I do not keep you informed about all my daily actions. But see, now, upon what frank terms you and I live: for I shall confide even the following fact to your ears. I have been hearing the lectures of a philosopher; four days have already passed since I have been attending his school and listening to the harangue, which begins at two o'clock. "A fine time of life for that!" you say. Yes, fine indeed! Now what is more foolish than refusing to learn, simply because one has not been learning for a long time? 2. "What do you mean? Must I follow the fashion set by the fops and youngsters?" But I am pretty well off if this is the only thing that discredits my declining years. Men of all ages are admitted to this class-room. You retort: "Do we grow old merely in order to tag after the youngsters?" But if I, an old man, go to the theatre, and am carried to the races, and allow no duel in the arena to be fought to a finish without my presence, shall I blush to attend a philosopher's lecture?

3. You should keep learning as long as you are ignorant, – even to the end of your life, if there is anything in the proverb. And the proverb suits the present case as well as any: "As long as you live, keep learning how to live." For all that, there is also something which I can teach in that school. You ask, do you, what I can teach? That even an old man should keep learning. 4. But I am ashamed of mankind, as often as I enter the lecture-hall. On my way to the house of Metronax I am compelled to go, as you know, right past the Neapolitan Theatre. The building is jammed; men are deciding, with tremendous zeal, who is entitled to be called a good flute-player; even the Greek piper and the herald draw their crowds. But in the other place, where the question discussed is: "What is a good man?" and the lesson which we learn is "How to be a good man," very few are in attendance, and the majority think that even these few are engaged in no good business; they have the name of being empty-headed idler. I hope I may be blessed with that kind of mockery; for one should listen in an unruffled spirit to the railings of the ignorant; when one is marching toward the goal of honour, one should scorn

scorn itself.

5. Proceed, then, Lucilius, and hasten, lest you yourself be compelled to learn in your old age, as is the case with me. Nay, you must hasten all the more, because for a long time you have not approached the subject, which is one that you can scarcely learn thoroughly when you are old. “How much progress shall I make?” you ask. Just as much as you try to make. 6. Why do you wait? Wisdom comes haphazard to no man. Money will come of its own accord; titles will be given to you; influence and authority will perhaps be thrust upon you; but virtue will not fall upon you by chance. Either is knowledge thereof to be won by light effort or small toil; but toiling is worth while when one is about to win all goods at a single stroke. 7. For there is but a single good, – namely, that which is honourable; in all those other things of which the general opinion approves, you will find no truth or certainty. Why it is, however, that there is but one good, namely, that which is honourable, I shall now tell you, inasmuch as you judge that in my earlier letter I did not carry the discussion far enough, and think that this theory was commended to you rather than proved. I shall also compress the remarks of other authors into narrow compass.

8. Everything is estimated by the standard of its own good. The vine is valued for its productiveness and the flavour of its wine, the stag for his speed. We ask, with regard to beasts of burden, how sturdy of back they are; for their only use is to bear burdens. If a dog is to find the trail of a wild beast, keenness of scent is of first importance; if to catch his quarry, swiftness of foot; if to attack and harry it, courage. In each thing that quality should be best for which the thing is brought into being and by which it is judged. 9. And what quality is best in man? It is reason; by virtue of reason he surpasses the animals, and is surpassed only by the gods. Perfect reason is therefore the good peculiar to man; all other qualities he shares in some degree with animals and plants. Man is strong; so is the lion. Man is comely; so is the peacock. Man is swift; so is the horse. I do not say that man is surpassed in all these qualities. I am not seeking to find that which is greatest in him, but that which is peculiarly his own. Man has body; so also have trees. Man has the power to act and to move at will; so have beasts and worms. Man has a voice; but how

much louder is the voice of the dog, how much shriller that of the eagle, how much deeper that of the bull, how much sweeter and more melodious that of the nightingale! ¹⁰. What then is peculiar to man? Reason. When this is right and has reached perfection, man's felicity is complete. Hence, if everything is praiseworthy and has arrived at the end intended by its nature, when it has brought its peculiar good to perfection, and if man's peculiar good is reason; then, if a man has brought his reason to perfection, he is praiseworthy and has readied the end suited to his nature. This perfect reason is called virtue, and is likewise that which is honourable.

¹¹. Hence that in man is alone a good which alone belongs to man. For we are not now seeking to discover what is a good, but what good is man's. And if there is no other attribute which belongs peculiarly to man except reason, then reason will be his one peculiar good, but a good that is worth all the rest put together. If any man is bad, he will, I suppose, be regarded with disapproval; if good, I suppose he will be regarded with approval. Therefore, that attribute of man whereby he is approved or disapproved is his chief and only good. ¹². You do not doubt whether this is a good; you merely doubt whether it is the sole good. If a man possess all other things, such as health, riches, pedigree, a crowded reception-hall, but is confessedly bad, you will disapprove of him. Likewise, if a man possess none of the things which I have mentioned, and lacks money, or an escort of clients, or rank and a line of grandfathers and great-grandfathers, but is confessedly good, you will approve of him. Hence, this is man's one peculiar good, and the possessor of it is to be praised even if he lacks other things; but he who does not possess it, though he possess everything else in abundance is condemned and rejected. ¹³. The same thing holds good regarding men as regarding things. A ship is said to be good not when it is decorated with costly colours, nor when its prow is covered with silver or gold or its figure-head embossed in ivory, nor when it is laden with the imperial revenues or with the wealth of kings, but when it is steady and staunch and taut, with seams that keep out the water, stout enough to endure the buffeting of the waves' obedient to its helm, swift and caring naught for the winds. ¹⁴. You will speak of a sword as good, not when its sword-belt is of gold, or its scabbard studded with gems, but when its

edge is fine for cutting and its point will pierce any armour. Take the carpenter's rule: we do not ask how beautiful it is, but how straight it is. Each thing is praised in regard to that attribute which is taken as its standard, in regard to that which is its peculiar quality.

15. Therefore in the case of man also, it is not pertinent to the question to know how many acres he ploughs, how much money he has out at interest, how many callers attend his receptions, how costly is the couch on which he lies, how transparent are the cups from which he drinks, but how good he is. He is good, however, if his reason is well-ordered and right and adapted to that which his nature has willed. 16. It is this that is called virtue; this is what we mean by "honourable"; it is man's unique good. For since reason alone brings man to perfection, reason alone, when perfected, makes man happy. This, moreover, is man's only good, the only means by which he is made happy. We do indeed say that those things also are goods which are furthered and brought together by virtue, – that is, all the works of virtue; but virtue itself is for this reason the only good, because there is no good without virtue. 17. If every good is in the soul, then whatever strengthens, uplifts, and enlarges the soul, is a good; virtue, however, does make the soul stronger, loftier, and larger. For all other things, which arouse our desires, depress the soul and weaken it, and when we think that they are uplifting the soul, they are merely puffing it up and cheating it with much emptiness. Therefore, that alone is good which will make the soul better.

18. All the actions of life, taken as a whole, are controlled by the consideration of what is honourable or base; it is with reference to these two things that our reason is governed in doing or not doing a particular thing. I shall explain what I mean: A good man will do what he thinks it will be honourable for him to do, even if it involves toil; he will do it even if it involves harm to him; he will do it even if it involves peril; again, he will not do that which will be base, even if it brings him money, or pleasure, or power. Nothing will deter him from that which is honourable, and nothing will tempt him into baseness. 19. Therefore, if he is determined invariably to follow that which is honourable, invariably to avoid baseness, and in every act of his life to have regard for these two things, deeming nothing else good except that which is honourable, and nothing else bad except

that which is base; if virtue alone is unperturbed in him and by itself keeps its even course, then virtue is that man's only good, and nothing can thenceforth happen to it which may make it anything else than good. It has escaped all risk of change; folly may creep upwards towards wisdom, but wisdom never slips back into folly.

20. You may perhaps remember my saying that the things which have been generally desired and feared have been trampled down by many a man in moments of sudden passion. There have been found men who would place their hands in the flames, men whose smiles could not be stopped by the torturer, men who would shed not a tear at the funeral of their children, men who would meet death unflinchingly. It is love, for example, anger, lust, which have challenged dangers. If a momentary stubbornness can accomplish all this when roused by some goad that pricks the spirit, how much more can be accomplished by virtue, which does not act impulsively or suddenly, but uniformly and with a strength that is lasting! 21. It follows that the things which are often scorned by the men who are moved with a sudden passion, and are always scorned by the wise, are neither goods nor evils. Virtue itself is therefore the only good; she marches proudly between the two extremes of fortune, with great scorn for both.

22. If, however, you accept the view that there is anything good besides that which is honourable, all the virtues will suffer. For it will never be possible for any virtue to be won and held, if there is anything outside itself which virtue must take into consideration. If there is any such thing, then it is at variance with reason, from which the virtues spring, and with truth also, which cannot exist without reason. Any opinion, however, which is at variance with truth, is wrong. 23. A good man, you will admit, must have the highest sense of duty toward the gods. Hence he will endure with an unruffled spirit whatever happens to him; for he will know that it has happened as a result of the divine law, by which the whole creation moves. This being so, there will be for him one good, and only one, namely, that which is honourable; for one of its dictates is that we shall obey the gods and not blaze forth in anger at sudden misfortunes or deplore our lot, but rather patiently accept fate and obey its commands. 24. If anything except the honourable is good, we shall be

hounded by greed for life, and by greed for the things which provide life with its furnishings, – an intolerable state, subject to no limits, unstable. The only good, therefore, is that which is honourable, that which is subject to bounds.

25. I have declared that man's life would be more blest than that of the gods, if those things which the gods do not enjoy are goods, – such as money and offices of dignity. There is this further consideration: if only it is true that our souls, when released from the body, still abide, a happier condition is in store for them than is theirs while they dwell in the body. And yet, if those things are goods which we make use of for our bodies' sake, our souls will be worse off when set free; and that is contrary to our belief, to say that the soul is happier when it is cabined and confined than when it is free and has betaken itself to the universe. 26. I also said that if those things which dumb animals possess equally with man are goods, then dumb animals also will lead a happy life; which is of course impossible. One must endure all things in defence of that which is honourable; but this would not be necessary if there existed any other good besides that which is honourable.

Although this question was discussed by me pretty extensively in a previous letter, I have discussed it summarily and briefly run through the argument. 27. But an opinion of this kind will never seem true to you unless you exalt your mind and ask yourself whether, at the call of duty, you would be willing to die for your country, and buy the safety of all your fellow-citizens at the price of your own; whether you would offer your neck not only with patience, but also with gladness. If you would do this, there is no other good in your eyes. For you are giving up everything in order to acquire this good. Consider how great is the power of that which is honourable: you will die for your country, even at a moment's notice, when you know that you ought to do so. 28. Sometimes, as a result of noble conduct, one wins great joy even in a very short and fleeting space of time; and though none of the fruits of a deed that has been done will accrue to the doer after he is dead and removed from the sphere of human affairs, yet the mere contemplation of a deed that is to be done is a delight, and the brave and upright man, picturing to himself the guerdons of his death, – guerdons such as the freedom of his country

and the deliverance of all those for whom he is paying out his life, – partakes of the greatest pleasure and enjoys the fruit of his own peril. 29. But that man also who is deprived of this joy, the joy which is afforded by the contemplation of some last noble effort, will leap to his death without a moment's hesitation, content to act rightly and dutifully. Moreover, you may confront him with many discouragements; you may say: "Your deed will speedily be forgotten," or "Your fellow-citizens will offer you scant thanks." He will answer: "All these matters lie outside my task. My thoughts are on the deed itself. I know that this is honourable. Therefore, whithersoever I am led and summoned by honour, I will go."

30. This, therefore, is the only good, and not only is every soul that has reached perfection aware of it, but also every soul that is by nature noble and of right instincts; all other goods are trivial and mutable. For this reason we are harassed if we possess them. Even though, by the kindness of Fortune, they have been heaped together, they weigh heavily upon their owners, always pressing them down and sometimes crushing them. 31. None of those whom you behold clad in purple is happy, any more than one of these actors upon whom the play bestows a sceptre and a cloak while on the stage; they strut their hour before a crowded house, with swelling port and buskined foot; but when once they make their exit the foot-gear is removed and they return to their proper stature. None of those who have been raised to a loftier height by riches and honours is really great. Why then does he seem great to you? It is because you are measuring the pedestal along with the man. A dwarf is not tall, though he stand upon a mountain-top; a colossal statue will still be tall, though you place it in a well. 32. This is the error under which we labour; this is the reason why we are imposed upon: we value no man at what he is, but add to the man himself the trappings in which he is clothed. But when you wish to inquire into a man's true worth, and to know what manner of man he is, look at him when he is naked; make him lay aside his inherited estate, his titles, and the other deceptions of fortune; let him even strip off his body. Consider his soul, its quality and its stature, and thus learn whether its greatness is borrowed, or its own.

33. If a man can behold with unflinching eyes the flash of a sword,

if he knows that it makes no difference to him whether his soul takes flight through his mouth or through a wound in his throat, you may call him happy; you may also call him happy if, when he is threatened with bodily torture, whether it be the result of accident or of the might of the stronger, he can without concern hear talk of chains, or of exile, or of all the idle fears that stir men's minds, and can say:

“O maiden, no new sudden form of toil

Springs up before my eyes; within my soul
I have forestalled and surveyed everything.

To-day it is you who threaten me with these terrors; but I have always threatened myself with them, and have prepared myself as a man to meet man's destiny.”³⁴ If an evil has been pondered beforehand, the blow is gentle when it comes. To the fool, however, and to him who trusts in fortune, each event as it arrives “comes in a new and sudden form,” and a large part of evil, to the inexperienced, consists in its novelty. This is proved by the fact that men endure with greater courage, when they have once become accustomed to them, the things which they had at first regarded as hardships.³⁵ Hence, the wise man accustoms himself to coming trouble, lightening by long reflection the evils which others lighten by long endurance. We sometimes hear the inexperienced say: “I knew that this was in store for me.” But the wise man knows that all things are in store for him. Whatever happens, he says: “I knew it.” Farewell.

LXXVII. On Taking One's Own Life

1. Suddenly there came into our view to-day the "Alexandrian" ships, – I mean those which are usually sent ahead to announce the coming of the fleet; they are called "mail-boats." The Campanians are glad to see them; all the rabble of Puteoli stand on the docks, and can recognize the "Alexandrian" boats, no matter how great the crowd of vessels, by the very trim of their sails. For they alone may keep spread their topsails, which all ships use when out at sea, 2. because nothing sends a ship along so well as its upper canvas; that is where most of the speed is obtained. So when the breeze has stiffened and becomes stronger than is comfortable, they set their yards lower; for the wind has less force near the surface of the water. Accordingly, when they have made Capreae and the headland whence

Tall Pallas watches on the stormy peak,

all other vessels are bidden to be content with the mainsail, and the topsail stands out conspicuously on the "Alexandrian" mail-boats.

3. While everybody was bustling about and hurrying to the water-front, I felt great pleasure in my laziness, because, although I was soon to receive letters from my friends, I was in no hurry to know how my affairs were progressing abroad, or what news the letters were bringing; for some time now I have had no losses, nor gains either. Even if I were not an old man, I could not have helped feeling pleasure at this; but as it is, my pleasure was far greater. For, however small my possessions might be, I should still have left over more travelling-money than journey to travel, especially since this journey upon which we have set out is one which need not be followed to the end. 4. An expedition will be incomplete if one stops half-way, or anywhere on this side of one's destination; but life is not incomplete if it is honourable. At whatever point you leave off living, provided you leave off nobly, your life is a whole. Often, however, one must leave off bravely, and our reasons therefore need not be momentous; for neither are the reasons momentous which hold us here.

5. Tullius Marcellinus, a man whom you knew very well, who in

youth was a quiet soul and became old prematurely, fell ill of a disease which was by no means hopeless; but it was protracted and troublesome, and it demanded much attention; hence he began to think about dying. He called many of his friends together. Each one of them gave Marcellinus advice, – the timid friend urging him to do what he had made up his mind to do; the flattering and wheedling friend giving counsel which he supposed would be more pleasing to Marcellinus when he came to think the matter over; 6. but our Stoic friend, a rare man, and, to praise him in language which he deserves, a man of courage and vigour admonished him best of all, as it seems to me. For he began as follows: “Do not torment yourself, my dear Marcellinus, as if the question which you are weighing were a matter of importance. It is not an important matter to live; all your slaves live, and so do all animals; but it is important to die honourably, sensibly, bravely. Reflect how long you have been doing the same thing: food, sleep, lust, – this is one’s daily round. The desire to die may be felt, not only by the sensible man or the brave or unhappy man, but even by the man who is merely surfeited.”

7. Marcellinus did not need someone to urge him, but rather someone to help him; his slaves refused to do his bidding. The Stoic therefore removed their fears, showing them that there was no risk involved for the household except when it was uncertain whether the master’s death was self-sought or not; besides, it was as bad a practice to kill one’s master as it was to prevent him forcibly from killing himself. 8. Then he suggested to Marcellinus himself that it would be a kindly act to distribute gifts to those who had attended him throughout his whole life, when that life was finished, just as, when a banquet is finished, the remaining portion is divided among the attendants who stand about the table. Marcellinus was of a compliant and generous disposition, even when it was a question of his own property; so he distributed little sums among his sorrowing slaves, and comforted them besides. 9. No need had he of sword or of bloodshed; for three days he fasted and had a tent put up in his very bedroom. Then a tub was brought in; he lay in it for a long time, and, as the hot water was continually poured over him, he gradually passed away, not without a feeling of pleasure, as he himself remarked, – such a feeling as a slow dissolution is wont to give.

Those of us who have ever fainted know from experience what this feeling is.

10. This little anecdote into which I have digressed will not be displeasing to you. For you will see that your friend departed neither with difficulty nor with suffering. Though he committed suicide, yet he withdrew most gently, gliding out of life. The anecdote may also be of some use; for often a crisis demands just such examples. There are times when we ought to die and are unwilling; sometimes we die and are unwilling. 11. No one is so ignorant as not to know that we must at some time die; nevertheless, when one draws near death, one turns to flight, trembles, and laments. Would you not think him an utter fool who wept because he was not alive a thousand years ago? And is he not just as much of a fool who weeps because he will not be alive a thousand years from now? It is all the same; you will not be, and you were not. Neither of these periods of time belongs to you. 12. You have been cast upon this point of time; if you would make it longer, how much longer shall you make it? Why weep? Why pray? You are taking pains to no purpose.

Give over thinking that your prayers can bend

Divine decrees from their predestined end.

These decrees are unalterable and fixed; they are governed by a mighty and everlasting compulsion. Your goal will be the goal of all things. What is there strange in this to you? You were born to be subject to this law; this fate befell your father, your mother, your ancestors, all who came before you; and it will befall all who shall come after you. A sequence which cannot be broken or altered by any power binds all things together and draws all things in its course. 13. Think of the multitudes of men doomed to death who will come after you, of the multitudes who will go with you! You would die more bravely, I suppose, in the company of many thousands; and yet there are many thousands, both of men and of animals, who at this very moment, while you are irresolute about death, are breathing their last, in their several ways. But you, – did you believe that you would not some day reach the goal towards which you have always been travelling? No journey but has its end.

14. You think, I suppose, that it is now in order for me to cite some examples of great men. No, I shall cite rather the case of a boy. The

story of the Spartan lad has been preserved: taken captive while still a stripling, he kept crying in his Doric dialect, "I will not be a slave!" and he made good his word; for the very first time he was ordered to perform a menial and degrading service, – and the command was to fetch a chamber-pot, – he dashed out his brains against the wall. 15. So near at hand is freedom, and is anyone still a slave? Would you not rather have your own son die thus than reach old age by weakly yielding? Why therefore are you distressed, when even a boy can die so bravely? Suppose that you refuse to follow him; you will be led. Take into your own control that which is now under the control of another. Will you not borrow that boy's courage, and say: "I am no slave!"? Unhappy fellow, you are a slave to men, you are a slave to your business, you are a slave to life. For life, if courage to die be lacking, is slavery.

16. Have you anything worth waiting for? Your very pleasures, which cause you to tarry and hold you back, have already been exhausted by you. None of them is a novelty to you, and there is none that has not already become hateful because you are cloyed with it. You know the taste of wine and cordials. It makes no difference whether a hundred or a thousand measures pass through your bladder; you are nothing but a wine-strainer. You are a connoisseur in the flavour of the oyster and of the mullet; your luxury has not left you anything untasted for the years that are to come; and yet these are the things from which you are torn away unwillingly. 17. What else is there which you would regret to have taken from you? Friends? But who can be a friend to you? Country? What? Do you think enough of your country to be late to dinner? The light of the sun? You would extinguish it, if you could; for what have you ever done that was fit to be seen in the light? Confess the truth; it is not because you long for the senate chamber or the forum, or even for the world of nature, that you would fain put off dying; it is because you are loth to leave the fish-market, though you have exhausted its stores.

18. You are afraid of death; but how can you scorn it in the midst of a mushroom supper? You wish to live; well, do you know how to live? You are afraid to die. But come now: is this life of yours anything but death? Gaius Caesar was passing along the Via Latina,

when a man stepped out from the ranks of the prisoners, his grey beard hanging down even to his breast, and begged to be put to death. “What!” said Caesar, “are you alive now?” That is the answer which should be given to men to whom death would come as a relief. “You are afraid to die; what! are you alive now?”¹⁹ “But,” says one, “I wish to live, for I am engaged in many honourable pursuits. I am loth to leave life’s duties, which I am fulfilling with loyalty and zeal.” Surely you are aware that dying is also one of life’s duties? You are deserting no duty; for there is no definite number established which you are bound to complete.²⁰ There is no life that is not short. Compared with the world of nature, even Nestor’s life was a short one, or Sattia’s, the woman who bade carve on her tombstone that she had lived ninety and nine years. Some persons, you see, boast of their long lives; but who could have endured the old lady if she had had the luck to complete her hundredth year? It is with life as it is with a play, – it matters not how long the action is spun out, but how good the acting is. It makes no difference at what point you stop. Stop whenever you choose; only see to it that the closing period is well turned. Farewell.

LXXVIII. On the Healing Power of the Mind

1. That you are frequently troubled by the snuffling of catarrh and by short attacks of fever which follow after long and chronic catarrhal seizures, I am sorry to hear; particularly because I have experienced this sort of illness myself, and scorned it in its early stages. For when I was still young, I could put up with hardships and show a bold front to illness. But I finally succumbed, and arrived at such a state that I could do nothing but snuffle, reduced as I was to the extremity of thinness. 2. I often entertained the impulse of ending my life then and there; but the thought of my kind old father kept me back. For I reflected, not how bravely I had the power to die, but how little power he had to bear bravely the loss of me. And so I commanded myself to live. For sometimes it is an act of bravery even to live.

3. Now I shall tell you what consoled me during those days, stating at the outset that these very aids to my peace of mind were as efficacious as medicine. Honourable consolation results in a cure; and whatever has uplifted the soul helps the body also. My studies were my salvation. I place it to the credit of philosophy that I recovered and regained my strength. I owe my life to philosophy, and that is the least of my obligations! 4. My friends, too, helped me greatly toward good health; I used to be comforted by their cheering words, by the hours they spent at my bedside, and by their conversation. Nothing, my excellent Lucilius, refreshes and aids a sick man so much as the affection of his friends; nothing so steals away the expectation and the fear of death. In fact, I could not believe that, if they survived me, I should be dying at all. Yes, I repeat, it seemed to me that I should continue to live, not with them, but through them. I imagined myself not to be yielding up my soul, but to be making it over to them.

All these things gave me the inclination to succour myself and to endure any torture; besides, it is a most miserable state to have lost one's zest for dying, and to have no zest in living. 5. These, then, are the remedies to which you should have recourse. The physician will prescribe your walks and your exercise; he will warn you not to become addicted to idleness, as is the tendency of the inactive

invalid; he will order you to read in a louder voice and to exercise your lungs the passages and cavity of which are affected; or to sail and shake up your bowels by a little mild motion; he will recommend the proper food, and the suitable time for aiding your strength with wine or refraining from it in order to keep your cough from being irritated and hacking. But as for me, my counsel to you is this, – and it is a cure, not merely of this disease of yours, but of your whole life, – “Despise death.” There is no sorrow in the world, when we have escaped from the fear of death. 6. There are these three serious elements in every disease: fear of death, bodily pain, and interruption of pleasures. Concerning death enough has been said, and I shall add only a word: this fear is not a fear of disease, but a fear of nature. Disease has often postponed death, and a vision of dying has been many a man’s salvation. You will die, not because you are ill, but because you are alive; even when you have been cured, the same end awaits you; when you have recovered, it will be not death, but ill-health, that you have escaped.

7. Let us now return to the consideration of the characteristic disadvantage of disease: it is accompanied by great suffering. The suffering, however, is rendered endurable by interruptions; for the strain of extreme pain must come to an end. No man can suffer both severely and for a long time; Nature, who loves us most tenderly, has so constituted us as to make pain either endurable or short. 8. The severest pains have their seat in the most slender parts of our body; nerves, joints, and any other of the narrow passages, hurt most cruelly when they have developed trouble within their contracted spaces. But these parts soon become numb, and by reason of the pain itself lose the sensation of pain, whether because the life-force, when checked in its natural course and changed for the worse, loses the peculiar power through which it thrives and through which it warns us, or because the diseased humours of the body, when they cease to have a place into which they may flow, are thrown back upon themselves, and deprive of sensation the parts where they have caused congestion. 9. So gout, both in the feet and in the hands, and all pain in the vertebrae and in the nerves, have their intervals of rest at the times when they have dulled the parts which they before had tortured; the first twinges, in all such cases, are what cause the

distress, and their onset is checked by lapse of time, so that there is an end of pain when numbness has set in. Pain in the teeth, eyes, and ears is most acute for the very reason that it begins among the narrow spaces of the body, – no less acute, indeed, than in the head itself. But if it is more violent than usual, it turns to delirium and stupor. ¹⁰. This is, accordingly, a consolation for excessive pain, – that you cannot help ceasing to feel it if you feel it to excess. The reason, however, why the inexperienced are impatient when their bodies suffer is, that they have not accustomed themselves to be contented in spirit. They have been closely associated with the body. Therefore a high-minded and sensible man divorces soul from body, and dwells much with the better or divine part, and only as far as he must with this complaining and frail portion.

¹¹. “But it is a hardship,” men say, “to do without our customary pleasures, – to fast, to feel thirst and hunger.” These are indeed serious when one first abstains from them. Later the desire dies down, because the appetites themselves which lead to desire are wearied and forsake us; then the stomach becomes petulant, then the food which we craved before becomes hateful. Our very wants die away. But there is no bitterness in doing without that which you have ceased to desire. ¹². Moreover, every pain sometimes stops, or at any rate slackens; moreover, one may take precautions against its return, and, when it threatens, may check it by means of remedies. Every variety of pain has its premonitory symptoms; this is true, at any rate, of pain that is habitual and recurrent. One can endure the suffering which disease entails, if one has come to regard its results with scorn.

¹³. But do not of your own accord make your troubles heavier to bear and burden yourself with complaining. Pain is slight if opinion has added nothing to it; but if, on the other hand, you begin to encourage yourself and say, “It is nothing, – a trifling matter at most; keep a stout heart and it will soon cease”; then in thinking it slight, you will make it slight. Everything depends on opinion; ambition, luxury, greed, hark back to opinion. It is according to opinion that we suffer.

¹⁴. A man is as wretched as he has convinced himself that he is. I hold that we should do away with complaint about past sufferings and with all language like this: “None has ever been worse off than I. What sufferings, what evils have I endured! No one has thought that I

shall recover. How often have my family bewailed me, and the physicians given me over! Men who are placed on the rack are not torn asunder with such agony!” However, even if all this is true, it is over and gone. What benefit is there in reviewing past sufferings, and in being unhappy, just because once you were unhappy? Besides, every one adds much to his own ills, and tells lies to himself. And that which was bitter to bear is pleasant to have borne; it is natural to rejoice at the ending of one’s ills.

Two elements must therefore be rooted out once for all, – the fear of future suffering, and the recollection of past suffering; since the latter no longer concerns me, and the former concerns me not yet. 15. But when set in the very midst of troubles one should say:

Perchance some day the memory of this sorrow
Will even bring delight.

Let such a man fight against them with all his might: if he once gives way, he will be vanquished; but if he strives against his sufferings, he will conquer. As it is, however, what most men do is to drag down upon their own heads a falling ruin which they ought to try to support. If you begin to withdraw your support from that which thrusts toward you and totters and is ready to plunge, it will follow you and lean more heavily upon you; but if you hold your ground and make up your mind to push against it, it will be forced back. 16. What blows do athletes receive on their faces and all over their bodies! Nevertheless, through their desire for fame they endure every torture, and they undergo these things not only because they are fighting but in order to be able to fight. Their very training means torture. So let us also win the way to victory in all our struggles, – for the reward is not a garland or a palm or a trumpeter who calls for silence at the proclamation of our names, but rather virtue, steadfastness of soul, and a peace that is won for all time, if fortune has once been utterly vanquished in any combat. You say, “I feel severe pain.” 17. What then; are you relieved from feeling it, if you endure it like a woman? Just as an enemy is more dangerous to a retreating army, so every trouble that fortune brings attacks us all the harder if we yield and turn our backs. “But the trouble is serious.” What? Is it for this purpose that we are strong, – that we may have light burdens to bear? Would you have your illness long-drawn-out,

or would you have it quick and short? If it is long, it means a respite, allows you a period for resting yourself, bestows upon you the boon of time in plenty; as it arises, so it must also subside. A short and rapid illness will do one of two things: it will quench or be quenched. And what difference does it make whether it is not or I am not? In either case there is an end of pain.

18. This, too, will help – to turn the mind aside to thoughts of other things and thus to depart from pain. Call to mind what honourable or brave deeds you have done; consider the good side of your own life. Run over in your memory those things which you have particularly admired. Then think of all the brave men who have conquered pain: of him who continued to read his book as he allowed the cutting out of varicose veins; of him who did not cease to smile, though that very smile so enraged his torturers that they tried upon him every instrument of their cruelty. If pain can be conquered by a smile, will it not be conquered by reason? 19. You may tell me now of whatever you like – of colds, bad coughing-spells that bring up parts of our entrails, fever that parches our very vitals, thirst, limbs so twisted that the joints protrude in different directions; yet worse than these are the stake, the rack, the red-hot plates, the instrument that reopens wounds while the wounds themselves are still swollen and that drives their imprint still deeper. Nevertheless there have been men who have not uttered a moan amid these tortures. “More yet!” says the torturer; but the victim has not begged for release. “More yet!” he says again; but no answer has come. “More yet!” the victim has smiled, and heartily, too. Can you not bring yourself, after an example like this, to make a mock at pain?

20. “But,” you object, “my illness does not allow me to be doing anything; it has withdrawn me from all my duties.” It is your body that is hampered by ill-health, and not your soul as well. It is for this reason that it clogs the feet of the runner and will hinder the handiwork of the cobbler or the artisan; but if your soul be habitually in practice, you will plead and teach, listen and learn, investigate and meditate. What more is necessary? Do you think that you are doing nothing if you possess self-control in your illness? You will be showing that a disease can be overcome, or at any rate endured. 21. There is, I assure you, a place for virtue even upon a bed of sickness.

It is not only the sword and the battle-line that prove the soul alert and unconquered by fear; a man can display bravery even when wrapped in his bed-clothes. You have something to do: wrestle bravely with disease. If it shall compel you to nothing, beguile you to nothing, it is a notable example that you display. O what ample matter were there for renown, if we could have spectators of our sickness! Be your own spectator; seek your own applause.

22. Again, there are two kinds of pleasures. Disease checks the pleasures of the body, but does not do away with them. Nay, if the truth is to be considered, it serves to excite them; for the thirstier a man is, the more he enjoys a drink; the hungrier he is, the more pleasure he takes in food. Whatever falls to one's lot after a period of abstinence is welcomed with greater zest. The other kind, however, the pleasures of the mind, which are higher and less uncertain, no physician can refuse to the sick man. Whoever seeks these and knows well what they are, scorns all the blandishments of the senses.

23. Men say, "Poor sick fellow!" But why? Is it because he does not mix snow with his wine, or because he does not revive the chill of his drink – mixed as it is in a good-sized bowl – by chipping ice into it? Or because he does not have Lucrine oysters opened fresh at his table? Or because there is no din of cooks about his dining-hall, as they bring in their very cooking apparatus along with their viands? For luxury has already devised this fashion – of having the kitchen accompany the dinner, so that the food may not grow luke-warm, or fail to be hot enough for a palate which has already become hardened. 24. "Poor sick fellow!" – he will eat as much as he can digest. There will be no boar lying before his eyes, banished from the table as if it were a common meat; and on his sideboard there will be heaped together no breast-meat of birds, because it sickens him to see birds served whole. But what evil has been done to you? You will dine like a sick man, nay, sometimes like a sound man.

25. All these things, however, can be easily endured – gruel, warm water, and anything else that seems insupportable to a fastidious man, to one who is wallowing in luxury, sick in soul rather than in body – if only we cease to shudder at death. And we shall cease, if once we have gained a knowledge of the limits of good and evil; then, and then only, life will not weary us, neither will death make us

afraid. 26. For surfeit of self can never seize upon a life that surveys all the things which are manifold, great, divine; only idle leisure is wont to make men hate their lives. To one who roams through the universe, the truth can never pall; it will be the untruths that will cloy. 27. And, on the other hand, if death comes near with its summons, even though it be untimely in its arrival, though it cut one off in one's prime, a man has had a taste of all that the longest life can give. Such a man has in great measure come to understand the universe. He knows that honourable things do not depend on time for their growth; but any life must seem short to those who measure its length by pleasures which are empty and for that reason unbounded.

28. Refresh yourself with such thoughts as these, and meanwhile reserve some hours for our letters. There will come a time when we shall be united again and brought together; however short this time may be, we shall make it long by knowing how to employ it. For, as Posidonius says: "A single day among the learned lasts longer than the longest life of the ignorant." 29. Meanwhile, hold fast to this thought, and grip it close: yield not to adversity; trust not to prosperity; keep before your eyes the full scope of Fortune's power, as if she would surely do whatever is in her power to do. That which has been long expected comes more gently. Farewell.

LXXIX. On the Rewards of Scientific Discovery

1. I have been awaiting a letter from you, that you might inform me what new matter was revealed to you during your trip round Sicily, and especially that you might give me further information regarding Charybdis itself. I know very well that Scylla is a rock – and indeed a rock not dreaded by mariners; but with regard to Charybdis I should like to have a full description, in order to see whether it agrees with the accounts in mythology; and, if you have by chance investigated it (for it is indeed worthy of your investigation), please enlighten me concerning the following: Is it lashed into a whirlpool by a wind from only one direction, or do all storms alike serve to disturb its depths? Is it true that objects snatched downwards by the whirlpool in that strait are carried for many miles under water, and then come to the surface on the beach near Tauromenium? 2. If you will write me a full account of these matters, I shall then have the boldness to ask you to perform another task, – also to climb Aetna at my special request. Certain naturalists have inferred that the mountain is wasting away and gradually settling, because sailors used to be able to see it from a greater distance. The reason for this may be, not that the height of the mountain is decreasing, but because the flames have become dim and the eruptions less strong and less copious, and because for the same reason the smoke also is less active by day. However, either of these two things is possible to believe: that on the one hand the mountain is growing smaller because it is consumed from day to day, and that, on the other hand, it remains the same in size because the mountain is not devouring itself, but instead of this the matter which seethes forth collects in some subterranean valley and is fed by other material, finding in the mountain itself not the food which it requires, but simply a passage-way out. 3. There is a well-known place in Lycia – called by the inhabitants “Hephaestion” – where the ground is full of holes in many places and is surrounded by a harmless fire, which does no injury to the plants that grow there. Hence the place is fertile and luxuriant with growth, because the flames do not scorch but merely shine with a force that is mild and feeble.

4. But let us postpone this discussion, and look into the matter when you have given me a description just how far distant the snow lies from the crater, – I mean the snow which does not melt even in summer, so safe is it from the adjacent fire. But there is no ground for your charging this work to my account; for you were about to gratify your own craze for fine writing, without a commission from anyone at all. 5. Nay, what am I to offer you *not* merely to describe Aetna in your poem, and *not* to touch lightly upon a topic which is a matter of ritual for all poets? Ovid could not be prevented from using this theme simply because Vergil had already fully covered it; nor could either of these writers frighten off Cornelius Severus. Besides, the topic has served them all with happy results, and those who have gone before seem to me not to have forestalled all what could be said, but merely to have opened the way.

6. It makes a great deal of difference whether you approach a subject that has been exhausted, or one where the ground has merely been broken; in the latter case, the topic grows day by day, and what is already discovered does not hinder new discoveries. Besides, he who writes last has the best of the bargain; he finds already at hand words which, when marshalled in a different way, show a new face. And he is not pilfering them, as if they belonged to someone else, when he uses them, for they are common property. 7. Now if Aetna does not make your mouth water, I am mistaken in you. You have for some time been desirous of writing something in the grand style and on the level of the older school. For your modesty does not allow you to set your hopes any higher; this quality of yours is so pronounced that, it seems to me, you are likely to curb the force of your natural ability, if there should be any danger of outdoing others; so greatly do you reverence the old masters. 8. Wisdom has this advantage, among others, – that no man can be outdone by another, except during the climb. But when you have arrived at the top, it is a draw; there is no room for further ascent, the game is over. Can the sun add to his size? Can the moon advance beyond her usual fullness? The seas do not increase in bulk. The universe keeps the same character, the same limits. 9. Things which have reached their full stature cannot grow higher. Men who have attained wisdom will therefore be equal and on the same footing. Each of them will

possess his own peculiar gifts – one will be more affable, another more facile, another more ready of speech, a fourth more eloquent; but as regards the quality under discussion, – the element that produces happiness, – it is equal in them all. ¹⁰ I do not know whether this Aetna of yours can collapse and fall in ruins, whether this lofty summit, visible for many miles over the deep sea, is wasted by the incessant power of the flames; but I do know that virtue will not be brought down to a lower plane either by flames or by ruins. Hers is the only greatness that knows no lowering; there can be for her no further rising or sinking. Her stature, like that of the stars in the heavens, is fixed. Let us therefore strive to raise ourselves to this altitude.

¹¹ Already much of the task is accomplished; nay, rather, if I can bring myself to confess the truth, not much. For goodness does not mean merely being better than the lowest. Who that could catch but a mere glimpse of the daylight would boast his powers of vision? One who sees the sun shining through a mist may be contented meanwhile that he has escaped darkness, but he does not yet enjoy the blessing of light. ¹² Our souls will not have reason to rejoice in their lot until, freed from this darkness in which they grope, they have not merely glimpsed the brightness with feeble vision, but have absorbed the full light of day and have been restored to their place in the sky, – until, indeed, they have regained the place which they held at the allotment of their birth. The soul is summoned upward by its very origin. And it will reach that goal even before it is released from its prison below, as soon as it has cast off sin and, in purity and lightness, has leaped up into celestial realms of thought.

¹³ I am glad, beloved Lucilius, that we are occupied with this ideal, that we pursue it with all our might, even though few know it, or none. Fame is the shadow of virtue; it will attend virtue even against her will. But, as the shadow sometimes precedes and sometimes follows or even lags behind, so fame sometimes goes before us and shows herself in plain sight, and sometimes is in the rear, and is all the greater in proportion as she is late in coming, when once envy has beaten a retreat. ¹⁴ How long did men believe Democritus to be mad! Glory barely came to Socrates. And how long did our state remain in ignorance of Cato! They rejected him, and did

not know his worth until they had lost him. If Rutilius had not resigned himself to wrong, his innocence and virtue would have escaped notice; the hour of his suffering was the hour of his triumph. Did he not give thanks for his lot, and welcome his exile with open arms? I have mentioned thus far those to whom Fortune has brought renown at the very moment of persecution; but how many there are whose progress toward virtue has come to light only after their death! And how many have been ruined, not rescued, by their reputation? ¹⁵. There is Epicurus, for example; mark how greatly he is admired, not only by the more cultured, but also by this ignorant rabble. This man, however, was unknown to Athens itself, near which he had hidden himself away. And so, when he had already survived by many years his friend Metrodorus, he added in a letter these last words, proclaiming with thankful appreciation the friendship that had existed between them: "So greatly blest were Metrodorus and I that it has been no harm to us to be unknown, and almost unheard of, in this well-known land of Greece." ¹⁶. Is it not true, therefore, that men did not discover him until after he had ceased to be? Has not his renown shone forth, for all that? Metrodorus also admits this fact in one of his letters: that Epicurus and he were not well known to the public; but he declares that after the lifetime of Epicurus and himself any man who might wish to follow in their footsteps would win great and ready-made renown.

¹⁷. Virtue is never lost to view; and yet to have been lost to view is no loss. There will come a day which will reveal her, though hidden away or suppressed by the spite of her contemporaries. That man is born merely for a few, who thinks only of the people of his own generation. Many thousands of years and many thousands of peoples will come after you; it is to these that you should have regard. Malice may have imposed silence upon the mouths of all who were alive in your day; but there will come men who will judge you without prejudice and without favour. If there is any reward that virtue receives at the hands of fame, not even this can pass away. We ourselves, indeed, shall not be affected by the talk of posterity; nevertheless, posterity will cherish and celebrate us even though we are not conscious thereof. ¹⁸. Virtue has never failed to reward a man, both during his life and after his death, provided he has followed her

loyally, provided he has not decked himself out or painted himself up, but has been always the same, whether he appeared before men's eyes after being announced, or suddenly and without preparation. Pretence accomplishes nothing. Few are deceived by a mask that is easily drawn over the face. Truth is the same in every part. Things which deceive us have no real substance. Lies are thin stuff; they are transparent, if you examine them with care. Farewell.

LXXX. On Worldly Deceptions

1. To-day I have some free time, thanks not so much to myself as to the games, which have attracted all the bores to the boxing-match. No one will interrupt me or disturb the train of my thoughts, which go ahead more boldly as the result of my very confidence. My door has not been continually creaking on its hinges nor will my curtain be pulled aside; my thoughts may march safely on, – and that is all the more necessary for one who goes independently and follows out his own path. Do I then follow no predecessors? Yes, but I allow myself to discover something new, to alter, to reject. I am not a slave to them, although I give them my approval.

2. And yet that was a very bold word which I spoke when I assured myself that I should have some quiet, and some uninterrupted retirement. For lo, a great cheer comes from the stadium, and while it does not drive me distracted, yet it shifts my thought to a contrast suggested by this very noise. How many men, I say to myself, train their bodies, and how few train their minds! What crowds flock to the games, spurious as they are and arranged merely for pastime, – and what a solitude reigns where the good arts are taught! How feather-brained are the athletes whose muscles and shoulders we admire! 3. The question which I ponder most of all is this; if the body can be trained to such a degree of endurance that it will stand the blows and kicks of several opponents at once and to such a degree that a man can last out the day and resist the scorching sun in the midst of the burning dust, drenched all the while with his own blood, – if this can be done, how much more easily might the mind be toughened so that it could receive the blows of Fortune and not be conquered, so that it might struggle to its feet again after it has been laid low, after it has been trampled under foot?

For although the body needs many things in order to be strong, yet the mind grows from within, giving to itself nourishment and exercise. Yonder athletes must have copious food, copious drink, copious quantities of oil, and long training besides; but you can acquire virtue without equipment and without expense. All that goes to make you a good man lies within yourself. 4. And what do you

need in order to become good? To wish it. But what better thing could you wish for than to break away from this slavery, a slavery that oppresses us all, a slavery which even chattels of the lowest estate, born amid such degradation, strive in every possible way to strip off? In exchange for freedom they pay out the savings which they have scraped together by cheating their own bellies; shall *you* not be eager to attain liberty at any price, seeing that you claim it as your birthright? ⁵ Why cast glances toward your strong-box? Liberty cannot be bought. It is therefore useless to enter in your ledger the item of "Freedom," for freedom is possessed neither by those who have bought it, nor by those who have sold it. You must give this good to yourself, and seek it from yourself.

First of all, free yourself from the fear of death, for death puts the yoke about our necks; then free yourself from the fear of poverty. ⁶ If you would know how little evil there is in poverty, compare the faces of the poor with those of the rich; the poor man smiles more often and more genuinely; his troubles do not go deep down; even if any anxiety comes upon him, it passes like a fitful cloud. But the merriment of those whom men call happy is feigned, while their sadness is heavy and festering, and all the heavier because they may not meanwhile display their grief, but must act the part of happiness in the midst of sorrows that eat out their very hearts. ⁷ I often feel called upon to use the following illustration, and it seems to me that none expresses more effectively this drama of human life, wherein we are assigned the parts which we are to play so badly. Yonder is the man who stalks upon the stage with swelling port and head thrown back, and says:

Lo, I am he whom Argos hails as lord,

Whom Pelops left the heir of lands that spread
From Hellespont and from th' Ionian sea
E'en to the Isthmian straits.

And who is this fellow? He is but a slave; his wage is five measures of grain and five denarii. ⁸ Yon other who, proud and wayward and puffed up by confidence in his power, declaims:

Peace, Menelaus, or this hand shall slay thee!

receives a daily pittance and sleeps on rags. You may speak in the same way about all these dandies whom you see riding in litters above the heads of men and above the crowd; in every case their happiness is put on like the actor's mask. Tear it off, and you will scorn them.

9. When you buy a horse, you order its blanket to be removed; you pull off the garments from slaves that are advertised for sale, so that no bodily flaws may escape your notice; if you judge a man, do you judge him when he is wrapped in a disguise? Slave dealers hide under some sort of finery any defect which may give offence, and for that reason the very trappings arouse the suspicion of the buyer. If you catch sight of a leg or an arm that is bound up in cloths, you demand that it be stripped and that the body itself be revealed to you.

10. Do you see yonder Scythian or Sarmatian king, his head adorned with the badge of his office? If you wish to see what he amounts to, and to know his full worth, take off his diadem; much evil lurks beneath it. But why do I speak of others? If you wish to set a value on yourself, put away your money, your estates, your honours, and look into your own soul. At present, you are taking the word of others for what you are. Farewell.

LXXXI. On Benefits

1. You complain that you have met with an ungrateful person. If this is your first experience of that sort, you should offer thanks either to your good luck or to your caution. In this case, however, caution can effect nothing but to make you ungenerous. For if you wish to avoid such a danger, you will not confer benefits; and so, that benefits may not be lost with another man, they will be lost to yourself.

It is better, however, to get no return than to confer no benefits. Even after a poor crop one should sow again; for often losses due to continued barrenness of an unproductive soil have been made good by one year's fertility. 2. In order to discover one grateful person, it is worth while to make trial of many ungrateful ones. No man has so unerring a hand when he confers benefits that he is not frequently deceived; it is well for the traveller to wander, that he may again cleave to the path. After a shipwreck, sailors try the sea again. The banker is not frightened away from the forum by the swindler. If one were compelled to drop everything that caused trouble, life would soon grow dull amid sluggish idleness; but in your case this very condition may prompt you to become more charitable. For when the outcome of any undertaking is unsure, you must try again and again, in order to succeed ultimately. 3. I have, however, discussed the matter with sufficient fullness in the volumes which I have written, entitled "On Benefits."

What I think should rather be investigated is this, – a question which I feel has not been made sufficiently clear: "Whether he who has helped us has squared the account and has freed us from our debt, if he has done us harm later." You may add this question also, if you like: "when the harm done later has been more than the help rendered previously." 4. If you are seeking for the formal and just decision of a strict judge, you will find that he checks off one act by the other, and declares: "Though the injuries outweigh the benefits, yet we should credit to the benefits anything that stands over even after the injury." The harm done was indeed greater, but the helpful act was done first. Hence the time also should be taken into account. 5. Other cases are so clear that I need not remind you that you should

also look into such points as: How gladly was the help offered, and how reluctantly was the harm done, – since benefits, as well as injuries, depend on the spirit. “I did not wish to confer the benefit; but I was won over by my respect for the man, or by the importunity of his request, or by hope.” 6. Our feeling about every obligation depends in each case upon the spirit in which the benefit is conferred; we weigh not the bulk of the gift, but the quality of the good-will which prompted it. So now let us do away with guess-work; the former deed was a benefit, and the latter, which transcended the earlier benefit, is an injury. The good man so arranges the two sides of his ledger that he voluntarily cheats himself by adding to the benefit and subtracting from the injury.

The more indulgent magistrate, however (and I should rather be such a one), will order us to forget the injury and remember the accommodation. 7. “But surely,” you say, “it is the part of justice to render to each that which is his due, – thanks in return for a benefit, and retribution, or at any rate ill-will, in return for an injury!” This, I say, will be true when it is one man who has inflicted the injury, and a different man who has conferred the benefit; for if it is the same man, the force of the injury is nullified by the benefit conferred. Indeed, a man who ought to be pardoned, even though there were no good deeds credited to him in the past, should receive something more than mere leniency if he commits a wrong when he has a benefit to his credit. 8. I do not set an equal value on benefits and injuries. I reckon a benefit at a higher rate than an injury. Not all grateful persons know what it involves to be in debt for a benefit; even a thoughtless, crude fellow, one of the common herd, may know, especially soon after he has received the gift; but he does not know how deeply he stands in debt therefor. Only the wise man knows exactly what value should be put upon everything; for the fool whom I just mentioned, no matter how good his intentions may be, either pays less than he owes, or pays it at the wrong time or the wrong place. That for which he should make return he wastes and loses. 9. There is a marvellously accurate phraseology applied to certain subjects, a long-established terminology which indicates certain acts by means of symbols that are most efficient and that serve to outline men’s duties. We are, as you know, wont to speak

thus: "A. has made a return for the favour bestowed by B." Making a return means handing over of your own accord that which you owe. We do not say, "He has paid back the favour"; for "pay back" is used of a man upon whom a demand for payment is made, of those who pay against their will. Of those who pay under any circumstances whatsoever, and of those who pay through a third party. We do not say, "He has 'restored' the benefit," or 'settled' it; we have never been satisfied with a word which applies properly to a debt of money. ¹⁰ Making a return means offering something to him from whom you have received something. The phrase implies a voluntary return; he who has made such a return has served the writ upon himself.

The wise man will inquire in his own mind into all the circumstances: how much he has received, from whom, when, where, how. And so we declare that none but the wise man knows how to make return for a favour; moreover, none but the wise man knows how to confer a benefit, – that man, I mean, who enjoys the giving more than the recipient enjoys the receiving. ¹¹ Now some person will reckon this remark as one of the generally surprising statements such as we Stoics are wont to make and such as the Greeks call "paradoxes," and will say: "Do you maintain, then, that only the wise man knows how to return a favour? Do you maintain that no one else knows how to make restoration to a creditor for a debt? Or, on buying a commodity, to pay full value to the seller?" In order not to bring any odium upon myself, let me tell you that Epicurus says the same thing. At any rate, Metrodorus remarks that only the wise man knows how to return a favour. ¹² Again, the objector mentioned above wonders at our saying: "The wise man alone knows how to love, the wise man alone is a real friend." And yet it is a part of love and of friendship to return favours; nay, further, it is an ordinary act, and happens more frequently than real friendship. Again, this same objector wonders at our saying, "There is no loyalty except in the wise man," just as if he himself does not say the same thing! Or do you think that there is any loyalty in him who does not know how to return a favour? ¹³ These men, accordingly, should cease to discredit us, just as if we were uttering an impossible boast; they should understand that the essence of honour resides in the wise man, while

among the crowd we find only the ghost and the semblance of honour. None but the wise man knows how to return a favour. Even a fool can return it in proportion to his knowledge and his power; his fault would be a lack of knowledge rather than a lack of will or desire. To will does not come by teaching.

14. The wise man will compare all things with one another; for the very same object becomes greater or smaller, according to the time, the place, and the cause. Often the riches that are spent in profusion upon a palace cannot accomplish as much as a thousand *denarii* given at the right time. Now it makes a great deal of difference whether you give outright, or come to a man's assistance, whether your generosity saves him, or sets him up in life. Often the gift is small, but the consequences great. And what a distinction do you imagine there is between taking something which one lacks, – something which was offered, – and receiving a benefit in order to confer one in return?

15. But we should not slip back into the subject which we have already sufficiently investigated. In this balancing of benefits and injuries, the good man will, to be sure, judge with the highest degree of fairness, but he will incline towards the side of the benefit; he will turn more readily in this direction. 16. Moreover, in affairs of this kind the person concerned is wont to count for a great deal. Men say: "You conferred a benefit upon me in that matter of the slave, but you did me an injury in the case of my father" or, "You saved my son, but robbed me of a father." Similarly, he will follow up all other matters in which comparisons can be made, and if the difference be very slight, he will pretend not to notice it. Even though the difference be great, yet if the concession can be made without impairment of duty and loyalty, our good man will overlook that is, provided the injury exclusively affects the good man himself. 17. To sum up, the matter stands thus: the good man will be easy-going in striking a balance; he will allow too much to be set against his credit. He will be unwilling to pay a benefit by balancing the injury against it. The side towards which he will lean, the tendency which he will exhibit, is the desire to be under obligations for the favour, and the desire to make return therefor. For anyone who receives a benefit more gladly than he repays it is mistaken. By as much as he who

pays is more light-hearted than he who borrows, by so much ought he to be more joyful who unburdens himself of the greatest debt – a benefit received – than he who incurs the greatest obligations. 18. For ungrateful men make mistakes in this respect also: they have to pay their creditors both capital and interest, but they think that benefits are currency which they can use without interest. So the debts grow through postponement, and the later the action is postponed the more remains to be paid. A man is an ingrate if he repays a favour without interest. Therefore, interest also should be allowed for, when you compare your receipts and your expenses. 19. We should try by all means to be as grateful as possible.

For gratitude is a good thing for ourselves, in a sense in which justice, that is commonly supposed to concern other persons, is not; gratitude returns in large measure unto itself. There is not a man who, when he has benefited his neighbour, has not benefited himself, – I do not mean for the reason that he whom you have aided will desire to aid you, or that he whom you have defended will desire to protect you, or that an example of good conduct returns in a circle to benefit the doer, just as examples of bad conduct recoil upon their authors, and as men find no pity if they suffer wrongs which they themselves have demonstrated the possibility of committing; but that the reward for all the virtues lies in the virtues themselves. For they are not practised with a view to recompense; the wages of a good deed is to have done it. 20. I am grateful, not in order that my neighbour, provoked by the earlier act of kindness, may be more ready to benefit me, but simply in order that I may perform a most pleasant and beautiful act; I feel grateful, not because it profits me, but because it pleases me. And, to prove the truth of this to you, I declare that even if I may not be grateful without seeming ungrateful, even if I am able to retain a benefit only by an act which resembles an injury; even so, I shall strive in the utmost calmness of spirit toward the purpose which honour demands, in the very midst of disgrace. No one, I think, rates virtue higher or is more consecrated to virtue than he who has lost his reputation for being a good man in order to keep from losing the approval of his conscience. 21. Thus, as I have said, your being grateful is more conducive to your own good than to your neighbour's good. For while your neighbour has had a

common, everyday experience, – namely, receiving back the gift which he had bestowed, – you have had a great experience which is the outcome of an utterly happy condition of soul, – to have felt gratitude. For if wickedness makes men unhappy and virtue makes men blest, and if it is a virtue to be grateful, then the return which you have made is only the customary thing, but the thing to which you have attained is priceless, – the consciousness of gratitude, which comes only to the soul that is divine and blessed. The opposite feeling to this, however, is immediately attended by the greatest unhappiness; no man, if he be ungrateful, will be unhappy in the future. I allow him no day of grace; he is unhappy forthwith.

22. Let us therefore avoid being ungrateful, not for the sake of others but for our own sakes. When we do wrong, only the least and lightest portion of it flows back upon our neighbour; the worst and, if I may use the term, the densest portion of it stays at home and troubles the owner. My master Attalus used to say: “Evil herself drinks the largest portion of her own poison.” The poison which serpents carry for the destruction of others, and secrete without harm to themselves, is not like this poison; for this sort is ruinous to the possessor. 23. The ungrateful man tortures and torments himself; he hates the gifts which he has accepted, because he must make a return for them, and he tries to belittle their value, but he really enlarges and exaggerates the injuries which he has received. And what is more wretched than a man who forgets his benefits and clings to his injuries?

Wisdom, on the other hand, lends grace to every benefit, and of her own free will commends it to her own favour, and delights her soul by continued recollection thereof. 24. Evil men have but one pleasure in benefits, and a very short-lived pleasure at that; it lasts only while they are receiving them. But the wise man derives therefrom an abiding and eternal joy. For he takes delight not so much in receiving the gift as in having received it; and this joy never perishes; it abides with him always. He despises the wrongs done him; he forgets them, not accidentally, but voluntarily. 25. He does not put a wrong construction upon everything, or seek for someone whom he may hold responsible for each happening; he rather ascribes even the sins of men to chance. He will not misinterpret a

word or a look; he makes light of all mishaps by interpreting them in a generous way. He does not remember an injury rather than a service. As far as possible, he lets his memory rest upon the earlier and the better deed, never changing his attitude towards those who have deserved well of him, except in climes where the bad deeds far outdistance the good, and the space between them is obvious even to one who closes his eyes to it; even then only to this extent, that he strives, after receiving the preponderant injury, to resume the attitude which he held before he received the benefit. For when the injury merely equals the benefit, a certain amount of kindly feeling is left over. 26. Just as a defendant is acquitted when the votes are equal, and just as the spirit of kindness always tries to bend every doubtful case toward the better interpretation, so the mind of the wise man, when another's merits merely equal his bad deeds, will, to be sure, cease to feel an obligation, but does not cease to desire to feel it, and acts precisely like the man who pays his debts even after they have been legally cancelled.

27. But no man can be grateful unless he has learned to scorn the things which drive the common herd to distraction; if you wish to make return for a favour, you must be willing to go into exile, – or to pour forth your blood, or to undergo poverty, or – and this will frequently happen, – even to let your very innocence be stained and exposed to shameful slanders. It is no slight price that a man must pay for being grateful. 28. We hold nothing dearer than a benefit, so long as we are seeking one; we hold nothing cheaper after we have received it. Do you ask what it is that makes us forget benefits received? It is our extreme greed for receiving others. We consider not what we have obtained, but what we are to seek. We are deflected from the right course by riches, titles, power, and everything which is valuable in our opinion but worthless when rated at its real value. 29. We do not know how to weigh matters; we should take counsel regarding them, not with their reputation but with their nature; those things possess no grandeur wherewith to enthrall our minds, except the fact that we have become accustomed to marvel at them. For they are not praised because they ought to be desired, but they are desired because they have been praised; and when the error of individuals has once created error on the part of the public, then the public error

goes on creating error on the part of individuals.

30. But just as we take on faith such estimates of values, so let us take on the faith of the people this truth that nothing is more honourable than a grateful heart. This phrase will be echoed by all cities, and by all races, even those from savage countries. Upon this point – good and bad will agree. 31. Some praise pleasure, some prefer toil; some say that pain is the greatest of evils, some say it is no evil at all; some will include riches in the Supreme Good, others will say that their discovery meant harm to the human race, and that none is richer than he to whom Fortune has found nothing to give. Amid all this diversity of opinion all men will yet with one voice, as the saying is, vote “aye” to the proposition that thanks should be returned to those who have deserved well of us. On this question the common herd, rebellious as they are, will all agree, but at present we keep paying back injuries instead of benefits, and the primary reason why a man is ungrateful is that he has found it impossible to be grateful enough. 32. Our madness has gone to such lengths that it is a very dangerous thing to confer great benefits upon a person; for just because he thinks it shameful not to repay, so he would have none left alive whom he should repay. “Keep for yourself what you have received; I do not ask it back – I do not demand it. Let it be safe to have conferred a favour.” There is no worse hatred than that which springs from shame at the desecration of a benefit. Farewell.

LXXXII. On the Natural Fear of Death

1. I have already ceased to be anxious about you. "Whom then of the gods," you ask, "have you found as your voucher?" A god, let me tell you, who deceives no one, – a soul in love with that which is upright and good. The better part of yourself is on safe ground. Fortune can inflict injury upon you; what is more pertinent is that I have no fears lest you do injury to yourself. Proceed as you have begun, and settle yourself in this way of living, not luxuriously, but calmly. 2. I prefer to be in trouble rather than in luxury; and you had better interpret the term "in trouble" as popular usage is wont to interpret it: living a "hard," "rough," "toilsome" life. We are wont to hear the lives of certain men praised as follows, when they are objects of unpopularity: "So-and-So lives luxuriously"; but by this they mean: "He is softened by luxury." For the soul is made womanish by degrees, and is weakened until it matches the ease and laziness in which it lies. Lo, is it not better for one who is really a man even to become hardened? Next, these same dandies fear that which they have made their own lives resemble. Much difference is there between lying idle and lying buried! 3. "But," you say, "is it not better even to lie idle than to whirl round in these eddies of business distraction?" Both extremes are to be deprecated – both tension and sluggishness. I hold that he who lies on a perfumed couch is no less dead than he who is dragged along by the executioner's hook.

Leisure without study is death; it is a tomb for the living man. 4. What then is the advantage of retirement? As if the real causes of our anxieties did not follow us across the seas! What hiding-place is there, where the fear of death does not enter? What peaceful haunts are there, so fortified and so far withdrawn that pain does not fill them with fear? Wherever you hide yourself, human ills will make an uproar all around. There are many external things which compass us about, to deceive us or to weigh upon us; there are many things within which, even amid solitude, fret and ferment.

5. Therefore, gird yourself about with philosophy, an impregnable wall. Though it be assaulted by many engines, Fortune can find no passage into it. The soul stands on unassailable ground, if it has

abandoned external things; it is independent in its own fortress; and every weapon that is hurled falls short of the mark. Fortune has not the long reach with which we credit her; she can seize none except him that clings to her. 6. Let us then recoil from her as far as we are able. This will be possible for us only through knowledge of self and of the world of Nature. The soul should know whither it is going and whence it came, what is good for it and what is evil, what it seeks and what it avoids, and what is that Reason which distinguishes between the desirable and the undesirable, and thereby tames the madness of our desires and calms the violence of our fears.

7. Some men flatter themselves that they have checked these evils by themselves even without the aid of philosophy; but when some accident catches them off their guard, a tardy confession of error is wrung from them. Their boastful words perish from their lips when the torturer commands them to stretch forth their hands, and when death draws nearer! You might say to such a man: "It was easy for you to challenge evils that were not near-by; but here comes pain, which you declared you could endure; here comes death, against which you uttered many a courageous boast! The whip cracks, the sword flashes:

Ah now, Aeneas, thou must needs be stout

And strong of heart!"

8. This strength of heart, however, will come from constant study, provided that you practise, not with the tongue but with the soul, and provided that you prepare yourself to meet death. To enable yourself to meet death, you may expect no encouragement or cheer from those who try to make you believe, by means of their hair-splitting logic, that death is no evil. For I take pleasure, excellent Lucilius, in poking fun at the absurdities of the Greeks, of which, to my continual surprise, I have not yet succeeded in ridding myself. 9. Our master Zeno uses a syllogism like this: "No evil is glorious; but death is glorious; therefore death is no evil." A cure, Zeno! I have been freed from fear; henceforth I shall not hesitate to bare my neck on the scaffold. Will you not utter sterner words instead of rousing a dying man to laughter? Indeed, Lucilius, I could not easily tell you whether he who thought that he was quenching the fear of death by setting up this syllogism was the more foolish, or he who attempted to refute it,

just as if it had anything to do with the matter! ¹⁰. For the refuter himself proposed a counter-syllogism, based upon the proposition that we regard death as “indifferent,” – one of the things which the Greeks call ἄδιάφορα. “Nothing,” he says, “that is indifferent can be glorious; death is glorious; therefore death is not indifferent.” You comprehend the tricky fallacy which is contained in this syllogism. – mere death is, in fact, not glorious; but a brave death is glorious. And when you say, “Nothing that is indifferent is glorious,” I grant you this much, and declare that nothing is glorious except as it deals with indifferent things. I classify as “indifferent,” – that is, neither good nor evil – sickness, pain, poverty, exile, death. ¹¹. None of these things is intrinsically glorious; but nothing can be glorious apart from them. For it is not poverty that we praise, it is the man whom poverty cannot humble or bend. Nor is it exile that we praise, it is the man who withdraws into exile in the spirit in which he would have sent another into exile. It is not pain that we praise, it is the man whom pain has not coerced. One praises not death, but the man whose soul death takes away before it can confound it. ¹². All these things are in themselves neither honourable nor glorious; but any one of them that virtue has visited and touched is made honourable and glorious by virtue; they merely lie in between, and the decisive question is only whether wickedness or virtue has laid hold upon them. For instance, the death which in Cato’s case is glorious, is in the case of Brutus forthwith base and disgraceful. For this Brutus, condemned to death, was trying to obtain postponement; he withdrew a moment in order to ease himself; when summoned to die and ordered to bare his throat, he exclaimed: “I will bare my throat, if only I may live!” What madness it is to run away, when it is impossible to turn back! “I will bare my throat, if only I may live!” He came very near saying also: “even under Antony!” This fellow deserved indeed to be consigned to *life*!

¹³. But, as I was going on to remark, you see that death in itself is neither an evil nor a good; Cato experienced death most honourably, Brutus most basely. Everything, if you add virtue, assumes a glory which it did not possess before. We speak of a sunny room, even though the same room is pitch-dark at night. ¹⁴. It is the day which fills it with light, and the night which steals the light away; thus it is

with the things which we call indifferent and “middle,” like riches, strength, beauty, titles, kingship, and their opposites, – death, exile, ill-health, pain, and all such evils, the fear of which upsets us to a greater or less extent; it is the wickedness or the virtue that bestows the name of good or evil. An object is not by its own essence either hot or cold; it is heated when thrown into a furnace, and chilled when dropped into water. Death is honourable when related to that which is honourable; by this I mean virtue and a soul that despises the worst hardships.

15. Furthermore, there are vast distinctions among these qualities which we call “middle.” For example, death is not so indifferent as the question whether your hair should be worn evenly or unevenly. Death belongs among those things which are not indeed evils, but still have in them a semblance of evil; for there are implanted in us love of self, a desire for existence and self-preservation, and also an abhorrence of dissolution, because death seems to rob us of many goods and to withdraw us from the abundance to which we have become accustomed. And there is another element which estranges us from death, we are already familiar with the present, but are ignorant of the future into which we shall transfer ourselves, and we shrink from the unknown. Moreover, it is natural to fear the world of shades, whither death is supposed to lead. 16. Therefore, although death is something indifferent, it is nevertheless not a thing which we can easily ignore. The soul must be hardened by long practice, so that it may learn to endure the sight and the approach of death.

Death ought to be despised more than it is wont to be despised. For we believe too many of the stories about death. Many thinkers have striven hard to increase its ill repute; they have portrayed the prison in the world below and the land overwhelmed by everlasting night, where

Within his blood-stained cave Hell’s warder huge

Doth sprawl his ugly length on half-crunched bones,
And terrifies the disembodied ghosts
With never-ceasing bark.

Even if you can win your point and prove that these are mere

stories and that nothing is left for the dead to fear, another fear steals upon you. For the fear of going to the underworld is equalled by the fear of going nowhere.

17. In the face of these notions, which long-standing opinion has dinned in our ears, how can brave endurance of death be anything else than glorious, and fit to rank among the greatest accomplishments of the human mind? For the mind will never rise to virtue if it believes that death is an evil; but it will so rise if it holds that death is a matter of indifference. It is not in the order of nature that a man shall proceed with a great heart to a destiny which he believes to be evil; he will go sluggishly and with reluctance. But nothing glorious can result from unwillingness and cowardice; virtue does nothing under compulsion. 18. Besides, no deed that a man does is honourable unless he has devoted himself thereto and attended to it with all his heart, rebelling against it with no portion of his being. When, however, a man goes to face an evil, either through fear of worse evils or in the hope of goods whose attainment is of sufficient moment to him that he can swallow the one evil which he must endure, – in that case the judgment of the agent is drawn in two directions. On the one side is the motive which bids him carry out his purpose; on the other, the motive which restrains him and makes him flee from something which has aroused his apprehension or leads to danger. Hence he is torn in different directions; and if this happens, the glory of his act is gone. For virtue accomplishes its plans only when the spirit is in harmony with itself. There is no element of fear in any of its actions.

Yield not to evils, but, still braver, go

Where'er thy fortune shall allow.

19. You cannot “still braver go,” if you are persuaded that those things are the real evils. Boot out this idea from your soul; otherwise your apprehensions will remain undecided and will thus check the impulse to action. You will be pushed into that towards which you ought to advance like a soldier.

Those of our school, it is true, would have men think that Zeno's syllogism is correct, but that the second I mentioned, which is set up against his, is deceptive and wrong. But I for my part decline to reduce such questions to a matter of dialectical rules or to the

subtleties of an utterly worn-out system. Away, I say, with all that sort of thing, which makes a man feel, when a question is propounded to him, that he is hemmed in, and forces him to admit a premiss, and then makes him say one thing in his answer when his real opinion is another. When truth is at stake, we must act more frankly; and when fear is to be combated, we must act more bravely. 20. Such questions, which the dialecticians involve in subtleties, I prefer to solve and weigh rationally, with the purpose of winning conviction and not of forcing the judgment.

When a general is about to lead into action an army prepared to meet death for their wives and children, how will he exhort them to battle? I remind you of the Fabii, who took upon a single clan a war which concerned the whole state. I point out to you the Lacedaemonians in position at the very pass of Thermopylae! They have no hope of victory, no hope of returning. The place where they stand is to be their tomb. 21. In what language do you encourage them to bar the way with their bodies and take upon themselves the ruin of their whole tribe, and to retreat from life rather than from their post? Shall you say: "That which is evil is not glorious; but death is glorious; therefore death is not an evil"? What a powerful discourse! After such words, who would hesitate to throw himself upon the serried spears of the foemen, and die in his tracks? But take Leonidas: how bravely did he address his men! He said: "Fellow-soldiers, let us to our breakfast, knowing that we shall sup in Hades!" The food of these men did not grow lumpy in their mouths, or stick in their throats, or slip from their fingers; eagerly did they accept the invitation to breakfast, and to supper also! 22. Think, too, of the famous Roman general; his soldiers had been dispatched to seize a position, and when they were about to make their way through a huge army of the enemy, he addressed them with the words: "You must go now, fellow-soldiers, to yonder place, whence there is no 'must' about your returning!"

You see, then, how straightforward and peremptory virtue is; but what man on earth can your deceptive logic make more courageous or more upright? Rather does it break the spirit, which should never be less straitened or forced to deal with petty and thorny problems than when some great work is being planned. 23. It is not the Three

Hundred, – it is all mankind that should be relieved of the fear of death. But how can you prove to all those men that death is no evil? How can you overcome the notions of all our past life, – notions with which we are tinged from our very infancy? What succour can you discover for man's helplessness? What can you say that will make men rush, burning with zeal, into the midst of danger? By what persuasive speech can you turn aside this universal feeling of fear, by what strength of wit can you turn aside the conviction of the human race which steadfastly opposes you? Do you propose to construct catchwords for me, or to string together petty syllogisms? It takes great weapons to strike down great monsters. ²⁴ You recall the fierce serpent in Africa, more frightful to the Roman legions than the war itself, and assailed in vain by arrows and slings; it could not be wounded even by "Pythius," since its huge size, and the toughness which matched its bulk, made spears, or any weapon hurled by the hand of man, glance off. It was finally destroyed by rocks equal in size to millstones. Are you, then, hurling petty weapons like yours even against death? Can you stop a lion's charge by an awl? Your arguments are indeed sharp; but there is nothing sharper than a stalk of grain. And certain arguments are rendered useless and unavailing by their very subtlety. Farewell.

LXXXIII. On Drunkenness

1. You bid me give you an account of each separate day, and of the whole day too; so you must have a good opinion of me if you think that in these days of mine there is nothing to hide. At any rate, it is thus that we should live, – as if we lived in plain sight of all men; and it is thus that we should think, – as if there were someone who could look into our inmost souls; and there is one who can so look. For what avails it that something is hidden from man? Nothing is shut off from the sight of God. He is witness of our souls, and he comes into the very midst of our thoughts – comes into them, I say, as one who may at any time depart. 2. I shall therefore do as you bid, and shall gladly inform you by letter what I am doing, and in what sequence. I shall keep watching myself continually, and – a most useful habit – shall review each day. For this is what makes us wicked: that no one of us looks back over his own life. Our thoughts are devoted only to what we are about to do. And yet our plans for the future always depend on the past.

3. To-day has been unbroken; no one has filched the slightest part of it from me. The whole time has been divided between rest and reading. A brief space has been given over to bodily exercise, and on this ground I can thank old age – my exercise costs very little effort; as soon as I stir, I am tired. And weariness is the aim and end of exercise, no matter how strong one is. 4. Do you ask who are my pacemakers? One is enough for me, – the slave Pharius, a pleasant fellow, as you know; but I shall exchange him for another. At my time of life I need one who is of still more tender years. Pharius, at any rate, says that he and I are at the same period of life; for we are both losing our teeth. Yet even now I can scarcely follow his pace as he runs, and within a very short time I shall not be able to follow him at all; so you see what profit we get from daily exercise. Very soon does a wide interval open between two persons who travel different ways. My slave is climbing up at the very moment when I am coming down, and you surely know how much quicker the latter is. Nay, I was wrong; for now my life is not coming down; it is falling outright. 5. Do you ask, for all that, how our race resulted to-day? We

raced to a tie, – something which rarely happens in a running contest. After tiring myself out in this way (for I cannot call it exercise), I took a cold bath; this, at my house, means just short of hot. I, the former cold-water enthusiast, who used to celebrate the new year by taking a plunge into the canal, who, just as naturally as I would set out to do some reading or writing, or to compose a speech, used to inaugurate the first of the year with a plunge into the Virgo aqueduct, have changed my allegiance, first to the Tiber, and then to my favourite tank, which is warmed only by the sun, at times when I am most robust and when there is not a flaw in my bodily processes. I have very little energy left for bathing. 6. After the bath, some stale bread and breakfast without a table; no need to wash the hands after such a meal. Then comes a very short nap. You know my habit; I avail myself of a scanty bit of sleep, – unharnessing, as it were. For I am satisfied if I can just stop staying awake. Sometimes I know that I have slept; at other times, I have a mere suspicion.

7. Lo, now the din of the Races sounds about me! My ears are smitten with sudden and general cheering. But this does not upset my thoughts or even break their continuity. I can endure an uproar with complete resignation. The medley of voices blended in one note sounds to me like the dashing of waves, or like the wind that lashes the tree-tops, or like any other sound which conveys no meaning.

8. What is it, then, you ask, to which I have been giving my attention? I will tell you, a thought sticks in my mind, left over from yesterday, – namely, what men of the greatest sagacity have meant when they have offered the most trifling and intricate proofs for problems of the greatest importance, – proofs which may be true, but none the less resemble fallacies. 9. Zeno, that greatest of men, the revered founder of our brave and holy school of philosophy, wishes to discourage us from drunkenness. Listen, then, to his arguments proving that the good man will not get drunk: “No one entrusts a secret to a drunken man; but one will entrust a secret to a good man; therefore, the good man will not get drunk.” Mark how ridiculous Zeno is made when we set up a similar syllogism in contrast with his. There are many, but one will be enough: “No one entrusts a secret to a man when he is asleep; but one entrusts a secret to a good man; therefore, the good man does not go to sleep.” 10. Posidonius pleads

the cause of our master Zeno in the only possible way; but it cannot, I hold, be pleaded even in this way. For Posidonius maintains that the word “drunken” is used in two ways, – in the one case of a man who is loaded with wine and has no control over himself; in the other, of a man who is accustomed to get drunk, and is a slave to the habit. Zeno, he says, meant the latter, – the man who is accustomed to get drunk, not the man who is drunk; and no one would entrust to this person any secret, for it might be blabbed out when the man was in his cups. ¹¹ This is a fallacy. For the first syllogism refers to him who is actually drunk and not to him who is about to get drunk. You will surely admit that there is a great difference between a man who is drunk and a drunkard. He who is actually drunk may be in this state for the first time and may not have the habit, while the drunkard is often free from drunkenness. I therefore interpret the word in its usual meaning, especially since the syllogism is set up by a man who makes a business of the careful use of words, and who weighs his language. Moreover, if this is what Zeno meant, and what he wished it to mean to us, he was trying to avail himself of an equivocal word in order to work in a fallacy; and no man ought to do this when truth is the object of inquiry.

12. But let us admit, indeed, that he meant what Posidonius says; even so, the conclusion is false, that secrets are not entrusted to an habitual drunkard. Think how many soldiers who are not always sober have been entrusted by a general or a captain or a centurion with messages which might not be divulged! With regard to the notorious plot to murder Gaius Caesar, – I mean the Caesar who conquered Pompey and got control of the state, – Tillius Cimber was trusted with it no less than Gaius Cassius. Now Cassius throughout his life drank water; while Tillius Cimber was a sot as well as a brawler. Cimber himself alluded to this fact, saying: “*I carry a master? I cannot carry my liquor!*” ¹³ So let each one call to mind those who, to his knowledge, can be ill trusted with wine, but well trusted with the spoken word; and yet one case occurs to my mind, which I shall relate, lest it fall into oblivion. For life should be provided with conspicuous illustrations. Let us not always be harking back to the dim past.

14. Lucius Piso, the director of Public Safety at Rome, was drunk

from the very time of his appointment. He used to spend the greater part of the night at banquets, and would sleep until noon. That was the way he spent his morning hours. Nevertheless, he applied himself most diligently to his official duties, which included the guardianship of the city. Even the sainted Augustus trusted him with secret orders when he placed him in command of Thrace. Piso conquered that country. Tiberius, too, trusted him when he took his holiday in Campania, leaving behind him in the city many a critical matter that aroused both suspicion and hatred. ¹⁵ I fancy that it was because Piso's drunkenness turned out well for the Emperor that he appointed to the office of city prefect Cossus, a man of authority and balance, but so soaked and steeped in drink that once, at a meeting of the Senate, whither he had come after banqueting, he was overcome by a slumber from which he could not be roused, and had to be carried home. It was to this man that Tiberius sent many orders, written in his own hand, – orders which he believed he ought not to trust even to the officials of his household. Cossus never let a single secret slip out, whether personal or public.

¹⁶ So let us abolish all such harangues as this: "No man in the bonds of drunkenness has power over his soul. As the very vats are burst by new wine, and as the dregs at the bottom are raised to the surface by the strength of the fermentation; so, when the wine effervesces, whatever lies hidden below is brought up and made visible. As a man overcome by liquor cannot keep down his food when he has over-indulged in wine, so he cannot keep back a secret either. He pours forth impartially both his own secrets and those of other persons." ¹⁷ This, of course, is what commonly happens, but so does this, – that we take counsel on serious subjects with those whom we know to be in the habit of drinking freely. Therefore this proposition, which is laid down in the guise of a defence of Zeno's syllogism, is false, – that secrets are not entrusted to the habitual drunkard.

How much better it is to arraign drunkenness frankly and to expose its vices! For even the middling good man avoids them, not to mention the perfect sage, who is satisfied with slaking his thirst; the sage, even if now and then he is led on by good cheer which, for a friend's sake, is carried somewhat too far, yet always stops short of

drunkenness. 18. We shall investigate later the question whether the mind of the sage is upset by too much wine and commits follies like those of the toper; but meanwhile, if you wish to prove that a good man ought not to get drunk, why work it out by logic? Show how base it is to pour down more liquor than one can carry, and not to know the capacity of one's own stomach; show how often the drunkard does things which make him blush when he is sober; state that drunkenness is nothing but a condition of insanity purposely assumed. Prolong the drunkard's condition to several days; will you have any doubt about his madness? Even as it is, the madness is no less; it merely lasts a shorter time. 19. Think of Alexander of Macedon, who stabbed Clitus, his dearest and most loyal friend, at a banquet; after Alexander understood what he had done, he wished to die, and assuredly he ought to have died.

Drunkenness kindles and discloses every kind of vice, and removes the sense of shame that veils our evil undertakings. For more men abstain from, forbidden actions because they are ashamed of sinning than because their inclinations are good. 20. When the strength of wine has become too great and has gained control over the mind, every lurking evil comes forth from its hiding-place. Drunkenness does not create vice, it merely brings it into view; at such times the lustful man does not wait even for the privacy of a bedroom, but without postponement gives free play to the demands of his passions; at such times the unchaste man proclaims and publishes his malady; at such times your cross-grained fellow does not restrain his tongue or his hand. The haughty man increases his arrogance, the ruthless man his cruelty, the slanderer his spitefulness. Every vice is given free play and comes to the front. 21. Besides, we forget who we are, we utter words that are halting and poorly enunciated, the glance is unsteady, the step falters, the head is dizzy, the very ceiling moves about as if a cyclone were whirling the whole house, and the stomach suffers torture when the wine generates gas and causes our very bowels to swell. However, at the time, these troubles can be endured, so long as the man retains his natural strength; but what can he do when sleep impairs his powers, and when that which was drunkenness becomes indigestion?

22. Think of the calamities caused by drunkenness in a nation! This

evil has betrayed to their enemies the most spirited and warlike races; this evil has made breaches in walls defended by the stubborn warfare of many years; this evil has forced under alien sway peoples who were utterly unyielding and defiant of the yoke; this evil has conquered by the wine-cup those who in the field were invincible. 23. Alexander, whom I have just mentioned, passed through his many marches, his many battles, his many winter campaigns (through which he worked his way by overcoming disadvantages of time or place), the many rivers which flowed from unknown sources, and the many seas, all in safety; it was intemperance in drinking that laid him low, and the famous death-dealing bowl of Hercules.

24. What glory is there in carrying much liquor? When you have won the prize, and the other banqueters, sprawling asleep or vomiting, have declined your challenge to still other toasts; when you are the last survivor of the revels; when you have vanquished every one by your magnificent show of prowess and there is no man who has proved himself of so great capacity as you, you are vanquished by the cask. 25. Mark Antony was a great man, a man of distinguished ability; but what ruined him and drove him into foreign habits and un-Roman vices, if it was not drunkenness and – no less potent than wine – love of Cleopatra? This it was that made him an enemy of the state; this it was that rendered him no match for his enemies; this it was that made him cruel, when as he sat at table the heads of the leaders of the state were brought in; when amid the most elaborate feasts and royal luxury he would identify the faces and hands of men whom he had proscribed; when, though heavy with wine, he yet thirsted for blood. It was intolerable that he was getting drunk while he did such things; how much more intolerable that he did these things while actually drunk! 26. Cruelty usually follows wine-bibbing; for a man's soundness of mind is corrupted and made savage. Just as a lingering illness makes men querulous and irritable and drives them wild at the least crossing of their desires, so continued bouts of drunkenness bestialize the soul. For when people are often beside themselves, the habit of madness lasts on, and the vices which liquor generated retain their power even when the liquor is gone.

27. Therefore you should state why the wise man ought not to get

drunk. Explain by facts, and not by mere words, the hideousness of the thing, and its haunting evils. Do that which is easiest of all – namely, demonstrate that what men call pleasures are punishments as soon as they have exceeded due bounds. For if you try to prove that the wise man can souse himself with much wine and yet keep his course straight, even though he be in his cups, you may go on to infer by syllogisms that he will not die if he swallows poison, that he will not sleep if he takes a sleeping-potion, that he will not vomit and reject the matter which clogs his stomach when you give him hellebore. But, when a man's feet totter and his tongue is unsteady, what reason have you for believing that he is half sober and half drunk? Farewell.

LXXXIV. On Gathering Ideas

1. The journeys to which you refer – journeys that shake the laziness out of my system – I hold to be profitable both for my health and for my studies. You see why they benefit my health: since my passion for literature makes me lazy and careless about my body, I can take exercise by deputy; as for my studies, I shall show you why my journeys help them, for I have not stopped my reading in the slightest degree. And reading, I hold, is indispensable – primarily, to keep me from being satisfied with myself alone, and besides, after I have learned what others have found out by their studies, to enable me to pass judgment on their discoveries and reflect upon discoveries that remain to be made. Reading nourishes the mind and refreshes it when it is wearied with study; nevertheless, this refreshment is not obtained without study. 2. We ought not to confine ourselves either to writing or to reading; the one, continuous writing, will cast a gloom over our strength, and exhaust it; the other will make our strength flabby and watery. It is better to have recourse to them alternately, and to blend one with the other, so that the fruits of one's reading may be reduced to concrete form by the pen.

3. We should follow, men say, the example of the bees, who flit about and cull the flowers that are suitable for producing honey, and then arrange and assort in their cells all that they have brought in; these bees, as our Vergil says,

pack close the flowing honey,

And swell their cells with nectar sweet.

4. It is not certain whether the juice which they obtain from the flowers forms at once into honey, or whether they change that which they have gathered into this delicious object by blending something therewith and by a certain property of their breath. For some authorities believe that bees do not possess the art of making honey, but only of gathering it; and they say that in India honey has been found on the leaves of certain reeds, produced by a dew peculiar to that climate, or by the juice of the reed itself, which has an unusual sweetness, and richness. And in our own grasses too, they say, the same quality exists, although less clear and less evident; and a

creature born to fulfil such a function could hunt it out and collect it. Certain others maintain that the materials which the bees have culled from the most delicate of blooming and flowering plants is transformed into this peculiar substance by a process of preserving and careful storing away, aided by what might be called fermentation, – whereby separate elements are united into one substance.

5. But I must not be led astray into another subject than that which we are discussing. We also, I say, ought to copy these bees, and sift whatever we have gathered from a varied course of reading, for such things are better preserved if they are kept separate; then, by applying the supervising care with which our nature has endowed us, – in other words, our natural gifts, – we should so blend those several flavours into one delicious compound that, even though it betrays its origin, yet it nevertheless is clearly a different thing from that whence it came. This is what we see nature doing in our own bodies without any labour on our part; 6. the food we have eaten, as long as it retains its original quality and floats, in our stomachs as an undiluted mass, is a burden; but it passes into tissue and blood only when it has been changed from its original form. So it is with the food which nourishes our higher nature, – we should see to it that whatever we have absorbed should not be allowed to remain unchanged, or it will be no part of us. 7. We must digest it; otherwise it will merely enter the memory and not the reasoning power. Let us loyally welcome such foods and make them our own, so that something that is one may be formed out of many elements, just as one number is formed of several elements whenever, by our reckoning, lesser sums, each different from the others, are brought together. This is what our mind should do: it should hide away all the materials by which it has been aided, and bring to light only what it has made of them. 8. Even if there shall appear in you a likeness to him who, by reason of your admiration, has left a deep impress upon you, I would have you resemble him as a child resembles his father, and not as a picture resembles its original; for a picture is a lifeless thing.

“What,” you say, “will it not be seen whose style you are imitating, whose method of reasoning, whose pungent sayings?” I

think that sometimes it is impossible for it to be seen who is being imitated, if the copy is a true one; for a true copy stamps its own form upon all the features which it has drawn from what we may call the original, in such a way that they are combined into a unity. 9. Do you not see how many voices there are in a chorus? Yet out of the many only one voice results. In that chorus one voice takes the tenor another the bass, another the baritone. There are women, too, as well as men, and the flute is mingled with them. In that chorus the voices of the individual singers are hidden; what we hear is the voices of all together. 10. To be sure, I am referring to the chorus which the old-time philosophers knew; in our present-day exhibitions we have a larger number of singers than there used to be spectators in the theatres of old. All the aisles are filled with rows of singers; brass instruments surround the auditorium; the stage resounds with flutes and instruments of every description; and yet from the discordant sounds a harmony is produced.

I would have my mind of such a quality as this; it should be equipped with many arts, many precepts, and patterns of conduct taken from many epochs of history; but all should blend harmoniously into one. 11. "How," you ask, "can this be accomplished?" By constant effort, and by doing nothing without the approval of reason. And if you are willing to hear her voice, she will say to you: "Abandon those pursuits which heretofore have caused you to run hither and thither. Abandon riches, which are either a danger or a burden to the possessor. Abandon the pleasures of the body and of the mind; they only soften and weaken you. Abandon your quest for office; it is a swollen, idle, and empty thing, a thing that has no goal, as anxious to see no one outstrip it as to see no one at its heels. It is afflicted with envy, and in truth with a twofold envy; and you see how wretched a man's plight is if he who is the object of envy feels envy also."

12. Do you behold yonder homes of the great, yonder thresholds uproarious with the brawling of those who would pay their respects? They have many an insult for you as you enter the door, and still more after you have entered. Pass by the steps that mount to rich men's houses, and the porches rendered hazardous by the huge throng; for there you will be standing, not merely on the edge of a

precipice but also on slippery ground. Instead of this, direct your course hither to wisdom, and seek her ways, which are ways of surpassing peace and plenty. 13. Whatever seems conspicuous in the affairs of men – however petty it may really be and prominent only by contrast with the lowest objects – is nevertheless approached by a difficult and toilsome pathway. It is a rough road that leads to the heights of greatness; but if you desire to scale this peak, which lies far above the range of Fortune, you will indeed look down from above upon all that men regard as most lofty, but none the less you can proceed to the top over level ground. Farewell.

LXXXV. On Some Vain Syllogisms

1. I had been inclined to spare you, and had omitted any knotty problems that still remained undiscussed; I was satisfied to give you a sort of taste of the views held by the men of our school, who desire to prove that virtue is of itself sufficiently capable of rounding out the happy life. But now you bid me include the entire bulk either of our own syllogisms or of those which have been devised by other schools for the purpose of belittling us. If I shall be willing to do this, the result will be a book, instead of a letter. And I declare again and again that I take no pleasure in such proofs. I am ashamed to enter the arena and undertake battle on behalf of gods and men armed only with an awl.

2. "He that possesses prudence is also self-restrained; he that possesses self-restraint is also unwavering; he that is unwavering is unperturbed; he that is unperturbed is free from sadness; he that is free from sadness is happy. Therefore, the prudent man is happy, and prudence is sufficient to constitute the happy life."

3. Certain of the Peripatetics reply to this syllogism by interpreting "unperturbed," "unwavering," and "free from sadness" in such a way as to make "unperturbed" mean one who is rarely perturbed and only to a moderate degree, and not one who is never perturbed. Likewise, they say that a person is called "free from sadness" who is not subject to sadness, one who falls into this objectionable state not often nor in too great a degree. It is not, they say, the way of human nature that a man's spirit should be exempt from sadness, or that the wise man is not overcome by grief but is merely touched by it, and other arguments of this sort, all in accordance with the teachings of their school. 4. They do not abolish the passions in this way; they only moderate them. But how petty is the superiority which we attribute to the wise man, if he is merely braver than the most craven, happier than the most dejected, more self-controlled than the most unbridled, and greater than the lowliest! Would Ladas boast his swiftness in running by comparing himself with the halt and the weak?

For she could skim the topmost blades of corn

And touch them not, nor bruise the tender ears;
Or travel over seas, well-poised above
The swollen floods, nor dip her flying feet
In ocean's waters.

This is speed estimated by its own standard, not the kind which wins praise by comparison with that which is slowest. Would you call a man well who has a light case of fever? No, for good health does not mean moderate illness. ⁵ They say, "The wise man is called unperturbed in the sense in which pomegranates are called mellow – not that there is no hardness at all in their seeds, but that the hardness is less than it was before." That view is wrong; for I am not referring to the gradual weeding out of evils in a good man, but to the complete absence of evils; there should be in him no evils at all, not even any small ones. For if there are any, they will grow, and as they grow will hamper him. Just as a large and complete cataract wholly blinds the eyes, so a medium-sized cataract dulls their vision.

⁶ If by your definition the wise man has any passions whatever, his reason will be no match for them and will be carried swiftly along, as it were, on a rushing stream, – particularly if you assign to him, not one passion with which he must wrestle, but all the passions. And a throng of such, even though they be moderate, can affect him more than the violence of one powerful passion. ⁷ He has a craving for money, although in a moderate degree. He has ambition, but it is not yet fully aroused. He has a hot temper, but it can be appeased. He has inconstancy, but not the kind that is very capricious or easily set in motion. He has lust, but not the violent kind. We could deal better with a person who possessed one full-fledged vice, than with one who possessed all the vices, but none of them in extreme form. ⁸ Again, it makes no difference how great the passion is; no matter what its size may be, it knows no obedience, and does not welcome advice. Just as no animal, whether wild or tamed and gentle, obeys reason, since nature made it deaf to advice; so the passions do not follow or listen, however slight they are. Tigers and lions never put off their wildness; they sometimes moderate it, and then, when you are least prepared, their softened fierceness is roused to madness. Vices are never genuinely tamed. ⁹

Again, if reason prevails, the passions will not even get a start; but if they get under way against the will of reason, they will maintain themselves against the will of reason. For it is easier to stop them in the beginning than to control them when they gather force. This half-way ground is accordingly misleading and useless; it is to be regarded just as the declaration that we ought to be “moderately” insane, or “moderately” ill. ¹⁰ Virtue alone possesses moderation; the evils that afflict the mind do not admit of moderation. You can more easily remove than control them. Can one doubt that the vices of the human mind, when they have become chronic and callous (“diseases” we call them), are beyond control, as, for example, greed, cruelty, and wantonness? Therefore the passions also are beyond control; for it is from the passions that we pass over to the vices. ¹¹ Again, if you grant any privileges to sadness, fear, desire, and all the other wrong impulses, they will cease to lie within our jurisdiction. And why? Simply because the means of arousing them lie outside our own power. They will accordingly increase in proportion as the causes by which they are stirred up are greater or less. Fear will grow to greater proportions, if that which causes the terror is seen to be of greater magnitude or in closer proximity; and desire will grow keener in proportion as the hope of a greater gain has summoned it to action. ¹² If the existence of the passions is not in our own control, neither is the extent of their power; for if you once permit them to get a start, they will increase along with their causes, and they will be of whatever extent they shall grow to be. Moreover, no matter how small these vices are, they grow greater. That which is harmful never keeps within bounds. No matter how trifling diseases are at the beginning, they creep on apace; and sometimes the slightest augmentation of disease lays low the enfeebled body!

¹³ But what folly it is, when the beginnings of certain things are situated outside our control, to believe that their endings are within our control! How have I the power to bring something to a close, when I have not had the power to check it at the beginning? For it is easier to keep a thing out than to keep it under after you have let it in. ¹⁴ Some men have made a distinction as follows, saying: “If a man has self-control and wisdom, he is indeed at peace as regards the attitude and habit of his mind, but not as regards the outcome. For, as

far as his habit of mind is concerned, he is not perturbed, or saddened, or afraid; but there are many extraneous causes which strike him and bring perturbation upon him.”¹⁵ What they mean to say is this: “So-and-so is indeed not a man of an angry disposition, but still he sometimes gives way to anger,” and “He is not, indeed, inclined to fear, but still he sometimes experiences fear”; in other words, he is free from the fault, but is not free from the passion of fear. If, however, fear is once given an entrance, it will by frequent use pass over into a vice; and anger, once admitted into the mind, will alter the earlier habit of a mind that was formerly free from anger.¹⁶ Besides, if the wise man, instead of despising all causes that come from without, ever fears anything, when the time arrives for him to go bravely to meet the spear, or the flames, on behalf of his country, his laws, and his liberty, he will go forth reluctantly and with flagging spirit. Such inconsistency of mind, however, does not suit the character of a wise man.

17. Then, again, we should see to it that two principles which ought to be tested separately should not be confused. For the conclusion is reached independently that that alone is good which is honourable, and again independently the conclusion that virtue is sufficient for the happy life. If that alone is good which is honourable, everyone agrees that virtue is sufficient for the purpose of living happily; but, on the contrary, if virtue alone makes men happy, it will not be conceded that that alone is good which is honourable.¹⁸ Xenocrates and Speusippus hold that a man can become happy even by virtue alone, not, however, that that which is honourable is the only good. Epicurus also decides that one who possesses virtue is happy, but that virtue of itself is not sufficient for the happy life, because the pleasure that results from virtue, and not virtue itself, makes one happy. This is a futile distinction. For the same philosopher declares that virtue never exists without pleasure; and therefore, if virtue is always connected with pleasure and always inseparable therefrom, virtue is of itself sufficient. For virtue keeps pleasure in its company, and does not exist without it, even when alone.¹⁹ But it is absurd to say that a man will be happy by virtue alone, and yet not absolutely happy. I cannot discover how that may be, since the happy life contains in itself a good that is perfect and

cannot be excelled, If a man has this good, life is completely happy.

Now if the life of the gods contains nothing greater or better, and the happy life is divine, then there is no further height to which a man can be raised. 20. Also, if the happy life is in want of nothing, then every happy life is perfect; it is happy and at the same time most happy. Have you any doubt that the happy life is the Supreme Good? Accordingly, if it possesses the Supreme Good, it is supremely happy. Just as the Supreme Good does not admit of increase (for what will be superior to that which is supreme?), exactly so the happy life cannot be increased either; for it is not without the Supreme Good. If then you bring in one man who is “happier” than another, you will also bring in one who is “much happier”; you will then be making countless distinctions in the Supreme Good; although I understand the Supreme Good to be that good which admits of no degree above itself. 21. If one person is less happy than another, it follows that he eagerly desires the life of that other and happier man in preference to his own. But the happy man prefers no other man’s life to his own. Either of these two things is incredible: that there should be anything left for a happy man to wish for in preference to what is, or that he should not prefer the thing which is better than what he already has. For certainly, the more prudent he is, the more he will strive after the best, and he will desire to attain it by every possible means. But how can one be happy who is still able, or rather who is still bound, to crave something else? 22. I will tell you what is the source of this error: men do not understand that the happy life is a unit; for it is its essence, and not its extent, that establishes such a life on the noblest Plane. Hence there is complete equality between the life that is long and the life that is short, between that which is spread out and that which is confined, between that whose influence is felt in many places and in many directions, and that which is restricted to one interest. Those who reckon life by number, or by measure, or by parts, rob it of its distinctive quality. Now, in the happy life, what is the distinctive quality? It is its fulness. 23. Satiety, I think, is the limit to our eating or drinking. A eats more and B eats less; what difference does it make? Each is now sated. Or A drinks more and B drinks less; what difference does it make? Each is no longer thirsty. Again, A lives for many years and B for fewer; no matter, if only A’s

many years have brought as much happiness as B's few years. He whom you maintain to be "less happy" is not happy; the word admits of no diminution.

24. "He who is brave is fearless; he who is fearless is free from sadness; he who is free from sadness is happy." It is our own school which has framed this syllogism; they attempt to refute it by this answer, namely, that we Stoics are assuming as admitted a premiss which is false and distinctly controverted, – that the brave man is fearless. "What!" they say, "will the brave man have no fear of evils that threaten him? That would be the condition of a madman, a lunatic, rather than of a brave man. The brave man will, it is true, feel fear in only a very slight degree; but he is not absolutely free from fear." 25. Now those who assert this are doubling back to their old argument, in that they regard vices of less degree as equivalent to virtues. For indeed the man who does feel fear, though he feels it rather seldom and to a slight degree, is not free from wickedness, but is merely troubled by it in a milder form. "Not so," is the reply, "for I hold that a man is mad if he does not fear evils which hang over his head." What you say is perfectly true, if the things which threaten are really evils; but if he knows that they are not evils and believes that the only evil is baseness, he will be bound to face dangers without anxiety and to despise things which other men cannot help fearing. Or, if it is the characteristic of a fool and a madman not to fear evils, then the wiser a man is the more he will fear such things! 26. "It is the doctrine of you Stoics, then," they reply, "that a brave man will expose himself to dangers." By no means; he will merely not fear them, though he will avoid them. It is proper for him to be careful, but not to be fearful. "What then? Is he not to fear death, imprisonment, burning, and all the other missiles of Fortune?" Not at all; for he knows that they are not evils, but only seem to be. He reckons all these things as the bugbears of man's existence. 27. Paint him a picture of slavery, lashes, chains, want, mutilation by disease or by torture, – or anything else you may care to mention; he will count all such things as terrors caused by the derangement of the mind. These things are only to be feared by those who are fearful. Or do you regard as an evil that to which some day we may be compelled to resort of our own free will?

28. What then, you ask, is an evil? It is the yielding to those things which are called evils; it is the surrendering of one's liberty into their control, when really we ought to suffer all things in order to preserve this liberty. Liberty is lost unless we despise those things which put the yoke upon our necks. If men knew what bravery was, they would have no doubts as to what a brave man's conduct should be. For bravery is not thoughtless rashness, or love of danger, or the courting of fear-inspiring objects; it is the knowledge which enables us to distinguish between that which is evil and that which is not. Bravery takes the greatest care of itself, and likewise endures with the greatest patience all things which have a false appearance of being evil. 29. "What then?" is the query; "if the sword is brandished over your brave man's neck, if he is pierced in this place and in that continually, if he sees his entrails in his lap, if he is tortured again after being kept waiting in order that he may thus feel the torture more keenly, and if the blood flows afresh out of bowels where it has but lately ceased to flow, has he no fear? Shall you say that he has felt no pain either?" Yes, he has felt pain; for no human virtue can rid itself of feelings. But he has no fear; unconquered he looks down from a lofty height upon his sufferings. Do you ask me what spirit animates him in these circumstances? It is the spirit of one who is comforting a sick friend.

30. "That which is evil does harm; that which does harm makes a man worse. But pain and poverty do not make a man worse; therefore they are not evils." "Your proposition," says the objector, "is wrong; for what harms one does not necessarily make one worse. The storm and the squall work harm to the pilot, but they do not make a worse pilot of him for all that." 31. Certain of the Stoic school reply to this argument as follows: "The pilot becomes a worse pilot because of storms or squalls, inasmuch as he cannot carry out his purpose and hold to his course; as far as his art is concerned, he becomes no worse a pilot, but in his work he does become worse." To this the Peripatetics retort: "Therefore, poverty will make even the wise man worse, and so will pain, and so will anything else of that sort. For although those things will not rob him of his virtue, yet they will hinder the work of virtue." 32. This would be a correct statement, were it not for the fact that the pilot and the wise man are

two different kinds of person. The wise man's purpose in conducting his life is not to accomplish at all hazards what he tries, but to do all things rightly; the pilot's purpose, however, is to bring his ship into port at all hazards. The arts are handmaids; they must accomplish what they promise to do. But wisdom is mistress and ruler. The arts render a slave's service to life; wisdom issues the commands.

33. For myself, I maintain that a different answer should be given: that the pilot's art is never made worse by the storm, nor the application of his art either. The pilot has promised you, not a prosperous voyage, but a serviceable performance of his task – that is, an expert knowledge of steering a ship. And the more he is hampered by the stress of fortune, so much the more does his knowledge become apparent. He who has been able to say, "Neptune, you shall never sink this ship except on an even keel," has fulfilled the requirements of his art; the storm does not interfere with the pilot's work, but only with his success. 34. "What then," you say, "is not a pilot harmed by any circumstance which does not permit him to make port, frustrates all his efforts, and either carries him out to sea, or holds the ship in irons, or strips her masts?" No, it does not harm him as a pilot, but only as a voyager; otherwise, he is no pilot. It is indeed so far from hindering the pilot's art that it even exhibits the art; for anyone, in the words of the proverb, is a pilot on a calm sea. These mishaps obstruct the voyage but not the steersman *qua* steersman. 35. A pilot has a double rôle: one he shares with all his fellow-passengers, for he also is a passenger; the other is peculiar to him, for he is the pilot. The storm harms him as a passenger, but not as a pilot. 36. Again, the pilot's art is another's good – it concerns his passengers just as a physician's art concerns his patients. But the wise man's good is a common good – it belongs both to those in whose company he lives, and to himself also. Hence our pilot may perhaps be harmed, since his services, which have been promised to others, are hindered by the storm; 37. but the wise man is not harmed by poverty, or by pain, or by any other of life's storms. For all his functions are not checked, but only those which pertain to others; he himself is always in action, and is greatest in performance at the very time when fortune has blocked his way. For then he is actually engaged in the business of wisdom; and this wisdom I have declared

already to be, both the good of others, and also his own. 38. Besides, he is not prevented from helping others, even at the time when constraining circumstances press him down. Because of his poverty he is prevented from showing how the State should be handled; but he teaches, none the less, how poverty should be handled. His work goes on throughout his whole life.

Thus no fortune, no external circumstance, can shut off the wise man from action. For the very thing which engages his attention prevents him from attending to other things. He is ready for either outcome: if it brings goods, he controls them; if evils, he conquers them. 39. So thoroughly, I mean, has he schooled himself that he makes manifest his virtue in prosperity as well as in adversity, and keeps his eyes on virtue itself, not on the objects with which virtue deals. Hence neither poverty, nor pain, nor anything else that deflects the inexperienced and drives them headlong, restrains him from his course. 40. Do you suppose that he is weighed down by evils? He makes use of them. It was not of ivory only that Phidias knew how to make statues; he also made statues of bronze. If you had given him marble, or a still meaner material, he would have made of it the best statue that the material would permit. So the wise man will develop virtue, if he may, in the midst of wealth, or, if not, in poverty; if possible, in his own country – if not, in exile; if possible, as a commander – if not, as a common soldier; if possible, in sound health – if not, enfeebled. Whatever fortune he finds, he will accomplish therefrom something noteworthy.

41. Animal-tamers are unerring; they take the most savage animals, which may well terrify those who encounter them, and subdue them to the will of man; not content with having driven out their ferocity, they even tame them so that they dwell in the same abode. The trainer puts his hand into the lion's mouth; the tiger is kissed by his keeper. The tiny Aethiopian orders the elephant to sink down on its knees, or to walk the rope. Similarly, the wise man is a skilled hand at taming evils. Pain, want, disgrace, imprisonment, exile, – these are universally to be feared; but when they encounter the wise man, they are tamed. Farewell.

LXXXVI. On Scipio's Villa

1. I am resting at the country-house which once belonged to Scipio Africanus himself; and I write to you after doing reverence to his spirit and to an altar which I am inclined to think is the tomb of that great warrior. That his soul has indeed returned to the skies, whence it came, I am convinced, not because he commanded mighty armies – for Cambyses also had mighty armies, and Cambyses was a madman who made successful use of his madness – but because he showed moderation and a sense of duty to a marvellous extent. I regard this trait in him as more admirable after his withdrawal from his native land than while he was defending her; for there was the alternative: Scipio should remain in Rome, or Rome should remain free. 2. “It is my wish,” said he, “not to infringe in the least upon our laws, or upon our customs; let all Roman citizens have equal rights. O my country, make the most of the good that I have done, but without me. I have been the cause of your freedom, and I shall also be its proof; I go into exile, if it is true that I have grown beyond what is to your advantage!”

3. What can I do but admire this magnanimity, which led him to withdraw into voluntary exile and to relieve the state of its burden? Matters had gone so far that either liberty must work harm to Scipio, or Scipio to liberty. Either of these things was wrong in the sight of heaven. So he gave way to the laws and withdrew to Liternum, thinking to make the state a debtor for his own exile no less than for the exile of Hannibal.

4. I have inspected the house, which is constructed of hewn stone; the wall which encloses a forest; the towers also, buttressed out on both sides for the purpose of defending the house; the well, concealed among buildings and shrubbery, large enough to keep a whole army supplied; and the small bath, buried in darkness according to the old style, for our ancestors did not think that one could have a hot bath except in darkness. It was therefore a great pleasure to me to contrast Scipio's ways with our own. 5. Think, in this tiny recess the “terror of Carthage,” to whom Rome should offer thanks because she was not captured more than once, used to bathe a

body wearied with work in the fields! For he was accustomed to keep himself busy and to cultivate the soil with his own hands, as the good old Romans were wont to do. Beneath this dingy roof he stood; and this floor, mean as it is, bore his weight.

6. But who in these days could bear to bathe in such a fashion? We think ourselves poor and mean if our walls are not resplendent with large and costly mirrors; if our marbles from Alexandria are not set off by mosaics of Numidian stone, if their borders are not faced over on all sides with difficult patterns, arranged in many colours like paintings; if our vaulted ceilings are not buried in glass; if our swimming-pools are not lined with Thasian marble, once a rare and wonderful sight in any temple pools into which we let down our bodies after they have been drained weak by abundant perspiration; and finally, if the water has not poured from silver spigots. 7. I have so far been speaking of the ordinary bathing-establishments; what shall I say when I come to those of the freedmen? What a vast number of statues, of columns that support nothing, but are built for decoration, merely in order to spend money! And what masses of water that fall crashing from level to level! We have become so luxurious that we will have nothing but precious stones to walk upon.

8. In this bath of Scipio's there are tiny chinks – you cannot call them windows – cut out of the stone wall in such a way as to admit light without weakening the fortifications; nowadays, however, people regard baths as fit only for moths if they have not been so arranged that they receive the sun all day long through the widest of windows, if men cannot bathe and get a coat of tan at the same time, and if they cannot look out from their bath-tubs over stretches of land and sea. So it goes; the establishments which had drawn crowds and had won admiration when they were first opened are avoided and put back in the category of venerable antiques as soon as luxury has worked out some new device, to her own ultimate undoing. 9. In the early days, however, there were few baths, and they were not fitted out with any display. For why should men elaborately fit out that which, costs a penny only, and was invented for use, not merely for delight? The bathers of those day did not have water poured over them, nor did it always run fresh as if from a hot spring; and they did not believe that it mattered at all how perfectly pure was the water

into which they were to leave their dirt. 10. Ye gods, what a pleasure it is to enter that dark bath, covered with a common sort of roof, knowing that therein your hero Cato, as aedile, or Fabius Maximus, or one of the Cornelia, has warmed the water with his own hands! For this also used to be the duty of the noblest aediles – to enter these places to which the populace resorted, and to demand that they be cleaned and warmed to a heat required by considerations of use and health, not the heat that men have recently made fashionable, as great as a conflagration – so much so, indeed, that a slave condemned for some criminal offence now ought to be *bathed* alive! It seems to me that nowadays there is no difference between “the bath is on fire,” and “the bath is warm.”

11. How some persons nowadays condemn Scipio as a boor because he did not let daylight into his perspiring-room through wide windows, or because he did not roast in the strong sunlight and dawdle about until he could stew in the hot water! “Poor fool,” they say, “he did not know how to live! He did not bathe in filtered water; it was often turbid, and after heavy rains almost muddy!” But it did not matter much to Scipio if he had to bathe in that way; he went there to wash off sweat, not ointment. 12. And how do you suppose certain persons will answer me? They will say: “I don’t envy Scipio; that was truly an exile’s life – to put up with baths like those!” Friend, if you were wiser, you would know that Scipio did not bathe every day. It is stated by those who have reported to us the old-time ways of Rome that the Romans washed only their arms and legs daily – because those were the members which gathered dirt in their daily toil – and bathed all over only once a week. Here someone will retort: “Yes; pretty dirty fellows they evidently were! How they must have smelled!” But they smelled of the camp, the farm, and heroism. Now that spick-and-span bathing establishments have been devised, men are really fouler than of yore. 13. What says Horatius Flaccus, when he wishes to describe a scoundrel, one who is notorious for his extreme luxury? He says. “Buccillus smells of perfume.” Show me a Buccillus in these days; his smell would be the veritable goat-smell – he would take the place of the Gargonius with whom Horace in the same passage contrasted him. It is nowadays not enough to use ointment, unless you put on a fresh coat two or three times a day, to

keep it from evaporating on the body. But why should a man boast of this perfume as if it were his own?

14. If what I am saying shall seem to you too pessimistic, charge it up against Scipio's country-house, where I have learned a lesson from Aegialus, a most careful householder and now the owner of this estate; he taught me that a tree can be transplanted, no matter how far gone in years. We old men must learn this precept; for there is none of us who is not planting an olive-yard for his successor. I have seen them bearing fruit in due season after three or four years of unproductiveness. 15. And you too shall be shaded by the tree which

Is slow to grow, but bringeth shade to cheer

Your grandsons in the far-off years,

as our poet Vergil says. Vergil sought, however, not what was nearest to the truth, but what was most appropriate, and aimed, not to teach the farmer, but to please the reader. 16. For example, omitting all other errors of his, I will quote the passage in which it was incumbent upon me to-day to detect a fault:

In spring sow beans then, too, O clover plant,

Thou'rt welcomed by the crumbling furrows; and
The millet calls for yearly care.

You may judge by the following incident whether those plants should be set out at the same time, or whether both should be sowed in the spring. It is June at the present writing, and we are well on towards July; and I have seen on this very day farmers harvesting beans and sowing millet.

17. But to return to our olive-yard again. I saw it planted in two ways. If the trees were large, Aegialus took their trunks and cut off the branches to the length of one foot each; he then transplanted along with the ball, after cutting off the roots, leaving only the thick part from which the roots hang. He smeared this with manure, and inserted it in the hole, not only heaping up the earth about it, but stamping and pressing it down. 18. There is nothing, he says, more effective than this packing process; in other words, it keeps out the cold and the wind. Besides, the trunk is not shaken so much, and for this reason the packing makes it possible for the young roots to come

out and get a hold in the soil. These are of necessity still soft; they have but a slight hold, and a very little shaking uproots them. This ball, moreover, Aegialus lops clean before he covers it up. For he maintains that new roots spring from all the parts which have been shorn. Moreover, the trunk itself should not stand more than three or four feet out of the ground. For there will thus be at once a thick growth from the bottom, nor will there be a large stump, all dry and withered, as is the case with old olive-yards. ¹⁹ The second way of setting them out was the following: he set out in similar fashion branches that were strong and of soft bark, as those of young saplings are wont to be. These grow a little more slowly, but, since they spring from what is practically a cutting, there is no roughness or ugliness in them.

²⁰ This too I have seen recently – an aged vine transplanted from its own plantation. In this case, the fibres also should be gathered together, if possible, and then you should cover up the vine-stem more generously, so that roots may spring up even from the stock. I have seen such plantings made not only in February, but at the very end of March; the plants take hold of and embrace alien elms. ²¹ But all trees, he declares, which are, so to speak, “thick-stemmed,” should be assisted with tank-water; if we have this help, we are our own rain-makers.

I do not intend to tell you any more of these precepts, lest, as Aegialus did with me, I may be training you up to be my competitor. Farewell.

LXXXVII. Some Arguments in Favour of the Simple Life

1. "I was shipwrecked before I got aboard." I shall not add how that happened, lest you may reckon this also as another of the Stoic paradoxes; and yet I shall, whenever you are willing to listen, nay, even though you be unwilling, prove to you that these words are by no means untrue, nor so surprising as one at first sight would think. Meantime, the journey showed me this: how much we possess that is superfluous; and how easily we can make up our minds to do away with things whose loss, whenever it is necessary to part with them, we do not feel.

2. My friend Maximus and I have been spending a most happy period of two days, taking with us very few slaves – one carriage-load – and no paraphernalia except what we wore on our persons. The mattress lies on the ground, and I upon the mattress. There are two rugs – one to spread beneath us and one to cover us. 3. Nothing could have been subtracted from our luncheon; it took not more than an hour to prepare, and we were nowhere without dried figs, never without writing tablets. If I have bread, I use figs as a relish; if not, I regard figs as a substitute for bread. Hence they bring me a New Year feast every day, and I make the New Year happy and prosperous by good thoughts and greatness of soul; for the soul is never greater than when it has laid aside all extraneous things, and has secured peace for itself by fearing nothing, and riches by craving no riches. 4. The vehicle in which I have taken my seat is a farmer's cart. Only by walking do the mules show that they are alive. The driver is barefoot, and not because it is summer either. I can scarcely force myself to wish that others shall think this cart mine. My false embarrassment about the truth still holds out, you see; and whenever we meet a more sumptuous party I blush in spite of myself – proof that this conduct which I approve and applaud has not yet gained a firm and steadfast dwelling-place within me. He who blushes at riding in a rattle-trap will boast when he rides in style.

5. So my progress is still insufficient. I have not yet the courage

openly to acknowledge my thriftiness. Even yet I am bothered by what other travellers think of me. But instead of this, I should really have uttered an opinion counter to that in which mankind believe, saying, “You are mad, you are misled, your admiration devotes itself to superfluous things! You estimate no man at his real worth. When property is concerned, you reckon up in this way with most scrupulous calculation those to whom you shall lend either money or benefits; for by now you enter benefits also as payments in your ledger. 6. You say. ‘His estates are wide, but his debts are large.’ ‘He has a fine house, but he has built it on borrowed capital.’ ‘No man will display a more brilliant retinue on short notice, but he cannot meet his debts.’ ‘If he pays off his creditors, he will have nothing left.’” So you will feel bound to do in all other cases as well, – to find out by elimination the amount of every man’s actual possessions.

7. I suppose you call a man rich just because his gold plate goes with him even on his travels, because he farms land in all the provinces, because he unrolls a large account-book, because he owns estates near the city so great that men would grudge his holding them in the waste lands of Apulia. But after you have mentioned all these facts, he is poor. And why? He is in debt. “To what extent?” you ask. For all that he has. Or perchance you think it matters whether one has borrowed from another man or from Fortune. 8. What good is there in mules caparisoned in uniform livery? Or in decorated chariots and

Steeds decked with purple and with tapestry,

With golden harness hanging from their necks,
Champing their yellow bits, all clothed in gold?

Neither master nor mule is improved by such trappings.

9. Marcus Cato the Censor, whose existence helped the state as much as did Scipio’s, – for while Scipio fought against our enemies, Cato fought against our bad morals, – used to ride a donkey, and a donkey, at that, which carried saddle-bags containing the master’s necessities. O how I should love to see him meet today on the road one of our coxcombs, with his outriders and Numidians, and a great cloud of dust before him! Your dandy would no doubt seem refined and well-attended in comparison with Marcus Cato, – your dandy,

who, in the midst of all his luxurious paraphernalia, is chiefly concerned whether to turn his hand to the sword or to the hunting-knife. ¹⁰ O what a glory to the times in which he lived, for a general who had celebrated a triumph, a censor, and what is most noteworthy of all, a Cato, to be content with a single nag, and with less than a whole nag at that! For part of the animal was pre-empted by the baggage that hung down on either flank. Would you not therefore prefer Cato's steed, that single steed, saddle-worn by Cato himself, to the coxcomb's whole retinue of plump ponies, Spanish cobs, and trotters? ¹¹ I see that there will be no end in dealing with such a theme unless I make an end myself. So I shall now become silent, at least with reference to superfluous things like these; doubtless the man who first called them "hindrances" had a prophetic inkling that they would be the very sort of thing they now are. At present I should like to deliver to you the syllogisms, as yet very few, belonging to our school and bearing upon the question of virtue, which, in our opinion, is sufficient for the happy life.

¹² "That which is good makes men good. For example, that which is good in the art of music makes the musician. But chance events do not make a good man; therefore, chance events are not goods." The Peripatetics reply to this by saying that the premiss is false; that men do not in every case become good by means of that which is good; that in music there is something good, like a flute, a harp, or an organ suited to accompany singing; but that none of these instruments makes the musician. ¹³ We shall then reply: "You do not understand in what sense we have used the phrase 'that which is good in music.' For we do not mean that which equips the musician, but that which makes the musician; you, however, are referring to the instruments of the art, and not to the art itself. If, however, anything in the art of music is good, that will in every case make the musician." ¹⁴ And I should like to put this idea still more clearly. We define the good in the art of music in two ways: first, that by which the performance of the musician is assisted, and second, that by which his art is assisted. Now the musical instruments have to do with his performance, – such as flutes and organs and harps; but they do not have to do with the musician's art itself. For he is an artist even without them; he may perhaps be lacking in the ability to practise his art. But the good

in man is not in the same way twofold; for the good of man and the good of life are the same.

15. "That which can fall to the lot of any man, no matter how base or despised he may be, is not a good. But wealth falls to the lot of the pander and the trainer of gladiators; therefore wealth is not a good." "Another wrong premiss," they say, "for we notice that goods fall to the lot of the very lowest sort of men, not only in the scholar's art, but also in the art of healing or in the art of navigating." 16. These arts, however, make no profession of greatness of soul; they do not rise to any heights nor do they frown upon what fortune may bring. It is virtue that uplifts man and places him Superior to what mortals hold dear; virtue neither craves overmuch nor fears to excess that which is called good or that which is called bad. Chelidon, one of Cleopatra's eunuchs, possessed great wealth; and recently Natalis – a man whose tongue was as shameless as it was dirty, a man whose mouth used to perform the vilest offices – was the heir of many, and also made many his heirs. What then? Was it his money that made him unclean, or did he himself besmirch his money? Money tumbles into the hands of certain men as a shilling tumbles down a sewer. 17. Virtue stands above all such things. It is appraised in coin of its own minting; and it deems none of these random windfalls to be good. But medicine and navigation do not forbid themselves and their followers to marvel at such things. One who is not a good man can nevertheless be a physician, or a pilot or a scholar, – yes just as well as he can be a cook! He to whose lot it falls to possess something which is not of a random sort, cannot be called a random sort of man: a person is of the same sort as that which he possesses. 18. A strong-box is worth just what it holds; or rather, it is a mere accessory of that which it holds. Who ever sets any price upon a full purse except the price established by the count of the money deposited therein? This also applies to the owners of great estates: they are only accessories and incidentals to their possessions.

Why, then, is the wise man great? Because he has a great soul. Accordingly, it is true that that which falls to the lot even of the most despicable person is not a good. 19. Thus, I should never regard inactivity as a good; for even the tree-frog and the flea possess this quality. Nor should I regard rest and freedom from trouble as a good;

for what is more at leisure than a worm? Do you ask what it is that produces the wise man? That which produces a god. You must grant that the wise man has in an element of godliness, heavenliness, grandeur. The good does not come to every one, nor does it allow any random person to possess it. 20. Behold:

What fruits each country bears, or will not bear;

Here corn, and there the vine, grow richlier.
And elsewhere still the tender tree and grass
Unbidden clothe themselves in green. Seest thou
How Tmolus ships its saffron perfumes forth,
And ivory comes from Ind; soft Sheba sends
Its incense, and the unclad Chalybes
Their iron.

21. These products are apportioned to separate countries in order that human beings may be constrained to traffic among themselves, each seeking something from his neighbour in his turn. So the Supreme Good has also its own abode. It does not grow where ivory grows, or iron. Do you ask where the Supreme Good dwells? In the soul. And unless the soul be pure and holy, there is no room in it for God.

22. “Good does not result from evil. But riches result from greed; therefore, riches are not a good.” “It is not true,” they say, “that good does not result from evil. For money comes from sacrilege and theft. Accordingly, although sacrilege and theft are evil, yet they are evil only because they work more evil than good. For they bring gain; but the gain is accompanied by fear, anxiety, and torture of mind and body.” 23. Whoever says this must perforce admit that sacrilege, though it be an evil because it works much evil, is yet partly good because it accomplishes a certain amount of good. What can be more monstrous than this? We have, to be sure, actually convinced the world that sacrilege, theft, and adultery are to be regarded as among the goods. How many men there are who do not blush at theft, how many who boast of having committed adultery! For petty sacrilege is punished, but sacrilege on a grand scale is honoured by a triumphal procession. 24. Besides, sacrilege, if it is wholly good in some respect,

will also be honourable and will be called right conduct; for it is conduct which concerns ourselves. But no human being, on serious consideration, admits this idea.

Therefore, goods cannot spring from evil. For if, as you object, sacrilege is an evil for the single reason that it brings on much evil, if you but absolve sacrilege of its punishment and pledge it immunity, sacrilege will be wholly good. And yet the worst punishment for crime lies in the crime itself. ²⁵ You are mistaken, I maintain, if you propose to reserve your punishments for the hangman or the prison; the crime is punished immediately after it is committed; nay, rather, at the moment when it is committed. Hence, good does not spring from evil, any more than figs grow from olive-trees. Things which grow correspond to their seed; and goods cannot depart from their class. As that which is honourable does not grow from that which is base, so neither does good grow from evil. For the honourable and the good are identical.

²⁶ Certain of our school oppose this statement as follows: "Let us suppose that money taken from any source whatsoever is a good; even though it is taken by an act of sacrilege, the money does not on that account derive its origin from sacrilege. You may get my meaning through the following illustration: In the same jar there is a piece of gold and there is a serpent. If you take the gold from the jar, it is not just because the serpent is there too, I say, that the jar yields me the gold – because it contains the serpent as well, – but it yields the gold in spite of containing the serpent also. Similarly, gain results from sacrilege, not just because sacrilege is a base and accursed act, but because it contains gain also. As the serpent in the jar is an evil, and not the gold which lies there, beside the serpent; so in an act of sacrilege it is the crime, not the profit, that is evil." ²⁷ But I differ from these men; for the conditions in each case are not at all the same. In the one instance I can take the gold without the serpent, in the other I cannot make the profit without committing the sacrilege. The gain in the latter case does not lie side by side with the crime; it is blended with the crime.

²⁸ "That which, while we are desiring to attain it, involves us in many evils, is not a good. But while we are desiring to attain riches, we become involved in many evils; therefore, riches are not a good,"

“Your first premiss,” they say, “contains two meanings; one is: we become involved in many evils while we are desiring to attain riches. But we also become involved in many evils while we are desiring to attain virtue. One man, while travelling in order to prosecute his studies, suffers shipwreck, and another is taken captive. 29. The second meaning is as follows: that through which we become involved in evils is not a good. And it will not logically follow from our proposition that we become involved in evils through riches or through pleasure; otherwise, if it is through riches that we become involved in many evils, riches are not only not a good, but they are positively an evil. You, however, maintain merely that they are not a good. Moreover,” the objector says, “you grant that riches are of some use. You reckon them among the advantages; and yet on this basis they cannot even be an advantage, for it is through the pursuit of riches that we suffer much disadvantage.” 30. Certain men answer this objection as follows: “You are mistaken if you ascribe disadvantages to riches. Riches injure no one; it is a man’s own folly, or his neighbour’s wickedness, that harms him in each case, just as a sword by itself does not slay; it is merely the weapon used by the slayer. Riches themselves do not harm you, just because it is on account of riches that you suffer harm.”

31. I think that the reasoning of Posidonius is better: he holds that riches are a cause of evil, not because, of themselves, they do any evil, but because they goad men on so that they are ready to do evil. For the efficient cause, which necessarily produces harm at once, is one thing, and the antecedent cause is another. It is this antecedent cause which inheres in riches; they puff up the spirit and beget pride, they bring on unpopularity and unsettle the mind to such an extent that the mere reputation of having wealth, though it is bound to harm us, nevertheless affords delight. 32. All goods, however, ought properly to be free from blame; they are pure, they do not corrupt the spirit, and they do not tempt us. They do, indeed, uplift and broaden the spirit, but without puffing it up. Those things which are goods produce confidence, but riches produce shamelessness. The things which are goods give us greatness of soul, but riches give us arrogance. And arrogance is nothing else than a false show of greatness.

33. "According to that argument," the objector says, "riches are not only not a good, but are a positive evil." Now they would be an evil if they did harm of themselves, and if, as I remarked, it were the efficient cause which inheres in them; in fact, however, it is the antecedent cause which inheres in riches, and indeed it is that cause which, so far from merely arousing the spirit, actually drags it along by force. Yes, riches shower upon us a semblance of the good, which is like the reality and wins credence in the eyes of many men. 34. The antecedent cause inheres in virtue also; it is this which brings on envy – for many men become unpopular because of their wisdom, and many men because of their justice. But this cause, though it inheres in virtue, is not the result of virtue itself, nor is it a mere semblance of the reality; nay, on the contrary, far more like the reality is that vision which is flashed by virtue upon the spirits of men, summoning them to love it and marvel thereat.

35. Posidonius thinks that the syllogism should be framed as follows: "Things which bestow upon the soul no greatness or confidence or freedom from care are not goods. But riches and health and similar conditions do none of these things; therefore, riches and health are not goods." This syllogism he then goes on to extend still farther in the following way: "Things which bestow upon the soul no greatness or confidence or freedom from care, but on the other hand create in it arrogance, vanity, and insolence, are evils. But things which are the gift of Fortune drive us into these evil ways. Therefore these things are not goods." 36. "But," says the objector, "by such reasoning, things which are the gift of Fortune will not even be advantages." No, advantages and goods stand each in a different situation. An advantage is that which contains more of usefulness than of annoyance. But a good ought to be unmixed and with no element in it of harmfulness. A thing is not good if it contains more benefit than injury, but only if it contains nothing but benefit. 37. Besides, advantages may be predicated of animals, of men who are less than perfect, and of fools. Hence the advantageous may have an element of disadvantage mingled with it, but the word "advantageous" is used of the compound because it is judged by its predominant element. The good, however, can be predicated of the wise man alone; it is bound to be without alloy,

38. Be of good cheer; there is only one knot left for you to untangle, though it is a knot for a Hercules: "Good does not result from evil. But riches result from numerous cases of poverty; therefore, riches are not a good." This syllogism is not recognized by our school, but the Peripatetics both concoct it and give its solution. Posidonius, however, remarks that this fallacy, which has been bandied about among all the schools of dialectic, is refuted by Antipater as follows: 39. "The word 'poverty' is used to denote, not the possession of something, but the non-possession or, as the ancients have put it, deprivation, (for the Greeks use the phrase 'by deprivation,' meaning 'negatively'). 'Poverty' states, not what a man has, but what he has not. Consequently there can be no fullness resulting from a multitude of voids; many positive things, and not many deficiencies, make up riches. You have," says he, "a wrong notion of the meaning of what poverty is. For poverty does not mean the possession of little, but the non-possession of much; it is used, therefore, not of what a man has, but of what he lacks." 40. I could express my meaning more easily if there were a Latin word which could translate the Greek word which means "not-possessing." Antipater assigns this quality to poverty, but for my part I cannot see what else poverty is than the possession of little. If ever we have plenty of leisure, we shall investigate the question: what is the essence of riches, and what the essence of poverty; but when the time comes, we shall also consider whether it is not better to try to mitigate poverty, and to relieve wealth of its arrogance, than to quibble about the words as if the question, of the things were already decided.

41. Let us suppose that we have been summoned to an assembly; an act dealing with the abolition of riches has been brought before the meeting. Shall we be supporting it, or opposing it, if we use these syllogisms? Will these syllogisms help us to bring it about that the Roman people shall demand poverty and praise it – poverty, the foundation and cause of their empire, – and, on the other hand, shall shrink in fear from their present wealth, reflecting that they have found it among the victims of their conquests, that wealth is the source from which office-seeking and bribery and disorder have burst into a city once characterized by the utmost scrupulousness and

sobriety, and that because of wealth an exhibition all too lavish is made of the spoils of conquered nations; reflecting, finally, that whatever one people has snatched away from all the rest may still more easily be snatched by all away from one? Nay, it were better to support this law by our conduct and to subdue our desires by direct assault rather than to circumvent them by logic. If we can, let us speak more boldly; if not, let us speak more frankly.

LXXXVIII. On Liberal and Vocational Studies

1. You have been wishing to know my views with regard to liberal studies. My answer is this: I respect no study, and deem no study good, which results in money-making. Such studies are profit-bringing occupations, useful only in so far as they give the mind a preparation and do not engage it permanently. One should linger upon them only so long as the mind can occupy itself with nothing greater; they are our apprenticeship, not our real work. 2. Hence you see why “liberal studies” are so called; it is because they are studies worthy of a free-born gentleman. But there is only one really liberal study, – that which gives a man his liberty. It is the study of wisdom, and that is lofty, brave, and great-souled. All other studies are puny and puerile. You surely do not believe that there is good in any of the subjects whose teachers are, as you see, men of the most ignoble and base stamp? We ought not to be learning such things; we should have done with learning them.

Certain persons have made up their minds that the point at issue with regard to the liberal studies is whether they make men good; but they do not even profess or aim at a knowledge of this particular subject. 3. The scholar busies himself with investigations into language, and if it be his desire to go farther afield, he works on history, or, if he would extend his range to the farthest limits, on poetry. But which of these paves the way to virtue? Pronouncing syllables, investigating words, memorizing plays, or making rules for the scansion of poetry, what is there in all this that rids one of fear, roots out desire, or bridles the passions? 4. The question is: do such men teach virtue, or not? If they do not teach it, then neither do they transmit it. If they do teach it, they are philosophers. Would you like to know how it happens that they have not taken the chair for the purpose of teaching virtue? See how unlike their subjects are; and yet their subjects would resemble each other if they taught the same thing.

5. It may be, perhaps, that they make you believe that Homer was a philosopher, although they disprove this by the very arguments through which they seek to prove it. For sometimes they make of

him a Stoic, who approves nothing but virtue, avoids pleasures, and refuses to relinquish honour even at the price of immortality; sometimes they make him an Epicurean, praising the condition of a state in repose, which passes its days in feasting and song; sometimes a Peripatetic, classifying goodness in three ways; sometimes an Academic, holding that all things are uncertain. It is clear, however, that no one of these doctrines is to be fathered upon Homer, just because they are all there; for they are irreconcilable with one another. We may admit to these men, indeed, that Homer was a philosopher; yet surely he became a wise man before he had any knowledge of poetry. So let us learn the particular things that made Homer wise.

6. It is no more to the point, of course, for me to investigate whether Homer or Hesiod was the older poet, than to know why Hecuba, although younger than Helen, showed her years so lamentably. What, in your opinion, I say, would be the point in trying to determine the respective ages of Achilles and Patroclus? 7. Do you raise the question, "Through what regions did Ulysses stray?" instead of trying to prevent ourselves from going astray at all times? We have no leisure to hear lectures on the question whether he was sea-tost between Italy and Sicily, or outside our known world (indeed, so long a wandering could not possibly have taken place within its narrow bounds); we ourselves encounter storms of the spirit, which toss us daily, and our depravity drives us into all the ills which troubled Ulysses. For us there is never lacking the beauty to tempt our eyes, or the enemy to assail us; on this side are savage monsters that delight in human blood, on that side the treacherous allurements of the ear, and yonder is shipwreck and all the varied category of misfortunes. Show me rather, by the example of Ulysses, how I am to love my country, my wife, my father, and how, even after suffering shipwreck, I am to sail toward these ends, honourable as they are. 8. Why try to discover whether Penelope was a pattern of purity, or whether she had the laugh on her contemporaries? Or whether she suspected that the man in her presence was Ulysses, before she knew it was he? Teach me rather what purity is, and how great a good we have in it, and whether it is situated in the body or in the soul.

9. Now I will transfer my attention to the musician. You, sir, are teaching me how the treble and the bass are in accord with one another, and how, though the strings produce different notes, the result is a harmony; rather bring my soul into harmony with itself, and let not my purposes be out of tune. You are showing me what the doleful keys are; show me rather how, in the midst of adversity, I may keep from uttering a doleful note. 10. The mathematician teaches me how to lay out the dimensions of my estates; but I should rather be taught how to lay out what is enough for a man to own. He teaches me to count, and adapts my fingers to avarice; but I should prefer him to teach me that there is no point in such calculations, and that one is none the happier for tiring out the book-keepers with his possessions – or rather, how useless property is to any man who would find it the greatest misfortune if he should be required to reckon out, by his own wits, the amount of his holdings. 11. What good is there for me in knowing how to parcel out a piece of land, if I know not how to share it with my brother? What good is there in working out to a nicety the dimensions of an acre, and in detecting the error if a piece has so much as escaped my measuring-rod, if I am embittered when an ill-tempered neighbour merely scrapes off a bit of my land? The mathematician teaches me how I may lose none of my boundaries; I, however, seek to learn how to lose them all with a light heart. 12. “But,” comes the reply, “I am being driven from the farm which my father and grandfather owned!” Well? Who owned the land before your grandfather? Can you explain what people (I will not say what person) held it originally? You did not enter upon it as a master, but merely as a tenant. And whose tenant are you? If your claim is successful, you are tenant of the heir. The lawyers say that public property cannot be acquired privately by possession; what you hold and call your own is public property – indeed, it belongs to mankind at large. 13. O what marvellous skill! You know how to measure the circle; you find the square of any shape which is set before you; you compute the distances between the stars; there is nothing which does not come within the scope of your calculations. But if you are a real master of your profession, measure me the mind of man! Tell me how great it is, or how puny! You know what a straight line is; but how does it benefit you if you do not know what

is straight in this life of ours?

14. I come next to the person who boasts his knowledge of the heavenly bodies, who knows

Whither the chilling star of Saturn hides,
And through what orbit Mercury doth stray.

Of what benefit will it be to know this? That I shall be disturbed because Saturn and Mars are in opposition, or when Mercury sets at eventide in plain view of Saturn, rather than learn that those stars, wherever they are, are propitious, and that they are not subject to change? 15. They are driven along by an unending round of destiny, on a course from which they cannot swerve. They return at stated seasons; they either set in motion, or mark the intervals of the whole world's work. But if they are responsible for whatever happens, how will it help you to know the secrets of the immutable? Or if they merely give indications, what good is there in foreseeing what you cannot escape? Whether you know these things or not, they will take place.

16. Behold the fleeting sun,

The stars that follow in his train, and thou
Shalt never find the morrow play thee false,
Or be misled by nights without a cloud.

It has, however, been sufficiently and fully ordained that I shall be safe from anything that may mislead me. 17. "What," you say, "does the 'morrow never play me false'?" Whatever happens without my knowledge plays me false." I, for my part, do not know what is to be, but I do know what may come to be. I shall have no misgivings in this matter; I await the future in its entirety; and if there is any abatement in its severity, I make the most of it. If the morrow treats me kindly, it is a sort of deception; but it does not deceive me even at that. For just as I know that all things can happen, so I know, too, that they will not happen in every case. I am ready for favourable events in every case, but I am prepared for evil.

18. In this discussion you must bear with me if I do not follow the regular course. For I do not consent to admit painting into the list of liberal arts, any more than sculpture, marble-working, and other

helps toward luxury. I also debar from the liberal studies wrestling and all knowledge that is compounded of oil and mud; otherwise, I should be compelled to admit perfumers also, and cooks, and all others who lend their wits to the service of our pleasures. 19. For what “liberal” element is there in these ravenous takers of emetics, whose bodies are fed to fatness while their minds are thin and dull? Or do we really believe that the training which they give is “liberal” for the young men of Rome, who used to be taught by our ancestors to stand straight and hurl a spear, to wield a pike, to guide a horse, and to handle weapons? Our ancestors used to teach their children nothing that could be learned while lying down. But neither the new system nor the old teaches or nourishes virtue. For what good does it do us to guide a horse and control his speed with the curb, and then find that our own passions, utterly uncurbed, bolt with us? Or to beat many opponents in wrestling or boxing, and then to find that we ourselves are beaten by anger?

20. “What then,” you say, “do the liberal studies contribute nothing to our welfare?” Very much in other respects, but nothing at all as regards virtue. For even these arts of which I have spoken, though admittedly of a low grade – depending as they do upon handiwork – contribute greatly toward the equipment of life, but nevertheless have nothing to do with virtue. And if you inquire, “Why, then, do we educate our children in the liberal studies?” it is not because they can bestow virtue, but because they prepare the soul for the reception of virtue. Just as that “primary course,” as the ancients called it, in grammar, which gave boys their elementary training, does not teach them the liberal arts, but prepares the ground for their early acquisition of these arts, so the liberal arts do not conduct the soul all the way to virtue, but merely set it going in that direction.

21. Posidonius divides the arts into four classes: first we have those which are common and low, then those which serve for amusement, then those which refer to the education of boys, and, finally, the liberal arts. The common sort belong to workmen and are mere hand-work; they are concerned with equipping life; there is in them no pretence to beauty or honour. 22. The arts of amusement are those which aim to please the eye and the ear. To this class you may assign the stage-machinists, who invent scaffolding that goes aloft of its

own accord, or floors that rise silently into the air, and many other surprising devices, as when objects that fit together then fall apart, or objects which are separate then join together automatically, or objects which stand erect then gradually collapse. The eye of the inexperienced is struck with amazement by these things; for such persons marvel at everything that takes place without warning, because they do not know the causes. 23. The arts which belong to the education of boys, and are somewhat similar to the liberal arts, are those which the Greeks call the “cycle of studies,” but which we Romans call the “liberal.” However, those alone are really liberal – or rather, to give them a truer name, “free” – whose concern is virtue.

24. “But,” one will say, “just as there is a part of philosophy which has to do with nature, and a part which has to do with ethics, and a part which has to do with reasoning, so this group of liberal arts also claims for itself a place in philosophy. When one approaches questions that deal with nature, a decision is reached by means of a word from the mathematician. Therefore mathematics is a department of that branch which it aids.” 25. But many things aid us and yet are not parts of ourselves. Nay, if they were, they would not aid us. Food is an aid to the body, but is not a part of it. We get some help from the service which mathematics renders; and mathematics is as indispensable to philosophy as the carpenter is to the mathematician. But carpentering is not a part of mathematics, nor is mathematics a part of philosophy. 26. Moreover, each has its own limits; for the wise man investigates and learns the causes of natural phenomena, while the mathematician follows up and computes their numbers and their measurements. The wise man knows the laws by which the heavenly bodies persist, what powers belong to them, and what attributes; the astronomer merely notes their comings and goings, the rules which govern their settings and their risings, and the occasional periods during which they seem to stand still, although as a matter of fact no heavenly body can stand still. 27. The wise man will know what causes the reflection in a mirror; but, the mathematician can merely tell you how far the body should be from the reflection, and what shape of mirror will produce a given reflection. The philosopher will demonstrate that the sun is a large body, while the astronomer will compute just how large, progressing

in knowledge by his method of trial and experiment; but in order to progress, he must summon to his aid certain principles. No art, however, is sufficient unto itself, if the foundation upon which it rests depends upon mere favour. 28. Now philosophy asks no favours from any other source; it builds everything on its own soil; but the science of numbers is, so to speak, a structure built on another man's land – it builds on everything on alien soil; It accepts first principles, and by their favour arrives at further conclusions. If it could march unassisted to the truth, if it were able to understand the nature of the universe, I should say that it would offer much assistance to our minds; for the mind grows by contact with things heavenly and draws into itself something from on high. There is but one thing that brings the soul to perfection – the unalterable knowledge of good and evil. But there is no other art which investigates good and evil.

I should like to pass in review the several virtues. 29. Bravery is a scorner of things which inspire fear; it looks down upon, challenges, and crushes the powers of terror and all that would drive our freedom under the yoke. But do “liberal studies” strengthen this virtue? Loyalty is the holiest good in the human heart; it is forced into betrayal by no constraint, and it is bribed by no rewards. Loyalty cries: “Burn me, slay me, kill me! I shall not betray my trust; and the more urgently torture shall seek to find my secret, the deeper in my heart will I bury it!” Can the “liberal arts” produce such a spirit within us? Temperance controls our desires; some it hates and routs, others it regulates and restores to a healthy measure, nor does it ever approach our desires for their own sake. Temperance knows that the best measure of the appetites is not what you want to take, but what you ought to take. 30. Kindliness forbids you to be over-bearing towards your associates, and it forbids you to be grasping. In words and in deeds and in feelings it shows itself gentle and courteous to all men. It counts no evil as another's solely. And the reason why it loves its own good is chiefly because it will some day be the good of another. Do “liberal studies” teach a man such character as this? No; no more than they teach simplicity, moderation and self-restraint, thrift and economy, and that kindliness which spares a neighbour's life as if it were one's own and knows that it is not for man to make wasteful use of his fellow-man.

31. "But," one says, "since you declare that virtue cannot be attained without the 'liberal studies,' how is it that you deny that they offer any assistance to virtue?" Because you cannot attain virtue without food, either; and yet food has nothing to do with virtue. Wood does not offer assistance to a ship, although a ship cannot be built except of wood. There is no reason, I say, why you should think that anything is made by the assistance of that without which it cannot be made. 32. We might even make the statement that it is possible to attain wisdom without the "liberal studies"; for although virtue is a thing that must be learned, yet it is not learned by means of these studies.

What reason have I, however, for supposing that one who is ignorant of letters will never be a wise man, since wisdom is not to be found in letters? Wisdom communicates facts and not words; and it may be true that the memory is more to be depended upon when it has no support outside itself. 33. Wisdom is a large and spacious thing. It needs plenty of free room. One must learn about things divine and human, the past and the future, the ephemeral and the eternal; and one must learn about Time. See how many questions arise concerning time alone: in the first place, whether it is anything in and by itself; in the second place, whether anything exists prior to time and without time; and again, did time begin along with the universe, or, because there was something even before the universe began, did time also exist then? 34. There are countless questions concerning the soul alone: whence it comes, what is its nature, when it begins to exist, and how long it exists; whether it passes from one place to another and changes its habitation, being transferred successively from one animal shape to another, or whether it is a slave but once, roaming the universe after it is set free; whether it is corporeal or not; what will become of it when it ceases to use us as its medium; how it will employ its freedom when it has escaped from this present prison; whether it will forget all its past, and at that moment begin to know itself when, released from the body, it has withdrawn to the skies.

35. Thus, whatever phase of things human and divine you have apprehended, you will be wearied by the vast number of things to be answered and things to be learned. And in order that these manifold

and mighty subjects may have free entertainment in your soul, you must remove therefrom all superfluous things. Virtue will not surrender herself to these narrow bounds of ours; a great subject needs wide space in which to move. Let all other things be driven out, and let the breast be emptied to receive virtue.

36. "But it is a pleasure to be acquainted with many arts." Therefore let us keep only as much of them as is essential. Do you regard that man as blameworthy who puts superfluous things on the same footing with useful things, and in his house makes a lavish display of costly objects, but do not deem him blameworthy who has allowed himself to become engrossed with the useless furniture of learning? This desire to know more than is sufficient is a sort of intemperance. 37. Why? Because this unseemly pursuit of the liberal arts makes men troublesome, wordy, tactless, self-satisfied bores, who fail to learn the essentials just because they have learned the non-essentials. Didymus the scholar wrote four thousand books. I should feel pity for him if he had only read the same number of superfluous volumes. In these books he investigates Homer's birthplace, who was really the mother of Aeneas, whether Anacreon was more of a rake or more of a drunkard, whether Sappho was a bad lot and other problems the answers to which, if found, were forthwith to be forgotten. Come now, do not tell me that life is long! 38. Nay, when you come to consider our own countrymen also, I can show you many works which ought to be cut down with the axe.

It is at the cost of a vast outlay of time and of vast discomfort to the ears of others that we win such praise as this: "What a learned man you are!" Let us be content with this recommendation, less citified though it be: "What a good man you are!" 39. Do I mean this? Well, would you have me unroll the annals of the world's history and try to find out who first wrote poetry? Or, in the absence of written records, shall I make an estimate of the number of years which lie between Orpheus and Homer? Or shall I make a study of the absurd writings of Aristarchus, wherein he branded the text of other men's verses, and wear my life away upon syllables? Shall I then wallow in the geometrician's dust? Have I so far forgotten that useful saw "Save your time"? Must I know these things? And what may I choose not to know?

40. Apion, the scholar, who drew crowds to his lectures all over Greece in the days of Gaius Caesar and was acclaimed a Homerid by every state, used to maintain that Homer, when he had finished his two poems, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, added a preliminary poem to his work, wherein he embraced the whole Trojan war. The argument which Apion adduced to prove this statement was that Homer had purposely inserted in the opening line two letters which contained a key to the number of his books. 41. A man who wishes to know many things must know such things as these, and must take no thought of all the time which one loses by ill-health, public duties, private duties, daily duties, and sleep. Apply the measure to the years of your life; they have no room for all these things.

42. I have been speaking so far of liberal studies; but think how much superfluous and unpractical matter the philosophers contain! Of their own accord they also have descended to establishing nice divisions of syllables, to determining the true meaning of conjunctions and prepositions; they have been envious of the scholars, envious of the mathematicians. They have taken over into their own art all the superfluities of these other arts; the result is that they know more about careful speaking than about careful living. 43. Let me tell you what evils are due to over-nice exactness, and what an enemy it is of truth! Protagoras declares that one can take either side on any question and debate it with equal success – even on this very question, whether every subject can be debated from either point of view. Nausiphanes holds that in things which seem to exist, there is no difference between existence and non-existence. 44. Parmenides maintains that nothing exists of all this which seems to exist, except the universe alone. Zeno of Elea removed all the difficulties by removing one; for he declares that nothing exists. The Pyrrhonean, Megarian, Eretrian, and Academic schools are all engaged in practically the same task; they have introduced a new knowledge, non-knowledge. 45. You may sweep all these theories in with the superfluous troops of “liberal” studies; the one class of men give me a knowledge that will be of no use to me, the other class do away with any hope of attaining knowledge. It is better, of course, to know useless things than to know nothing. One set of philosophers offers no light by which I may direct my gaze toward the truth; the

other digs out my very eyes and leaves me blind. If I cleave to Protagoras, there is nothing in the scheme of nature that is not doubtful; if I hold with Nausiphanes, I am sure only of this – that everything is unsure; if with Parmenides, there is nothing except the One; if with Zeno, there is not even the One.

46. What are we, then? What becomes of all these things that surround us, support us, sustain us? The whole universe is then a vain or deceptive shadow. I cannot readily say whether I am more vexed at those who would have it that we know nothing, or with those who would not leave us even this privilege. Farewell.

LXXXIX. On the Parts of Philosophy

1. It is a useful fact that you wish to know, one which is essential to him who hastens after wisdom – namely, the parts of philosophy and the division of its huge bulk into separate members. For by studying the parts we can be brought more easily to understand the whole. I only wish that philosophy might come before our eyes in all her unity, just as the whole expanse of the firmament is spread out for us to gaze upon! It would be a sight closely resembling that of the firmament. For then surely philosophy would ravish all mortals with love for her; we should abandon all those things which, in our ignorance of what is great, we believe to be great. Inasmuch, however, as this cannot fall to our lot, we must view philosophy just as men gaze upon the secrets of the firmament.

2. The wise man's mind, to be sure, embraces the whole framework of philosophy, surveying it with no less rapid glance than our mortal eyes survey the heavens; we, however, who must break through the gloom, we whose vision fails even for that which is near at hand, can be shown with greater ease each separate object even though we cannot yet comprehend the universe. I shall therefore comply with your demand, and shall divide philosophy into parts, but not into scraps. For it is useful that philosophy should be divided, but not chopped into bits. Just as it is hard to take in what is indefinitely large, so it is hard to take in what is indefinitely small. 3. The people are divided into tribes, the army into centuries. Whatever has grown to greater size is more easily identified if it is broken up into parts; but the parts, as I have remarked, must not be countless in number and diminutive in size. For over-analysis is faulty in precisely the same way as no analysis at all; whatever you cut so fine that it becomes dust is as good as blended into a mass again.

4. In the first place, therefore, if you approve, I shall draw the distinction between wisdom and philosophy. Wisdom is the perfect good of the human mind; philosophy is the love of wisdom, and the endeavour to attain it. The latter strives toward the goal which the former has already reached. And it is clear why philosophy was so called. For it acknowledges by its very name the object of its love. 5.

Certain persons have defined wisdom as the knowledge of things divine and things human. Still others say: "Wisdom is knowing things divine and things human, and their causes also." This added phrase seems to me to be superfluous, since the causes of things divine and things human are a part of the divine system. Philosophy also has been defined in various ways; some have called it "the study of virtue," others have referred to it as "a study of the way to amend the mind," and some have named it "the search for right reason." 6. One thing is practically settled, that there is some difference between philosophy and wisdom. Nor indeed is it possible that that which is sought and that which seeks are identical. As there is a great difference between avarice and wealth, the one being the subject of the craving and the other its object, so between philosophy and wisdom. For the one is a result and a reward of the other. Philosophy does the going, and wisdom is the goal. 7. Wisdom is that which the Greeks call σοφία. The Romans also were wont to use this word in the sense in which they now use "philosophy" also. This will be proved to your satisfaction by our old national plays, as well as by the epitaph that is carved on the tomb of Dossennus:

Pause, stranger, and read the wisdom of Dossennus.

8. Certain of our school, however, although philosophy meant to them "the study of virtue," and though virtue was the object sought and philosophy the seeker, have maintained nevertheless that the two cannot be sundered. For philosophy cannot exist without virtue, nor virtue without philosophy. Philosophy is the study of virtue, by means, however, of virtue itself; but neither can virtue exist without the study of itself, nor can the study of virtue exist without virtue itself. For it is not like trying to hit a target at long range, where the shooter and the object to be shot at are in different places. Nor, as roads which lead into a city, are the approaches to virtue situated outside virtue herself; the path by which one reaches virtue leads by way of virtue herself; philosophy and virtue cling closely together.

9. The greatest authors, and the greatest number of authors, have maintained that there are three divisions of philosophy – moral, natural, and rational. The first keeps the soul in order; the second investigates the universe; the third works out the essential meanings of words, their combinations, and the proofs which keep falsehood

from creeping in and displacing truth. But there have also been those who divided philosophy on the one hand into fewer divisions, on the other hand into more. ¹⁰ Certain of the Peripatetic school have added a fourth division, “civil philosophy,” because it calls for a special sphere of activity and is interested in a different subject matter. Some have added a department for which they use the Greek term “economics,” the science of managing one’s own household. Still others have made a distinct heading for the various kinds of life. There is no one of these subdivisions, however, which will not be found under the branch called “moral” philosophy.

¹¹ The Epicureans held that philosophy was twofold, natural and moral; they did away with the rational branch. Then, when they were compelled by the facts themselves to distinguish between equivocal ideas and to expose fallacies that lay hidden under the cloak of truth they themselves also introduced a heading to which they give the name “forensic and regulative,” which is merely “rational” under another name, although they hold that this section is accessory to the department of “natural” philosophy. ¹² The Cyrenaic school abolished the natural as well as the rational department, and were content with the moral side alone; and yet these philosophers also include under another title that which they have rejected. For they divide moral philosophy into five parts: (1) What to avoid and what to seek, (2) The Passions, (3) Actions, (4) Causes, (5) Proofs. Now the causes of things really belong to the “natural” division, the proofs to the “rational.” ¹³ Aristo of Chios remarked that the natural and the rational were not only superfluous, but were also contradictory. He even limited the “moral,” which was all that was left to him; for he abolished that heading which embraced advice, maintaining that it was the business of the pedagogue, and not of the philosopher – as if the wise man were anything else than the pedagogue of the human race!

¹⁴ Since, therefore, philosophy is threefold, let us first begin to set in order the moral side. It has been agreed that this should be divided into three parts. First, we have the speculative part, which assigns to each thing its particular function and weighs the worth of each; it is highest in point of utility. For what is so indispensable as giving to everything its proper value? The second has to do with impulse, the

third with actions. For the first duty is to determine severally what things are worth; the second, to conceive with regard to them a regulated and ordered impulse; the third, to make your impulse and your actions harmonize, so that under all these conditions you may be consistent with yourself. 15. If any of the three be defective, there is confusion in the rest also. For what benefit is there in having all things appraised, each in its proper relations, if you go to excess in your impulses? What benefit is there in having checked your impulses and in having your desires in your own control, if when you come to action you are unaware of the proper times and seasons, and if you do not know when, where, and how each action should be carried out? It is one thing to understand the merits and the values of facts, another thing to know the precise moment for action, and still another to curb impulses and to proceed, instead of rushing, toward what is to be done. Hence life is in harmony with itself only when action has not deserted impulse, and when impulse toward an object arises in each case from the worth of the object, being languid or more eager as the case may be, according as the objects which arouse it are worth seeking.

16. The natural side of philosophy is twofold: bodily and non-bodily. Each is divided into its own grades of importance, so to speak. The topic concerning bodies deals, first, with these two grades: the creative and the created; and the created things are the elements. Now this very topic of the elements, as some writers hold, is integral; as others hold, it is divided into matter, the cause which moves all things, and the elements. 17. It remains for me to divide rational philosophy into its parts. Now all speech is either continuous, or split up between questioner and answerer. It has been agreed upon that the former should be called rhetoric, and the latter dialectic. Rhetoric deals with words, and meanings, and arrangement. Dialectic is divided into two parts: words and their meanings, that is, into things which are said, and the words in which they are said. Then comes a subdivision of each – and it is of vast extent. Therefore I shall stop at this point, and

But treat the climax of the story;

for if I should take a fancy to give the subdivisions, my letter would become a debater's handbook! 18. I am not trying to discourage

you, excellent Lucilius, from reading on this subject, provided only that you promptly relate to conduct all that you have read.

It is your conduct that you must hold in check; you must rouse what is languid in you, bind fast what has become relaxed, conquer what is obstinate, persecute your appetites, and the appetites of mankind, as much as you can; and to those who say: “How long will this unending talk go on?” answer with the words: 19. “I ought to be asking you ‘How long will these unending sins of yours go on?’” Do you really desire my remedies to stop before your vices? But I shall speak of my remedies all the more, and just because you offer objections I shall keep on talking. Medicine begins to do good at the time when a touch makes the diseased body tingle with pain. I shall utter words that will help men even against their will. At times you should allow words other than compliments to reach your ears, and because as individuals you are unwilling to hear the truth, hear it collectively. 20. How far will you extend the boundaries of your estates? An estate which held a nation is too narrow for a single lord. How far will you push forward your ploughed fields – you who are not content to confine the measure of your farms even within the amplitude of provinces? You have noble rivers flowing down through your private grounds; you have mighty streams – boundaries of mighty nations – under your dominion from source to outlet. This also is too little for you unless you also surround whole seas with your estates, unless your steward holds sway on the other side of the Adriatic, the Ionian, and the Aegean seas, unless the islands, homes of famous chieftains, are reckoned by you as the most paltry of possessions! Spread them as widely as you will, if only you may have as a “farm” what was once called a kingdom; make whatever you can your own, provided only that it is more than your neighbour’s!

21. And now for a word with you, whose luxury spreads itself out as widely as the greed of those to whom I have just referred. To you I say: “Will this custom continue until there is no lake over which the pinnacles of your country-houses do not tower? Until there is no river whose banks are not bordered by your lordly structures? Wherever hot waters shall gush forth in rills, there you will be causing new resorts of luxury to rise. Wherever the shore shall bend

into a bay, there will you straightway be laying foundations, and, not content with any land that has not been made by art, you will bring the sea within your boundaries. On every side let your house-tops flash in the sun, now set on mountain peaks where they command an extensive outlook over sea and land, now lifted from the plain to the height of mountains; build your manifold structures, your huge piles, – you are nevertheless but individuals, and puny ones at that! What profit to you are your many bed-chambers? You sleep in one. No place is yours where you yourselves are not.” 22. “Next I pass to you, you whose bottomless and insatiable maw explores on the one hand the seas, on the other the earth, with enormous toil hunting down your prey, now with hook, now with snare, now with nets of various kinds; no animal has peace except when you are cloyed with it. And how slight a portion of those banquets of yours, prepared for you by so many hands, do you taste with your pleasure-jaded palate! How slight a portion of all that game, whose taking was fraught with danger, does the master’s sick and squeamish stomach relish? How slight a portion of all those shell-fish, imported from so far, slips down that insatiable gullet? Poor wretches, do you not know that your appetites are bigger than your bellies?”

23. Talk in this way to other men, – provided that while you talk you also listen; write in this way, – provided that while you write you read, remembering that everything you hear or read, is to be applied to conduct, and to the alleviation of passion’s fury. Study, not in order to add anything to your knowledge, but to make your knowledge better. Farewell.

XC. On the Part Played by Philosophy in the Progress of Man

1. Who can doubt, my dear Lucilius, that life is the gift of the immortal gods, but that living well is the gift of philosophy? Hence the idea that our debt to philosophy is greater than our debt to the gods, in proportion as a good life is more of a benefit than mere life, would be regarded as correct, were not philosophy itself a boon which the gods have bestowed upon us. They have given the knowledge thereof to none, but the faculty of acquiring it they have given to all. 2. For if they had made philosophy also a general good, and if we were gifted with understanding at our birth, wisdom would have lost her best attribute – that she is not one of the gifts of fortune. For as it is, the precious and noble characteristic of wisdom is that she does not advance to meet us, that each man is indebted to himself for her, and that we do not seek her at the hands of others.

What would there be in philosophy worthy of your respect, if she were a thing that came by bounty? 3. Her sole function is to discover the truth about things divine and things human. From her side religion never departs, nor duty, nor justice, nor any of the whole company of virtues which cling together in close-united fellowship. Philosophy has taught us to worship that which is divine, to love that which is human; she has told us that with the gods lies dominion, and among men, fellowship. This fellowship remained unspoiled for a long time, until avarice tore the community asunder and became the cause of poverty, even in the case of those whom she herself had most enriched. For men cease to possess all things the moment they desire all things for their own.

4. But the first men and those who sprang from them, still unspoiled, followed nature, having one man as both their leader and their law, entrusting themselves to the control of one better than themselves. For nature has the habit of subjecting the weaker to the stronger. Even among the dumb animals those which are either biggest or fiercest hold sway. It is no weakling bull that leads the herd; it is one that has beaten the other males by his might and his

muscle. In the case of elephants, the tallest goes first; among men, the best is regarded as the highest. That is why it was to the mind that a ruler was assigned; and for that reason the greatest happiness rested with those peoples among whom a man could not be the more powerful unless he were the better. For that man can safely accomplish what he will who thinks he can do nothing except what he ought to do.

5. Accordingly, in that age which is maintained to be the golden age, Posidonius holds that the government was under the jurisdiction of the wise. They kept their hands under control, and protected the weaker from the stronger. They gave advice, both to do and not to do; they showed what was useful and what was useless. Their forethought provided that their subjects should lack nothing; their bravery ward off dangers; their kindness enriched and adorned their subjects. For them ruling was a service, not an exercise of royalty. No ruler tried his power against those to whom he owed the beginnings of his power; and no one had the inclination, or the excuse, to do wrong, since the ruler ruled well and the subject obeyed well, and the king could utter no greater threat against disobedient subjects than that they should depart from the kingdom.

6. But when once vice stole in and kingdoms were transformed into tyrannies, a need arose for laws and these very laws were in turn framed by the wise. Solon, who established Athens upon a firm basis by just laws, was one of the seven men renowned for their wisdom. Had Lycurgus lived in the same period, an eighth would have been added to that hallowed number seven. The laws of Zaleucus and Charondas are praised; it was not in the forum or in the offices of skilled counsellors, but in the silent and holy retreat of Pythagoras, that these two men learned the principles of justice which they were to establish in Sicily (which at that time was prosperous) and throughout Grecian Italy.

7. Up to this point I agree with Posidonius; but that philosophy discovered the arts of which life makes use in its daily round I refuse to admit. Nor will I ascribe to it an artisan's glory. Posidonius says: "When men were scattered over the earth, protected by eaves or by the dug-out shelter of a cliff or by the trunk of a hollow tree, it was philosophy that taught them to build houses." But I, for my part, do

not hold that philosophy devised these shrewdly-contrived dwellings of ours which rise story upon story, where city crowds against city, any more than that she invented the fish-preserves, which are enclosed for the purpose of saving men's gluttony from having to run the risk of storms, and in order that, no matter how wildly the sea is raging, luxury may have its safe harbours in which to fatten fancy breeds of fish. 8. What! Was it philosophy that taught the use of keys and bolts? Nay, what was that except giving a hint to avarice? Was it philosophy that erected all these towering tenements, so dangerous to the persons who dwell in them? Was it not enough for man to provide himself a roof of any chance covering, and to contrive for himself some natural retreat without the help of art and without trouble? Believe me, that was a happy age, before the days of architects, before the days of builders! 9. All this sort of thing was born when luxury was being born, – this matter of cutting timbers square and cleaving a beam with unerring hand as the saw made its way over the marked-out line.

The primal man with wedges split his wood.

For they were not preparing a roof for a future banquet-ball; for no such use did they carry the pine trees or the firs along the trembling streets with a long row of drays – merely to fasten thereon panelled ceilings heavy with gold. 10. Forked poles erected at either end propped up their houses. With close-packed branches and with leaves heaped up and laid sloping they contrived a drainage for even the heaviest rains. Beneath such dwellings, they lived, but they lived in peace. A thatched roof once covered free men; under marble and gold dwells slavery.

11. On another point also I differ from Posidonius, when he holds that mechanical tools were the invention of wise men. For on that basis one might maintain that those were wise who taught the arts

Of setting traps for game, and liming twigs

For birds, and girdling mighty woods with dogs.

It was man's ingenuity, not his wisdom, that discovered all these devices. 12. And I also differ from him when he says that wise men discovered our mines of iron and copper, "when the earth, scorched by forest fires, melted the veins of ore which lay near the surface and caused the metal to gush forth." Nay, the sort of men who discover

such things are the sort of men who are busied with them. 13. Nor do I consider this question so subtle as Posidonius thinks, namely, whether the hammer or the tongs came first into use. They were both invented by some man whose mind was nimble and keen, but not great or exalted; and the same holds true of any other discovery which can only be made by means of a bent body and of a mind whose gaze is upon the ground.

The wise man was easy-going in his way of living. And why not? Even in our own times he would prefer to be as little cumbered as possible. 14. How, I ask, can you consistently admire both Diogenes and Daedalus? Which of these two seems to you a wise man – the one who devised the saw, or the one who, on seeing a boy drink water from the hollow of his hand, forthwith took his cup from his wallet and broke it, upbraiding himself with these words: “Fool that I am, to have been carrying superfluous baggage all this time!” and then curled himself up in his tub and lay down to sleep? 15. In these our own times, which man, pray, do you deem the wiser – the one who invents a process for spraying saffron perfumes to a tremendous height from hidden pipes, who fills or empties canals by a sudden rush of waters, who so cleverly constructs a dining-room with a ceiling of movable panels that it presents one pattern after another, the roof changing as often as the courses, – or the one who proves to others, as well as to himself, that nature has laid upon us no stern and difficult law when she tells us that we can live without the marble-cutter and the engineer, that we can clothe ourselves without traffic in silk fabrics, that we can have everything that is indispensable to our use, provided only that we are content with what the earth has placed on its surface? If mankind were willing to listen to this sage, they would know that the cook is as superfluous to them as the soldier. 16. Those were wise men, or at any rate like the wise, who found the care of the body a problem easy to solve. The things that are indispensable require no elaborate pains for their acquisition; it is only the luxuries that call for labour. Follow nature, and you will need no skilled craftsmen.

Nature did not wish us to be harassed. For whatever she forced upon us, she equipped us. “But cold cannot be endured by the naked body.” What then? Are there not the skins of wild beasts and other

animals, which can protect us well enough, and more than enough, from the cold? Do not many tribes cover their bodies with the bark of trees? Are not the feathers of birds sewn together to serve for clothing? Even at the present day does not a large portion of the Scythian tribe garb itself in the skins of foxes and mice, soft to the touch and impervious to the winds? ¹⁷. “For all that, men must have some thicker protection than the skin, in order to keep off the heat of the sun in summer.” What then? Has not antiquity produced many retreats which, hollowed out either by the damage wrought by time or by any other occurrence you will, have opened into caverns? What then? Did not the very first-comers take twigs and weave them by hand into wicker mats, smear them with common mud, and then with stubble and other wild grasses construct a roof, and thus pass their winters secure, the rains carried off by means of the sloping gables? What then? Do not the peoples on the edge of the Syrtes dwell in dug-out houses and indeed all the tribes who, because of the too fierce blaze of the sun, possess no protection sufficient to keep off the heat except the parched soil itself?

¹⁸. Nature was not so hostile to man that, when she gave all the other animals an easy rôle in life, she made it impossible for him alone to live without all these artifices. None of these was imposed upon us by her; none of them had to be painfully sought out that our lives might be prolonged. All things were ready for us at our birth; it is we that have made everything difficult for ourselves, through our disdain for what is easy. Houses, shelter, creature comforts, food, and all that has now become the source of vast trouble, were ready at hand, free to all, and obtainable for trifling pains. For the limit everywhere corresponded to the need; it is we that have made all those things valuable, we that have made them admired, we that have caused them to be sought for by extensive and manifold devices. ¹⁹. Nature suffices for what she demands. Luxury has turned her back upon nature; each day she expands herself, in all the ages she has been gathering strength, and by her wit promoting the vices. At first, luxury began to lust for what nature regarded as superfluous, then for that which was contrary to nature; and finally she made the soul a bondsman to the body, and bade it be an utter slave to the body’s lusts. All these crafts by which the city is patrolled – or shall I say

kept in uproar – are but engaged in the body's business; time was when all things were offered to the body as to a slave, but now they are made ready for it as for a master. Accordingly, hence have come the workshops of the weavers and the carpenters; hence the savoury smells of the professional cooks; hence the wantonness of those who teach wanton postures, and wanton and affected singing. For that moderation which nature prescribes, which limits our desires by resources restricted to our needs, has abandoned the field; it has now come to this – that to want only what is enough is a sign both of boorishness and of utter destitution.

20. It is hard to believe, my dear Lucilius, how easily the charm of eloquence wins even great men away from the truth. Take, for example, Posidonius – who, in my estimation, is of the number of those who have contributed most to philosophy – when he wishes to describe the art of weaving. He tells how, first, some threads are twisted and some drawn out from the soft, loose mass of wool; next, how the upright warp keeps the threads stretched by means of hanging weights; then, how the inserted thread of the woof, which softens the hard texture of the web which holds it fast on either side, is forced by the batten to make a compact union with the warp. He maintains that even the weaver's art was discovered by wise men, forgetting that the more complicated art which he describes was invented in later days – the art wherein

The web is bound to frame; asunder now

The reed doth part the warp. Between the threads
Is shot the woof by pointed shuttles borne;
The broad comb's well-notched teeth then drive it home.

Suppose he had had the opportunity of seeing the weaving of our own day, which produces the clothing that will conceal nothing, the clothing which affords – I will not say no protection to the body, but none even to modesty!

21. Posidonius then passes on to the farmer. With no less eloquence he describes the ground which is broken up and crossed again by the plough, so that the earth, thus loosened, may allow freer play to the roots; then the seed is sown, and the weeds plucked out

by hand, lest any chance growth or wild plant spring up and spoil the crop. This trade also, he declares, is the creation of the wise, – just as if cultivators of the soil were not even at the present day discovering countless new methods of increasing the soil's fertility! 22. Furthermore, not confining his attention to these arts, he even degrades the wise man by sending him to the mill. For he tells us how the sage, by imitating the processes of nature, began to make bread. "The grain," he says, "once taken into the mouth, is crushed by the flinty teeth, which meet in hostile encounter, and whatever grain slips out the tongue turns back to the selfsame teeth. Then it is blended into a mass, that it may the more easily pass down the slippery throat. When this has readied the stomach, it is digested by the stomach's equable heat; then, and not till then, it is assimilated with the body. 23. Following this pattern," he goes on, "someone placed two rough stones, the one above the other, in imitation of the teeth, one set of which is stationary and awaits the motion of the other set. Then by the rubbing of the one stone against the other, the grain is crushed and brought back again and again, until by frequent rubbing it is reduced to powder. Then this man sprinkled the meal with water, and by continued manipulation subdued the mass and moulded the loaf. This loaf was, at first, baked by hot ashes or by an earthen vessel glowing hot; later on ovens were gradually discovered and the other devices whose heat will render obedience to the sage's will." Posidonius came very near declaring that even the cobbler's trade was the discovery of the wise man.

24. Reason did indeed devise all these things, but it was not right reason. It was man, but not the wise man, that discovered them; just as they invented ships, in which we cross rivers and seas – ships fitted with sails for the purpose of catching the force of the winds, ships with rudders added at the stern in order to turn the vessel's course in one direction or another. The model followed was the fish, which steers itself by its tail, and by its slightest motion on this side or on that bends its swift course. 25. "But," says Posidonius, "the wise man did indeed discover all these things; they were, however, too petty for him to deal with himself and so he entrusted them to his meaner assistants." Not so; these early inventions were thought out by no other class of men than those who have them in charge to-day.

We know that certain devices have come to light only within our own memory – such as the use of windows which admit the clear light through transparent tiles, and such as the vaulted baths, with pipes let into their walls for the purpose of diffusing the heat which maintains an even temperature in their lowest as well as in their highest spaces. Why need I mention the marble with which our temples and our private houses are resplendent? Or the rounded and polished masses of stone by means of which we erect colonnades and buildings roomy enough for nations? Or our signs for whole words, which enable us to take down a speech, however rapidly uttered, matching speed of tongue by speed of hand? All this sort of thing has been devised by the lowest grade of slaves. 26. Wisdom's seat is higher; she trains not the hands, but is mistress of our minds.

Would you know what wisdom has brought forth to light, what she has accomplished? It is not the graceful poses of the body, or the varied notes produced by horn and flute, whereby the breath is received and, as it passes out or through, is transformed into voice. It is not wisdom that contrives arms, or walls, or instruments useful in war; nay, her voice is for peace, and she summons all mankind to concord. 27. It is not she, I maintain, who is the artisan of our indispensable implements of daily use. Why do you assign to her such petty things? You see in her the skilled artisan of life. The other arts, it is true, wisdom has under her control; for he whom life serves is also served by the things which equip life. But wisdom's course is toward the state of happiness; thither she guides us, thither she opens the way for us. 28. She shows us what things are evil and what things are seemingly evil; she strips our minds of vain illusion. She bestows upon us a greatness which is substantial, but she represses the greatness which is inflated, and showy but filled with emptiness; and she does not permit us to be ignorant of the difference between what is great and what is but swollen; nay, she delivers to us the knowledge of the whole of nature and of her own nature. She discloses to us what the gods are and of what sort they are; what are the nether gods, the household deities, and the protecting spirits; what are the souls which have been endowed with lasting life and have been admitted to the second class of divinities, where is their abode and what their activities, powers, and will.

Such are wisdom's rites of initiation, by means of which is unlocked, not a village shrine, but the vast temple of all the gods – the universe itself, whose true apparitions and true aspects she offers to the gaze of our minds. For the vision of our eyes is too dull for sights so great. 29. Then she goes back to the beginnings of things, to the eternal Reason which was imparted to the whole, and to the force which inheres in all the seeds of things, giving them the power to fashion each thing according to its kind. Then wisdom begins to inquire about the soul, whence it comes, where it dwells, how long it abides, into how many divisions it falls. Finally, she has turned her attention from the corporeal to the incorporeal, and has closely examined truth and the marks whereby truth is known, inquiring next how that which is equivocal can be distinguished from the truth, whether in life or in language; for in both are elements of the false mingled with the true.

30. It is my opinion that the wise man has not withdrawn himself, as Posidonius thinks, from those arts which we were discussing, but that he never took them up at all. For he would have judged that nothing was worth discovering that he would not afterwards judge to be worth using always. He would not take up things which would have to be laid aside.

31. "But Anacharsis," says Posidonius, "invented the potter's wheel, whose whirling gives shape to vessels." Then because the potter's wheel is mentioned in Homer, people prefer to believe that Homer's verses are false rather than the story of Posidonius! But I maintain that Anacharsis was not the creator of this wheel; and even if he was, although he was a wise man when he invented it, yet he did not invent it *qua* "wise man" – just as there are a great many things which wise men do as men, not as wise men. Suppose, for example, that a wise man is exceedingly fleet of foot; he will outstrip all the runners in the race by virtue of being fleet, not by virtue of his wisdom. I should like to show Posidonius some glass-blower who by his breath moulds the glass into manifold shapes which could scarcely be fashioned by the most skilful hand. Nay, these discoveries have been made since we men have ceased to discover wisdom.

32. But Posidonius again remarks. "Democritus is said to have

discovered the arch, whose effect was that the curving line of stones, which gradually lean toward each other, is bound together by the keystone.” I am inclined to pronounce this statement false. For there must have been, before Democritus, bridges and gateways in which the curvature did not begin until about the top. It seems to have quite slipped your memory that this same Democritus discovered how ivory could be softened, how, by boiling, a pebble could be transformed into an emerald, – the same process used even to-day for colouring stones which are found to be amenable to this treatment! It may have been a wise man who discovered all such things, but he did not discover them by virtue of being a wise man; for he does many things which we see done just as well, or even more skilfully and dexterously, by men who are utterly lacking in sagacity.

34. Do you ask what, then, the wise man has found out and what he has brought to light? First of all there is truth, and nature; and nature he has not followed as the other animals do, with eyes too dull to perceive the divine in it. In the second place, there is the law of life, and life he has made to conform to universal principles; and he has taught us, not merely to know the gods, but to follow them, and to welcome the gifts of chance precisely as if they were divine commands. He has forbidden us to give heed to false opinions, and has weighed the value of each thing by a true standard of appraisement. He has condemned those pleasures with which remorse is intermingled, and has praised those goods which will always satisfy; and he has published the truth abroad that he is most happy who has no need of happiness, and that he is most powerful who has power over himself.

35. I am not speaking of that philosophy which has placed the citizen outside his country and the gods outside the universe, and which has bestowed virtue upon pleasure, but rather of that philosophy which counts nothing good except what is honourable, – one which cannot be cajoled by the gifts either of man or fortune, one whose value is that it cannot be bought for any value. That this philosophy existed in such a rude age, when the arts and crafts were still unknown and when useful things could only be learned by use, – this I refuse to believe.

36. Next there came the fortune-favoured period when the bounties

of nature lay open to all, for men's indiscriminate use, before avarice and luxury had broken the bonds which held mortals together, and they, abandoning their communal existence, had separated and turned to plunder. The men of the second age were not wise men, even though they did what wise men should do. ³⁷ Indeed, there is no other condition of the human race that anyone would regard more highly; and if God should commission a man to fashion earthly creatures and to bestow institutions upon peoples, this man would approve of no other system than that which obtained among the men of that age, when

No ploughman tilled the soil, nor was it right

To portion off or bound one's property.

Men shared their gains, and earth more freely gave

Her riches to her sons who sought them not.

³⁸ What race of men was ever more blest than that race? They enjoyed all nature in partnership. Nature sufficed for them, now the guardian, as before she was the parent, of all; and this her gift consisted of the assured possession by each man of the common resources. Why should I not even call that race the richest among mortals, since you could not find a poor person among them?

But avarice broke in upon a condition so happily ordained, and, by its eagerness to lay something away and to turn it to its own private use, made all things the property of others, and reduced itself from boundless wealth to straitened need. It was avarice that introduced poverty and, by craving much, lost all. ³⁹ And so, although she now tries to make good her loss, although she adds one estate to another, evicting a neighbour either by buying him out or by wronging him, although she extends her country-seats to the size of provinces and defines ownership as meaning extensive travel through one's own property, – in spite of all these efforts of hers no enlargement of our boundaries will bring us back to the condition from which we have departed.

When there is no more that we can do, we shall possess much; but we once possessed the whole world! ⁴⁰ The very soil was more productive when untilled, and yielded more than enough for peoples

who refrained from despoiling one another. Whatever gift nature had produced, men found as much pleasure in revealing it to another as in having discovered it. It was possible for no man either to surpass another or to fall short of him; what there was, was divided among unquarrelling friends. Not yet had the stronger begun to lay hands upon the weaker; not yet had the miser, by hiding away what lay before him, begun to shut off his neighbour from even the necessities of life; each cared as much for his neighbour as for himself. 41. Armour lay unused, and the hand, unstained by human blood, had turned all its hatred against wild beasts. The men of that day, who had found in some dense grove protection against the sun, and security against the severity of winter or of rain in their mean hiding-places, spent their lives under the branches of the trees and passed tranquil nights without a sigh. Care vexes us in our purple, and routs us from our beds with the sharpest of goads; but how soft was the sleep the hard earth bestowed upon the men of that day! 42. No fretted and panelled ceilings hung over them, but as they lay beneath the open sky the stars glided quietly above them, and the firmament, night's noble pageant, marched swiftly by, conducting its mighty task in silence. For them by day, as well as by night, the visions of this most glorious abode were free and open. It was their joy to watch the constellations as they sank from mid-heaven and others, again, as they rose from their hidden abodes. 43. What else but joy could it be to wander among the marvels which dotted the heavens far and wide? But you of the present day shudder at every sound your houses make, and as you sit among your frescoes the slightest creak makes you shrink in terror. *They* had no houses as big as cities. The air, the breezes blowing free through the open spaces, the flitting shade of crag or tree, springs crystal-clear and streams not spoiled by man's work, whether by water-pipe or by any confinement of the channel, but running at will, and meadows beautiful without the use of art, – amid such scenes were their rude homes, adorned with rustic hand. Such a dwelling was in accordance with nature; therein it was a joy to live, fearing neither the dwelling itself nor for its safety. In these days, however, our houses constitute a large portion of our dread.

44. But no matter how excellent and guileless was the life of the

men of that age, they were not wise men; for that title is reserved for the highest achievement. Still, I would not deny that they were men of lofty spirit and – I may use the phrase – fresh from the gods. For there is no doubt that the world produced a better progeny before it was yet worn out. However, not all were endowed with mental faculties of highest perfection, though in all cases their native powers were more sturdy than ours and more fitted for toil. For nature does not bestow virtue; it is an art to become good. ⁴⁵ They, at least, searched not in the lowest dregs of the earth for gold, nor yet for silver or transparent stones; and they still were merciful even to the dumb animals – so far removed was that epoch from the custom of slaying man by man, not in anger or through fear, but just to make a show! They had as yet no embroidered garments nor did they weave cloth of gold; gold was not yet even mined.

⁴⁶ What, then, is the conclusion of the matter? It was by reason of their ignorance of things that the men of those days were innocent; and it makes a great deal of difference whether one wills not to sin or has not the knowledge to sin. Justice was unknown to them, unknown prudence, unknown also self-control and bravery; but their rude life possessed certain qualities akin to all these virtues. Virtue is not vouchsafed to a soul unless that soul has been trained and taught, and by unremitting practice brought to perfection. For the attainment of this boon, but not in the possession of it, were we born; and even in the best of men, before you refine them by instruction, there is but the stuff of virtue, not virtue itself. Farewell.

XCI. On the Lesson to be Drawn from the Burning of Lyons

1. Our friend Liberalis is now downcast; for he has just heard of the fire which has wiped out the colony of Lyons. Such a calamity might upset anyone at all, not to speak of a man who dearly loves his country. But this incident has served to make him inquire about the strength of his own character, which he has trained, I suppose, just to meet situations that he thought might cause him fear. I do not wonder, however, that he was free from apprehension touching an evil so unexpected and practically unheard of as this, since it is without precedent. For fire has damaged many a city, but has annihilated none. Even when fire has been hurled against the walls by the hand of a foe, the flame dies out in many places, and although continually renewed, rarely devours so wholly as to leave nothing for the sword. Even an earthquake has scarcely ever been so violent and destructive as to overthrow whole cities. Finally, no conflagration has ever before blazed forth so savagely in any town that nothing was left for a second. 2. So many beautiful buildings, any single one of which would make a single town famous, were wrecked in one night. In time of such deep peace an event has taken place worse than men can possibly fear even in time of war. Who can believe it? When weapons are everywhere at rest and when peace prevails throughout the world, Lyons, the pride of Gaul, is missing!

Fortune has usually allowed all men, when she has assailed them collectively, to have a foreboding of that which they were destined to suffer. Every great creation has had granted to it a period of reprieve before its fall; but in this case, only a single night elapsed between the city at its greatest and the city non-existent. In short, it takes me longer to tell you it has perished than it took for the city to perish.

3. All this has affected our friend Liberalis, bending his will, which is usually so steadfast and erect in the face of his own trials. And not without reason has he been shaken; for it is the unexpected that puts the heaviest load upon us. Strangeness adds to the weight of calamities, and every mortal feels the greater pain as a result of that

which also brings surprise.

4. Therefore, nothing ought to be unexpected by us. Our minds should be sent forward in advance to meet all problems, and we should consider, not what is wont to happen, but what can happen. For what is there in existence that Fortune, when she has so willed, does not drag down from the very height of its prosperity? And what is there that she does not the more violently assail the more brilliantly it shines? What is laborious or difficult for her? 5. She does not always attack in one way or even with her full strength; at one time she summons our own hands against us; at another time, content with her own powers, she makes use of no agent in devising perils for us. No time is exempt; in the midst of our very pleasures there spring up causes of suffering. War arises in the midst of peace, and that which we depended upon for protection is transformed into a cause of fear; friend becomes enemy, ally becomes foeman, The summer calm is stirred into sudden storms, wilder than the storms of winter. With no foe in sight we are victims of such fates as foes inflict, and if other causes of disaster fail, excessive good fortune finds them for itself. The most temperate are assailed by illness, the strongest by wasting disease, the most innocent by chastisement, the most secluded by the noisy mob.

Chance chooses some new weapon by which to bring her strength to bear against us, thinking we have forgotten her. 6. Whatever structure has been reared by a long sequence of years, at the cost of great toil and through the great kindness of the gods, is scattered and dispersed by a single day. Nay, he who has said "a day" has granted too long a postponement to swift-coming misfortune; an hour, an instant of time, suffices for the overthrow of empires! It would be some consolation for the feebleness of our selves and our works, if all things should perish as slowly as they come into being; but as it is, increases are of sluggish growth, but the way to ruin is rapid. 7. Nothing, whether public or private, is stable; the destinies of men, no less than those of cities, are in a whirl. Amid the greatest calm terror arises, and though no external agencies stir up commotion, yet evils burst forth from sources whence they were least expected. Thrones which have stood the shock of civil and foreign wars crash to the ground though no one sets them tottering. How few the states which

have carried their good fortune through to the end!

We should therefore reflect upon all contingencies, and should fortify our minds against the evils which may possibly come. 8. Exile, the torture of disease, wars, shipwreck, – we must think on these. Chance may tear you from your country or your country from you, or may banish you to the desert; this very place, where throngs are stifling, may become a desert. Let us place before our eyes in its entirety the nature of man's lot, and if we would not be overwhelmed, or even dazed, by those unwonted evils, as if they were novel, let us summon to our minds beforehand, not as great an evil as oftentimes happens, but the very greatest evil that possibly can happen. We must reflect upon fortune fully and completely.

9. How often have cities in Asia, how often in Achaia, been laid low by a single shock of earthquake! How many towns in Syria, how many in Macedonia, have been swallowed up! How often has this kind of devastation laid Cyprus in ruins! How often has Paphos collapsed! Not infrequently are tidings brought to us of the utter destruction of entire cities; yet how small a part of the world are we, to whom such tidings often come!

Let us rise, therefore, to confront the operations of Fortune, and whatever happens, let us have the assurance that it is not so great as rumour advertises it to be. 10. A rich city has been laid in ashes, the jewel of the provinces, counted as one of them and yet not included with them; rich though it was, nevertheless it was set upon a single hill, and that not very large in extent. But of all those cities, of whose magnificence and grandeur you hear today, the very traces will be blotted out by time. Do you not see how, in Achaia, the foundations of the most famous cities have already crumbled to nothing, so that no trace is left to show that they ever even existed? 11. Not only does that which has been made with hands totter to the ground, not only is that which has been set in place by man's art and man's efforts overthrown by the passing days; nay, the peaks of mountains dissolve, whole tracts have settled, and places which once stood far from the sight of the sea are now covered by the waves. The mighty power of fires has eaten away the hills through whose sides they used to glow, and has levelled to the ground peaks which were once most lofty – the sailor's solace and his beacon. The works of nature herself

are harassed; hence we ought to bear with untroubled minds the destruction of cities. 12. They stand but to fall! This doom awaits them, one and all; it may be that some internal force, and blasts of violence which are tremendous because their way is blocked, will throw off the weight which holds them down; or that a whirlpool of raging currents, mightier because they are hidden in the bosom of the earth, will break through that which resists its power; or that the vehemence of flames will burst asunder the framework of the earth's crust; or that time, from which nothing is safe, will reduce them little by little; or that a pestilential climate will drive their inhabitants away and the mould will corrode their deserted walls. It would be tedious to recount all the ways by which fate may come; but this one thing I know: all the works of mortal man have been doomed to mortality, and in the midst of things which have been destined to die, we live!

13. Hence it is thoughts like these, and of this kind, which I am offering as consolation to our friend Liberalis, who burns with a love for his country that is beyond belief. Perhaps its destruction has been brought about only that it may be raised up again to a better destiny. Oftentimes a reverse has but made room for more prosperous fortune. Many structures have fallen only to rise to a greater height. Timagenes, who had a grudge against Rome and her prosperity, used to say that the only reason he was grieved when conflagrations occurred in Rome was his knowledge that better buildings would arise than those which had gone down in the flames. 14. And probably in this city of Lyons, too, all its citizens will earnestly strive that everything shall be rebuilt better in size and security than what they have lost. May it be built to endure and, under happier auspices, for a longer existence! This is indeed but the hundredth year since this colony was founded – not the limit even of a man's lifetime. Led forth by Plancus, the natural advantages of its site have caused it to wax strong and reach the numbers which it contains to-day; and yet how many calamities of the greatest severity has it endured within the space of an old man's life!

15. Therefore let the mind be disciplined to understand and to endure its own lot, and let it have the knowledge that there is nothing which fortune does not dare – that she has the same jurisdiction over

empires as over emperors, the same power over cities as over the citizens who dwell therein. We must not cry out at any of these calamities. Into such a world have we entered, and under such laws do we live. If you like it, obey; if not, depart whithersoever you wish. Cry out in anger if any unfair measures are taken with reference to you individually; but if this inevitable law is binding upon the highest and the lowest alike, be reconciled to fate, by which all things are dissolved. 16. You should not estimate our worth by our funeral mounds or by these monuments of unequal size which line the road; their ashes level all men! We are unequal at birth, but are equal in death. What I say about cities I say also about their inhabitants. Ardea was captured as well as Rome. The great founder of human law has not made distinctions between us on the basis of high lineage or of illustrious names, except while we live. When, however, we come to the end which awaits mortals, he says: "Depart, ambition! To all creatures that burden the earth let one and the same law apply!" For enduring all things, we are equal; no one is more frail than another, no one more certain of his own life on the morrow.

17. Alexander, king of Macedon, began to study geometry; unhappy man, because he would thereby learn how puny was that earth of which he had seized but a fraction! Unhappy man, I repeat, because he was bound to understand that he was bearing a false title. For who can be "great" in that which is puny? The lessons which were being taught him were intricate and could be learned only by assiduous application; they were not the kind to be comprehended by a madman, who let his thoughts range beyond the ocean. "Teach me something easy!" he cries; but his teacher answers: "These things are the same for all, as hard for one as for another." 18. Imagine that nature is saying to us: "Those things of which you complain are the same for all. I cannot give anything easier to any man, but whoever wishes will make things easier for himself." In what way? By equanimity. You must suffer pain, and thirst, and hunger, and old age too, if a longer stay among men shall be granted you; you must be sick, and you must suffer loss and death. 19. Nevertheless, you should not believe those whose noisy clamour surrounds you; none of these things is an evil, none is beyond your power to bear, or is burdensome. It is only by common opinion that there is anything

formidable in them. Your fearing death is therefore like your fear of gossip. But what is more foolish than a man afraid of words? Our friend Demetrius is wont to put it cleverly when he says: “For me the talk of ignorant men is like the rumblings which issue from the belly. For,” he adds, “what difference does it make to me whether such rumblings come from above or from below?”²⁰ What madness it is to be afraid of disrepute in the judgment of the disreputable! Just as you have had no cause for shrinking in terror from the talk of men, so you have no cause now to shrink from these things, which you would never fear had not their talk forced fear upon you. Does it do any harm to a good man to be besmirched by unjust gossip?²¹ Then let not this sort of thing damage death, either, in our estimation; death also is in bad odour. But no one of those who malign death has made trial of it.

Meanwhile it is foolhardy to condemn that of which you are ignorant. This one thing, however, you do know – that death is helpful to many, that it sets many free from tortures, want, ailments, sufferings, and weariness. We are in the power of nothing when once we have death in our own power! Farewell.

XCII. On the Happy Life

1. You and I will agree, I think, that outward things are sought for the satisfaction of the body, that the body is cherished out of regard for the soul, and that in the soul there are certain parts which minister to us, enabling us to move and to sustain life, bestowed upon us just for the sake of the primary part of us. In this primary part there is something irrational, and something rational. The former obeys the latter, while the latter is the only thing that is not referred back to another, but rather refers all things to itself. For the divine reason also is set in supreme command over all things, and is itself subject to none; and even this reason which we possess is the same, because it is derived from the divine reason. 2. Now if we are agreed on this point, it is natural that we shall be agreed on the following also – namely, that the happy life depends upon this and this alone: our attainment of perfect reason. For it is naught but this that keeps the soul from being bowed down, that stands its ground against Fortune; whatever the condition of their affairs may be, it keeps men untroubled. And that alone is a good which is never subject to impairment. That man, I declare, is happy whom nothing makes less strong than he is; he keeps to the heights, leaning upon none but himself; for one who sustains himself by any prop may fall. If the case is otherwise, then things which do not pertain to us will begin to have great influence over us. But who desires Fortune to have the upper hand, or what sensible man prides himself upon that which is not his own?

3. What is the happy life? It is peace of mind, and lasting tranquillity. This will be yours if you possess greatness of soul; it will be yours if you possess the steadfastness that resolutely clings to a good judgment just reached. How does a man reach this condition? By gaining a complete view of truth, by maintaining, in all that he does, order, measure, fitness, and a will that is inoffensive and kindly, that is intent upon reason and never departs therefrom, that commands at the same time love and admiration. In short, to give you the principle in brief compass, the wise man's soul ought to be such as would be proper for a god. 4. What more can one desire who

possesses all honourable things? For if dishonourable things can contribute to the best estate, then there will be the possibility of a happy life under conditions which do not include an honourable life. And what is more base or foolish than to connect the good of a rational soul with things irrational? 5. Yet there are certain philosophers who hold that the Supreme Good admits of increase because it is hardly complete when the gifts of fortune are adverse. Even Antipater, one of the great leaders of this school, admits that he ascribes some influence to externals, though only a very slight influence. You see, however, what absurdity lies in not being content with the daylight unless it is increased by a tiny fire. What importance can a spark have in the midst of this clear sunlight? 6. If you are not contented with only that which is honourable, it must follow that you desire in addition either the kind of quiet which the Greeks call “undisturbedness,” or else pleasure. But the former may be attained in any case. For the mind is free from disturbance when it is fully free to contemplate the universe, and nothing distracts it from the contemplation of nature. The second, pleasure, is simply the good of cattle. We are but adding the irrational to the rational, the dishonourable to the honourable. A pleasant physical sensation affects this life of ours; 7. why, therefore, do you hesitate to say that all is well with a man just because all is well with his appetite? And do you rate, I will not say among heroes, but among men, the person whose Supreme Good is a matter of flavours and colours and sounds? Nay, let him withdraw from the ranks of this, the noblest class of living beings, second only to the gods; let him herd with the dumb brutes – an animal whose delight is in fodder!

8. The irrational part of the soul is twofold: the one part is spirited, ambitious, uncontrolled; its seat is in the passions; the other is lowly, sluggish, and devoted to pleasure. Philosophers have neglected the former, which, though unbridled, is yet better, and is certainly more courageous and more worthy of a man, and have regarded the latter, which is nerveless and ignoble, as indispensable to the happy life. 9. They have ordered reason to serve this latter; they have made the Supreme Good of the noblest living being an abject and mean affair, and a monstrous hybrid, too, composed of various members which harmonize but ill. For as our Vergil, describing Scylla, says

Above, a human face and maiden's breast,

A beauteous breast, – below, a monster huge
Of bulk and shapeless, with a dolphin's tail
Joined to a wolf-like belly.

And yet to this Scylla are tacked on the forms of wild animals, dreadful and swift; but from what monstrous shapes have these wiseacres compounded wisdom! ¹⁰ Man's primary art is virtue itself; there is joined to this the useless and fleeting flesh, fitted only for the reception of food, as Posidonius remarks. This divine virtue ends in foulness, and to the higher parts, which are worshipful and heavenly, there is fastened a sluggish and flabby animal. As for the second desideratum, – quiet, – although it would indeed not of itself be of any benefit to the soul, yet it would relieve the soul of hindrances; pleasure, on the contrary, actually destroys the soul and softens all its vigour. What elements so inharmonious as these can be found united? To that which is most vigorous is joined that which is most sluggish, to that which is austere that which is far from serious, to that which is most holy that which is unrestrained even to the point of impurity. ¹¹ “What, then,” comes the retort, “if good health, rest, and freedom from pain are not likely to hinder virtue, shall you not seek all these?” Of course I shall seek them, but not because they are goods, – I shall seek them because they are according to nature and because they will be acquired through the exercise of good judgment on my part. What, then, will be good in them? This alone, – that it is a good thing to choose them. For when I don suitable attire, or walk as I should, or dine as I ought to dine, it is not my dinner, or my walk, or my dress that are goods, but the deliberate choice which I show in regard to them, as I observe, in each thing I do, a mean that conforms with reason. ¹² Let me also add that the choice of neat clothing is a fitting object of a man's efforts; for man is by nature a neat and well-groomed animal. Hence the choice of neat attire, and not neat attire in itself, is a good; since the good is not in the thing selected, but in the quality of the selection. Our actions are honourable, but not the actual things which we do. ¹³ And you may assume that what I have said about dress applies also to the body. For

nature has surrounded our soul with the body as with a sort of garment; the body is its cloak. But who has ever reckoned the value of clothes by the wardrobe which contained them? The scabbard does not make the sword good or bad. Therefore, with regard to the body I shall return the same answer to you, – that, if I have the choice, I shall choose health and strength, but that the good involved will be my judgment regarding these things, and not the things themselves.

14. Another retort is: “Granted that the wise man is happy; nevertheless, he does not attain the Supreme Good which we have defined, unless the means also which nature provides for its attainment are at his call. So, while one who possesses virtue cannot be unhappy, yet one cannot be perfectly happy if one lacks such natural gifts as health, or soundness of limb.”¹⁵ But in saying this, you grant the alternative which seems the more difficult to believe, – that the man who is in the midst of unremitting and extreme pain is not wretched, nay, is even happy; and you deny that which is much less serious, – that he is completely happy. And yet, if virtue can keep a man from being wretched, it will be an easier task for it to render him completely happy. For the difference between happiness and complete happiness is less than that between wretchedness and happiness. Can it be possible that a thing which is so powerful as to snatch a man from disaster, and place him among the happy, cannot also accomplish what remains, and render him supremely happy? Does its strength fail at the very top of the climb?¹⁶ There are in life things which are advantageous and disadvantageous, – both beyond our control. If a good man, in spite of being weighed down by all kinds of disadvantages, is not wretched, how is he not supremely happy, no matter if he does lack certain advantages? For as he is not weighted down to wretchedness by his burden of disadvantages, so he is not withdrawn from supreme happiness through lack of any advantages; nay, he is just as supremely happy without the advantages as he is free from wretchedness though under the load of his disadvantages. Otherwise, if his good can be impaired, it can be snatched from him altogether.

17. A short space above, I remarked that a tiny fire does not add to the sun’s light. For by reason of the sun’s brightness any light that

shines apart from the sunlight is blotted out. "But," one may say, "there are certain objects that stand in the way even of the sunlight." The sun, however, is unimpaired even in the midst of obstacles, and, though an object may intervene and cut off our view thereof, the sun sticks to his work and goes on his course. Whenever he shines forth from amid the clouds, he is no smaller, nor less punctual either, than when he is free from clouds; since it makes a great deal of difference whether there is merely something in the way of his light or something which interferes with his shining. ¹⁸ Similarly, obstacles take nothing away from virtue; it is no smaller, but merely shines with less brilliancy. In our eyes, it may perhaps be less visible and less luminous than before; but as regards itself it is the same and, like the sun when he is eclipsed, is still, though in secret, putting forth its strength. Disasters, therefore, and losses, and wrongs, have only the same power over virtue that a cloud has over the sun.

19. We meet with one person who maintains that a wise man who has met with bodily misfortune is neither wretched nor happy. But he also is in error, for he is putting the results of chance upon a parity with the virtues, and is attributing only the same influence to things that are honourable as to things that are devoid of honour. But what is more detestable and more unworthy than to put contemptible things in the same class with things worthy of reverence! For reverence is due to justice, duty, loyalty, bravery, and prudence; on the contrary, those attributes are worthless with which the most worthless men are often blessed in fuller measure, – such as a sturdy leg, strong shoulders, good teeth, and healthy and solid muscles. ²⁰ Again, if the wise man whose body is a trial to him shall be regarded as neither wretched nor happy, but shall be left in a sort of half-way position, his life also will be neither desirable nor undesirable. But what is so foolish as to say that the wise man's life is not desirable? And what is so far beyond the bounds of credence as the opinion that any life is neither desirable nor undesirable? Again, if bodily ills do not make a man wretched, they consequently allow him to be happy. For things which have no power to change his condition for the worse, have not the power, either, to disturb that condition when it is at its best.

21. "But," someone will say, "we know what is cold and what is

hot; a lukewarm temperature lies between. Similarly, A is happy, and B is wretched, and C is neither happy nor wretched.” I wish to examine this figure, which is brought into play against us. If I add to your lukewarm water a larger quantity of cold water, the result will be cold water. But if I pour in a larger quantity of hot water, the water will finally become hot. In the case, however, of your man who is neither wretched nor happy, no matter how much I add to his troubles, he will not be unhappy, according to your argument; hence your figure offers no analogy.²² Again, suppose that I set before you a man who is neither miserable nor happy. I add blindness to his misfortunes; he is not rendered unhappy. I cripple him; he is not rendered unhappy. I add afflictions which are unceasing and severe; he is not rendered unhappy. Therefore, one whose life is not changed to misery by all these ills is not dragged by them, either, from his life of happiness.²³ Then if, as you say, the wise man cannot fall from happiness to wretchedness, he cannot fall into non-happiness. For how, if one has begun to slip, can one stop at any particular place? That which prevents him from rolling to the bottom, keeps him at the summit. Why, you urge, may not a happy life possibly be destroyed? It cannot even be disjointed; and for that reason virtue is itself of itself sufficient for the happy life.

24. “But,” it is said, “is not the wise man happier if he has lived longer and has been distracted by no pain, than one who has always been compelled to grapple with evil fortune?” Answer me now, – is he any better or more honourable? If he is not, then he is not happier either. In order to live more happily, he must live more rightly; if he cannot do that, then he cannot live more happily either. Virtue cannot be strained tighter, and therefore neither can the happy life, which depends on virtue. For virtue is so great a good that it is not affected by such insignificant assaults upon it as shortness of life, pain, and the various bodily vexations. For pleasure does not deserve that. virtue should even glance at it.²⁵ Now what is the chief thing in virtue? It is the quality of not needing a single day beyond the present, and of not reckoning up the days that are ours; in the slightest possible moment of time virtue completes an eternity of good. These goods seem to us incredible and transcending man’s nature; for we measure its grandeur by the standard of our own

weakness, and we call our vices by the name of virtue. Furthermore, does it not seem just as incredible that any man in the midst of extreme suffering should say, "I am happy"? And yet this utterance was heard in the very factory of pleasure, when Epicurus said: "To-day and one other day have been the happiest of all!" although in the one case he was tortured by strangury, and in the other by the incurable pain of an ulcerated stomach. 26. Why, then, should those goods which virtue bestows be incredible in the sight of us, who cultivate virtue, when they are found even in those who acknowledge pleasure as their mistress? These also, ignoble and base-minded as they are, declare that even in the midst of excessive pain and misfortune the wise man will be neither wretched nor happy. And yet this also is incredible, – nay, still more incredible, than the other case. For I do not understand how, if virtue falls from her heights, she can help being hurled all the way to the bottom. She either must preserve one in happiness, or, if driven from this position, she will not prevent us from becoming unhappy. If virtue only stands her ground, she cannot be driven from the field; she must either conquer or be conquered.

27. But some say: "Only to the immortal gods is given virtue and the happy life; we can attain but the shadow, as it were, and semblance of such goods as theirs. We approach them, but we never reach them." Reason, however, is a common attribute of both gods and men; in the gods it is already perfected, in us it is capable of being perfected. 28. But it is our vices that bring us to despair; for the second class of rational being, man, is of an inferior order, – a guardian, as it were, who is too unstable to hold fast to what is best, his judgment still wavering and uncertain. He may require the faculties of sight and hearing, good health, a bodily exterior that is not loathsome, and, besides, greater length of days conjoined with an unimpaired constitution. 29. Though by means of reason he can lead a life which will not bring regrets, yet there resides in this imperfect creature, man, a certain power that makes for badness, because he possesses a mind which is easily moved to perversity. Suppose, however, the badness which is in full view, and has previously been stirred to activity, to be removed; the man is still not a good man, but he is being moulded to goodness. One, however, in whom there is

lacking any quality that makes for goodness, is bad.

30. But

He in whose body virtue dwells, and spirit

E'er present

is equal to the gods; mindful of his origin, he strives to return thither. No man does wrong in attempting to regain the heights from which he once came down. And why should you not believe that something of divinity exists in one who is a part of God? All this universe which encompasses us is one, and it is God; we are associates of God; we are his members. Our soul has capabilities, and is carried thither, if vices do not hold it down. Just as it is the nature of our bodies to stand erect and look upward to the sky, so the soul, which may reach out as far as it will, was framed by nature to this end, that it should desire equality with the gods. And if it makes use of its powers and stretches upward into its proper region it is by no alien path that it struggles toward the heights. 31. It would be a great task to journey heavenwards; the soul but returns thither. When once it has found the road, it boldly marches on, scornful of all things. It casts, no backward glance at wealth; gold and silver – things which are fully worthy of the gloom in which they once lay – it values not by the sheen which smites the eyes of the ignorant, but by the mire of ancient days, whence our greed first detached and dug them out.

The soul, I affirm, knows that riches are stored elsewhere than in men's heaped-up treasure-houses; that it is the soul, and not the strong-box, which should be filled. 32. It is the soul that men may set in dominion over all things, and may install as owner of the universe, so that it may limit its riches only by the boundaries of East and West, and, like the gods, may possess all things; and that it may, with its own vast resources, look down from on high upon the wealthy, no one of whom rejoices as much in his own wealth as he resents the wealth of another. 33. When the soul has transported itself to this lofty height, it regards the body also, since it is a burden which must be borne, not as a thing to love, but as a thing to oversee; nor is it subservient to that over which it is set in mastery. For no man is free who is a slave to his body. Indeed, omitting all the other masters which are brought into being by excessive care for the body, the sway which the body itself exercises is captious and fastidious. 34.

Forth from this body the soul issues, now with unruffled spirit, now with exultation, and, when once it has gone forth, asks not what shall be the end of the deserted day. No; just as we do not take thought for the clippings of the hair and the beard, even so that divine soul, when it is about to issue forth from the mortal man, regards the destination of its earthly vessel – whether it be consumed by fire, or shut in by a stone, or buried in the earth, or torn by wild beasts – as being of no more concern to itself than is the afterbirth to a child just born. And whether this body shall be cast out and plucked to pieces by birds, or devoured when

thrown to the sea-dogs as prey,

how does that concern him who is nothing? ³⁵ Nay even when it is among the living, the soul fears nothing that may happen to the body after death; for though such things may have been threats, they were not enough to terrify the soul previous to the moment of death. It says; “I am not frightened by the executioner’s hook, nor by the revolting mutilation of the corpse which is exposed to the scorn of those who would witness the spectacle. I ask no man to perform the last rites for me; I entrust my remains to none. Nature has made provision that none shall go unburied. Time will lay away one whom cruelty has cast forth.” Those were eloquent words which Maecenas uttered:

I want no tomb; for Nature doth provide

For outcast bodies burial.

You would imagine that this was the saying of a man of strict principles. He was indeed a man of noble and robust native gifts, but in prosperity he impaired these gifts by laxness. Farewell.

XCIII. On the Quality, as Contrasted with the Length, of Life

1. While reading the letter in which you were lamenting the death of the philosopher Metronax as if he might have, and indeed ought to have, lived longer, I missed the spirit of fairness which abounds in all your discussions concerning men and things, but is lacking when you approach one single subject, – as is indeed the case with us all. In other words, I have noticed many who deal fairly with their fellow-men, but none who deals fairly with the gods. We rail every day at Fate, saying “Why has A. been carried off in the very middle of his career? Why is not B. carried off instead? Why should he prolong his old age, which is a burden to himself as well as to others?”

2. But tell me, pray, do you consider it fairer that you should obey Nature, or that Nature should obey you? And what difference does it make how soon you depart from a place which you must depart from sooner or later? We should strive, not to live long, but to live rightly; for to achieve long life you have need of Fate only, but for right living you need the soul. A life is really long if it is a full life; but fullness is not attained until the soul has rendered to itself its proper Good, that is, until it has assumed control over itself. 3. What benefit does this older man derive from the eighty years he has spent in idleness? A person like him has not lived; he has merely tarried awhile in life. Nor has he died late in life; he has simply been a long time dying. He has lived eighty years, has he? That depends upon the date from which you reckon his death! Your other friend, however, departed in the bloom of his manhood. 4. But he had fulfilled all the duties of a good citizen, a good friend, a good son; in no respect had he fallen short. His age may have been incomplete, but his life was complete. The other man has lived eighty years, has he? Nay, he has existed eighty years, unless perchance you mean by “he has lived” what we mean when we say that a tree “lives.”

Pray, let us see to it, my dear Lucilius, that our lives, like jewels of great price, be noteworthy not because of their width but because of their weight. Let us measure them by their performance, not by

their duration. Would you know wherein lies the difference between this hardy man who, despising Fortune, has served through every campaign of life and has attained to life's Supreme Good, and that other person over whose head many years have passed? The former exists even after his death; the latter has died even before he was dead.

5. We should therefore praise, and number in the company of the blest, that man who has invested well the portion of time, however little, that has been allotted to him; for such a one has seen the true light. He has not been one of the common herd. He has not only lived, but flourished. Sometimes he enjoyed fair skies; sometimes, as often happens, it was only through the clouds that there flashed to him the radiance of the mighty star. Why do you ask: "How long did he live?" He still lives! At one bound he has passed over into posterity and has consigned himself to the guardianship of memory.

6. And yet I would not on that account decline for myself a few additional years; although, if my life's space be shortened, I shall not say that I have lacked aught that is essential to a happy life. For I have not planned to live up to the very last day that my greedy hopes had promised me; nay, I have looked upon every day as if it were my last. Why ask the date of my birth, or whether I am still enrolled on the register of the younger men? What I have is my own. 7. Just as one of small stature can be a perfect man, so a life of small compass can be a perfect life. Age ranks among the external things. How long I am to exist is not mine to decide, but how long I shall go on existing in my present way is in my own control. This is the only thing you have the right to require of me, – that I shall cease to measure out an inglorious age as it were in darkness, and devote myself to living instead of being carried along past life.

8. And what, you ask, is the fullest span of life? It is living until you possess wisdom. He who has attained wisdom has reached, not the furthestmost, but the most important, goal. Such a one may indeed exult boldly and give thanks to the gods – aye, and to himself also – and he may count himself Nature's creditor for having lived. He will indeed have the right to do so, for he has paid her back a better life than he has received. He has set up the pattern of a good man, showing the quality and the greatness of a good man. Had another

year been added, it would merely have been like the past.

9. And yet how long are we to keep living? We have had the joy of learning the truth about the universe. We know from what beginnings Nature arises; how she orders the course of the heavens; by what successive changes she summons back the year; how she has brought to an end all things that ever have been, and has established herself as the only end of her own being. We know that the stars move by their own motion, and that nothing except the earth stands still, while all the other bodies run on with uninterrupted swiftness. We know how the moon outstrips the sun; why it is that the slower leaves the swifter behind; in what manner she receives her light, or loses it again; what brings on the night, and what brings back the day. To that place you must go where you are to have a closer view of all these things. 10. "And yet," says the wise man, "I do not depart more valiantly because of this hope – because I judge the path lies clear before me to my own gods. I have indeed earned admission to their presence, and in fact have already been in their company; I have sent my soul to them as they had previously sent theirs to me. But suppose that I am utterly annihilated, and that after death nothing mortal remains; I have no less courage, even if, when I depart, my course leads – nowhere."

"But," you say, "he has not lived as many years as he might have lived." 11. There are books which contain very few lines, admirable and useful in spite of their size; and there are also the *Annals of Tanusius* – you know how bulky the book is, and what men say of it. This is the case with the long life of certain persons, – a state which resembles the *Annals of Tanusius*! 12. Do you regard as more fortunate the fighter who is slain on the last day of the games than one who goes to his death in the middle of the festivities? Do you believe that anyone is so foolishly covetous of life that he would rather have his throat cut in the dressing-room than in the amphitheatre? It is by no longer an interval than this that we precede one another. Death visits each and all; the slayer soon follows the slain. It is an insignificant trifle, after all, that people discuss with so much concern. And anyhow, what does it matter for how long a time you avoid that which you cannot escape? Farewell.

XCIV. On the Value of Advice

1. That department of philosophy which supplies precepts appropriate to the individual case, instead of framing them for mankind at large – which, for instance, advises how a husband should conduct himself towards his wife, or how a father should bring up his children, or how a master should rule his slaves – this department of philosophy, I say, is accepted by some as the only significant part, while the other departments are rejected on the ground that they stray beyond the sphere of practical needs – as if any man could give advice concerning a portion of life without having first gained a knowledge of the sum of life as a whole!

2. But Aristo the Stoic, on the contrary, believes the above-mentioned department to be of slight import – he holds that it does not sink into the mind, having in it nothing but old wives' precepts, and that the greatest benefit is derived from the actual dogmas of philosophy and from the definition of the Supreme Good. When a man has gained a complete understanding of this definition and has thoroughly learned it, he can frame for himself a precept directing what is to be done in a given case. 3. Just as the student of javelin-throwing keeps aiming at a fixed target and thus trains the hand to give direction to the missile, and when, by instruction and practice, he has gained the desired ability he can then employ it against any target he wishes (having learned to strike not any random object, but precisely the object at which he has aimed), – he who has equipped himself for the whole of life does not need to be advised concerning each separate item, because he is now trained to meet his problem as a whole; for he knows not merely how he should live with his wife or his son, but how he should live aright. In this knowledge there is also included the proper way of living with wife and children.

4. Cleanthes holds that this department of wisdom is indeed useful, but that it is a feeble thing unless it is derived from general principles – that is, unless it is based upon a knowledge of the actual dogmas of philosophy and its main headings. This subject is therefore twofold, leading to two separate lines of inquiry: first, Is it useful or useless? and, and second, can it of itself produce a good man? – in other

words, Is it superfluous, or does it render all other departments superfluous?

5. Those who urge the view that this department is superfluous argue as follows: "If an object that is held in front of the eyes interferes with the vision, it must be removed. For just as long as it is in the way, it is a waste of time to offer such precepts as these: 'Walk thus and so; extend your hand in that direction.' Similarly, when something blinds a man's soul and hinders it from seeing a line of duty clearly, there is no use in advising him: 'Live thus and so with your father, thus and so with your wife.' For precepts will be of no avail while the mind is clouded with error; only when the cloud is dispersed will it be clear what one's duty is in each case. Otherwise, you will merely be showing the sick man what he ought to do if he were well, instead of making him well. 6. Suppose you are trying to reveal to the poor man the art of 'acting rich'; how can the thing be accomplished as long as his poverty is unaltered? You are trying to make clear to a starveling in what manner he is to act the part of one with a well-filled stomach; the first requisite, however, is to relieve him of the hunger that grips his vitals.

"The same thing, I assure you, holds good of all faults; the faults themselves must be removed, and precepts should not be given which cannot possibly be carried out while the faults remain. Unless you drive out the false opinions under which we suffer, the miser will never receive instruction as to the proper use of his money, nor the coward regarding the way to scorn danger. 7. You must make the miser know that money is neither a good nor an evil; show him men of wealth who are miserable to the last degree. You must make the coward know that the things which generally frighten us out of our wits are less to be feared than rumour advertises them to be, whether the object of fear be suffering or death; that when death comes – fixed by law for us all to suffer – it is often a great solace to reflect that it can never come again; that in the midst of suffering resoluteness of soul will be as good as a cure, for the soul renders lighter any burden that it endures with stubborn defiance. Remember that pain has this most excellent quality: if prolonged it cannot be severe, and if severe it cannot be prolonged; and that we should bravely accept whatever commands the inevitable laws of the

universe lay upon us.

8. “When by means of such doctrines you have brought the erring man to a sense of his own condition, when he has learned that the happy life is not that which conforms to pleasure, but that which conforms to Nature, when he has fallen deeply in love with virtue as man’s sole good and has avoided baseness as man’s sole evil, and when he knows that all other things – riches, office, health, strength, dominion – fall in between and are not to be reckoned either among goods or among evils, then he will not need a monitor for every separate action, to say to him: ‘Walk thus and so, eat thus and so. This is the conduct proper for a man and that for a woman; this for a married man and that for a bachelor.’ 9. Indeed, the persons who take the greatest pains to proffer such advice are themselves unable to put it into practice. It is thus that the pedagogue advises the boy, and the grandmother her grandson; it is the hottest-tempered schoolmaster who contends that one should never lose one’s temper. Go into an elementary school, and you will learn that just such pronouncements, emanating from high-browed philosophers, are to be found in the lesson-book for boys!

10. “Shall you then offer precepts that are clear, or precepts that are doubtful? Those which are clear need no counsellor, and doubtful precepts gain no credence; so the giving of precepts is superfluous. Indeed you should study the problem in this way: if you are counselling someone on a matter which is of doubtful clearness and doubtful meaning, you must supplement your precepts by proofs; and if you must resort to proofs, your means of proof are more effective and more satisfactory in themselves. 11. ‘It is thus that you must treat your friend, thus your fellow citizen, thus your associate.’ And why? ‘Because it is just.’ Yet I can find all that material included under the head of Justice. I find there that fair play is desirable in itself, that we are not forced into it by fear nor hired to that end for pay, and that no man is just who is attracted by anything in this virtue other than the virtue itself. After convincing myself of this view and thoroughly absorbing it, what good can I obtain from such precepts, which only teach one who is already trained? To one who knows, it is superfluous to give precepts; to one who does not know, it is insufficient. For he must be told, not only what he is being instructed

to do, but also why. 12. I repeat, are such precepts useful to him who has correct ideas about good and evil, or to one who has them not? The latter will receive no benefit from you; for some idea that clashes with your counsel has already monopolized his attention. He who has made a careful decision as to what should be sought and what should be avoided knows what he ought to do, without a single word from you. Therefore, that whole department of philosophy may be abolished.

13. "There are two reasons why we go astray: either there is in the soul an evil quality which has been brought about by wrong opinions, or, even if not possessed by false ideas, the soul is prone to falsehood and rapidly corrupted by some outward appearance which attracts it in the wrong direction. For this reason it is our duty either to treat carefully the diseased mind and free it from faults, or to take possession of the mind when it is still unoccupied and yet inclined to what is evil. Both these results can be attained by the main doctrines of philosophy; therefore the giving of such precepts is of no use. 14. Besides, if we give forth precepts to each individual, the task is stupendous. For one class of advice should be given to the financier, another to the farmer, another to the business man, another to one who cultivates the good graces of royalty, another to him who will seek the friendship of his equals, another to him who will court those of lower rank. 15. In the case of marriage, you will advise one person how he should conduct himself with a wife who before her marriage was a maiden, and another how he should behave with a woman who had previously been wedded to another; how the husband of a rich woman should act, or another man with a dowerless spouse. Or do you not think that there is some difference between a barren woman and one who bears children, between one advanced in years and a mere girl, between a mother and a step-mother? We cannot include all the types, and yet each type requires separate treatment; but the laws of philosophy are concise and are binding in all cases. 16. Moreover, the precepts of wisdom should be definite and certain: when things cannot be defined, they are outside the sphere of wisdom; for wisdom knows the proper limits of things.

"We should therefore do away with this department of precepts, because it cannot afford to all what it promises only to a few;

wisdom, however, embraces all. 17. Between the insanity of people in general and the insanity which is subject to medical treatment there is no difference, except that the latter is suffering from disease and the former from false opinions. In the one case, the symptoms of madness may be traced to ill-health; the other is the ill-health of the mind. If one should offer precepts to a madman – how he ought to speak, how he ought to walk, how he ought to conduct himself in public and private, he would be more of a lunatic than the person whom he was advising. What is really necessary is to treat the black bile and remove the essential cause of the madness. And this is what should also be done in the other case – that of the mind diseased. The madness itself must be shaken off; otherwise, your words of advice will vanish into thin air.”

18. This is what Aristo says; and I shall answer his arguments one by one. First, in opposition to what he says about one’s obligation to remove that which blocks the eye and hinders the vision. I admit that such a person does not need precepts in order to see, but that he needs treatment for the curing of his eyesight and the getting rid of the hindrance that handicaps him. For it is Nature that gives us our eyesight; and he who removes obstacles restores to Nature her proper function. But Nature does not teach us our duty in every case. 19. Again, if a man’s cataract is cured, he cannot, immediately after his recovery, give back their eyesight to other men also; but when we are freed from evil we can free others also. There is no need of encouragement, or even of counsel, for the eye to be able to distinguish different colours; black and white can be differentiated without prompting from another. The mind, on the other hand, needs many precepts in order to see what it should do in life; although in eye-treatment also the physician not only accomplishes the cure, but gives advice into the bargain. 20. He says: “There is no reason why you should at once expose your weak vision to a dangerous glare; begin with darkness, and then go into half-lights, and finally be more bold, accustoming yourself gradually to the bright light of day. There is no reason why you should study immediately after eating; there is no reason why you should impose hard tasks upon your eyes when they are swollen and inflamed; avoid winds and strong blasts of cold air that blow into your face,” – and other suggestions of the same

sort, which are just as valuable as drugs themselves. The physician's art supplements remedies by advice.

21. "But," comes the reply, "error is the source of sin; precepts do not remove error, nor do they rout our false opinions on the subject of Good and Evil." I admit that precepts alone are not effective in overthrowing the mind's mistaken beliefs; but they do not on that account fail to be of service when they accompany other measures also. In the first place, they refresh the memory; in the second place, when sorted into their proper classes, the matters which showed themselves in a jumbled mass when considered as a whole, can be considered in this with greater care. According to our opponents theory, you might even say that consolation, and exhortation were superfluous. Yet they are not superfluous; neither, therefore, is counsel.

22. "But it is folly," they retort, "to prescribe what a sick man ought to do, just as if he were well, when you should really restore his health; for without health precepts are not worth a jot." But have not sick men and sound men something in common, concerning which they need continual advice? For example, not to grasp greedily after food, and to avoid getting over-tired. Poor and rich have certain precepts which fit them both. 23. "Cure their greed, then," people say, "and you will not need to lecture either the poor or the rich, provided that in the case of each of them the craving has subsided." But is it not one thing to be free from lust for money, and another thing to know how to use this money? Misers do not know the proper limits in money matters, but even those who are not misers fail to comprehend its use. Then comes the reply: "Do away with error, and your precepts become unnecessary." That is wrong; for suppose that avarice is slackened, that luxury is confined, that rashness is reined in, and that laziness is pricked by the spur; even after vices are removed, we must continue to learn what we ought to do, and how we ought to do it.

24. "Nothing," it is said, "will be accomplished by applying advice to the more serious faults." No; and not even medicine can master incurable diseases; it is nevertheless used in some cases as a remedy, in others as a relief. Not even the power of universal philosophy, though it summon all its strength for the purpose, will remove from

the soul what is now a stubborn and chronic disease. But Wisdom, merely because she cannot cure everything, is not incapable of making cures. ²⁵ People say: "What good does it do to point out the obvious?" A great deal of good; for we sometimes know facts without paying attention to them. Advice is not teaching; it merely engages the attention and rouses us, and concentrates the memory, and keeps it from losing grip. We miss much that is set before our very eyes. Advice is, in fact, a sort of exhortation. The mind often tries not to notice even that which lies before our eyes; we must therefore force upon it the knowledge of things that are perfectly well known. One might repeat here the saying of Calvus about Vatinius: "You all know that bribery has been going on, and everyone knows that you know it." ²⁶ You know that friendship should be scrupulously honoured, and yet you do not hold it in honour. You know that a man does wrong in requiring chastity of his wife while he himself is intriguing with the wives of other men; you know that, as your wife should have no dealings with a lover, neither should you yourself with a mistress; and yet you do not act accordingly. Hence, you must be continually brought to remember these facts; for they should not be in storage, but ready for use. And whatever is wholesome should be often discussed and often brought before the mind, so that it may be not only familiar to us, but also ready to hand. And remember, too, that in this way what is clear often becomes clearer.

²⁷ "But if," comes the answer, "your precepts are not obvious, you will be bound to add proofs; hence the proofs, and not the precepts, will be helpful." But cannot the influence of the monitor avail even without proofs? It is like the opinions of a legal expert, which hold good even though the reasons for them are not delivered. Moreover, the precepts which are given are of great weight in themselves, whether they be woven into the fabric of song, or condensed into prose proverbs, like the famous *Wisdom of Cato* "Buy not what you need, but what you must have. That which you do not need, is dear even at a farthing." Or those oracular or oracular-like replies, such as ²⁸ "Be thrifty with time!" "Know thyself!" Shall you need to be told the meaning when someone repeats to you lines like these:

Forgetting trouble is the way to cure it.

Fortune favours the brave, but the coward is foiled by his faint heart.

Such maxims need no special pleader; they go straight to our emotions, and help us simply because Nature is exercising her proper function. 29. The soul carries within itself the seed of everything that is honourable, and this seed is stirred to growth by advice, as a spark that is fanned by a gentle breeze develops its natural fire. Virtue is aroused by a touch, a shock. Moreover, there are certain things which, though in the mind, yet are not ready to hand but begin to function easily as soon as they are put into words. Certain things lie scattered about in various places, and it is impossible for the unpractised mind to arrange them in order. Therefore, we should bring them into unity, and join them, so that they may be more powerful and more of an uplift to the soul. 30. Or, if precepts do not avail at all, then every method of instruction should be abolished, and we should be content with Nature alone.

Those who maintain this view do not understand that one man is lively and alert of wit, another sluggish and dull, while certainly some men have more intelligence than others. The strength of the wit is nourished and kept growing by precepts; it adds new points of view to those which are inborn and corrects depraved ideas. 31. "But suppose," people retort, "that a man is not the possessor of sound dogmas, how can advice help him when he is chained down by vicious dogmas?" In this, assuredly, that he is freed there-from; for his natural disposition has not been crushed, but over-shadowed and kept down. Even so it goes on endeavouring to rise again, struggling against the influences that make for evil; but when it wins support and receives the aid of precepts, it grows stronger, provided only that the chronic trouble has not corrupted or annihilated the natural man. For in such a case, not even the training that comes from philosophy, striving with all its might, will make restoration. What difference, indeed, – is there between the dogmas of philosophy and precepts, unless it be this – that the former are general and the latter special? Both deal with advice – the one through the universal, the other through the particular.

32. Some say: "If one is familiar with upright and honourable

dogmas, it will be superfluous to advise him.” By no means; for this person has indeed learned to do things which he ought to do; but he does not see with sufficient clearness what these things are. For we are hindered from accomplishing praiseworthy deeds not only by our emotions, but also by want of practice in discovering the demands of a particular situation. Our minds are often under good control, and yet at the same time are inactive and untrained in finding the path of duty, – and advice makes this clear. ³³ Again, it is written: “Cast out all false opinions concerning Good and Evil, but replace them with true opinions; then advice will have no function to perform.” Order in the soul can doubtless be established in this way; but these are not the only ways. For although we may infer by proofs just what Good and Evil are, nevertheless precepts have their proper rôle. Prudence and justice consist of certain duties; and duties are set in order by precepts. ³⁴ Moreover, judgment as to Good and Evil is itself strengthened by following up our duties, and precepts conduct us to this end. For both are in accord with each other; nor can precepts take the lead unless the duties follow. They observe their natural order; hence precepts clearly come first.

³⁵ “Precepts,” it is said “are numberless.” Wrong again! For they are not numberless so far as concerns important and essential things. Of course there are slight distinctions, due to the time, or the place, or the person; but even in these cases, precepts are given which have a general application. ³⁶ “No one, however,” it is said, “cures madness by precepts, and therefore not wickedness either.” There is a distinction; for if you rid a man of insanity, he becomes sane again, but if we have removed false opinions, insight into practical conduct does not at once follow. Even though it follows, counsel will none the less confirm one’s right opinion concerning Good and Evil. And it is also wrong to believe that precepts are of no use to madmen. For though, by themselves, they are of no avail, yet they are a help towards the cure. Both scolding and chastening rein in a lunatic. Note that I here refer to lunatics whose wits are disturbed but not hopelessly gone.

³⁷ “Still,” it is objected, “laws do not always make us do what we ought to do; and what else are laws than precepts mingled with threats?” Now first of all, the laws do not persuade just because they

threaten; precepts, however, instead of coercing, correct men by pleading. Again, laws frighten one out of committing crime, while precepts urge a man on to his duty. Besides, the laws also are of assistance towards good conduct, at any rate if they instruct as well as command. 38. On this point I disagree with Posidonius, who says: "I do not think that Plato's *Laws* should have the preambles added to them. For a law should be brief, in order that the uninitiated may grasp it all the more easily. It should be a voice, as it were, sent down from heaven; it should command, not discuss. Nothing seems to me more dull or more foolish than a law with a preamble. Warn me, tell me what you wish me to do; I am not learning but obeying." But laws framed in this way are helpful; hence you will notice that a state with defective laws will have defective morals. 39. "But," it is said, "they are not of avail in every case." Well neither is philosophy; and yet philosophy is not on that account ineffectual and useless in the training of the soul. Furthermore, is not philosophy the Law of Life? Grant, if we will, that the laws do not avail; it does not necessarily follow that advice also should not avail. On this ground, you ought to say that consolation does not avail, and warning, and exhortation, and scolding, and praising; since they are all varieties of advice. It is by such methods that we arrive at a perfect condition of mind. 40. Nothing is more successful in bringing honourable influences to bear upon the mind, or in straightening out the wavering spirit that is prone to evil, than association with good men. For the frequent seeing, the frequent hearing of them little by little sinks into the heart and acquires the force of precepts.

We are indeed uplifted merely by meeting wise men; and one can be helped by a great man even when he is silent. 41. I could not easily tell you how it helps us, though I am certain of the fact that I have received help in that way. Phaedo says: "Certain tiny animals do not leave any pain when they sting us; so subtle is their power, so deceptive for purposes of harm. The bite is disclosed by a swelling, and even in the swelling there is no visible wound." That will also be your experience when dealing with wise men, you will not discover how or when the benefit comes to you, but you will discover that you have received it. 42. "What is the point of this remark?" you ask. It is, that good precepts, often welcomed within you, will benefit you just

as much as good examples. Pythagoras declares that our souls experience a change when we enter a temple and behold the images of the gods face to face, and await the utterances of an oracle. 43. Moreover, who can deny that even the most inexperienced are effectively struck by the force of certain precepts? For example, by such brief but weighty saws as: “Nothing in excess,” “The greedy mind is satisfied by no gains,” “You must expect to be treated by others as you yourself have treated them.” We receive a sort of shock when we hear such sayings; no one ever thinks of doubting them or of asking “Why?” So strongly, indeed, does mere truth, unaccompanied by reason, attract us. 44. If reverence reins in the soul and checks vice, why cannot counsel do the same? Also, if rebuke gives one a sense of shame, why has not counsel the same power, even though it does use bare precepts? The counsel which assists suggestion by reason – which adds the motive for doing a given thing and the reward which awaits one who carries out and obeys such precepts is – more effective and settles deeper into the heart. If commands are helpful, so is advice. But one is helped by commands; therefore one is helped also by advice.

45. Virtue is divided into two parts – into contemplation of truth, and conduct. Training teaches contemplation, and admonition teaches conduct. And right conduct both practises and reveals virtue. But if, when a man is about to act, he is helped by advice, he is also helped by admonition. Therefore, if right conduct is necessary to virtue, and if, moreover, admonition makes clear right conduct, then admonition also is an indispensable thing. 46. There are two strong supports to the soul – trust in the truth and confidence; both are the result of admonition. For men believe it, and when belief is established, the soul receives great inspiration and is filled with confidence. Therefore, admonition is not superfluous.

Marcus Agrippa, a great-souled man, the only person among those whom the civil wars raised to fame and power whose prosperity helped the state, used to say that he was greatly indebted to the proverb “Harmony makes small things grow; lack of harmony makes great things decay.” 47. He held that he himself became the best of brothers and the best of friends by virtue of this saying. And if proverbs of such a kind, when welcomed intimately into the soul, can

mould this very soul, why cannot the department of philosophy which consists of such proverbs possess equal influence? Virtue depends partly upon training and partly upon practice; you must learn first, and then strengthen your learning by action. If this be true, not only do the doctrines of wisdom help us but the precepts also, which check and banish our emotions by a sort of official decree.

48. It is said: "Philosophy is divided into knowledge and state of mind. For one who has learned and understood what he should do and avoid, is not a wise man until his mind is metamorphosed into the shape of that which he has learned. This third department – that of precept – is compounded from both the others, from dogmas of philosophy and state of mind. Hence it is superfluous as far as the perfecting of virtue is concerned; the other two parts are enough for the purpose." 49. On that basis, therefore, even consolation would be superfluous, since this also is a combination of the other two, as likewise are exhortation, persuasion, and even proof itself. For proof also originates from a well-ordered and firm mental attitude. But, although these things result from a sound state of mind, yet the sound state of mind also results from them; it is both creative of them and resultant from them. 50. Furthermore, that which you mention is the mark of an already perfect man, of one who has attained the height of human happiness. But the approach to these qualities is slow, and in the meantime in practical matters, the path should be pointed out for the benefit of one who is still short of perfection, but is making progress. Wisdom by her own agency may perhaps show herself this path without the help of admonition; for she has brought the soul to a stage where it can be impelled only in the right direction. Weaker characters, however, need someone to precede them, to say: "Avoid this," or "Do that." 51. Moreover, if one awaits the time when one can know of oneself what the best line of action is, one will sometimes go astray and by going astray will be hindered from arriving at the point where it is possible to be content with oneself. The soul should accordingly be guided at the very moment when it is becoming able to guide itself. Boys study according to direction. Their fingers are held and guided by others so that they may follow the outlines of the letters; next, they are ordered to imitate a copy and base thereon a style of penmanship. Similarly, the mind is helped if it is taught

according to direction. 52. Such facts as these prove that this department of philosophy is not superfluous.

The question next arises whether this part alone is sufficient to make men wise. The problem shall be treated at the proper time; but at present, omitting all arguments, is it not clear that we need someone whom we may call upon as our preceptor in opposition to the precepts of men in general? 53. There is no word which reaches our ears without doing us harm; we are injured both by good wishes and by curses. The angry prayers of our enemies instil false fears in us; and the affection of our friends spoils us through their kindly wishes. For this affection sets us a-groping after goods that are far away, unsure, and wavering, when we really might open the store of happiness at home. 54. We are not allowed, I maintain, to travel a straight road. Our parents and our slaves draw us into wrong. Nobody confines his mistakes to himself; people sprinkle folly among their neighbours, and receive it from them in turn. For this reason, in an individual, you find the vices of nations, because the nation has given them to the individual. Each man, in corrupting others, corrupts himself; he imbibes, and then imparts, badness the result is a vast mass of wickedness, because the worst in every separate person is concentrated in one mass.

55. We should, therefore, have a guardian, as it were, to pluck us continually by the ear and dispel rumours and protest against popular enthusiasms. For you are mistaken if you suppose that our faults are inborn in us; they have come from without, have been heaped upon us. Hence, by receiving frequent admonitions, we can reject the opinions which din about our ears. 56. Nature does not ally us with any vice; she produced us in health and freedom. She put before our eyes no object which might stir in us the itch of greed. She placed gold and silver beneath our feet, and bade those feet stamp down and crush everything that causes us to be stamped down and crushed. Nature elevated our gaze towards the sky and willed that we should look upward to behold her glorious and wonderful works. She gave us the rising and the setting sun, the whirling course of the on-rushing world which discloses the things of earth by day and the heavenly bodies by night, the movements of the stars, which are slow if you compare them with the universe, but most rapid if you reflect

on the size of the orbits which they describe with unslackened speed; she showed us the successive eclipses of sun and moon, and other phenomena, wonderful because they occur regularly or because, through sudden causes they help into view – such as nightly trails of fire, or flashes in the open heavens unaccompanied by stroke or sound of thunder, or columns and beams and the various phenomena of flames. 57. She ordained that all these bodies should proceed above our heads; but gold and silver, with the iron which, because of the gold and silver, never brings peace, she has hidden away, as if they were dangerous things to trust to our keeping. It is we ourselves that have dragged them into the light of day to the end that we might fight over them; it is we ourselves who, tearing away the superincumbent earth, have dug out the causes and tools of our own destruction; it is we ourselves who have attributed our own misdeeds to Fortune, and do not blush to regard as the loftiest objects those which once lay in the depths of earth. 58. Do you wish to know how false is the gleam that has deceived your eyes? There is really nothing fouler or more involved in darkness than these things of earth, sunk and covered for so long a time in the mud where they belong. Of course they are foul; they have been hauled out through a long and murky mine-shaft. There is nothing uglier than these metals during the process of refinement and separation from the ore. Furthermore, watch the very workmen who must handle and sift the barren grade of dirt, the sort which comes from the bottom; see how soot-besmeared they are! 59. And yet the stuff they handle soils the soul more than the body, and there is more foulness in the owner than in the workman.

It is therefore indispensable that we be admonished, that we have some advocate with upright mind, and, amid all the uproar and jangle of falsehood, hear one voice only. But what voice shall this be? Surely a voice which, amid all the tumult of self-seeking, shall whisper wholesome words into the deafened ear, saying: 60. “You need not be envious of those whom the people call great and fortunate; applause need not disturb your composed attitude and your sanity of mind; you need not become disgusted with your calm spirit because you see a great man, clothed in purple, protected by the well-known symbols of authority; you need not judge the magistrate for whom the road is cleared to be any happier than yourself, whom

his officer pushes from the road. If you would wield a command that is profitable to yourself, and injurious to nobody, clear your own faults out of the way. ⁶¹ There are many who set fire to cities, who storm garrisons that have remained impregnable for generations and safe for numerous ages, who raise mounds as high as the walls they are besieging, who with battering-rams and engines shatter towers that have been reared to a wondrous height. There are many who can send their columns ahead and press destructively upon the rear of the foe, who can reach the Great Sea dripping with the blood of nations; but even these men, before they could conquer their foe, were conquered by their own greed. No one withstood their attack; but they themselves could not withstand desire for power and the impulse to cruelty; at the time when they seemed to be hounding others, they were themselves being hounded. ⁶² Alexander was hounded into misfortune and dispatched to unknown countries by a mad desire to lay waste other men's territory. Do you believe that the man was in his senses who could begin by devastating Greece, the land where he received his education? One who snatched away the dearest guerdon of each nation, bidding Spartans be slaves, and Athenians hold their tongues? Not content with the ruin of all the states which Philip had either conquered or bribed into bondage, he overthrew various commonwealths in various places and carried his weapons all over the world; his cruelty was tired, but it never ceased – like a wild beast that tears to pieces more than its hunger demands. ⁶³ Already he has joined many kingdoms into one kingdom; already Greeks and Persians fear the same lord; already nations Darius had left free submit to the yoke: yet he passes beyond the Ocean and the Sun, deeming it shame that he should shift his course of victory from the paths which Hercules and Bacchus had trod; he threatens violence to Nature herself. He does not wish to go; but he cannot stay; he is like a weight that falls headlong, its course ending only when it lies motionless.

⁶⁴ It was not virtue or reason which persuaded Gnaeus Pompeius to take part in foreign and civil warfare; it was his mad craving for unreal glory. Now he attacked Spain and the faction of Sertorius; now he fared forth to enchain the pirates and subdue the seas. These were merely excuses and pretexts for extending his power. ⁶⁵ What

drew him into Africa, into the North, against Mithridates, into Armenia and all the corners of Asia? Assuredly it was his boundless desire to grow bigger; for only in his own eyes was he not great enough. And what impelled Gaius Caesar to the combined ruin of himself and of the state? Renown, self-seeking, and the setting no limit to pre-eminence over all other men. He could not allow a single person to outrank him, although the state allowed two men to stand at its head. 66. Do you think that Gaius Marius, who was once consul (he received this office on one occasion, and stole it on all the others) courted all his perils by the inspiration of virtue when he was slaughtering the Teutons and the Cimbri, and pursuing Jugurtha through the wilds of Africa? Marius commanded armies, ambition Marius.

67. When such men as these were disturbing the world, they were themselves disturbed – like cyclones that whirl together what they have seized, but which are first whirled themselves and can for this reason rush on with all the greater force, having no control over themselves; hence, after causing such destruction to others, they feel in their own body the ruinous force which has enabled them to cause havoc to many. You need never believe that a man can become happy through the unhappiness of another. 68. We must unravel all such cases as are forced before our eyes and crammed into our ears; we must clear out our hearts, for they are full of evil talk. Virtue must be conducted into the place these have seized, – a kind of virtue which may root out falsehood and doctrines which contravene the truth, or may sunder us from the throng, in which we put too great trust, and may restore us to the possession of sound opinions. For this is wisdom – a return to Nature and a restoration to the condition from which man's errors have driven us. 69. It is a great part of health to have forsaken the counsellors of madness and to have fled far from a companionship that is mutually baneful.

That you may know the truth of my remark, see how different is each individual's life before the public from that of his inner self. A quiet life does not of itself give lessons in upright conduct; the countryside does not of itself teach plain living; no, but when witnesses and onlookers are removed, faults which ripen in publicity and display sink into the background. 70. Who puts on the purple robe

for the sake of flaunting it in no man's eyes? Who uses gold plate when he dines alone? Who, as he flings himself down beneath the shadow of some rustic tree, displays in solitude the splendour of his luxury? No one makes himself elegant only for his own beholding, or even for the admiration of a few friends or relatives. Rather does he spread out his well-appointed vices in proportion to the size of the admiring crowd. ⁷¹ It is so: claqueurs and witnesses are irritants of all our mad foibles. You can make us cease to crave, if you only make us cease to display. Ambition, luxury, and waywardness need a stage to act upon; you will cure all those ills if you seek retirement.

⁷² Therefore, if our dwelling is situated amid the din of a city, there should be an adviser standing near us. When men praise great incomes, he should praise the person who can be rich with a slender estate and measures his wealth by the use he makes of it. In the face of those who glorify influence and power, he should of his own volition recommend a leisure devoted to study, and a soul which has left the external and found itself. ⁷³ He should point out persons, happy in the popular estimation, who totter on their envied heights of power, who are dismayed and hold a far different opinion of themselves from what others hold of them. That which others think elevated, is to them a sheer precipice. Hence they are frightened and in a flutter whenever they look down the abrupt steep of their greatness. For they reflect that there are various ways of falling and that the topmost point is the most slippery. ⁷⁴ Then they fear that for which they strove, and the good fortune which made them weighty in the eyes of others weighs more heavily upon themselves. Then they praise easy leisure and independence; they hate the glamour and try to escape while their fortunes are still unimpaired. Then at last you may see them studying philosophy amid their fear, and hunting sound advice when their fortunes go awry. For these two things are, as it were, at opposite poles – good fortune and good sense; that is why we are wiser when in the midst of adversity. It is prosperity that takes away righteousness. Farewell.

XCV. On the Usefulness of Basic Principles

1. You keep asking me to explain without postponement a topic which I once remarked should be put off until the proper time, and to inform you by letter whether this department of philosophy which the Greeks call *paraenetic*, and we Romans call the “preceptorial,” is enough to give us perfect wisdom. Now I know that you will take it in good part if I refuse to do so. But I accept your request all the more willingly, and refuse to let the common saying lose its point:

Don’t ask for what you’ll wish you hadn’t got.

2. For sometimes we seek with effort that which we should decline if offered voluntarily. Call that fickleness or call it pettishness, – we must punish the habit by ready compliance. There are many things that we would have men think that we wish, but that we really do not wish. A lecturer sometimes brings upon the platform a huge work of research, written in the tiniest hand and very closely folded; after reading off a large portion, he says: “I shall stop, if you wish;” and a shout arises: “Read on, read on!” from the lips of those who are anxious for the speaker to hold his peace then and there. We often want one thing and pray for another, not telling the truth even to the gods, while the gods either do not hearken, or else take pity on us. 3. But I shall without pity avenge myself and shall load a huge letter upon your shoulders; for your part, if you read it with reluctance, you may say: “I brought this burden upon myself,” and may class yourself among those men whose too ambitious wives drive them frantic, or those whom riches harass, earned by extreme sweat of the brow, or those who are tortured with the titles which they have sought by every sort of device and toil, and all others who are responsible for their own misfortunes.

4. But I must stop this preamble and approach the problem under consideration. Men say: “The happy life consists in upright conduct; precepts guide one to upright conduct; therefore precepts are sufficient for attaining the happy life.” But they do not always guide us to upright conduct; this occurs only when the will is receptive; and sometimes they are applied in vain, when wrong opinions obsess the soul. 5. Furthermore, a man may act rightly without knowing that he

is acting rightly. For nobody, except he be trained from the start and equipped with complete reason, can develop to perfect proportions, understanding when he should do certain things, and to what extent, and in whose company, and how, and why. Without such training a man cannot strive with all his heart after that which is honourable, or even with steadiness or gladness, but will ever be looking back and wavering.

6. It is also said: "If honourable conduct results from precepts, then precepts are amply sufficient for the happy life; but the first of these statements is true; therefore the second is true also." We shall reply to these words that honourable conduct is, to be sure, brought about by precepts, but not by precepts alone. 7. "Then," comes the reply, "if the other arts are content with precepts, wisdom will also be content therewith; for wisdom itself is an art of living. And yet the pilot is made by precepts which tell him thus and so to turn the tiller, set his sails, make use of a fair wind, tack, make the best of shifting and variable breezes – all in the proper manner. Other craftsmen also are drilled by precepts; hence precepts will be able to accomplish the same result in the case of our craftsman in the art of living." 8. Now all these arts are concerned with the tools of life, but not with life as a whole. Hence there is much to clog these arts from without and to complicate them – such as hope, greed, fear. But that art which professes to teach the art of life cannot be forbidden by any circumstance from exercising its functions; for it shakes off complications and pierces through obstacles. Would you like to know how unlike its status is to the other arts? In the case of the latter, it is more pardonable to err voluntarily rather than by accident; but in the case of wisdom the worst fault is to commit sin wilfully. 9. I mean something like this: A scholar will blush for shame, not if he makes a grammatical blunder intentionally, but if he makes it unintentionally; if a physician does not recognize that his patient is failing, he is a much poorer practitioner than if he recognizes the fact and conceals his knowledge. But in this art of living a voluntary mistake is the more shameful.

Furthermore, many arts, aye and the most liberal of them all, have their special doctrine, and not mere precepts of advice – the medical profession, for example. There are the different schools of

Hippocrates, of Asclepiades, of Themison. 10. And besides, no art that concerns itself with theories can exist without its own doctrines; the Greeks call them *dogmas*, while we Romans may use the term “doctrines,” or “tenets,” or “adopted principles,” – such as you will find in geometry or astronomy. But philosophy is both theoretic and practical; it contemplates and at the same time acts. You are indeed mistaken if you think that philosophy offers you nothing but worldly assistance; her aspirations are loftier than that. She cries: “I investigate the whole universe, nor am I content, keeping myself within a mortal dwelling, to give you favourable or unfavourable advice. Great matters invite and such as are set far above you. In the words of Lucretius:

11. To thee shall I reveal the ways of heaven

And the gods, spreading before thine eyes
The atoms, – whence all things are brought to birth,
Increased, and fostered by creative power,
And eke their end when Nature casts them off.

Philosophy, therefore, being theoretic, must have her doctrines. 12. And why? Because no man can duly perform right actions except one who has been entrusted with reason, which will enable him, in all cases, to fulfil all the categories of duty. These categories he cannot observe unless he receives precepts for every occasion, and not for the present alone. Precepts by themselves are weak and, so to speak, rootless if they be assigned to the parts and not to the whole. It is the doctrines which will strengthen and support us in peace and calm, which will include simultaneously the whole of life and the universe in its completeness. There is the same difference between philosophical doctrines and precepts as there is between elements and members; the latter depend upon the former, while the former are the source both of the latter and of all things.

13. People say: “The old-style wisdom advised only what one should do and avoid; and yet the men of former days were better men by far. When savants have appeared, sages have become rare. For that frank, simple virtue has changed into hidden and crafty knowledge; we are taught how to debate, not how to live.” 14. Of

course, as you say, the old-fashioned wisdom, especially in its beginnings, was crude; but so were the other arts, in which dexterity developed with progress. Nor indeed in those days was there yet any need for carefully-planned cures. Wickedness had not yet reached such a high point, or scattered itself so broadcast. Plain vices could be treated by plain cures; now, however, we need defences erected with all the greater care, because of the stronger powers by which we are attacked. 15. Medicine once consisted of the knowledge of a few simples, to stop the flow of blood, or to heal wounds; then by degrees it reached its present stage of complicated variety. No wonder that in early days medicine had less to do! Men's bodies were still sound and strong; their food was light and not spoiled by art and luxury, whereas when they began to seek dishes not for the sake of removing, but of rousing, the appetite, and devised countless sauces to whet their gluttony, – then what before was nourishment to a hungry man became a burden to the full stomach. 16. Thence come paleness, and a trembling of wine-sodden muscles, and a repulsive thinness, due rather to indigestion than to hunger. Thence weak tottering steps, and a reeling gait just like that of drunkenness. Thence dropsy, spreading under the entire skin, and the belly growing to a paunch through an ill habit of taking more than it can hold. Thence yellow jaundice, discoloured countenances, and bodies that rot inwardly, and fingers that grow knotty when the joints stiffen, and muscles that are numbed and without power of feeling, and palpitation of the heart with its ceaseless pounding. 17. Why need I mention dizziness? Or speak of pain in the eye and in the ear, itching and aching in the fevered brain, and internal ulcers throughout the digestive system? Besides these, there are countless kinds of fever, some acute in their malignity, others creeping upon us with subtle damage, and still others which approach us with chills and severe ague. 18. Why should I mention the other innumerable diseases, the tortures that result from high living?

Men used to be free from such ills, because they had not yet slackened their strength by indulgence, because they had control over themselves, and supplied their own needs. They toughened their bodies by work and real toil, tiring themselves out by running or hunting or tilling the earth. They were refreshed by food in which

only a hungry man could take pleasure. Hence, there was no need for all our mighty medical paraphernalia, for so many instruments and pill-boxes. For plain reasons they enjoyed plain health; it took elaborate courses to produce elaborate diseases. 19. Mark the number of things – all to pass down a single throat – that luxury mixes together, after ravaging land and sea. So many different dishes must surely disagree; they are bolted with difficulty and are digested with difficulty, each jostling against the other. And no wonder, that diseases which result from ill-assorted food are variable and manifold; there must be an overflow when so many unnatural combinations are jumbled together. Hence there are as many ways of being ill as there are of living. 20. The illustrious founder of the guild and profession of medicine remarked that women never lost their hair or suffered from pain in the feet; and yet nowadays they run short of hair and are afflicted with gout. This does not mean that woman's physique has changed, but that it has been conquered; in rivalling male indulgences they have also rivalled the ills to which men are heirs. 21. They keep just as late hours, and drink just as much liquor; they challenge men in wrestling and carousing; they are no less given to vomiting from distended stomachs and to thus discharging all their wine again; nor are they behind the men in gnawing ice, as a relief to their fevered digestions. And they even match the men in their passions, although they were created to feel love passively (may the gods and goddesses confound them!). They devise the most impossible varieties of unchastity, and in the company of men they play the part of men. What wonder, then, that we can trip up the statement of the greatest and most skilled physician, when so many women are gouty and bald! Because of their vices, women have ceased to deserve the privileges of their sex; they have put off their womanly nature and are therefore condemned to suffer the diseases of men.

22. Physicians of old time knew nothing about prescribing frequent nourishment and propping the feeble pulse with wine; they did not understand the practice of blood-letting and of easing chronic complaints with sweat-baths; they did not understand how, by bandaging ankles and arms, to recall to the outward parts the hidden strength which had taken refuge in the centre. They were not

compelled to seek many varieties of relief, because the varieties of suffering were very few in number. 23. Nowadays, however, to what a stage have the evils of ill-health advanced! This is the interest which we pay on pleasures which we have coveted beyond what is reasonable and right. You need not wonder that diseases are beyond counting: count the cooks! All intellectual interests are in abeyance; those who follow culture lecture to empty rooms, in out-of-the-way places. The halls of the professor and the philosopher are deserted; but what a crowd there is in the cafés! How many young fellows besiege the kitchens of their gluttonous friends! 24. I shall not mention the troops of luckless boys who must put up with other shameful treatment after the banquet is over. I shall not mention the troops of catamites, rated according to nation and colour, who must all have the same smooth skin, and the same amount of youthful down on their cheeks, and the same way of dressing their hair, so that no boy with straight locks may get among the curly-heads. Nor shall I mention the medley of bakers, and the numbers of waiters who at a given signal scurry to carry in the courses. Ye gods! How many men are kept busy to humour a single belly! 25. What? Do you imagine that those mushrooms, the epicure's poison, work no evil results in secret, even though they have had no immediate effect? What? Do you suppose that your summer snow does not harden the tissue of the liver? What? Do you suppose that those oysters, a sluggish food fattened on slime, do not weigh one down with mud-begotten heaviness? What? Do you not think that the so-called "Sauce from the Provinces," the costly extract of poisonous fish, burns up the stomach with its salted putrefaction? What? Do you judge that the corrupted dishes which a man swallows almost burning from the kitchen fire, are quenched in the digestive system without doing harm? How repulsive, then, and how unhealthy are their belchings, and how disgusted men are with themselves when they breathe forth the fumes of yesterday's debauch! You may be sure that their food is not being digested, but is rotting.

26. I remember once hearing gossip about a notorious dish into which everything over which epicures love to dally had been heaped together by a cookshop that was fast rushing into bankruptcy; there were two kinds of mussels, and oysters trimmed round at the line

where they are edible, set off at intervals by sea-urchins; the whole was flanked by mullets cut up and served without the bones. 27. In these days we are ashamed of separate foods; people mix many flavours into one. The dinner table does work which the stomach ought to do. I look forward next to food being served masticated! And how little we are from it already when we pick out shells and bones and the cook performs the office of the teeth!

They say: "It is too much trouble to take our luxuries one by one; let us have everything served at the same time and blended into the same flavour. Why should I help myself to a single dish? Let us have many coming to the table at once; the dainties of various courses should be combined and confounded. 28. Those who used to declare that this was done for display and notoriety should understand that it is not done for show, but that it is an oblation to our sense of duty! Let us have at one time, drenched in the same sauce, the dishes that are usually served separately. Let there be no difference: let oysters, sea-urchins, shell-fish, and mullets be mixed together and cooked in the same dish." No vomited food could be jumbled up more helter-skelter. 29. And as the food itself is complicated, so the resulting diseases are complex, unaccountable, manifold, variegated; medicine has begun to campaign against them in many ways and by many rules of treatment.

Now I declare to you that the same statement applies to philosophy. It was once more simple because men's sins were on a smaller scale, and could be cured with but slight trouble; in the face, however, of all this moral topsy-turvy men must leave no remedy untried. And would that this pest might so at last be overcome! 30. We are mad, not only individually, but nationally. We check manslaughter and isolated murders; but what of war and the much-vaunted crime of slaughtering whole peoples? There are no limits to our greed, none to our cruelty. And as long as such crimes are committed by stealth and by individuals, they are less harmful and less portentous; but cruelties are practised in accordance with acts of senate and popular assembly, and the public is bidden to do that which is forbidden to the individual. 31. Deeds that would be punished by loss of life when committed in secret, are praised by us because uniformed generals have carried them out. Man, naturally

the gentlest class of being, is not ashamed to revel in the blood of others, to wage war, and to entrust the waging of war to his sons, when even dumb beasts and wild beasts keep the peace with one another. 32. Against this overmastering and widespread madness philosophy has become a matter of greater effort, and has taken on strength in proportion to the strength which is gained by the opposition forces.

It used to be easy to scold men who were slaves to drink and who sought out more luxurious food; it did not require a mighty effort to bring the spirit back to the simplicity from which it had departed only slightly. But now

33. One needs the rapid hand, the master-craft.

Men seek pleasure from every source. No vice remains within its limits; luxury is precipitated into greed. We are overwhelmed with forgetfulness of that which is honourable. Nothing that has an attractive value, is base. Man, an object of reverence in the eyes of man, is now slaughtered for jest and sport; and those whom it used to be unholy to train for the purpose of inflicting and enduring wounds, are thrust forth exposed and defenceless; and it is a satisfying spectacle to see a man made a corpse.

34. Amid this upset condition of morals, something stronger than usual is needed, – something which will shake off these chronic ills; in order to root out a deep-seated belief in wrong ideas, conduct must be regulated by doctrines. It is only when we add precepts, consolation, and encouragement to these, that they can prevail; by themselves they are ineffective. 35. If we would hold men firmly bound and tear them away from the ills which clutch them fast, they must learn what is evil and what is good. They must know that everything except virtue changes its name and becomes now good and now bad. Just as the soldier's primary bond of union is his oath of allegiance and his love for the flag, and a horror of desertion, and just as, after this stage, other duties can easily be demanded of him, and trusts given to him when once the oath has been administered; so it is with those whom you would bring to the happy life: the first foundations must be laid, and virtue worked into these men. Let them be held by a sort of superstitious worship of virtue; let them love her; let them desire to live with her, and refuse to live without her.

36. “But what, then,” people say, “have not certain persons won their way to excellence without complicated training? Have they not made great progress by obeying bare precepts alone?” Very true; but their temperaments were propitious, and they snatched salvation as it were by the way. For just as the immortal gods did not learn virtue having been born with virtue complete, and containing in their nature the essence of goodness – even so certain men are fitted with unusual qualities and reach without a long apprenticeship that which is ordinarily a matter of teaching, welcoming honourable things as soon as they hear them. Hence come the choice minds which seize quickly upon virtue, or else produce it from within themselves. But your dull, sluggish fellow, who is hampered by his evil habits, must have this soul-rust incessantly rubbed off. 37. Now, as the former sort, who are inclined towards the good, can be raised to the heights more quickly: so the weaker spirits will be assisted and freed from their evil opinions if we entrust to them the accepted principles of philosophy; and you may understand how essential these principles are in the following way. Certain things sink into us, rendering us sluggish in some ways, and hasty in others. These two qualities, the one of recklessness and the other of sloth, cannot be respectively checked or roused unless we remove their causes, which are mistaken admiration and mistaken fear. As long as we are obsessed by such feelings, you may say to us: “You owe this duty to your father, this to your children, this to your friends, this to your guests”; but greed will always hold us back, no matter how we try. A man may know that he should fight for his country, but fear will dissuade him. A man may know that he should sweat forth his last drop of energy on behalf of his friends, but luxury will forbid. A man may know that keeping a mistress is the worst kind of insult to his wife, but lust will drive him in the opposite direction. 38. It will therefore be of no avail to give precepts unless you first remove the conditions that are likely to stand in the way of precepts; it will do no more good than to place weapons by your side and bring yourself near the foe without having your hands free to use those weapons. The soul, in order to deal with the precepts which we offer, must first be set free. 39. Suppose that a man is acting as he should; he cannot keep it up continuously or consistently, since he will not know the reason for so acting. Some of

his conduct will result rightly because of luck or practice; but there will be in his hand no rule by which he may regulate his acts, and which he may trust to tell him whether that which he has done is right. One who is good through mere chance will not give promise of retaining such a character for ever. 40. Furthermore, precepts will perhaps help you to do what should be done; but they will not help you to do it in the proper way; and if they do not help you to this end, they do not conduct you to virtue. I grant you that, if warned, a man will do what he should; but that is not enough, since the credit lies, not in the actual deed, but in the way it is done. 41. What is more shameful than a costly meal which eats away the income even of a knight? Or what so worthy of the censor's condemnation as to be always indulging oneself and one's "inner man," if I may speak as the gluttons do? And yet often has an inaugural dinner cost the most careful man a cool million! The very sum that is called disgraceful if spent on the appetite, is beyond reproach if spent for official purposes! For it is not luxury but an expenditure sanctioned by custom.

42. A mullet of monstrous size was presented to the Emperor Tiberius. They say it weighed four and one half pounds (and why should I not tickle the palates of certain epicures by mentioning its weight?). Tiberius ordered it to be sent to the fish-market and put up for sale, remarking: "I shall be taken entirely by surprise, my friends, if either Apicius or P. Octavius does not buy that mullet." The guess came true beyond his expectation: the two men bid, and Octavius won, thereby acquiring a great reputation among his intimates because he had bought for five thousand sesterces a fish which the Emperor had sold, and which even Apicius did not succeed in buying. To pay such a price was disgraceful for Octavius, but not for the individual who purchased the fish in order to present it to Tiberius, – though I should be inclined to blame the latter as well; but at any rate he admired a gift of which he thought Caesar worthy.

When people sit by the bedsides of their sick friends, we honour their motives. 43. But when people do this for the purpose of attaining a legacy, they are like vultures waiting for carrion. The same act may be either shameful or honourable: the purpose and the manner make all the difference. Now each of our acts will be honourable if we

declare allegiance to honour and judge honour and its results to be the only good that can fall to man's lot; for other things are only temporarily good. 44. I think, then, that there should be deeply implanted a firm belief which will apply to life as a whole: this is what I call a "doctrine." And as this belief is, so will be our acts and our thoughts. As our acts and our thoughts are, so will our lives be. It is not enough, when a man is arranging his existence as a whole, to give him advice about details. 45. Marcus Brutus, in the book which he has entitled *Concerning Duty*, gives many precepts to parents, children, and brothers; but no one will do his duty as he ought, unless he has some principle to which he may refer his conduct. We must set before our eyes the goal of the Supreme Good, towards which we may strive, and to which all our acts and words may have reference – just as sailors must guide their course according to a certain star. 46. Life without ideals is erratic: as soon as an ideal is to be set up, doctrines begin to be necessary. I am sure you will admit that there is nothing more shameful than uncertain and wavering conduct, than the habit of timorous retreat. This will be our experience in all cases unless we remove that which checks the spirit and clogs it, and keeps it from making an attempt and trying with all its might.

47. Precepts are commonly given as to how the gods should be worshipped. But let us forbid lamps to be lighted on the Sabbath, since the gods do not need light, neither do men take pleasure in soot. Let us forbid men to offer morning salutation and to throng the doors of temples; mortal ambitions are attracted by such ceremonies, but God is worshipped by those who truly know Him. Let us forbid bringing towels and flesh-scrapers to Jupiter, and proffering mirrors to Juno; for God seeks no servants. Of course not; he himself does service to mankind, everywhere and to all he is at hand to help. Although a man hear what limit he should observe in sacrifice, and how far he should recoil from burdensome superstitions, he will never make sufficient progress until he has conceived a right idea of God, – regarding Him as one who possesses all things, and allots all things, and bestows them without price. 49. And what reason have the Gods for doing deeds of kindness? It is their nature. One who thinks that they are unwilling to do harm, is wrong; they cannot do harm. They cannot receive or inflict injury; for doing harm is in the same

category as suffering harm. The universal nature, all-glorious and all-beautiful, has rendered incapable of inflicting ill those whom it has removed from the danger of ill.

50. The first way to worship the gods is to believe in the gods; the next to acknowledge their majesty, to acknowledge their goodness without which there is no majesty. Also, to know that they are supreme commanders in the universe, controlling all things by their power and acting as guardians of the human race, even though they are sometimes unmindful of the individual. They neither give nor have evil but they do chasten and restrain certain persons and impose penalties, and sometimes punish by bestowing that which seems good outwardly. Would you win over the gods? Then be a good man. Whoever imitates them, is worshipping them sufficiently. 51. Then comes the second problem, – how to deal with men. What is our purpose? What precepts do we offer? Should we bid them refrain from bloodshed? What a little thing it is not to harm one whom you ought to help! It is indeed worthy of great praise, when man treats man with kindness! Shall we advise stretching forth the hand to the shipwrecked sailor, or pointing out the way to the wanderer, or sharing a crust with the starving? Yes, if I can only tell you first everything which ought to be afforded or withheld; meantime, I can lay down for mankind a rule, in short compass, for our duties in human relationships: 52. all that you behold, that which comprises both god and man, is one – we are the parts of one great body. Nature produced us related to one another, since she created us from the same source and to the same end. She engendered in us mutual affection, and made us prone to friendships. She established fairness and justice; according to her ruling, it is more wretched to commit than to suffer injury. Through her orders, let our hands be ready for all that needs to be helped. 53. Let this verse be in your heart and on your lips:

I am a man; and nothing in man's lot

Do I deem foreign to me.

Let us possess things in common; for birth is ours in common. Our relations with one another are like a stone arch, which would collapse if the stones did not mutually support each other, and which is upheld in this very way.

54. Next, after considering gods and men, let us see how we should make use of things. It is useless for us to have mouthed out precepts, unless we begin by reflecting what opinion we ought to hold concerning everything – concerning poverty, riches, renown, disgrace, citizenship, exile. Let us banish rumour and set a value upon each thing, asking what it is and not what it is called.

55. Now let us turn to a consideration of the virtues. Some persons will advise us to rate prudence very high, to cherish bravery, and to cleave more closely, if possible, to justice than to all other qualities. But this will do us no good if we do not know what virtue is, whether it is simple or compound, whether it is one or more than one, whether its parts are separate or interwoven with one another; whether he who has one virtue possesses the other virtues also; and just what are the distinctions between them. 56. The carpenter does not need to inquire about his art in the light of its origin or of its function, any more than a pantomime need inquire about the art of dancing; if these arts understand themselves, nothing is lacking, for they do not refer to life as a whole. But virtue means the knowledge of other things besides herself: if we would learn virtue we must learn all about virtue. 57. Conduct will not be right unless the will to act is right; for this is the source of conduct. Nor, again, can the will be right without a right attitude of mind; for this is the source of the will. Furthermore, such an attitude of mind will not be found even in the best of men unless he has learned the laws of life as a whole and has worked out a proper judgment about everything, and unless he has reduced facts to a standard of truth. Peace of mind is enjoyed only by those who have attained a fixed and unchanging standard of judgment; the rest of mankind continually ebb and flow in their decisions, floating in a condition where they alternately reject things and seek them. 58. And what is the reason for this tossing to and fro? It is because nothing is clear to them, because they make use of a most unsure criterion – rumour. If you would always desire the same things, you must desire the truth. But one cannot attain the truth without doctrines; for doctrines embrace the whole of life. Things good and evil, honourable and disgraceful, just and unjust, dutiful and undutiful, the virtues and their practice, the possession of comforts, worth and respect, health, strength, beauty, keenness of the

senses – all these qualities call for one who is able to appraise them. One should be allowed to know at what value every object is to be rated on the list; 59. for sometimes you are deceived and believe that certain things are worth more than their real value; in fact, so badly are you deceived that you will find you should value at a mere pennyworth those things which we men regard as worth most of all – for example, riches, influence, and power.

You will never understand this unless you have investigated the actual standard by which such conditions are relatively rated. As leaves cannot flourish by their own efforts, but need a branch to which they may cling and from which they may draw sap, so your precepts, when taken alone, wither away; they must be grafted upon a school of philosophy. 60. Moreover, those who do away with doctrines do not understand that these doctrines are proved by the very arguments through which they seem to disprove them. For what are these men saying? They are saying that precepts are sufficient to develop life, and that the doctrines of wisdom (in other words, dogmas) are superfluous. And yet this very utterance of theirs is a doctrine just as if I should now remark that one must dispense with precepts on the ground that they are superfluous, that one must make use of doctrines, and that our studies should be directed solely towards this end; thus, by my very statement that precepts should not be taken seriously, I should be uttering a precept. 61. There are certain matters in philosophy which need admonition; there are others which need proof, and a great deal of proof, too, because they are complicated and can scarcely be made clear with the greatest care and the greatest dialectic skill. If proofs are necessary, so are doctrines; for doctrines deduce the truth by reasoning. Some matters are clear, and others are vague: those which the senses and the memory can embrace are clear; those which are outside their scope are vague.

But reason is not satisfied by obvious facts; its higher and nobler function is to deal with hidden things. Hidden things need proof; proof cannot come without doctrines; therefore, doctrines are necessary. 62. That which leads to a general agreement, and likewise to a perfect one, is an assured belief in certain facts; but if, lacking this assurance, all things are adrift in our minds, then doctrines are

indispensable; for they give to our minds the means of unswerving decision. 63. Furthermore, when we advise a man to regard his friends as highly as himself, to reflect that an enemy may become a friend, to stimulate love in the friend, and to check hatred in the enemy, we add: "This is just and honourable." Now the just and honourable element in our doctrines is embraced by reason; hence reason is necessary; for without it the doctrines cannot exist, either. 64. But let us unite the two. For indeed branches are useless without their roots, and the roots themselves are strengthened by the growths which they have produced. Everyone can understand how useful the hands are; they obviously help us. But the heart, the source of the hands growth and power and motion, is hidden. And I can say the same thing about precepts: they are manifest, while the doctrines of wisdom are concealed. And as only the initiated know the more hallowed portion of the rites, so in philosophy the hidden truths are revealed only to those who are members and have been admitted to the sacred rites. But precepts and other such matters are familiar even to the uninitiated.

65. Posidonius holds that not only precept-giving (there is nothing to prevent my using this word), but even persuasion, consolation, and encouragement, are necessary. To these he adds the *investigation of causes* (but I fail to see why I should not dare to call it *aetiology*, since the scholars who mount guard over the Latin language thus use the term as having the right to do so). He remarks that it will also be useful to illustrate each particular virtue; this science Posidonius calls *ethology*, while others call it *characterization*. It gives the signs and marks which belong to each virtue and vice, so that by them distinction may be drawn between like things. 66. Its function is the same as that of precept. For he who utters precepts says: "If you would have self-control, act thus and so!" He who illustrates, says "The man who acts thus and so, and refrains from certain other things, possesses self-control." If you ask what the difference here is, I say that the one gives the precepts of virtue, the other its embodiment. These illustrations, or, to use a commercial term, these *samples*, have, I confess, a certain utility; just put them up for exhibition well recommended, and you will find men to copy them. 67. Would you, for instance, deem it a useful thing to have evidence

given you by which you may recognize a thoroughbred horse, and not be cheated in your purchase or waste your time over a low-bred animal? But how much more useful it is to know the marks of a surpassingly fine soul – marks which one may appropriate from another for oneself!

68. Straightway the foal of the high-bred drove, nursed up in the pastures,

Marches with spirited step, and treads with a delicate motion;
First on the dangerous pathway and into the threatening river,
Trusting himself to the unknown bridge, without fear at its creakings,
Neck thrown high in the air, and clear-cut head, and a belly
Spare, back rounded, and breast abounding in courage and muscle.
He, when the clashing of weapons is heard to resound in the distance,
Leaps from his place, and pricks up his ears, and all in a tremble
Pours forth the pent-up fire that lay close-shut in his nostrils.

69. Vergil's description, though referring to something else, might perfectly well be the portrayal of a brave man; at any rate, I myself should select no other simile for a hero. If I had to describe Cato, who was unterrified amid the din of civil war, who was first to attack the armies that were already making for the Alps, who plunged face-forward into the civil conflict, this is exactly the sort of expression and attitude which I should give him. 70. Surely none could "march with more spirited step" than one who rose against Caesar and Pompey at the same time and, when some were supporting Caesar's party and others that of Pompey, issued a challenge to both leaders, thus showing that the republic also had some backers. For it is not enough to say of Cato "without fear at its creakings." Of course he is not afraid! He does not quail before real and imminent noises; in the face of ten legions, Gallic auxiliaries, and a motley host of citizens and foreigners, he utters words fraught with freedom, encouraging the Republic not to fail in the struggle for freedom, but to try all hazards; he declares that it is more honourable to fall into servitude than to fall in line with it. 71. What force and energy are his! What confidence he displays amid the general panic! He knows that he is the only one whose standing is not in question, and that men do not

ask whether Cato is free, but whether he is still *among* the free. Hence his contempt for danger and the sword. What a pleasure it is to say, in admiration of the unflinching steadiness of a hero who did not totter when the whole state was in ruins:

A breast abounding in courage and muscle!

72. It will be helpful not only to state what is the usual quality of good men, and to outline their figures and features, but also to relate and set forth what men there have been of this kind. We might picture that last and bravest wound of Cato's, through which Freedom breathed her last; or the wise Laelius and his harmonious life with his friend Scipio; or the noble deeds of the Elder Cato at home and abroad; or the wooden couches of Tubero, spread at a public feast, goatskins instead of tapestry, and vessels of earthenware set out for the banquet before the very shrine of Jupiter! What else was this except consecrating poverty on the Capitol? Though I know no other deed of his for which to rank him with the Catos, is this one not enough? It was a censorship, not a banquet. 73. How lamentably do those who covet glory fail to understand what glory is, or in what way it should be sought! On that day the Roman populace viewed the furniture of many men; it marvelled only at that of one! The gold and silver of all the others has been broken up and melted down times without number; but Tubero's earthenware will endure throughout eternity. Farewell.

XCVI. On Facing Hardships

1. Spite of all do you still chafe and complain, not understanding that, in all the evils to which you refer, there is really only one – the fact that you *do* chafe and complain? If you ask me, I think that for a *man* there is no misery unless there be something in the universe which he thinks miserable. I shall not endure myself on that day when I find anything unendurable.

I am ill; but that is a part of my lot. My slaves have fallen sick, my income has gone off, my house is rickety, I have been assailed by losses, accidents, toil, and fear; this is a common thing. Nay, that was an understatement; it was an inevitable thing. 2. Such affairs come by order, and not by accident. If you will believe me, it is my inmost emotions that I am just now disclosing to you: when everything seems to go hard and uphill, I have trained myself not merely to obey God, but to agree with His decisions. I follow Him because my soul wills it, and not because I must. Nothing will ever happen to me that I shall receive with ill humour or with a wry face. I shall pay up all my taxes willingly. Now all the things which cause us to groan or recoil, are part of the tax of life – things, my dear Lucilius, which you should never hope and never seek to escape.

3. It was disease of the bladder that made you apprehensive; downcast letters came from you; you were continually getting worse; I will touch the truth more closely, and say that you feared for your life. But come, did you not know, when you prayed for long life, that this was what you were praying for? A long life includes all these troubles, just as a long journey includes dust and mud and rain. 4. “But,” you cry, “I wished to live, and at the same time to be immune from all ills.” Such a womanish cry does no credit to a man. Consider in what attitude you shall receive this prayer of mine (I offer it not only in a good, but in a noble spirit): “May gods and goddesses alike forbid that Fortune keep you in luxury!” 5. Ask yourself voluntarily which you would choose if some god gave you the choice – a life in a café or life in a camp.

And yet life, Lucilius, is really a battle. For this reason those who are tossed about at sea, who proceed uphill and downhill over

toilsome crags and heights, who go on campaigns that bring the greatest danger, are heroes and front-rank fighters; but persons who live in rotten luxury and ease while others toil, are mere turtle-doves safe only because men despise them. Farewell.

XCVII. On the Degeneracy of the Age

1. You are mistaken, my dear Lucilius, if you think that luxury, neglect of good manners, and other vices of which each man accuses the age in which he lives, are especially characteristic of our own epoch; no, they are the vices of mankind and not of the times. No era in history has ever been free from blame. Moreover, if you once begin to take account of the irregularities belonging to any particular era, you will find – to man's shame be it spoken – that sin never stalked abroad more openly than in Cato's very presence. 2. Would anyone believe that money changed hands in the trial when Clodius was defendant on the charge of secret adultery with Caesar's wife, when he violated the ritual of that sacrifice which is said to be offered on behalf of the people when all males are so rigorously removed outside the precinct, that even pictures of all male creatures are covered up? And yet, money was given to the jury, and, baser even than such a bargain, sexual crimes were demanded of married women and noble youths as a sort of additional contribution. 3. The charge involved less sin than the acquittal; for the defendant on a charge of adultery parcelled out the adulteries, and was not sure of his own safety until he had made the jury criminals like himself. All this was done at the trial in which Cato gave evidence, although that was his sole part therein.

I shall quote Cicero's actual words, because the facts are so bad as to pass belief: 4. "He made assignations, promises, pleas, and gifts. And more than this (merciful Heavens, what an abandoned state of affairs!) upon several of the jury, to round out their reward, he even bestowed the enjoyment of certain women and meetings with noble youths." 5. It is superfluous to be shocked at the bribe; the additions to the bribe were worse. "Will you have the wife of that prig, A.? Very good. Or of B., the millionaire? I will guarantee that you shall lie with her. If you fail to commit adultery, condemn Clodius. That beauty whom you desire shall visit you. I assure you a night in that woman's company without delay; my promise shall be carried out faithfully within the legal time of postponement." It means more to parcel out such crimes than to commit them; it means blackmailing

dignified matrons. 6. These jurymen in the Clodius trial had asked the Senate for a guard – a favour which would have been necessary only for a jury about to convict the accused; and their request had been granted. Hence the witty remark of Catulus after the defendant had been acquitted: “Why did you ask us for the guard? Were you afraid of having your money stolen from you?” And yet, amid jests like these he got off unpunished who before the trial was an adulterer, during the trial a pander, and who escaped conviction more vilely than he deserved it.

7. Do you believe that anything could be more disgraceful than such moral standards – when lust could not keep its hands either from religious worship or from the courts of law, when, in the very inquiry which was held in special session by order of the Senate, more crime was committed than investigated? The question at issue was whether one could be safe after committing adultery; it was shown that one could not be safe without committing adultery! 8. All this bargaining took place in the presence of Pompey and Caesar, of Cicero and Cato, – yes, that very Cato whose presence, it is said, caused the people to refrain from demanding the usual quips and cranks of naked actresses at the Floralia, – if you can believe that men were stricter in their conduct at a festival than in a court-room! Such things will be done in the future, as they have been done in the past; and the licentiousness of cities will sometimes abate through discipline and fear, never of itself.

9. Therefore, you need not believe that it is we who have yielded most to lust and least to law. For young men of to-day live far more simple lives than those of an epoch when a defendant would plead not guilty to an adultery charge before his judges, and his judges admit it before the defendant, when debauchery was practised to secure a verdict, and when Clodius, befriended by the very vices of which he was guilty, played the procurer during the actual hearing of the case. Could one believe this? He to whom one adultery brought condemnation was acquitted because of many. 10. All ages will produce men like Clodius, but not all ages men like Cato. We degenerate easily, because we lack neither guides nor associates in our wickedness, and the wickedness goes on of itself, even without guides or associates. The road to vice is not only downhill, but steep;

and many men are rendered incorrigible by the fact that, while in all other crafts errors bring shame to good craftsmen and cause vexation to those who go astray, the errors of life are a positive source of pleasure. 11. The pilot is not glad when his ship is thrown on her beam-ends; the physician is not glad when he buries his patient; the orator is not glad when the defendant loses a case through the fault of his advocate; but on the other hand every man enjoys his own crimes. A. delights in an intrigue – for it was the very difficulty which attracted him thereto. B. delights in forgery and theft, and is only displeased with his sin when his sin has failed to hit the mark. And all this is the result of perverted habits.

12. Conversely, however, in order that you may know that there is an idea of good conduct present subconsciously in souls which have been led even into the most depraved ways, and that men are not ignorant of what evil is but indifferent – I say that all men hide their sins, and, even though the issue be successful, enjoy the results while concealing the sins themselves. A good conscience, however, wishes to come forth and be seen of men; wickedness fears the very shadows. 13. Hence I hold Epicurus's saying to be most apt: "That the guilty may haply remain hidden is possible, that he should be sure of remaining hidden is not possible," or, if you think that the meaning can be made more clear in this way: "The reason that it is no advantage to wrong-doers to remain hidden is that even though they have the good fortune they have not the assurance of remaining so." This is what I mean: crimes can be well guarded; free from anxiety they cannot be.

14. This view, I maintain, is not at variance with the principles of our school, if it be so explained. And why? Because the first and worst penalty of sin is to have committed sin; and crime, though Fortune deck it out with her favours, though she protect and take it in her charge, can never go unpunished; since the punishment of crime lies in the crime itself. But none the less do these second penalties press close upon the heels of the first – constant fear, constant terror, and distrust in one's own security.

Why, then, should I set wickedness free from such a punishment? Why should I not always leave it trembling in the balance? 15. Let us disagree with Epicurus on the one point, when he declares that there

is no natural justice, and that crime should be avoided because one cannot escape the fear which results therefrom; let us agree with him on the other – that bad deeds are lashed by the whip of conscience, and that conscience is tortured to the greatest degree because unending anxiety drives and whips it on, and it cannot rely upon the guarantors of its own peace of mind. For this, Epicurus, is the very proof that we are by nature reluctant to commit crime, because even in circumstances of safety there is no one who does not feel fear. 16. Good luck frees many men from punishment, but no man from fear. And why should this be if it were not that we have engrained in us a loathing for that which Nature has condemned? Hence even men who hide their sins can never count upon remaining hidden; for their conscience convicts them and reveals them to themselves. But it is the property of guilt to be in fear. It had gone ill with us, owing to the many crimes which escape the vengeance of the law and the prescribed punishments, were it not that those grievous offences against nature must pay the penalty in ready money, and that in place of suffering the punishment comes fear. Farewell.

XCVIII. On the Fickleness of Fortune

1. You need never believe that anyone who depends upon happiness is happy! It is a fragile support – this delight in adventitious things; the joy which entered from without will some day depart. But that joy which springs wholly from oneself is real and sound; it increases and attends us to the last; while all other things which provoke the admiration of the crowd are but temporary Goods. You may reply: “What do you mean? Cannot such things serve both for utility and for delight?” Of course. But only if they depend on us, and not we on them. 2. All things that Fortune looks upon become productive and pleasant, only if he who possesses them is in possession also of himself, and is not in the power of that which belongs to him. For men make a mistake, my dear Lucilius, if they hold that anything good, or evil either, is bestowed upon us by Fortune; it is simply the raw material of Goods and Ills that she gives to us – the sources of things which, in our keeping, will develop into good or ill. For the soul is more powerful than any sort of Fortune; by its own agency it guides its affairs in either direction, and of its own power it can produce a happy life, or a wretched one.

3. A bad man makes everything bad – even things which had come with the appearance of what is best; but the upright and honest man corrects the wrongs of Fortune, and softens hardship and bitterness because he knows how to endure them; he likewise accepts prosperity with appreciation and moderation, and stands up against trouble with steadiness and courage. Though a man be prudent, though he conduct all his interests with well-balanced judgment, though he attempt nothing beyond his strength, he will not attain the Good which is unalloyed and beyond the reach of threats, unless he is sure in dealing with that which is unsure. 4. For whether you prefer to observe other men (and it is easier to make up one’s mind when judging the affairs of others), or whether you observe yourself, with all prejudice laid aside, you will perceive and acknowledge that there is no utility in all these desirable and beloved things, unless you equip yourself in opposition to the fickleness of chance and its consequences, and unless you repeat to yourself often and

uncomplainingly, at every mishap, the words: "Heaven decreed it otherwise!" 5. Nay rather, to adopt a phrase which is braver and nearer the truth – one on which you may more safely prop your spirit – say to yourself, whenever things turn out contrary to your expectation: "Heaven decreed *better!*"

If you are thus poised, nothing will affect you and a man will be thus poised if he reflects on the possible ups and downs in human affairs before he feels their force, and if he comes to regard children, or wife, or property, with the idea that he will not necessarily possess them always and that he will not be any more wretched just because he ceases to possess them. 6. It is tragic for the soul to be apprehensive of the future and wretched in anticipation of wretchedness, consumed with an anxious desire that the objects which give pleasure may remain in its possession to the very end. For such a soul will never be at rest; in waiting for the future it will lose the present blessings which it might enjoy. And there is no difference between grief for something lost and the fear of losing it.

7. But I do not for this reason advise you to be indifferent. Rather do you turn aside from you whatever may cause fear. Be sure to foresee whatever can be foreseen by planning. Observe and avoid, long before it happens, anything that is likely to do you harm. To effect this your best assistance will be a spirit of confidence and a mind strongly resolved to endure all things. He who can bear Fortune, can also beware of Fortune. At any rate, there is no dashing of billows when the sea is calm. And there is nothing more wretched or foolish than premature fear. What madness it is to anticipate one's troubles! 8. In fine, to express my thoughts in brief compass and portray to you those busybodies and self-tormentors – they are as uncontrolled in the midst of their troubles as they are before them. He suffers more than is necessary, who suffers before it is necessary; such men do not weigh the amount of their suffering, by reason of the same failing which prevents them from being ready for it; and with the same lack of restraint they fondly imagine that their luck will last for ever, and fondly imagine that their gains are bound to increase as well as merely continue. They forget this spring-board on which mortal things are tossed, and they guarantee for themselves exclusively a steady continuance of the gifts of chance.

9. For this very reason I regard as excellent the saying of Metrodorus, in a letter of consolation to his sister on the loss of her son, a lad of great promise: “All the Good of mortals is mortal.” He is referring to those Goods towards which men rush in shoals. For the real Good does not perish; it is certain and lasting and it consists of wisdom and virtue; it is the only immortal thing that falls to mortal lot. 10. But men are so wayward, and so forgetful of their goal and of the point toward which every day jostles them, that they are surprised at losing anything, although some day they are bound to lose everything. Anything of which you are entitled the owner is in your possession but is not your own; for there is no strength in that which is weak, nor anything lasting and invincible in that which is frail. We must lose our lives as surely as we lose our property, and this, if we understand the truth, is itself a consolation. Lose it with equanimity; for you must lose your life also.

11. What resource do we find, then, in the face of these losses? Simply this – to keep in memory the things we have lost, and not to suffer the enjoyment which we have derived from them to pass away along with them. To have may be taken from us, to have had, never. A man is thankless in the highest degree if, after losing something, he feels no obligation for having received it. Chance robs us of the thing, but leaves us its use and its enjoyment – and we have lost this if we are so unfair as to regret. 12. Just say to yourself: “Of all these experiences that seem so frightful, none is insuperable. Separate trials have been overcome by many: fire by Mucius, crucifixion by Regulus, poison by Socrates, exile by Rutilius, and a sword-inflicted death by Cato; therefore, let us also overcome something.” 13. Again, those objects which attract the crowd under the appearance of beauty and happiness, have been scorned by many men and on many occasions. Fabricius when he was general refused riches, and when he was censor branded them with disapproval. Tubero deemed poverty worthy both of himself and of the deity on the Capitol when, by the use of earthenware dishes at a public festival, he showed that man should be satisfied with that which the gods could still use. The elder Sextius rejected the honours of office; he was born with an obligation to take part in public affairs, and yet would not accept the broad stripe even when the deified Julius offered it to him. For he

understood that what can be given can also be taken away.

Let us also, therefore, carry out some courageous act of our own accord; let us be included among the ideal types of history. 14. Why have we been slack? Why do we lose heart? That which could be done, can be done, if only we purify our souls and follow Nature; for when one strays away from Nature one is compelled to crave, and fear, and be a slave to the things of chance. We may return to the true path; we may be restored to our proper state; let us therefore be so, in order that we may be able to endure pain, in whatever form it attacks our bodies, and say to Fortune: “You have to deal with a man; seek someone whom you can conquer!”

15. By these words, and words of a like kind, the malignity of the ulcer is quieted down; and I hope indeed that it can be reduced, and either cured or brought to a stop, and grow old along with the patient himself. I am, however, comfortable in my mind regarding him; what we are now discussing is our own loss – the taking-off of a most excellent old man. For he himself has lived a full life, and anything additional may be craved by him, not for his own sake, but for the sake of those who need his services. 16. In continuing to live, he deals generously. Some other person might have put an end to these sufferings; but our friend considers it no less base to flee from death than to flee towards death. “But,” comes the answer, “if circumstances warrant, shall he not take his departure?” Of course, if he can no longer be of service to anyone, if all his business will be to deal with pain. 17. This, my dear Lucilius, is what we mean by studying philosophy while applying it, by practising it on truth – note what courage a prudent man possesses against death, or against pain, when the one approaches and the other weighs heavily. What ought to be done must be learned from one who does it. 18. Up to now we have dealt with arguments – whether any man can resist pain, or whether the approach of death can cast down even great souls. Why discuss it further? Here is an immediate fact for us to tackle – death does not make our friend braver to face pain, nor pain to face death. Rather does he trust himself in the face of both; he does not suffer with resignation because he hopes for death, nor does he die gladly because he is tired of suffering. Pain he endures, death he awaits. Farewell.

XCIX. On Consolation to the Bereaved

1. I enclose a copy of the letter which I wrote to Marullus at the time when he had lost his little son and was reported to be rather womanish in his grief – a letter in which I have not observed the usual form of condolence: for I did not believe that he should be handled gently, since in my opinion he deserved criticism rather than consolation. When a man is stricken and is finding it most difficult to endure a grievous wound, one must humour him for a while; let him satisfy his grief or at any rate work off the first shock; 2. but those who have assumed an indulgence in grief should be rebuked forthwith, and should learn that there are certain follies even in tears.

“Is it solace that you look for? Let me give you a scolding instead! You are like a woman in the way you take your son’s death; what would you do if you had lost an intimate friend? A son, a little child of unknown promise, is dead; a fragment of time has been lost. 3. We hunt out excuses for grief; we would even utter unfair complaints about Fortune, as if Fortune would never give us just reason for complaining! But I had really thought that you possessed spirit enough to deal with concrete troubles, to say nothing of the shadowy troubles over which men make moan through force of habit. Had you lost a friend (which is the greatest blow of all), you would have had to endeavour rather to rejoice because you had possessed him than to mourn because you had lost him.

4. “But many men fail to count up how manifold their gains have been, how great their rejoicings. Grief like yours has this among other evils: it is not only useless, but thankless. Has it then all been for nothing that you have had such a friend? During so many years, amid such close associations, after such intimate communion of personal interests, has nothing been accomplished? Do you bury friendship along with a friend? And why lament having lost him, if it be of no avail to have possessed him? Believe me, a great part of those we have loved, though chance has removed their persons, still abides with us. The past is ours, and there is nothing more secure for us than that which has been. 5. We are ungrateful for past gains, because we hope for the future, as if the future – if so be that any

future is ours – will not be quickly blended with the past. People set a narrow limit to their enjoyments if they take pleasure only in the present; both the future and the past serve for our delight – the one with anticipation, and the other with memories but the one is contingent and may not come to pass, while the other must have been.

“What madness it is, therefore, to lose our grip on that which is the surest thing of all? Let us rest content with the pleasures we have quaffed in past days, if only, while we quaffed them, the soul was not pierced like a sieve, only to lose again whatever it had received. 6. There are countless cases of men who have without tears buried sons in the prime of manhood – men who have returned from the funeral pyre to the Senate chamber, or to any other official duties, and have straightway busied themselves with something else. And rightly; for in the first place it is idle to grieve if you get no help from grief. In the second place, it is unfair to complain about what has happened to one man but is in store for all. Again, it is foolish to lament one’s loss, when there is such a slight interval between the lost and the loser. Hence we should be more resigned in spirit, because we follow closely those whom we have lost.

7. “Note the rapidity of Time – that swiftest of things; consider the shortness of the course along which we hasten at top speed; mark this throng of humanity all straining toward the same point with briefest intervals between them – even when they seem longest; he whom you count as passed away has simply posted on ahead. And what is more irrational than to bewail your predecessor, when you yourself must travel on the same journey? 8. Does a man bewail an event which he knew would take place? Or, if he did not think of death as man’s lot, he has but cheated himself. Does a man bewail an event which he has been admitting to be unavoidable? Whoever complains about the death of anyone, is complaining that he was a man. Everyone is bound by the same terms: he who is privileged to be born, is destined to die. 9. Periods of time separate us, but death levels us. The period which lies between our first day and our last is shifting and uncertain: if you reckon it by its troubles, it is long even to a lad, if by its speed, it is scanty even to a greybeard. Everything is slippery, treacherous, and more shifting than any weather. All things

are tossed about and shift into their opposites at the bidding of Fortune; amid such a turmoil of mortal affairs nothing but death is surely in store for anyone. And yet all men complain about the one thing wherein none of them is deceived. ¹⁰. 'But he died in boyhood.' I am not yet prepared to say that he who quickly comes to the end of his life has the better of the bargain; let us turn to consider the case of him who has grown to old age. How very little is he superior to the child! Place before your mind's eye the vast spread of time's abyss, and consider the universe; and then contrast our so-called human life with infinity: you will then see how scant is that for which we pray, and which we seek to lengthen. ¹¹. How much of this time is taken up with weeping, how much with worry! How much with prayers for death before death arrives, how much with our health, how much with our fears! How much is occupied by our years of inexperience or of useless endeavour! And half of all this time is wasted in sleeping. Add, besides, our toils, our griefs, our dangers – and you will comprehend that even in the longest life real living is the least portion thereof. ¹². Nevertheless, who will make such an admission as: 'A man is not better off who is allowed to return home quickly, whose journey is accomplished before he is wearied out'? Life is neither a Good nor an Evil; it is simply the place where good and evil exist. Hence this little boy has lost nothing except a hazard where loss was more assured than gain. He might have turned out temperate and prudent; he might, with your fostering care, have been moulded to a better standard; but (and this fear is more reasonable) he might have become just like the many. ¹³. Note the youths of the noblest lineage whose extravagance has flung them into the arena; note those men who cater to the passions of themselves and others in mutual lust, whose days never pass without drunkenness or some signal act of shame; it will thus be clear to you that there was more to fear than to hope for.

"For this reason you ought not to invite excuses for grief or aggravate slight burdens by getting indignant. ¹⁴. I am not exhorting you to make an effort and rise to great heights; for my opinion of you is not so low as to make me think that it is necessary for you to summon every bit of your virtue to face this trouble. Yours is not pain; it is a mere sting – and it is you yourself who are turning it into

pain.

“Of a surety philosophy has done you much service if you can bear courageously the loss of a boy who was as yet better known to his nurse than to his father! ¹⁵ And what, then? Now, at this time, am I advising you to be hard-hearted, desiring you to keep your countenance unmoved at the very funeral ceremony, and not allowing your soul even to feel the pinch of pain? By no means. That would mean lack of feeling rather than virtue – to behold the burial ceremonies of those near and dear to you with the same expression as you beheld their living forms, and to show no emotion over the first bereavement in your family. But suppose that I forbade you to show emotion; there are certain feelings which claim their own rights. Tears fall, no matter how we try to check them, and by being shed they ease the soul. ¹⁶ What, then, shall we do? Let us allow them to fall, but let us not command them do so; let us according as emotion floods our eyes, but not as mere imitation shall demand. Let us, indeed, add nothing to natural grief, nor augment it by following the example of others. The display of grief makes more demands than grief itself: how few men are sad in their own company! They lament the louder for being heard; persons who are reserved and silent when alone are stirred to new paroxysms of tears when they behold others near them! At such times they lay violent hands upon their own persons, – though they might have done this more easily if no one were present to check them; at such times they pray for death; at such times they toss themselves from their couches. But their grief slackens with the departure of onlookers. ¹⁷ In this matter, as in others also, we are obsessed by this fault – conforming to the pattern of the many, and regarding convention rather than duty. We abandon nature and surrender to the mob – who are never good advisers in anything, and in this respect as in all others are most inconsistent. People see a man who bears his grief bravely: they call him undutiful and savage-hearted; they see a man who collapses and clings to his dead: they call him womanish and weak. ¹⁸ Everything, therefore, should be referred to reason. But nothing is more foolish than to court a reputation for sadness and to sanction tears; for I hold that with a wise man some tears fall by consent, others by their own force.

“I shall explain the difference as follows: When the first news of some bitter loss has shocked us, when we embrace the form that will soon pass from our arms to the funeral flames – then tears are wrung from us by the necessity of Nature, and the life-force, smitten by the stroke of grief, shakes both the whole body, and the eyes also, from which it presses out and causes to flow the moisture that lies within. 19. Tears like these fall by a forcing-out process, against our will; but different are the tears which we allow to escape when we muse in memory upon those whom we have lost. And there is in them a certain sweet sadness when we remember the sound of a pleasant voice, a genial conversation, and the busy duties of yore; at such a time the eyes are loosened, as it were, with joy. This sort of weeping we indulge; the former sort overcomes us.

20. “There is, then, no reason why, just because a group of persons is standing in your presence or sitting at your side, you should either check or pour forth your tears; whether restrained or outpoured, they are never so disgraceful as when feigned. Let them flow naturally. But it is possible for tears to flow from the eyes of those who are quiet and at peace. They often flow without impairing the influence of the wise man – with such restraint that they show no want either of feeling or of self-respect. 21. We may, I assure you, obey Nature and yet maintain our dignity. I have seen men worthy of reverence, during the burial of those near and dear, with countenances upon which love was written clear even after the whole apparatus of mourning was removed, and who showed no other conduct than that which was allowed to genuine emotion. There is a comeliness even in grief. This should be cultivated by the wise man; even in tears, just as in other matters also, there is a certain sufficiency; it is with the unwise that sorrows, like joys, gush over.

22. “Accept in an unruffled spirit that which is inevitable. What can happen that is beyond belief? Or what that is new? How many men at this very moment are making arrangements for funerals! How many are purchasing grave-clothes! How many are mourning, when you yourself have finished mourning! As often as you reflect that your boy has ceased to be, reflect also upon man, who has no sure promise of anything, whom Fortune does not inevitably escort to the confines of old age, but lets him go at whatever point she sees fit. 23. You may,

however, speak often concerning the departed, and cherish his memory to the extent of your power. This memory will return to you all the more often if you welcome its coming without bitterness; for no man enjoys converse with one who is sorrowful, much less with sorrow itself. And whatever words, whatever jests of his, no matter how much of a child he was, may have given you pleasure to hear – these I would have you recall again and again; assure yourself confidently that he might have fulfilled the hopes which you, his father, had entertained. ²⁴ Indeed, to forget the beloved dead, to bury their memory along with their bodies, to bewail them bounteously and afterwards think of them but scantily – this is the mark of a soul below that of man. For that is the way in which birds and beasts love their young; their affection is quickly roused and almost reaches madness, but it cools away entirely when its object dies. This quality does not befit a man of sense; he should continue to remember, but should cease to mourn. ²⁵ And in no wise do I approve of the remark of Metrodorus – that there is a certain pleasure akin to sadness, and that one should give chase thereto at such times as these. I am quoting the actual words of Metrodorus ²⁶. I have no doubt what your feelings will be in these matters; for what is baser than to ‘chase after’ pleasure in the very midst of mourning – nay rather by means of mourning – and even amid one’s tears to hunt out that which will give pleasure? These are the men who accuse us of too great strictness, slandering our precepts because of supposed harshness – because (say they) we declare that grief should either not be given place in the soul at all, or else should be driven out forthwith. But which is the more incredible or inhuman – to feel no grief at the loss of one’s friend, or to go a-hawking after pleasure in the midst of grief? ²⁷ That which we Stoics advise, is honourable; when emotion has prompted a moderate flow of tears, and has, so to speak, ceased to effervesce, the soul should not be surrendered to grief. But what do you mean, Metrodorus, by saying that with our very grief there should be a blending of pleasure? That is the sweetmeat method of pacifying children; that is the way we still the cries of infants, by pouring milk down their throats!

“Even at the moment when your son’s body is on the pyre, or your friend breathing his last, will you not suffer your pleasure to

cease, rather than tickle your very grief with pleasure? Which is the more honourable – to remove grief from your soul, or to admit pleasure even into the company of grief? Did I say ‘admit’? Nay, I mean ‘chase after,’ and from the hands, too, of grief itself. 28. Metrodorus says: ‘There is a certain pleasure which is related to sadness.’ We Stoics may say that, but you may not. The only Good which you recognize, is pleasure, and the only Evil, pain; and what relationship can there be between a Good and an Evil? But suppose that such a relationship does exist; now, of all times, is it to be rooted out? Shall we examine grief also, and see with what elements of delight and pleasure it is surrounded? 29. Certain remedies, which are beneficial for some parts of the body, cannot be applied to other parts because these are, in a way, revolting and unfit; and that which in certain cases would work to a good purpose without any loss to one’s self-respect, may become unseemly because of the situation of the wound. Are you not, similarly, ashamed to cure sorrow by pleasure? No, this sore spot must be treated in a more drastic way. This is what you should preferably advise: that no sensation of evil can reach one who is dead; for if it can reach him, he is not dead. 30. And I say that nothing can hurt him who is as naught; for if a man can be hurt, he is alive. Do you think him to be badly off because he is no more, or because he still exists as somebody? And yet no torment can come to him from the fact that he is no more – for what feeling can belong to one who does not exist? – nor from the fact that he exists; for he has escaped the greatest disadvantage that death has in it – namely, non-existence.

31. “Let us say this also to him who mourns and misses the untimely dead: that all of us, whether young or old, live, in comparison with eternity, on the same level as regards our shortness of life. For out of all time there comes to us less than what any one could call least, since ‘least’ is at any rate some part; but this life of ours is next to nothing, and yet (fools that we are!), we marshal it in broad array!

32. “These words I have written to you, not with the idea that you should expect a cure from me at such a late date – for it is clear to me that you have told yourself everything that you will read in my letter – but with the idea that I should rebuke you even for the slight delay

during which you lapsed from your true self, and should encourage you for the future, to rouse your spirit against Fortune and to be on the watch for all her missiles, not as if they might possibly come, but as if they were bound to come.” Farewell.

C. On the Writings of Fabianus

1. You write me that you have read with the greatest eagerness the work by Fabianus Papirius entitled *The Duties of a Citizen*, and that it did not come up to your expectations; then, forgetting that you are dealing with a philosopher, you proceed to criticize his style.

Suppose, now, that your statement is true – that he pours forth rather than places his words; let me, however, tell you at the start that this trait of which you speak has a peculiar charm, and that it is a grace appropriate to a smoothly-gliding style. For, I maintain, it matters a great deal whether it tumbles forth, or flows along. Moreover, there is a deal of deference in this regard also – as I shall make clear to you: 2. Fabianus seems to me to have not so much an “efflux” as a “flow” of words: so copious is it, without confusion, and yet not without speed. This is indeed what his style declares and announces – that he has not spent a long time in working his matter over and twisting it into shape. But even supposing the facts are as you would have them; the man was building up character rather than words, and was writing those words for the mind rather than for the ear. 3. Besides, had he been speaking them in his own person, you would not have had time to consider the details – the whole work would have so swept you along. For as a rule that which pleases by its swiftness is of less value when taken in hand for reading.

Nevertheless, this very quality, too, of attracting at first sight is a great advantage, no matter whether careful investigation may discover something to criticize. 4. If you ask me, I should say that he who has forced approval is greater than he who has earned it; and yet I know that the latter is safer, I know that he can give more confident guarantees for the future. A meticulous manner of writing does not suit the philosopher; if he is timid as to words, when will he ever be brave and steadfast, when will he ever really show his worth? 5. Fabianus’s style was not careless, it was assured. That is why you will find nothing shoddy in his work: his words are well chosen and yet not hunted for; they are not unnaturally inserted and inverted, according to the present-day fashion; but they possess distinction, even though they are taken from ordinary speech. There you have

honourable and splendid ideas, not fettered into aphorisms, but spoken with greater freedom. We shall of course notice passages that are not sufficiently pruned, not constructed with sufficient care, and lacking the polish which is in vogue nowadays; but after regarding the whole, you will see that there are no futile subtleties of argument.

6. There may, doubtless, be no variety of marbles, no water-supply which flows from one apartment to another, no “pauper-rooms,” or any other device that luxury adds when ill content with simple charms; but, in the vulgar phrase, it is “a good house to live in.”

Furthermore, opinions vary with regard to the style. Some wish it to be polished down from all roughness; and some take so great a pleasure in the abrupt manner that they would intentionally break up any passage which may by chance spread itself out more smoothly, scattering the closing words in such a way that the sentences may result unexpectedly. 7. Read Cicero: his style has unity; it moves with a modulated pace, and is gentle without being degenerate. The style of Asinius Pollio, on the other hand, is “bumpy,” jerky, leaving off when you least expect it. And finally, Cicero always stops gradually; while Pollio breaks off, except in the very few cases where he cleaves to a definite rhythm and a single pattern.

8. In addition to this, you say that everything in Fabianus seems to you commonplace and lacking in elevation; but I myself hold that he is free from such a fault. For that style of his is not commonplace, but simply calm and adjusted to his peaceful and well-ordered mind – not on a low level but on an even plane. There is lacking the verve and spur of the orator (for which you are looking), and a sudden shock of epigrams. But look, please, at the whole work, how well-ordered it is: there is a distinction in it. His style does not possess, but will suggest, dignity.

9. Mention someone whom you may rank ahead of Fabianus. Cicero, let us say, whose books on philosophy are almost as numerous as those of Fabianus. I will concede this point; but it is no slight thing to be less than the greatest. Or Asinius Pollio, let us say. I will yield again, and content myself by replying: “It is a distinction to be third in so great a field.” You may also include Livy; for Livy wrote both dialogues (which should be ranked as history no less than as philosophy), and works which professedly deal with philosophy. I

shall yield in the case of Livy also. But consider how many writers Fabianus outranks, if he is surpassed by three only – and those three the greatest masters of eloquence!

10. But, it may be said, he does not offer everything: though his style is elevated, it is not strong; though it flows forth copiously, it lacks force and sweep; it is not translucent, but it is lucid. “One would fail,” you urge, “to find therein any rugged denunciation of vice, any courageous words in the face of danger, any proud defiance of Fortune, any scornful threats against self-seeking. I wish to see luxury rebuked, lust condemned, waywardness crushed out. Let him show us the keenness of oratory, the loftiness of tragedy, the subtlety of comedy.” You wish him to rely on that pettiest of things, phraseology; but he has sworn allegiance to the greatness of his subject and draws eloquence after him as a sort of shadow, but not of set purpose.

11. Our author will doubtless not investigate every detail, nor subject it to analysis, nor inspect and emphasize each separate word. This I admit. Many phrases will fall short, or will fail to strike home, and at times the style will slip along indolently; but there will be plenty of light throughout the work; there will be long stretches which will not weary the reader. And, finally, he will offer this quality of making it clear to you that he meant what he wrote. You will understand that his aim was to have you know what pleased him, rather than that he should please you. All his work makes for progress and for sanity, without any search for applause.

12. I do not doubt that his writings are of the kind I have described, although I am harking back to him rather than retaining a sure memory of him, and although the general tone of his writings remains in my mind, not from a careful and recent perusal, but in outline, as is natural after an acquaintance of long ago. But certainly, whenever I heard him lecture, such did his work seem to me – not solid but full, the kind which would inspire young men of promise and rouse their ambition to become like him, without making them hopeless of surpassing him; and this method of encouragement seems to me the most helpful of all. For it is disheartening to inspire in a man the desire, and to take away from him the hope, of emulation. At any rate, his language was fluent, and though one

might not approve every detail, the general effect was noble.
Farewell.

CI. On the Futility of Planning Ahead

1. Every day and every hour reveal to us what a nothing we are, and remind us with some fresh evidence that we have forgotten our weakness; then, as we plan for eternity, they compel us to look over our shoulders at Death.

Do you ask me what this preamble means? It refers to Cornelius Senecio, a distinguished and capable Roman knight, whom you knew: from humble beginnings he had advanced himself to fortune, and the rest of the path already lay downhill before him. For it is easier to grow in dignity than to make a start; 2. and money is very slow to come where there is poverty; until it can creep out of that, it goes halting. Senecio was already bordering upon wealth, helped in that direction by two very powerful assets – knowing how to make money and how to keep it also; either one of these gifts might have made him a rich man. 3. Here was a person who lived most simply, careful of health and wealth alike. He had, as usual, called upon me early in the morning, and had then spent the whole day, even up to nightfall, at the bedside of a friend who was seriously and hopelessly ill. After a comfortable dinner, he was suddenly seized with an acute attack of quinsy, and, with the breath clogged tightly in his swollen throat, barely lived until daybreak. So within a very few hours after the time when he had been performing all the duties of a sound and healthy man, he passed away. 4. He who was venturing investments by land and sea, who had also entered public life and left no type of business untried, during the very realization of financial success and during the very onrush of the money that flowed into his coffers, was snatched from the world!

Graft now thy pears, Meliboeus, and set out thy vines in their order!

But how foolish it is to set out one's life, when one is not even owner of the morrow! O what madness it is to plot out far-reaching hopes! To say: "I will buy and build, loan and call in money, win titles of honour, and then, old and full of years, I will surrender myself to a life of ease." 5. Believe me when I say that everything is doubtful, even for those who are prosperous. No one has any right to

draw for himself upon the future. The very thing that we grasp slips through our hands, and chance cuts into the actual hour which we are crowding so full. Time does indeed roll along by fixed law, but as in darkness; and what is it to me whether Nature's course is sure, when my own is unsure?

6. We plan distant voyages and long-postponed home-comings after roaming over foreign shores, we plan for military service and the slow rewards of hard campaigns, we canvass for governorships and the promotions of one office after another – and all the while death stands at our side; but since we never think of it except as it affects our neighbour, instances of mortality press upon us day by day, to remain in our minds only as long as they stir our wonder.

7. Yet what is more foolish than to wonder that something which may happen every day has happened on any one day? There is indeed a limit fixed for us, just where the remorseless law of Fate has fixed it; but none of us knows how near he is to this limit. Therefore, let us so order our minds as if we had come to the very end. Let us postpone nothing. Let us balance life's account every day. 8. The greatest flaw in life is that it is always imperfect, and that a certain part of it is postponed. One who daily puts the finishing touches to his life is never in want of time. And yet, from this want arise fear and a craving for the future which eats away the mind. There is nothing more wretched than worry over the outcome of future events; as to the amount or the nature of that which remains, our troubled minds are set aflutter with unaccountable fear.

9. How, then, shall we avoid this vacillation? In one way only, – if there be no reaching forward in our life, if it is withdrawn into itself. For he only is anxious about the future, to whom the present is unprofitable. But when I have paid my soul its due, when a soundly-balanced mind knows that a day differs not a whit from eternity – whatever days or problems the future may bring – then the soul looks forth from lofty heights and laughs heartily to itself when it thinks upon the ceaseless succession of the ages. For what disturbance can result from the changes and the instability of Chance, if you are sure in the face of that which is unsure?

10. Therefore, my dear Lucilius, begin at once to live, and count each separate day as a separate life. He who has thus prepared

himself, he whose daily life has been a rounded whole, is easy in his mind; but those who live for hope alone find that the immediate future always slips from their grasp and that greed steals along in its place, and the fear of death, a curse which lays a curse upon everything else. Thence came that most debased of prayers, in which Maecenas does not refuse to suffer weakness, deformity, and as a climax the pain of crucifixion provided only that he may prolong the breath of life amid these sufferings:

11. Fashion me with a palsied hand,

Weak of foot, and a cripple;
Build upon me a crook-backed hump;
Shake my teeth till they rattle;
All is well, if my life remains.
Save, oh, save it, I pray you,
Though I sit on the piercing cross!

12. There he is, praying for that which, if it had befallen him, would be the most pitiable thing in the world! And seeking a postponement of suffering, as if he were asking for life! I should deem him most despicable had he wished to live up to the very time of crucifixion: “Nay,” he cries, “you may weaken my body if you will only leave the breath of life in my battered and ineffective carcass! Maim me if you will, but allow me, misshapen and deformed as I may be, just a little more time in the world! You may nail me up and set my seat upon the piercing cross!” Is it worth while to weigh down upon one’s own wound, and hang impaled upon a gibbet, that one may but postpone something which is the balm of troubles, the end of punishment? Is it worth all this to possess the breath of life only to give it up? 13. What would you ask for Maecenas but the indulgence of Heaven? What does he mean by such womanish and indecent verse? What does he mean by making terms with panic fear? What does he mean by begging so vilely for life? He cannot ever have heard Vergil read the words:

Tell me, is Death so wretched as that?

He asks for the climax of suffering, and – what is still harder to bear – prolongation and extension of suffering; and what does he

gain thereby? Merely the boon of a longer existence. But what sort of life is a lingering death? ¹⁴. Can anyone be found who would prefer wasting away in pain, dying limb by limb, or letting out his life drop by drop, rather than expiring once for all? Can any man be found willing to be fastened to the accursed tree, long sickly, already deformed, swelling with ugly tumours on chest and shoulders, and draw the breath of life amid long-drawn-out agony? I think he would have many excuses for dying even before mounting the cross!

Deny, now, if you can, that Nature is very generous in making death inevitable. ¹⁵. Many men have been prepared to enter upon still more shameful bargains: to betray friends in order to live longer themselves, or voluntarily to debase their children and so enjoy the light of day which is witness of all their sins. We must get rid of this craving for life, and learn that it makes no difference when your suffering comes, because at some time you are bound to suffer. The point is, not how long you live, but how nobly you live. And often this living nobly means that you cannot live long. Farewell.

CII. On the Intimations of Our Immortality

1. Just as a man is annoying when he rouses a dreamer of pleasant dreams (for he is spoiling a pleasure which may be unreal but nevertheless has the appearance of reality), even so your letter has done me an injury. For it brought me back abruptly, absorbed as I was in agreeable meditation and ready to proceed still further if it had been permitted me. 2. I was taking pleasure in investigating the immortality of souls, nay, in believing that doctrine. For I was lending a ready ear to the opinions of the great authors, who not only approve but promise this most pleasing condition. I was giving myself over to such a noble hope; for I was already weary of myself, beginning already to despise the fragments of my shattered existence, and feeling that I was destined to pass over into that infinity of time and the heritage of eternity, when I was suddenly awakened by the receipt of your letter, and lost my lovely dream. But, if I can once dispose of you, I shall reseek and rescue it.

3. There was a remark, at the beginning of your letter, that I had not explained the whole problem wherein I was endeavouring to prove one of the beliefs of our school, that the renown which falls to one's lot after death is a good; for I had not solved the problem with which we are usually confronted: "No good can consist of things that are distinct and separate; yet renown consists of such things." 4. What you are asking about, my dear Lucilius, belongs to another topic of the same subject, and that is why I had postponed the arguments, not only on this one topic, but on other topics which also covered the same ground. For, as you know, certain logical questions are mingled with ethical ones. Accordingly, I handled the essential part of my subject which has to do with conduct – as to whether it is foolish and useless to be concerned with what lies beyond our last day, or whether our goods die with us and there is nothing left of him who is no more, or whether any profit can be attained or attempted beforehand out of that which, when it comes, we shall not be capable of feeling.

5. All these things have a view to conduct, and therefore they have been inserted under the proper topic. But the remarks of dialecticians

in opposition to this idea had to be sifted out, and were accordingly laid aside. Now that you demand an answer to them all, I shall examine all their statements, and then refute them singly. 6. Unless, however, I make a preliminary remark, it will be impossible to understand my rebuttals. And what is that preliminary remark? Simply this: there are certain continuous bodies, such as a man; there are certain composite bodies, – as ships, houses, and everything which is the result of joining separate parts into one sum total: there are certain others made up of things that are distinct, each member remaining separate – like an army, a populace, or a senate. For the persons who go to make up such bodies are united by virtue of law or function; but by their nature they are distinct and individual. Well, what further prefatory remarks do I still wish to make? 7. Simply this: we believe that nothing is a good, if it be composed of things that are distinct. For a single good should be checked and controlled by a single soul; and the essential quality of each single good should be single. This can be proved of itself whenever you desire; in the meanwhile, however, it had to be laid aside, because our own weapons are being hurled at us.

8. Opponents speak thus: “You say, do you, that no good can be made up of things that are distinct? Yet this renown, of which you speak, is simply the favourable opinion of good men. For just as reputation does not consist of one person’s remarks, and as ill repute does not consist of one person’s disapproval, so renown does not mean that we have merely pleased one good person. In order to constitute renown, the agreement of many distinguished and praiseworthy men is necessary. But this results from the decision of a number – in other words, of persons who are distinct. Therefore, it is not a good. 9. You say, again, that renown is the praise rendered to a good man by good men. Praise means speech: now speech is utterance with a particular meaning; and utterance, even from the lips of good men, is not a good in itself. For any act of a good man is not necessarily a good; he shouts his applause and hisses his disapproval, but one does not call the shouting or the hissing good – although his entire conduct may be admired and praised – any more than one would applaud a sneeze or a cough. Therefore, renown is not a good. 10. Finally, tell us whether the good belongs to him who praises, or to

him who is praised: if you say that the good belongs to him who is praised, you are on as foolish a quest as if you were to maintain that my neighbour's good health is my own. But to praise worthy men is an honourable action; thus the good is exclusively that of the man who does the praising, of the man who performs the action, and not of us, who are being praised. And yet this was the question under discussion."

11. I shall now answer the separate objections hurriedly. The first question still is, whether any good can consist of things that are distinct – and there are votes cast on both sides. Again, does renown need many votes? Renown can be satisfied with the decision of one good man: it is one good man who decides that we are good. 12. Then the retort is: "What! Would you define reputation as the esteem of one individual, and ill-repute as the rancorous chatter of one man? Glory, too, we take to be more widespread, for it demands the agreement of many men." But the position of the "many" is different from that of "the one." And why? Because, if the good man thinks well of me, it practically amounts to my being thought well of by all good men; for they will all think the same, if they know me. Their judgment is alike and identical; the effect of truth on it is equal. They cannot disagree, which means that they would all hold the same view, being unable to hold different views. 13. "One man's opinion," you say, "is not enough to create glory or reputation." In the former case, one judgment is a universal judgment, because all, if they were asked, would hold one opinion; in the other case, however, men of dissimilar character give divergent judgments. You will find perplexing emotions – everything doubtful, inconstant, untrustworthy. And can you suppose that all men are able to hold one opinion? Even an individual does not hold to a single opinion. With the good man it is truth that causes belief, and truth has but one function and one likeness; while among the second class of which I spoke, the ideas with which they agree are unsound. Moreover, those who are false are never steadfast: they are irregular and discordant. 14. "But praise," says the objector, "is nothing but an utterance, and an utterance is not a good." When they say that renown is praise bestowed on the good by the good, what they refer to is not an utterance but a judgment. For a good man may remain silent; but if

he decides that a certain person is worthy, of praise, that person is the object of praise. 15. Besides, praise is one thing, and the giving of praise another; the latter demands utterance also. Hence no one speaks of “a funeral praise,” but says “praise-giving” – for its function depends upon speech. And when we say that a man is worthy of praise, we assure human kindness to him, not in words, but in judgment. So the good opinion, even of one who in silence feels inward approval of a good man, is praise.

16. Again, as I have said, praise is a matter of the mind rather than of the speech; for speech brings out the praise that the mind has conceived, and publishes it forth to the attention of the many. To judge a man worthy of praise, is to praise him. And when our tragic poet sings to us that it is wonderful “to be praised by a well-praised hero,” he means, “by one who is worthy of praise.” Again, when an equally venerable bard says: “Praise nurtureth the arts,” he does not mean the giving of praise, for that spoils the arts. Nothing has corrupted oratory and all other studies that depend on hearing so much as popular approval. 17. Reputation necessarily demands words, but renown can be content with men’s judgments, and suffice without the spoken word. It is satisfied not only amid silent approval, but even in the face of open protest. There is, in my opinion, this difference between renown and glory – the latter depends upon the judgments of the many; but renown on the judgments of good men.

18. The retort comes: “But whose good is this renown, this praise rendered to a good man by good men? Is it of the one praised, or of the one who praises?” Of both, I say. It is my own good, in that I am praised, because I am naturally born to love all men, and I rejoice in having done good deeds and congratulate myself on having found men who express their ideas of my virtues with gratitude; that they are grateful, is a good to the many, but it is a good to me also. For my spirit is so ordered that I can regard the good of other men as my own – in any case those of whose good I am myself the cause. 19. This good is also the good of those who render the praise, for it is applied by means of virtue; and every act of virtue is a good. My friends could not have found this blessing if I had not been a man of the right stamp. It is therefore a good belonging to both sides – this being praised when one deserves it – just as truly as a good decision

is the good of him who makes the decision and also of him in whose favour the decision was given. Do you doubt that justice is a blessing to its possessor, as well as to the man to whom the just due was paid? To praise the deserving is justice; therefore, the good belongs to both sides.

20. This will be a sufficient answer to such dealers in subtleties. But it should not be our purpose to discuss things cleverly and to drag Philosophy down from her majesty to such petty quibbles. How much better it is to follow the open and direct road, rather than to map out for yourself a circuitous route which you must retrace with infinite trouble! For such argumentation is nothing else than the sport of men who are skilfully juggling with each other. 21. Tell me rather how closely in accord with nature it is to let one's mind reach out into the boundless universe! The human soul is a great and noble thing; it permits of no limits except those which can be shared even by the gods. First of all, it does not consent to a lowly birthplace, like Ephesus or Alexandria, or any land that is even more thickly populated than these, and more richly spread with dwellings. The soul's homeland is the whole space that encircles the, height and breadth of the firmament, the whole rounded dome within which lie land and sea, within which the upper air that sunders the human from the divine also unites them, and where all the sentinel stars are taking their turn on duty. 22. Again, the soul will not put up with a narrow span of existence. "All the years," says the soul, "are mine; no epoch is closed to great minds; all Time is open for the progress of thought. When the day comes to separate the heavenly from its earthly blend, I shall leave the body here where I found it, and shall of my own volition betake myself to the gods. I am not apart from them now, but am merely detained in a heavy and earthly prison." 23. These delays of mortal existence are a prelude to the longer and better life. As the mother's womb holds us for ten months, making us ready, not for the womb itself, but for the existence into which we seem to be sent forth when at last we are fitted to draw breath and live in the open; just so, throughout the years extending between infancy and old age, we are making ourselves ready for another birth. A different beginning, a different condition, await us. 24. We cannot yet, except at rare intervals, endure the light of heaven; therefore, look forward

without fearing to that appointed hour, – the last hour of the body but not of the soul. Survey everything that lies about you, as if it were luggage in a guest-chamber: you must travel on. Nature strips you as bare at your departure as at your entrance. 25. You may take away no more than you brought in; what is more, you must throw away the major portion of that which you brought with you into life: you will be stripped of the very skin which covers you – that which has been your last protection; you will be stripped of the flesh, and lose the blood which is suffuses and circulated through your body; you will be stripped of bones and sinews, the framework of these transitory and feeble parts.

26. That day, which you fear as being the end of all things, is the birthday of your eternity. Lay aside your burden – why delay? – just as if you had not previously left the body which was your hiding-place! You cling to your burden, you struggle; at your birth also great effort was necessary on your mother's part to set you free. You weep and wail; and yet this very weeping happens at birth also; but then it was to be excused – for you came into the world wholly ignorant and inexperienced. When you left the warm and cherishing protection of your mother's womb, a freer air breathed into your face; then you winced at the touch of a rough hand, and you looked in amaze at unfamiliar objects, still delicate and ignorant of all things.

27. But now it is no new thing for you to be sundered from that of which you have previously been a part; let go your already useless limbs with resignation and dispense with that body in which you have dwelt for so long. It will be torn asunder, buried out of sight, and wasted away. Why be downcast? This is what ordinarily happens: when we are born, the afterbirth always perishes. Why love such a thing as if it were your own possession? It was merely your covering. The day will come which will tear you forth and lead you away from the company of the foul and noisome womb. 28. Withdraw from it now too as much as you can, and withdraw from pleasure, except such as may be bound up with essential and important things; estrange yourself from it even now, and ponder on something nobler and loftier. Some day the secrets of nature shall be disclosed to you, the haze will be shaken from your eyes, and the bright light will

stream in upon you from all sides.

Picture to yourself how great is the glow when all the stars mingle their fires; no shadows will disturb the clear sky. The whole expanse of heaven will shine evenly; for day and night are interchanged only in the lowest atmosphere. Then you will say that you have lived in darkness, after you have seen, in your perfect state, the perfect light – that light which now you behold darkly with vision that is cramped to the last degree. And yet, far off as it is, you already look upon it in wonder; what do you think the heavenly light will be when you have seen it in its proper sphere?

29. Such thoughts permit nothing mean to settle in the soul, nothing low, nothing cruel. They maintain that the gods are witnesses of everything. They order us to meet the gods' approval, to prepare ourselves to join them at some future time, and to plan for immortality. He that has grasped this idea shrinks from no attacking army, is not terrified by the trumpet-blast, and is intimidated by no threats. 30. How should it not be that a man feels no fear, if he looks forward to death? He also who believes that the soul abides only as long as it is fettered in the body, scatters it abroad forthwith when dissolved, so that it may be useful even after death. For though he is taken from men's sight, still

Often our thoughts run back to the hero, and often the glory
Won by his race recurs to the mind.

Consider how much we are helped by good example; you will thus understand that the presence of a noble man is of no less service than his memory. Farewell.

CIII. On the Dangers of Association with our Fellow-Men

1. Why are you looking about for troubles which may perhaps come your way, but which may indeed not come your way at all? I mean fires, falling buildings, and other accidents of the sort that are mere events rather than plots against us. Rather beware and shun those troubles which dog our steps and reach out their hands against us. Accidents, though they may be serious, are few – such as being shipwrecked or thrown from one's carriage; but it is from his fellow-man that a man's everyday danger comes. Equip yourself against that; watch that with an attentive eye. There is no evil more frequent, no evil more persistent, no evil more insinuating. 2. Even the storm, before it gathers, gives a warning; houses crack before they crash; and smoke is the forerunner of fire. But damage from man is instantaneous, and the nearer it comes the more carefully it is concealed.

You are wrong to trust the countenances of those you meet. They have the aspect of men, but the souls of brutes; the difference is that only beasts damage you at the first encounter; those whom they have passed by they do not pursue. For nothing ever goads them to do harm except when need compels them: it is hunger or fear that forces them into a fight. But man delights to ruin man.

3. You must, however, reflect thus what danger you run at the hand of man, in order that you may deduce what is the duty of man. Try, in your dealings with others, to harm not, in order that you be not harmed. You should rejoice with all in their joys and sympathize with them in their troubles, remembering what you should offer and what you should withhold. 4. And what may you attain by living such a life? Not necessarily freedom from harm at their hands, but at least freedom from deceit. In so far, however, as you are able, take refuge with philosophy: she will cherish you in her bosom, and in her sanctuary you shall be safe, or, at any rate, safer than before. People collide only when they are travelling the same path. 5. But this very philosophy must never be vaunted by you; for philosophy when

employed with insolence and arrogance has been perilous to many. Let her strip off your faults, rather than assist you to decry the faults of others. Let her not hold aloof from the customs of mankind, nor make it her business to condemn whatever she herself does not do. A man may be wise without parade and without arousing enmity. Farewell.

CIV. On Care of Health and Peace of Mind

1. I have run off to my villa at Nomentum, for what purpose, do you suppose? To escape the city? No; to shake off a fever which was surely working its way into my system. It had already got a grip upon me. My physician kept insisting that when the circulation was upset and irregular, disturbing the natural poise, the disease was under way. I therefore ordered my carriage to be made ready at once, and insisted on departing in spite of my wife Paulina's efforts to stop me; for I remembered master Gallio's words, when he began to develop a fever in Achaia and took ship at once, insisting that the disease was not of the body but of the place. 2. That is what I remarked to my dear Paulina, who always urges me to take care of my health. I know that her very life-breath comes and goes with my own, and I am beginning, in my solicitude for her, to be solicitous for myself. And although old age has made me braver to bear many things, I am gradually losing this boon that old age bestows. For it comes into my mind that in this old man there is a youth also, and youth needs tenderness. Therefore, since I cannot prevail upon her to love me any more heroically, she prevails upon me to cherish myself more carefully. 3. For one must indulge genuine emotions; sometimes, even in spite of weighty reasons, the breath of life must be called back and kept at our very lips even at the price of great suffering, for the sake of those whom we hold dear; because the good man should not live as long as it pleases him, but as long as he ought. He who does not value his wife, or his friend, highly enough to linger longer in life – he who obstinately persists in dying is a voluptuary.

The soul should also enforce this command upon itself whenever the needs of one's relatives require; it should pause and humour those near and dear, not only when it desires, but even when it has begun, to die. 4. It gives proof of a great heart to return to life for the sake of others; and noble men have often done this. But this procedure also, I believe, indicates the highest type of kindness: that although the greatest advantage of old age is the opportunity to be more negligent regarding self-preservation and to use life more adventurously, one should watch over one's old age with still greater

care if one knows that such action is pleasing, useful, or desirable in the eyes of a person whom one holds dear. 5. This is also a source of no mean joy and profit; for what is sweeter than to be so valued by one's wife that one becomes more valuable to oneself for this reason? Hence my dear Paulina is able to make me responsible, not only for her fears, but also for my own.

6. So you are curious to know the outcome of this prescription of travel? As soon as I escaped from the oppressive atmosphere of the city, and from that awful odour of reeking kitchens which, when in use, pour forth a ruinous mess of steam and soot, I perceived at once that my health was mending. And how much stronger do you think I felt when I reached my vineyards! Being, so to speak, let out to pasture, I regularly walked into my meals! So I am my old self again, feeling now no wavering languor in my system, and no sluggishness in my brain. I am beginning to work with all my energy.

7. But the mere place avails little for this purpose, unless the mind is fully master of itself, and can, at its pleasure, find seclusion even in the midst of business; the man, however, who is always selecting resorts and hunting for leisure, will find something to distract his mind in every place. Socrates is reported to have replied, when a certain person complained of having received no benefit from his travels: "It serves you right! You travelled in your own company!" 8. O what a blessing it would be for some men to wander away from themselves! As it is, they cause themselves vexation, worry, demoralization, and fear! What profit is there in crossing the sea and in going from one city to another? If you would escape your troubles, you need not another place but another personality. Perhaps you have reached Athens, or perhaps Rhodes; choose any state you fancy, how does it matter what its character may be? You will be bringing to it your own.

9. Suppose that you hold wealth to be a good: poverty will then distress you, and, – which is most pitiable, – it will be an imaginary poverty. For you may be rich, and nevertheless, because your neighbour is richer, you suppose yourself to be poor exactly by the same amount in which you fall short of your neighbour. You may deem official position a good; you will be vexed at another's appointment or re-appointment to the consulship; you will be jealous

whenever you see a name several times in the state records. Your ambition will be so frenzied that you will regard yourself last in the race if there is anyone in front of you. ¹⁰ Or you may rate death as the worst of evils, although there is really no evil therein except that which precedes death's coming – fear. You will be frightened out of your wits, not only by real, but by fancied dangers, and will be tossed for ever on the sea of illusion. What benefit will it be to

Have threaded all the towns of Argolis,

A fugitive through midmost press of foes?

For peace itself will furnish further apprehension. Even in the midst of safety you will have no confidence if your mind has once been given a shock; once it has acquired the habit of blind panic, it is incapable of providing even for its own safety. For it does not avoid danger, but runs away. Yet we are more exposed to danger when we turn our backs.

¹¹. You may judge it the most grievous of ills to lose any of those you love; while all the same this would be no less foolish than weeping because the trees which charm your eye and adorn your home lose their foliage. Regard everything that pleases you as if it were a flourishing plant; make the most of it while it is in leaf, for different plants at different seasons must fall and die. But just as the loss of leaves is a light thing, because they are born afresh, so it is with the loss of those whom you love and regard as the delight of your life; for they can be replaced even though they cannot be born afresh. ¹². “New friends, however, will not be the same.” No, nor will you yourself remain the same; you change with every day and every hour. But in other men you more readily see what time plunders; in your own case the change is hidden, because it will not take place visibly. Others are snatched from sight; we ourselves are being stealthily filched away from ourselves. You will not think about any of these problems, nor will you apply remedies to these wounds. You will of your own volition be sowing a crop of trouble by alternate hoping and despairing. If you are wise, mingle these two elements: do not hope without despair, or despair without hope.

¹³. What benefit has travel of itself ever been able to give anyone? No restraint upon pleasure, no bridling of desire, no checking of bad temper, no crushing of the wild assaults of passion, no opportunity to

rid the soul of evil. Travelling cannot give us judgment, or shake off our errors; it merely holds our attention for a moment by a certain novelty, as children pause to wonder at something unfamiliar. ¹⁴. Besides, it irritates us, through the wavering of a mind which is suffering from an acute attack of sickness; the very motion makes it more fitful and nervous. Hence the spots we had sought most eagerly we quit still more eagerly, like birds that flit and are off as soon as they have alighted. ¹⁵. What travel will give is familiarity with other nations: it will reveal to you mountains of strange shape, or unfamiliar tracts of plain, or valleys that are watered by everflowing springs, or the characteristics of some river that comes to our attention. We observe how the Nile rises and swells in summer, or how the Tigris disappears, runs underground through hidden spaces, and then appears with unabated sweep; or how the Maeander, that oft-rehearsed theme and plaything of the poets, turns in frequent bendings, and often in winding comes close to its own channel before resuming its course. But this sort of information will not make better or sounder men of us.

¹⁶. We ought rather to spend our time in study, and to cultivate those who are masters of wisdom, learning something which has been investigated, but not settled; by this means the mind can be relieved of a most wretched serfdom, and won over to freedom. Indeed, as long as you are ignorant of what you should avoid or seek, or of what is necessary or superfluous, or of what is right or wrong, you will not be travelling, but merely wandering. ¹⁷. There will be no benefit to you in this hurrying to and fro; for you are travelling with your emotions and are followed by your afflictions. Would that they were indeed following you! In that case, they would be farther away; as it is, you are carrying and not leading them. Hence they press about you on all sides, continually chafing and annoying you. It is medicine, not scenery, for which the sick man must go a-searching. ¹⁸. Suppose that someone has broken a leg or dislocated a joint: he does not take carriage or ship for other regions, but he calls in the physician to set the fractured limb, or to move it back to its proper place in the socket. What then? When the spirit is broken or wrenched in so many places, do you think that change of place can heal it? The complaint is too deep-seated to be cured by a journey. ¹⁹.

Travel does not make a physician or an orator; no art is acquired by merely living in a certain place.

Where lies the truth, then? Can wisdom, the greatest of all the arts, be picked up on a journey? I assure you, travel as far as you like, you can never establish yourself beyond the reach of desire, beyond the reach of bad temper, or beyond the reach of fear; had it been so, the human race would long ago have banded together and made a pilgrimage to the spot. Such ills, as long as you carry with you their causes, will load you down and worry you to skin and bone in your wanderings over land and sea. ²⁰ Do you wonder that it is of no use to run away from them? That from which you are running, is within you. Accordingly, reform your own self, get the burden off your own shoulders, and keep within safe limits the cravings which ought to be removed. Wipe out from your soul all trace of sin. If you would enjoy your travels, make healthy the companion of your travels. As long as this companion is avaricious and mean, greed will stick to you; and while you consort with an overbearing man, your puffed-up ways will also stick close. Live with a hangman, and you will never be rid of your cruelty. If an adulterer be your club-mate, he will kindle the baser passions. ²¹ If you would be stripped of your faults leave far behind you the patterns of the faults. The miser, the swindler, the bully, the cheat, who will do you much harm merely by being near you, are within you.

Change therefore to better associations: live with the Catos, with Laelius, with Tubero. Or, if you enjoy living with Greeks also, spend your time with Socrates and with Zeno: the former will show you how to die if it be necessary; the latter how to die before it is necessary. ²² Live with Chrysippus, with Posidonius: they will make you acquainted with things earthly and things heavenly; they will bid you work hard over something more than neat turns of language and phrases mouthed forth for the entertainment of listeners; they will bid you be stout of heart and rise superior to threats. The only harbour safe from the seething storms of this life is scorn of the future, a firm stand, a readiness to receive Fortune's missiles full in the breast, neither skulking nor turning the back. ²³ Nature has brought us forth brave of spirit, and, as she has implanted in certain animals a spirit of ferocity, in others craft, in others terror, so she has gifted us with an

aspiring and lofty spirit, which prompts us to seek a life of the greatest honour, and not of the greatest security, that most resembles the soul of the universe, which it follows and imitates as far as our mortal steps permit. This spirit thrusts itself forward, confident of commendation and esteem. 24. It is superior to all, monarch of all it surveys; hence it should be subservient to nothing, finding no task too heavy, and nothing strong enough to weigh down the shoulders of a man.

Shapes dread to look upon, of toil or death

are not in the least dreadful, if one is able to look upon them with unflinching gaze, and is able to pierce the shadows. Many a sight that is held a terror in the night-time, is turned to ridicule by day. “Shapes dread to look upon, of toil or death”: our Vergil has excellently said that these shapes are dread, not in reality, but only “to look upon” – in other words, they seem terrible, but are not. 25. And in these visions what is there, I say, as fear-inspiring as rumour has proclaimed? Why, pray, my dear Lucilius, should a man fear toil, or a mortal death? Countless cases occur to my mind of men who think that what they themselves are unable to do is impossible, who maintain that we utter words which are too big for man’s nature to carry out. 26. But how much more highly do I think of these men! They can do these things, but decline to do them. To whom that ever tried have these tasks proved false? To what man did they not seem easier in the doing? Our lack of confidence is not the result of difficulty. The difficulty comes from our lack of confidence.

27. If, however, you desire a pattern, take Socrates, a long-suffering old man, who was sea-tossed amid every hardship and yet was unconquered both by poverty (which his troubles at home made more burdensome) and by toil, including the drudgery of military service. He was much tried at home, whether we think of his wife, a woman of rough manners and shrewish tongue, or of the children whose intractability showed them to be more like their mother than their father. And if you consider the facts, he lived either in time of war, or under tyrants, or under a democracy, which is more cruel than wars and tyrants. 28. The war lasted for twenty-seven years; then the state became the victim of the Thirty Tyrants, of whom many were his personal enemies. At the last came that climax of

condemnation under the gravest of charges: they accused him of disturbing the state religion and corrupting the youth, for they declared that he had influenced the youth to defy the gods, to defy the council, and to defy the state in general. Next came the prison, and the cup of poison. But all these measures changed the soul of Socrates so little that they did not even change his features. What wonderful and rare distinction! He maintained this attitude up to the very end, and no man ever saw Socrates too much elated or too much depressed. Amid all the disturbance of Fortune, he was undisturbed.

29. Do you desire another case? Take that of the younger Marcus Cato, with whom Fortune dealt in a more hostile and more persistent fashion. But he withstood her, on all occasions, and in his last moments, at the point of death, showed that a brave man can live in spite of Fortune, can die in spite of her. His whole life was passed either in civil warfare, or under a political regime which was soon to breed civil war. And you may say that he, just as much as Socrates, declared allegiance to liberty in the midst of slavery – unless perchance you think that Pompey, Caesar, and Crassus were the allies of liberty! 30. No one ever saw Cato change, no matter how often the state changed: he kept himself the same in all circumstances – in the praetorship, in defeat, under accusation, in his province, on the platform, in the army, in death. Furthermore, when the republic was in a crisis of terror, when Caesar was on one side with ten embattled legions at his call, aided by so many foreign nations. and when Pompey was on the other, satisfied to stand alone against all comers, and when the citizens were leaning towards either Caesar or Pompey, Cato alone established a definite party for the Republic. 31. If you would obtain a mental picture of that period, you may imagine on one side the people and the whole proletariat eager for revolution – on the other the senators and knights, the chosen and honoured men of the commonwealth; and there were left between them but these two – the Republic and Cato.

I tell you, you will marvel when you see

Atreus' son, and Priam, and Achilles, wroth at both.

Like Achilles, he scorns and disarms each faction. 32. And this is the vote which he casts concerning them both: "If Caesar wins, I slay myself; if Pompey, I go into exile." What was there for a man to fear

who, whether in defeat or in victory, had assigned to himself a doom which might have been assigned to him by his enemies in their utmost rage? So he died by his own decision.

33. You see that man can endure toil: Cato, on foot, led an army through African deserts. You see that thirst can be endured: he marched over sun-baked hills, dragging the remains of a beaten army and with no train of supplies, undergoing lack of water and wearing a heavy suit of armour; always the last to drink of the few springs which they chanced to find. You see that honour, and dishonour too, can be despised: for they report that on the very day when Cato was defeated at the elections, he played a game of ball. You see also that man can be free from fear of those above him in rank: for Cato attacked Caesar and Pompey simultaneously, at a time when none dared fall foul of the one without endeavouring to oblige the other. You see that death can be scorned as well as exile: Cato inflicted exile upon himself and finally death, and war all the while.

34. And so, if only we are willing to withdraw our necks from the yoke, we can keep as stout a heart against such terrors as these. But first and foremost, we must reject pleasures; they render us weak and womanish; they make great demands upon us, and, moreover, cause us to make great demands upon Fortune. Second, we must spurn wealth: wealth is the diploma of slavery. Abandon gold and silver, and whatever else is a burden upon our richly-furnished homes; liberty cannot be gained for nothing. If you set a high value on liberty, you must set a low value on everything else. Farewell.

CV. On Facing the World with Confidence

1. I shall now tell you certain things to which you should pay attention in order to live more safely. Do you however, – such is my judgment, – hearken to my precepts just as if I were counselling you to keep safe your health in your country-place at Ardea.

Reflect on the things which goad man into destroying man: you will find that they are hope, envy, hatred, fear, and contempt. 2. Now, of all these, contempt is the least harmful, so much so that many have skulked behind it as a sort of cure. When a man despises you, he works you injury, to be sure, but he passes on; and no one persistently or of set purpose does hurt to a person whom he despises. Even in battle, prostrate soldiers are neglected: men fight with those who stand their ground. 3. And you can avoid the envious hopes of the wicked so long as you have nothing which can stir the evil desires of others, and so long as you possess nothing remarkable. For people crave even little things, if these catch the attention or are of rare occurrence.

You will escape envy if you do not force yourself upon the public view, if you do not boast your possessions, if you understand how to enjoy things privately. Hatred comes either from running foul of others: and this can be avoided by never provoking anyone; or else it is uncalled for: and common-sense will keep you safe from it. Yet it has been dangerous to many; some people have been hated without having had an enemy. 4. As to not being feared, a moderate fortune and an easy disposition will guarantee you that; men should know that you are the sort of person who can be offended without danger; and your reconciliation should be easy and sure. Moreover, it is as troublesome to be feared at home as abroad; it is as bad to be feared by a slave as by a gentleman. For every one has strength enough to do you some harm. Besides, he who is feared, fears also; no one has been able to arouse terror and live in peace of mind.

5. Contempt remains to be discussed. He who has made this quality an adjunct of his own personality, who is despised because he wishes to be despised and not because he *must* be despised, has the measure of contempt under his control. Any inconveniences in this

respect can be dispelled by honourable occupations and by friendships with men who have influence with an influential person; with these men it will profit you to engage but not to entangle yourself, lest the cure may cost you more than the risk. 6. Nothing, however, will help you so much as keeping still – talking very little with others, and as much as may be with yourself. For there is a sort of charm about conversation, something very subtle and coaxing, which, like intoxication or love, draws secrets from us. No man will keep to himself what he hears. No one will tell another only as much as he has heard. And he who tells tales will tell names, too. Everyone has someone to whom he entrusts exactly what has been entrusted to him. Though he checks his own garrulity, and is content with one hearer, he will bring about him a nation, if that which was a secret shortly before becomes common talk.

7. The most important contribution to peace of mind is never to do wrong. Those who lack self-control lead disturbed and tumultuous lives; their crimes are balanced by their fears, and they are never at ease. For they tremble after the deed, and they are embarrassed; their consciences do not allow them to busy themselves with other matters, and continually compel them to give an answer. Whoever expects punishment, receives it, but whoever deserves it, expects it. 8. Where there is an evil conscience something may bring safety, but nothing can bring ease; for a man imagines that, even if he is not under arrest, he may soon be arrested. His sleep is troubled; when he speaks of another man's crime, he reflects upon his own, which seems to him not sufficiently blotted out, not sufficiently hidden from view. A wrongdoer sometimes has the luck to escape notice but never the assurance thereof. Farewell.

CVI. On the Corporeality of Virtue

1. My tardiness in answering your letter was not due to press of business. Do not listen to that sort of excuse; I am at liberty, and so is anyone else who wishes to be at liberty. No man is at the mercy of affairs. He gets entangled in them of his own accord, and then flatters himself that being busy is a proof of happiness. Very well; you no doubt want to know why I did not answer the letter sooner? The matter about which you consulted me was being gathered into the fabric of my volume. 2. For you know that I am planning to cover the whole of moral philosophy and to settle all the problems which concern it. Therefore I hesitated whether to make you wait until the proper time came for this subject, or to pronounce judgment out of the logical order; but it seemed more kindly not to keep waiting one who comes from such a distance. 3. So I propose both to pick this out of the proper sequence of correlated matter, and also to send you, without waiting to be asked, whatever has to do with questions of the same sort.

Do you ask what these are? Questions regarding which knowledge pleases rather than profits; for instance, your question whether the good is corporeal. 4. Now the good is active: for it is beneficial; and what is active is corporeal. The good stimulates the mind and, in a way, moulds and embraces that which is essential to the body. The goods of the body are bodily; so therefore must be the goods of the soul. For the soul, too, is corporeal. 5. Ergo, man's good must be corporeal, since man himself is corporeal. I am sadly astray if the elements which support man and preserve or restore his health, are not bodily; therefore, his good is a body. You will have no doubt, I am sure, that emotions are bodily things (if I may be allowed to wedge in another subject not under immediate discussion), like wrath, love, sternness; unless you doubt whether they change our features, knot our foreheads, relax the countenance, spread blushes, or drive away the blood? What, then? Do you think that such evident marks of the body are stamped upon us by anything else than body? 6. And if emotions are corporeal, so are the diseases of the spirit – such as greed, cruelty, and all the faults which harden in our souls, to such

an extent that they get into an incurable state. Therefore evil is also, and all its branches – spite, hatred, pride; 7. and so also are goods, first because they are opposite poles of the bad, and second because they will manifest to you the same symptoms. Do you not see how a spirit of bravery makes the eye flash? How prudence tends toward concentration? How reverence produces moderation and tranquillity? How joy produces calm? How sternness begets stiffness? How gentleness produces relaxation? These qualities are therefore bodily; for they change the tones and the shapes of substances, exercising their own power in their own kingdoms.

Now all the virtues which I have mentioned are goods, and so are their results. 8. Have you any doubt that whatever can touch is corporeal?

Nothing but body can touch or be touched,

as Lucretius says. Moreover, such changes as I have mentioned could not affect the body without touching it. Therefore, they are bodily. 9. Furthermore, any object that has power to move, force, restrain, or control, is corporeal. Come now! Does not fear hold us back? Does not boldness drive us ahead? Bravery spur us on, and give us momentum? Restraint rein us in and call us back? Joy raise our spirits? Sadness cast us down? 10. In short, any act on our part is performed at the bidding of wickedness or virtue. Only a body can control or forcefully affect another body. The good of the body is corporeal; a man's good is related to his bodily good; therefore, it is bodily.

11. Now that I have humoured your wishes, I shall anticipate your remark, when you say: "What a game of pawns!" We dull our fine edge by such superfluous pursuits; these things make men clever, but not good. 12. Wisdom is a plainer thing than that; nay, it is clearly better to use literature for the improvement of the mind, instead of wasting philosophy itself as we waste other efforts on superfluous things. Just as we suffer from excess in all things, so we suffer from excess in literature; thus we learn our lessons, not for life, but for the lecture-room. Farewell.

CVII. On Obedience to the Universal Will

1. Where is that common-sense of yours? Where that deftness in examining things? That greatness of soul? Have you come to be tormented by a trifle? Your slaves regarded your absorption in business as an opportunity for them to run away. Well, if your friends deceived you (for by all means let them have the name which we mistakenly bestowed upon them, and so call them, that they may incur more shame by not being such friends) – if your friends, I repeat, deceived you, all your affairs would lack something; as it is, you merely lack men who damaged your own endeavours and considered you burdensome to your neighbours. 2. None of these things is unusual or unexpected. It is as nonsensical to be put out by such events as to complain of being spattered in the street or at getting befouled in the mud. The programme of life is the same as that of a bathing establishment, a crowd, or a journey: sometimes things will be thrown at you, and sometimes they will strike you by accident. Life is not a dainty business. You have started on a long journey; you are bound to slip, collide, fall, become weary, and cry out: “O for Death!” – or in other words, tell lies. At one stage you will leave a comrade behind you, at another you will bury someone, at another you will be apprehensive. It is amid stumblings of this sort that you must travel out this rugged journey.

3. Does one wish to die? Let the mind be prepared to meet everything; let it know that it has reached the heights round which the thunder plays. Let it know that it has arrived where –

Grief and avenging Care have set their couch,
And pallid sickness dwells, and drear Old Age.

With such messmates must you spend your days. Avoid them you cannot, but despise them you can. And you will despise them, if you often take thought and anticipate the future. 4. Everyone approaches courageously a danger which he has prepared himself to meet long before, and withstands even hardships if he has previously practised how to meet them. But, contrariwise, the unprepared are panic-stricken even at the most trifling things. We must see to it that nothing shall come upon us unforeseen. And since things are all the

more serious when they are unfamiliar, continual reflection will give you the power, no matter what the evil may be, not to play the unschooled boy.

5. "My slaves have run away from me!" Yes, other men have been robbed, blackmailed, slain, betrayed, stamped under foot, attacked by poison or by slander; no matter what trouble you mention, it has happened to many. Again, there are manifold kinds of missiles which are hurled at us. Some are planted in us, some are being brandished and at this very moment are on the way, some which were destined for other men graze us instead. 6. We should not manifest surprise at any sort of condition into which we are born, and which should be lamented by no one, simply because it is equally ordained for all. Yes, I say, equally ordained; for a man might have experienced even that which he has escaped. And an equal law consists, not of that which all have experienced, but of that which is laid down for all. Be sure to prescribe for your mind this sense of equity; we should pay without complaint the tax of our mortality.

7. Winter brings on cold weather; and we must shiver. Summer returns, with its heat; and we must sweat. Unseasonable weather upsets the health; and we must fall ill. In certain places we may meet with wild beasts, or with men who are more destructive than any beasts. Floods, or fires, will cause us loss. And we cannot change this order of things; but what we can do is to acquire stout hearts, worthy of good men, thereby courageously enduring chance and placing ourselves in harmony with Nature. 8. And Nature moderates this world-kingdom which you see, by her changing seasons: clear weather follows cloudy; after a calm, comes the storm; the winds blow by turns; day succeeds night; some of the heavenly bodies rise, and some set. Eternity consists of opposites.

9. It is to this law that our souls must adjust themselves, this they should follow, this they should obey. Whatever happens, assume that it was bound to happen, and do not be willing to rail at Nature. That which you cannot reform, it is best to endure, and to attend uncomplainingly upon the God under whose guidance everything progresses; for it is a bad soldier who grumbles when following his commander. 10. For this reason we should welcome our orders with energy and vigour, nor should we cease to follow the natural course

of this most beautiful universe, into which all our future sufferings are woven.

Let us address Jupiter, the pilot of this world-mass, as did our great Cleanthes in those most eloquent lines – lines which I shall allow myself to render in Latin, after the example of the eloquent Cicero. If you like them, make the most of them; if they displease you, you will understand that I have simply been following the practise of Cicero:

11. Lead me, O Master of the lofty heavens,

My Father, whithersoever thou shalt wish.

I shall not falter, but obey with speed.

And though I would not, I shall go, and suffer,

In sin and sorrow what I might have done

In noble virtue. Aye, the willing soul

Fate leads, but the unwilling drags along.

12. Let us live thus, and speak thus; let Fate find us ready and alert.

Here is your great soul – the man who has given himself over to Fate; on the other hand, that man is a weakling and a degenerate who struggles and maligns the order of the universe and would rather reform the gods than reform himself. Farewell.

CVIII. On the Approaches to Philosophy

1. The topic about which you ask me is one of those where our only concern with knowledge is to have the knowledge. Nevertheless, because it does so far concern us, you are in a hurry; you are not willing to wait for the books which I am at this moment arranging for you, and which embrace the whole department of moral philosophy. I shall send you the books at once; but I shall, before doing that, write and tell you how this eagerness to learn, with which I see you are aflame, should be regulated, so that it may not get in its own way.

2. Things are not to be gathered at random; nor should they be greedily attacked in the mass; one will arrive at a knowledge of the whole by studying the parts. The burden should be suited to your strength, nor should you tackle more than you can adequately handle. Absorb not all that you wish, but all that you can hold. Only be of a sound mind, and then you will be able to hold all that you wish. For the more the mind receives, the more does it expand.

3. This was the advice, I remember, which Attalus gave me in the days when I practically laid siege to his class-room, the first to arrive and the last to leave. Even as he paced up and down, I would challenge him to various discussions; for he not only kept himself accessible to his pupils, but met them half-way. His words were: "The same purpose should possess both master and scholar – an ambition in the one case to promote, and in the other to progress." 4. He who studies with a philosopher should take away with him some one good thing every day: he should daily return home a sounder man, or in the way to become sounder. And he will thus return; for it is one of the functions of philosophy to help not only those who study her, but those also who associate with her. He that walks in the sun, though he walk not for that purpose, must needs become sunburned. He who frequents the perfumer's shop and lingers even for a short time, will carry with him the scent of the place. And he who follows a philosopher is bound to derive some benefit therefrom, which will help him even though he be remiss. Mark what I say: "remiss," not "recalcitrant."

5. "What then?" you say, "do we not know certain men who have

sat for many years at the feet of a philosopher and yet have not acquired the slightest tinge of wisdom?" Of course I know such men. There are indeed persevering gentlemen who stick at it; I do not call them pupils of the wise, but merely "squatters." 6. Certain of them come to hear and not to learn, just as we are attracted to the theatre to satisfy the pleasures of the ear, whether by a speech, or by a song, or by a play. This class, as you will see, constitutes a large part of the listeners, who regard the philosopher's lecture-room merely as a sort of lounging-place for their leisure. They do not set about to lay aside any faults there, or to receive a rule of life, by which they may test their characters; they merely wish to enjoy to the full the delights of the ear. And yet some arrive even with notebooks, not to take down the matter, but only the words, that they may presently repeat them to others with as little profit to these as they themselves received when they heard them. 7. A certain number are stirred by high-sounding phrases, and adapt themselves to the emotions of the speaker with lively change of face and mind – just like the emasculated Phrygian priests who are wont to be roused by the sound of the flute and go mad to order. But the true hearer is ravished and stirred by the beauty of the subject matter, not by the jingle of empty words. When a bold word has been uttered in defiance of death, or a saucy fling in defiance of Fortune, we take delight in acting straightway upon that which we have heard. Men are impressed by such words, and become what they are bidden to be, should but the impression abide in the mind, and should the populace, who discourage honourable things, not immediately lie in wait to rob them of this noble impulse; only a few can carry home the mental attitude with which they were inspired. 8. It is easy to rouse a listener so that he will crave righteousness; for Nature has laid the foundations and planted the seeds of virtue in us all. And we are all born to these general privileges; hence, when the stimulus is added, the good spirit is stirred as if it were freed from bonds. Have you not noticed how the theatre re-echoes whenever any words are spoken whose truth we appreciate generally and confirm unanimously.

9. The poor lack much; the greedy man lacks all.

A greedy man does good to none; he does

Most evil to himself.

At such verses as these, your meanest miser claps applause and rejoices to hear his own sins reviled. How much more do you think this holds true, when such things are uttered by a philosopher, when he introduces verses among his wholesome precepts, that he may thus make those verses sink more effectively into the mind of the neophyte! ¹⁰. Cleanthes used to say: “As our breath produces a louder sound when it passes through the long and narrow opening of the trumpet and escapes by a hole which widens at the end, even so the fettering rules of poetry clarify our meaning.” The very same words are more carelessly received and make less impression upon us, when they are spoken in prose; but when metre is added and when regular prosody has compressed a noble idea, then the selfsame thought comes, as it were, hurtling with a fuller fling. ¹¹. We talk much about despising money, and we give advice on this subject in the lengthiest of speeches, that mankind may believe true riches to exist in the mind and not in one’s bank account, and that the man who adapts himself to his slender means and makes himself wealthy on a little sum, is the truly rich man; but our minds are struck more effectively when a verse like this is repeated:

He needs but little who desires but little.

or,

He hath his wish, whose wish includeth naught

Save that which is enough.

¹². When we hear such words as these, we are led towards a confession of the truth.

Even men in whose opinion nothing is enough, wonder and applaud when they hear such words, and swear eternal hatred against money. When you see them thus disposed, strike home, keep at them, and charge them with this duty, dropping all double meanings, syllogisms, hair-splitting, and the other side-shows of ineffective smartness. Preach against greed, preach against high living; and when you notice that you have made progress and impressed the minds of your hearers, lay on still harder. You cannot imagine how much progress can be brought about by an address of that nature, when you are bent on curing your hearers and are absolutely devoted to their best interests. For when the mind is young, it may most easily be won over to desire what is honourable and upright; truth, if

she can obtain a suitable pleader, will lay strong hands upon those who can still be taught, those who have been but superficially spoiled.

13. At any rate, when I used to hear Attalus denouncing sin, error, and the evils of life, I often felt sorry for mankind and regarded Attalus as a noble and majestic being – above our mortal heights. He called himself a king, but I thought him more than a king, because he was entitled to pass judgment on kings. 14. And in truth, when he began to uphold poverty, and to show what a useless and dangerous burden was everything that passed the measure of our need, I often desired to leave his lecture-room a poor man. Whenever he castigated our pleasure-seeking lives, and extolled personal purity, moderation in diet, and a mind free from unnecessary, not to speak of unlawful, pleasures, the desire came upon me to limit my food and drink. 15. And that is why some of these habits have stayed with me, Lucilius. For I had planned my whole life with great resolves. And later, when I returned to the duties of a citizen, I did indeed keep a few of these good resolutions. That is why I have forsaken oysters and mushrooms for ever: since they are not really food, but are relishes to bully the sated stomach into further eating, as is the fancy of gourmands and those who stuff themselves beyond their powers of digestion: down with it quickly, and up with it quickly! 16. That is why I have also throughout my life avoided perfumes; because the best scent for the person is no scent at all. That is why my stomach is unacquainted with wine. That is why throughout my life I have shunned the bath, and have believed that to emaciate the body and sweat it into thinness is at once unprofitable and effeminate. Other resolutions have been broken, but after all in such a way that, in cases where I ceased to practice abstinence, I have observed a limit which is indeed next door to abstinence; perhaps it is even a little more difficult, because it is easier for the will to cut off certain things utterly than to use them with restraint.

17. Inasmuch as I have begun to explain to you how much greater was my impulse to approach philosophy in my youth than to continue it in my old age, I shall not be ashamed to tell you what ardent zeal Pythagoras inspired in me. Sotion used to tell me why Pythagoras abstained from animal food, and why, in later times,

Sextius did also. In each case, the reason was different, but it was in each case a noble reason. 18. Sextius believed that man had enough sustenance without resorting to blood, and that a habit of cruelty is formed whenever butchery is practised for pleasure. Moreover, he thought we should curtail the sources of our luxury; he argued that a varied diet was contrary to the laws of health, and was unsuited to our constitutions. 19. Pythagoras, on the other hand, held that all beings were inter-related, and that there was a system of exchange between souls which transmigrated from one bodily shape into another. If one may believe him, no soul perishes or ceases from its functions at all, except for a tiny interval – when it is being poured from one body into another. We may question at what time and after what seasons of change the soul returns to man, when it has wandered through many a dwelling-place; but meantime, he made men fearful of guilt and parricide, since they might be, without knowing it, attacking the soul of a parent and injuring it with knife or with teeth – if, as is possible, the related spirit be dwelling temporarily in this bit of flesh! 20. When Sotion had set forth this doctrine, supplementing it with his own proofs, he would say: “You do not believe that souls are assigned, first to one body and then to another, and that our so-called death is merely a change of abode? You do not believe that in cattle, or in wild beasts, or in creatures of the deep, the soul of him who was once a man may linger? You do not believe that nothing on this earth is annihilated, but only changes its haunts? And that animals also have cycles of progress and, so to speak, an orbit for their souls, no less than the heavenly bodies, which revolve in fixed circuits? Great men have put faith in this idea; 21. therefore, while holding to your own view, keep the whole question in abeyance in your mind. If the theory is true, it is a mark of purity to refrain from eating flesh; if it be false, it is economy. And what harm does it do to you to give such credence? I am merely depriving you of food which sustains lions and vultures.”

22. I was imbued with this teaching, and began to abstain from animal food; at the end of a year the habit was as pleasant as it was easy. I was beginning to feel that my mind was more active; though I would not to-day positively state whether it really was or not. Do you ask how I came to abandon the practice? It was this way: The days of

my youth coincided with the early part of the reign of Tiberius Caesar. Some foreign rites were at that time being inaugurated, and abstinence from certain kinds of animal food was set down as a proof of interest in the strange cult. So at the request of my father, who did not fear prosecution, but who detested philosophy, I returned to my previous habits; and it was no very hard matter to induce me to dine more comfortably.

23. Attalus used to recommend a pillow which did not give in to the body; and now, old as I am, I use one so hard that it leaves no trace after pressure. I have mentioned all this in order to show you how zealous neophytes are with regard to their first impulses towards the highest ideals, provided that some one does his part in exhorting them and in kindling their ardour. There are indeed mistakes made, through the fault of our advisers, who teach us how to debate and not how to live; there are also mistakes made by the pupils, who come to their teachers to develop, not their souls, but their wits. Thus the study of wisdom has become the study of words.

24. Now it makes a great deal of difference what you have in mind when you approach a given subject. If a man is to be a scholar, and is examining the works of Vergil, he does not interpret the noble passage

Time flies away, and cannot be restored

in the following sense: "We must wake up; unless we hasten, we shall be left behind. Time rolls swiftly ahead, and rolls us with it. We are hurried along ignorant of our destiny; we arrange all our plans for the future, and on the edge of a precipice are at our ease." Instead of this, he brings to our attention how often Vergil, in speaking of the rapidity of time, uses the word "flies" (*fugit*).

The choicest days of hapless human life

Fly first; disease and bitter eld succeed,
And toil, till harsh death rudely snatches all.

25. He who considers these lines in the spirit of a philosopher comments on the words in their proper sense: "Vergil never says, 'Time goes,' but 'Time flies,' because the latter is the quickest kind of movement, and in every case our best days are the first to be

snatched away; why, then, do we hesitate to bestir ourselves so that we may be able to keep pace with this swiftest of all swift things?" The good flies past and the bad takes its place. 26. Just as the purest wine flows from the top of the jar and the thickest dregs settle at the bottom; so in our human life, that which is best comes first. Shall we allow other men to quaff the best, and keep the dregs for ourselves? Let this phrase cleave to your soul; you should be satisfied thereby as if it were uttered by an oracle:

Each choicest day of hapless human life

Flies first.

27. Why "choicest day?" Because what's to come is unsure. Why "choicest day"? Because in our youth we are able to learn; we can bend to nobler purposes minds that are ready and still pliable; because this is the time for work, the time for keeping our minds busied in study and in exercising our bodies with useful effort; for that which remains is more sluggish and lacking in spirit – nearer the end.

Let us therefore strive with all courage, omitting attractions by the way; let us struggle with a single purpose, lest, when we are left behind, we comprehend too late the speed of quick-flying time, whose course we cannot stay. Let every day, as soon as it comes, be welcome as being the choicest, and let it be made our own possession. 28. We must catch that which flees. Now he who scans with a scholar's eye the lines I have just quoted, does not reflect that our first days are the best because disease is approaching and old age weighs upon us and hangs over our heads while we are still thinking about our youth. He thinks rather of Vergil's usual collocation of *disease and eld*; and indeed rightly. For old age is a disease which we cannot cure. 29. "Besides," he says to himself, "think of the epithet that accompanies *eld*; Vergil calls it *bitter*," –

Disease and bitter eld succeed.

And elsewhere Vergil says:

There dwelleth pale disease and bitter eld.

There is no reason why you should marvel that each man can collect from the same source suitable matter for his own studies; for in the same meadow the cow grazes, the dog hunts the hare, and the stork the lizard. 30. When Cicero's book *On the State* is opened by a

philologist, a scholar, or a follower of philosophy, each man pursues his investigation in his own way. The philosopher wonders that so much could have been said therein against justice. The philologist takes up the same book and comments on the text as follows: There were two Roman kings – one without a father and one without a mother. For we cannot settle who was Servius’s mother, and Ancus, the grandson of Numa, has no father on record. ³¹ The philologist also notes that the officer whom we call dictator, and about whom we read in our histories under that title, was named in old times the *magister populi*; such is the name existing to-day in the augural records, proved by the fact that he whom the dictator chose as second in command was called *magister equitum*. He will remark, too, that Romulus met his end during an eclipse; that there was an appeal to the people even from the kings (this is so stated in the pontiffs’ register and is the opinion of others, including Fenestella). ³² When the scholar unrolls this same volume, he puts down in his notebook the forms of words, noting that *reapse*, equivalent to *re ipsa*, is used by Cicero, and *sepse* just as frequently, which means *se ipse*. Then he turns his attention to changes in current usage. Cicero, for example, says: “Inasmuch as we are summoned back from the very calx by his interruption.” Now the line in the circus which we call the *creta* was called the calx by men of old time. ³³ Again, he puts together some verses by Ennius, especially those which referred to Africanus:

A man to whom nor friend nor foe could give

Due meed for all his efforts and his deed.

From this passage the scholar declares that he infers the word *opem* to have meant formerly not merely *assistance*, but *efforts*. For Ennius must mean that neither friend nor foe could pay Scipio a reward worthy of his efforts. ³⁴ Next, he congratulates himself on finding the source of Vergil’s words:

Over whose head the mighty gate of Heaven

Thunders,

remarking that Ennius stole the idea from Homer, and Vergil from Ennius. For there is a couplet by Ennius, preserved in this same book of Cicero’s, *On the State*:

If it be right for a mortal to scale the regions of Heaven,

Then the huge gate of the sky opens in glory to *me*.

35. But that I, too, while engaged upon another task, may not slip into the department of the philologist or the scholar, my advice is this – that all study of philosophy and all reading should be applied to the idea of living the happy life, that we should not hunt out archaic or far-fetched words and eccentric metaphors and figures of speech, but that we should seek precepts which will help us, utterances of courage and spirit which may at once be turned into facts. We should so learn them that words may become deeds. 36. And I hold that no man has treated mankind worse than he who has studied philosophy as if it were some marketable trade, who lives in a different manner from that which he advises. For those who are liable to every fault which they castigate advertise themselves as patterns of useless training. 37. A teacher like that can help me no more than a sea-sick pilot can be efficient in a storm. He must hold the tiller when the waves are tossing him; he must wrestle, as it were, with the sea; he must furl his sails when the storm rages; what good is a frightened and vomiting steersman to *me*? And how much greater, think you, is the storm of life than that which tosses any ship! One must steer, not talk.

All the words that these men utter and juggle before a listening crowd, belong to others. 38. They have been spoken by Plato, spoken by Zeno, spoken by Chrysippus or by Posidonius, and by a whole host of Stoics as numerous as excellent. I shall show you how men can prove their words to be their own: it is by doing what they have been talking about. Since therefore I have given you the message I wished to pass on to you, I shall now satisfy your craving and shall reserve for a new letter a complete answer to your summons; so that you may not approach in a condition of weariness a subject which is thorny and which should be followed with an attentive and painstaking ear. Farewell.

CIX. On the Fellowship of Wise Men

1. You expressed a wish to know whether a wise man can help a wise man. For we say that the wise man is completely endowed with every good, and has attained perfection; accordingly, the question arises how it is possible for anyone to help a person who possesses the Supreme Good.

Good men are mutually helpful; for each gives practice to the other's virtues and thus maintains wisdom at its proper level. Each needs someone with whom he may make comparisons and investigations. 2. Skilled wrestlers are kept up to the mark by practice; a musician is stirred to action by one of equal proficiency. The wise man also needs to have his virtues kept in action; and as he prompts himself to do things, so is he prompted by another wise man. 3. How can a wise man help another wise man? He can quicken his impulses, and point out to him opportunities for honourable action. Besides, he can develop some of his own ideas; he can impart what he has discovered. For even in the case of the wise man something will always remain to discover, something towards which his mind may make new ventures.

4. Evil men harm evil men; each debases the other by rousing his wrath, by approving his churlishness, and praising his pleasures; bad men are at their worst stage when their faults are most thoroughly intermingled, and their wickedness has been, so to speak, pooled in partnership. Conversely, therefore, a good man will help another good man. "How?" you ask. 5. Because he will bring joy to the other, he will strengthen his faith, and from the contemplation of their mutual tranquillity the delight of both will be increased. Moreover they will communicate to each other a knowledge of certain facts; for the wise man is not all-knowing. And even if he were all-knowing, someone might be able to devise and point out short cuts, by which the whole matter is more readily disseminated. 6. The wise will help the wise, not, mark you, because of his own strength merely, but because of the strength of the man whom he assists. The latter, it is true, can by himself develop his own parts; nevertheless, even one who is running well is helped by one who cheers him on.

“But the wise man does not really help the wise; he helps himself. Let me tell you this: strip the one of his special powers, and the other will accomplish nothing.”⁷ You might as well, on that basis, say that sweetness is not in the honey: for it is the person himself who is to eat it, that is so equipped, as to tongue and palate, for tasting this kind of food that the special flavour appeals to him, and anything else displeases. For there are certain men so affected by disease that they regard honey as bitter. Both men should be in good health, that the one may be helpful and the other a proper subject for help. Again they say: “When the highest degree of heat has been attained, it is superfluous to apply more heat; and when the Supreme Good has been attained, it is superfluous to have a helper. Does a completely stocked farmer ask for further supplies from his neighbours? Does a soldier who is sufficiently armed for going well-equipped into action need any more weapons? Very well, neither does the wise man; for he is sufficiently equipped and sufficiently armed for life.”⁹ My answer to this is, that when one is heated to the highest degree, one must have continued heat to maintain the highest temperature. And if it be objected that heat is self-maintaining, I say that there are great distinctions among the things that you are comparing; for heat is a single thing, but helpfulness is of many kinds. Again, heat is not helped by the addition of further heat, in order to be hot; but the wise man cannot maintain his mental standard without intercourse with friends of his own kind – with whom he may share his goodness.¹⁰ Moreover, there is a sort of mutual friendship among all the virtues. Thus, he who loves the virtues of certain among his peers, and in turn exhibits his own to be loved, is helpful. Like things give pleasure, especially when they are honourable and when men know that there is mutual approval.¹¹ And besides, none but a wise man can prompt another wise man’s soul in an intelligent way, just as man can be prompted in a rational way by man only. As, therefore, reason is necessary for the prompting of reason, so, in order to prompt perfect reason, there is need of perfect reason.

¹² Some say that we are helped even by those who bestow on us the so-called “indifferent” benefits, such as money, influence, security, and all the other valued or essential aids to living. If we argue in this way, the veriest fool will be said to help a wise man.

Helping, however, really means prompting the soul in accordance with Nature, both by the prompter's excellence and by the excellence of him who is thus prompted. And this cannot take place without advantage to the helper also. For in training the excellence of another, a man must necessarily train his own. ¹³ But, to omit from discussion supreme goods or the things which produce them, wise men can none the less be mutually helpful. For the mere discovery of a sage by a sage is in itself a desirable event; since everything good is naturally dear to the good man, and for this reason one feels congenial with a good man as one feels congenial with oneself.

¹⁴ It is necessary for me to pass from this topic to another, in order to prove my point. For the question is asked, whether the wise man will weigh his opinions, or whether he will apply to others for advice. Now he is compelled to do this when he approaches state and home duties – everything, so to speak, that is mortal. He needs outside advice on such matters, as does the physician, the pilot, the attorney, or the pleader of cases. Hence, the wise will sometimes help the wise; for they will persuade each other. But in these matters of great import also, – aye, of divine import, as I have termed them, – the wise man can also be useful by discussing honourable things in common, and by contributing his thoughts and ideas. ¹⁵ Moreover, it is in accordance with Nature to show affection for our friends, and to rejoice in their advancement as if it were absolutely our own. For if we have not done this, even virtue, which grows strong only through exercising our perceptions, will not abide with us. Now virtue advises us to arrange the present well, to take thought regarding the future, to deliberate and apply our minds; and one who takes a friend into council with him, can more easily apply his mind and think out his problem.

Therefore he will seek either the perfect wise man or one who has progressed to a point bordering on perfection. The perfect wise man, moreover, will help us if he aids our counsels with ordinary good sense. ¹⁶ They say that men see farther in the affairs of others than in their own. A defect of character causes this in those who are blinded by self-love, and whose fear in the hour of peril takes away their clear view of that which is useful; it is when a man is more at ease and freed from fear that he will begin to be wise. Nevertheless, there

are certain matters where even wise men see the facts more clearly in the case of others than in their own. Moreover, the wise man will, in company with his fellow sage, confirm the truth of that most sweet and honourable proverb – “always desiring and always refusing the same things”: it will be a noble result when they draw the load “with equal yoke.”

17. I have thus answered your demand, although it came under the head of subjects which I include in my volumes *On Moral Philosophy*. Reflect, as I am often wont to tell you, that there is nothing in such topics for us except mental gymnastics. For I return again and again to the thought: “What good does this do me? Make me more brave now, more just, more restrained! I have not yet the opportunity to make use of my training; for I still need the physician.

18. Why do you ask of me a useless knowledge? You have promised great things; test me, watch me! You assured me that I should be unterrified though swords were flashing round me, though the point of the blade were grazing my throat; you assured me that I should be at ease though fires were blazing round me, or though a sudden whirlwind should snatch up my ship and carry it over all the sea. Now make good for me such a course of treatment that I may despise pleasure and glory. Thereafter you shall teach me to work out complicated problems, to settle doubtful points, to see through that which is not clear; teach me now what it is necessary for me to know!” Farewell.

CX. On True and False Riches

1. From my villa at Nomentum I send you greeting and bid you keep a sound spirit within you – in other words, gain the blessing of all the gods, for he is assured of their grace and favour who has become a blessing to himself. Lay aside for the present the belief of certain persons – that a god is assigned to each one of us as a sort of attendant – not a god of regular rank, but one of a lower grade – one of those whom Ovid calls “plebeian gods.” Yet, while laying aside this belief, I would have you remember that our ancestors, who followed such a creed, have become Stoics; for they have assigned a Genius or a Juno to every individual. 2. Later on we shall investigate whether the gods have enough time on their hands to care for the concerns of private individuals; in the meantime, you must know that whether we are allotted to special guardians, or whether we are neglected and consigned to Fortune, you can curse a man with no heavier curse than to pray that he may be at enmity with himself.

There is no reason, however, why you should ask the gods to be hostile to anyone whom you regard as deserving of punishment; they *are* hostile to such a person, I maintain, even though he seems to be advanced by their favour. 3. Apply careful investigation, considering how our affairs actually stand, and not what men say of them; you will then understand that evils are more likely to help us than to harm us. For how often has so-called affliction been the source and the beginning of happiness! How often have privileges which we welcomed with deep thanksgiving built steps for themselves to the top of a precipice, still uplifting men who were already distinguished – just as if they had previously stood in a position whence they could fall in safety! 4. But this very fall has in it nothing evil, if you consider the end, after which nature lays no man lower. The universal limit is near; yes, there is near us the point where the prosperous man is upset, and the point where the unfortunate is set free. It is we ourselves that extend both these limits, lengthening them by our hopes and by our fears.

If, however, you are wise, measure all things according to the state of man; restrict at the same time both your joys and your fears.

Moreover, it is worth while not to rejoice at anything for long, so that you may not fear anything for long. 5. But why do I confine the scope of this evil? There is no reason why you should suppose that anything is to be feared. All these things which stir us and keep us a-flutter, are empty things. None of us has sifted out the truth; we have passed fear on to one another; none has dared to approach the object which caused his dread, and to understand the nature of his fear – aye, the good behind it. That is why falsehood and vanity still gain credit – because they are not refuted. 6. Let us account it worth while to look closely at the matter; then it will be clear how fleeting, how unsure, and how harmless are the things which we fear. The disturbance in our spirits is similar to that which Lucretius detected:

Like boys who cower frightened in the dark,

So grown-ups in the light of day feel fear.

What, then? Are we not more foolish than any child, we who “in the light of day feel fear”? 7. But you were wrong, Lucretius; we are not afraid in the daylight; we have turned everything into a state of darkness. We see neither what injures nor what profits us; all our lives through we blunder along, neither stopping nor treading more carefully on this account. But you see what madness it is to rush ahead in the dark. Indeed, we are bent on getting ourselves called back from a greater distance; and though we do not know our goal, yet we hasten with wild speed in the direction whither we are straining.

8. The light, however, may begin to shine, provided we are willing. But such a result can come about only in one way – if we acquire by knowledge this familiarity with things divine and human, if we not only flood ourselves but steep ourselves therein, if a man reviews the same principles even though he understands them and applies them again and again to himself, if he has investigated what is good, what is evil, and what has falsely been so entitled; and, finally, if he has investigated honour and baseness, and Providence. 9. The range of the human intelligence is not confined within these limits; it may also explore outside the universe – its destination and its source, and the ruin towards which all nature hastens so rapidly. We have withdrawn the soul from this divine contemplation and dragged it into mean and lowly tasks, so that it might be a slave to

greed, so that it might forsake the universe and its confines, and, under the command of masters who try all possible schemes, pry beneath the earth and seek what evil it can dig up therefrom – discontented with that which was freely offered to it.

10. Now God, who is the Father of us all, has placed ready to our hands those things which he intended for our own good; he did not wait for any search on our part, and he gave them to us voluntarily. But that which would be injurious, he buried deep in the earth. We can complain of nothing but ourselves; for we have brought to light the materials for our destruction, against the will of Nature, who hid them from us. We have bound over our souls to pleasure, whose service is the source of all evil; we have surrendered ourselves to self-seeking and reputation, and to other aims which are equally idle and useless.

11. What, then, do I now encourage you to do? Nothing new – we are not trying to find cures for new evils – but this first of all: namely, to see clearly for yourself what is necessary and what is superfluous. What is necessary will meet you everywhere; what is superfluous has always to be hunted-out – and with great endeavour.

12. But there is no reason why you should flatter yourself over-much if you despise gilded couches and jewelled furniture. For what virtue lies in despising useless things? The time to admire your own conduct is when you have come to despise the necessities. You are doing no great thing if you can live without royal pomp, if you feel no craving for boars which weigh a thousand pounds, or for flamingo tongues, or for the other absurdities of a luxury that already wearies of game cooked whole, and chooses different bits from separate animals; I shall admire you only when you have learned to scorn even the common sort of bread, when you have made yourself believe that grass grows for the needs of men as well as of cattle, when you have found out that food from the treetop can fill the belly – into which we cram things of value as if it could keep what it has received. We should satisfy our stomachs without being over-nice. How does it matter what the stomach receives, since it must lose whatever it has received? 13. You enjoy the carefully arranged dainties which are caught on land and sea; some are more pleasing if they are brought fresh to the table, others, if after long feeding and

forced fattening they almost melt and can hardly retain their own grease. You like the subtly devised flavour of these dishes. But I assure you that such carefully chosen and variously seasoned dishes, once they have entered the belly, will be overtaken alike by one and the same corruption. Would you despise the pleasures of eating? Then consider its result! ¹⁴ I remember some words of Attalus, which elicited general applause:

“Riches long deceived me. I used to be dazed when I caught some gleam of them here and there. I used to think that their hidden influence matched their visible show. But once, at a certain elaborate entertainment, I saw embossed work in silver and gold equalling the wealth of a whole city, and colours and tapestry devised to match objects which surpassed the value of gold or of silver – brought not only from beyond our own borders, but from beyond the borders of our enemies; on one side were slave-boys notable for their training and beauty, on the other were throngs of slave-women, and all the other resources that a prosperous and mighty empire could offer after reviewing its possessions. ¹⁵ What else is this, I said to myself, than a stirring-up of man’s cravings, which are in themselves provocative of lust? What is the meaning of all this display of money? Did we gather merely to learn what greed was? For my own part I left the place with less craving than I had when I entered. I came to despise riches, not because of their uselessness, but because of their pettiness. ¹⁶ Have you noticed how, inside a few hours, that programme, however slow-moving and carefully arranged, was over and done? Has a business filled up this whole life of ours, which could not fill up a whole day?

“I had another thought also: the riches seemed to me to be as useless to the possessors as they were to the onlookers. ¹⁷ Accordingly, I say to myself, whenever a show of that sort dazzles my eyes, whenever I see a splendid palace with a well-groomed corps of attendants and beautiful bearers carrying a litter: Why wonder? Why gape in astonishment? It is all show; such things are displayed, not possessed; while they please they pass away. ¹⁸ Turn thyself rather to the true riches. Learn to be content with little, and cry out with courage and with greatness of soul: ‘We have water, we have porridge; let us compete in happiness with Jupiter himself.’

And why not, I pray thee, make this challenge even without porridge and water? For it is base to make the happy life depend upon silver and gold, and just as base to make it depend upon water and porridge. 'But,' some will say, 'what could I do without such things?' 19. Do you ask what is the cure for want? It is to make hunger satisfy hunger; for, all else being equal, what difference is there in the smallness or the largeness of the things that force you to be a slave? What matter how little it is that Fortune can refuse to you? 20. Your very porridge and water can fall under another's jurisdiction; and besides, freedom comes, not to him over whom Fortune has slight power, but to him over whom she has no power at all. This is what I mean: you must crave nothing, if you would vie with Jupiter; for Jupiter craves nothing."

This is what Attalus told us. If you are willing to think often of these things, you will strive not to seem happy, but to be happy, and, in addition, to seem happy to yourself rather than to others. Farewell.

CXI. On the Vanity of Mental Gymnastics

1. You have asked me to give you a Latin word for the Greek *sophismata*. Many have tried to define the term, but no name has stuck. This is natural, inasmuch as the thing itself has not been admitted to general use by us; the name, too, has met with opposition. But the word which Cicero used seems to me most suitable: he calls them *cavillationes*. 2. If a man has surrendered himself to them, he weaves many a tricky subtlety, but makes no progress toward real living; he does not thereby become braver, or more restrained, or loftier of spirit.

He, however, who has practised philosophy to effect his own cure, becomes high-souled, full of confidence, invincible, and greater as you draw near him. 3. This phenomenon is seen in the case of high mountains, which appear less lofty when beheld from afar, but which prove clearly how high the peaks are when you come near them; such, my dear Lucilius, is our true philosopher, true by his acts and not by his tricks. He stands in a high place, worthy of admiration, lofty, and really great. He does not stretch himself or walk on tiptoe like those who seek to improve their height by deceit, wishing to seem taller than they really are; he is content with his own greatness. 4. And why should he not be content with having grown to such a height that Fortune cannot reach her hands to it? He is therefore above earthly things, equal to himself under all conditions, – whether the current of life runs free, or whether he is tossed and travels on troubled and desperate seas; but this steadfastness cannot be gained through such hair-splittings as I have just mentioned. The mind plays with them, but profits not a whit; the mind in such cases is simply dragging philosophy down from her heights to the level ground.

5. I would not forbid you to practise such exercises occasionally; but let it be at a time when you wish to do nothing. The worst feature, however, that these indulgences present is that they acquire a sort of self-made charm, occupying and holding the soul by a show of subtlety; although such weighty matters claim our attention, and a whole life seems scarcely sufficient to learn the single principle of despising life. “What? Did you not mean ‘control’ instead of

‘despise’”? No; “controlling” is the second task; for no one has controlled his life aright unless he has first learned to despise it. Farewell.

CXII. On Reforming Hardened Sinners

1. I am indeed anxious that your friend be moulded and trained, according to your desire. But he has been taken in a very hardened state, or rather (and this is a more difficult problem), in a very soft state, broken down by bad and inveterate habits.

I should like to give you an illustration from my own handicraft. 2. It is not every vine that admits the grafting process; if it be old and decayed, or if it be weak and slender, the vine either will not receive the cutting, or will not nourish it and make it a part of itself, nor will it accommodate itself to the qualities and nature of the grafted part. Hence we usually cut off the vine above ground, so that if we do not get results at first, we may try a second venture, and on a second trial graft it below the ground.

3. Now this person, concerning whom you have sent me your message in writing, has no strength; for he has pampered his vices. He has at one and the same time become flabby and hardened. He cannot receive reason, nor can he nourish it. "But," you say, "he desires reason of his own free will." Don't believe him. Of course I do not mean that he is lying to you; for he really thinks that he desires it. Luxury has merely upset his stomach; he will soon become reconciled to it again. 4. "But he says that he is put out with his former way of living." Very likely. Who is not? Men love and hate their vices at the same time. It will be the proper season to pass judgment on him when he has given us a guarantee that he really hates luxury; as it is now, luxury and he are merely not on speaking terms. Farewell.

CXIII. On the Vitality of the Soul and Its Attributes

1. You wish me to write to you my opinion concerning this question, which has been mooted by our school – whether justice, courage, foresight, and the other virtues, are living things. By such niceties as this, my beloved Lucilius, we have made people think that we sharpen our wits on useless objects, and waste our leisure time in discussions that will be unprofitable. I shall, however, do as you ask, and shall set forth the subject as viewed by our school. For myself, I confess to another belief: I hold that there are certain things which befit a wearer of white shoes and a Greek mantle. But what the beliefs are that have stirred the ancients, or those which the ancients have stirred up for discussion, I shall explain to you.

2. The soul, men are agreed, is a living thing, because of itself it can make us living things, and because “living things” have derived their name therefrom. But virtue is nothing else than a soul in a certain condition; therefore it is a living thing. Again, virtue is active, and no action can take place without impulse. And if a thing has impulse, it must be a living thing; for none except a living thing possesses impulse. 3. A reply to this is: “If virtue is a living thing, then virtue itself possesses virtue.” Of course it possesses its own self! Just as the wise man does everything by reason of virtue, so virtue accomplishes everything by reason of itself. “In that case,” say they, “all the arts also are living things, and all our thoughts and all that the mind comprehends. It therefore follows that many thousands of living things dwell in man’s tiny heart, and that each individual among us consists of, or at least contains, many living beings.”

Are you gruelled for an answer to this remark? Each of these will be a living thing; but they will not be many separate living things. And why? I shall explain, if you will apply your subtlety and your concentration to my words. 4. Each living thing must have a separate substance; but since all the things mentioned above have a single soul, consequently they can be separate living things but without plurality. I myself am a living thing, and a man; but you cannot say

that there are two of me for that reason. And why? Because, if that were so, they would have to be two separate existences. This is what I mean: one would have to be sundered from the other so as to produce two. But whenever you have that which is manifold in one whole, it falls into the category of a single nature, and is therefore single.

5. My soul is a living thing, and so am I; but we are not two separate persons. And why? Because the soul is part of myself. It will only be reckoned as a definite thing in itself when it shall exist by itself. But as long as it shall be part of another, it cannot be regarded as different. And why? I will tell you: it is because that which is different, must be personal and peculiar to itself, a whole, and complete within itself. 6. I myself have gone on record as being of a different opinion; for if one adopts this belief, not only the virtues will be living things, but so will their contrary vices, and the emotions, like wrath, fear, grief, and suspicion. Nay, the argument will carry us still further – all opinions and all thoughts will be living things. This is by no means admissible; since anything that man does is not necessarily the man himself. 7. “What is Justice?” people say. Justice is a soul that maintains itself in a certain attitude. “Then if the soul is a living being, so is Justice.” By no means. For Justice is really a state, a kind of power, of the soul; and this same soul is transformed into various likenesses and does not become a different kind of living thing as often as it acts differently. Nor is the result of soul-action a living thing. 8. If Justice, Bravery, and the other virtues have actual life, do they cease to be living things and then begin life over again, or are they *always* living things?

But the virtues cannot cease to be. Therefore, there are many, nay countless, living things, sojourning in this one soul. 9. “No,” is the answer, “not many, because they are all attached to the one, being parts and members of a single whole.” We are then portraying for ourselves an image of the soul like that of a many-headed hydra – each separate head fighting and destroying independently. And yet there is no separate living thing to each head; it is the head of a living thing, and the hydra itself is one single living thing. No one ever believed that the Chimaera contained a living lion or a living serpent; these were merely parts of the whole Chimaera; and parts are not

living things. 10. Then how can you infer that Justice is a living thing? “Justice,” people reply, “is active and helpful; that which acts and is helpful, possesses impulse; and that which possesses impulse is a living thing.” True, if the impulse is its own; (but in the case of justice it is not its own;) the impulse comes from the soul. 11. Every living thing exists as it began, until death; a man, until he dies, is a man, a horse is a horse, a dog a dog. They cannot change into anything else. Now let us grant that Justice – which is defined as “a soul in a certain attitude,” is a living thing. Let us suppose this to be so. Then Bravery also is alive, being “a soul in a certain attitude.” But which soul? That which was but now defined as Justice? The soul is kept within the first-named being, and cannot cross over into another; it must last out its existence in the medium where it had its origin. 12. Besides, there cannot be one soul to two living things, much less to many living things. And if Justice, Bravery, Restraint, and all the other virtues, are living things, how will they have one soul? They must possess separate souls, or else they are not living things. 13. Several living things cannot have one body; this is admitted by our very opponents. Now what is the “body” of justice? “The soul,” they admit. And of bravery? “The soul also.” And yet there cannot be one body of two living things. 14. “The same soul, however,” they answer, “assumes the guise of Justice, or Bravery, or Restraint.” This would be possible if Bravery were absent when Justice was present, and if Restraint were absent when Bravery was present; as the case stands now, all the virtues exist at the same time. Hence, how can the separate virtues be living things, if you grant that there is one single soul, which cannot create more than one single living thing?

15. Again, no living thing is part of another living thing. But Justice is a part of the soul; therefore Justice is not a living thing. It looks as if I were wasting time over something that is an acknowledged fact; for one ought to decry such a topic rather than debate it. And no two living things are equal. Consider the bodies of all beings: every one has its particular colour, shape, and size. 16. And among the other reasons for marvelling at the genius of the Divine Creator is, I believe, this, – that amid all this abundance there is no repetition; even seemingly similar things are, on comparison, unlike.

God has created all the great number of leaves that we behold: each, however, is stamped with its special pattern. All the many animals: none resembles another in size – always some difference! The Creator has set himself the task of making unlike and unequal things that are different; but all the virtues, as your argument states, are equal. Therefore, they are not living things.

17. Every living thing acts of itself; but virtue does nothing of itself; it must act in conjunction with man. All living things either are gifted with reason, like men and gods, or else are irrational, like beasts and cattle. Virtues, in any case, are rational; and yet they are neither men nor gods; therefore they are not living things. 18. Every living thing possessed of reason is inactive if it is not first stirred by some external impression; then the impulse comes, and finally assent confirms the impulse. Now what *assent* is, I shall explain. Suppose that I ought to take a walk: I *do* walk, but only after uttering the command to myself and approving this opinion of mine. Or suppose that I ought to seat myself; I *do* seat myself, but only after the same process. This assent is not a part of virtue. 19. For let us suppose that it is Prudence; how will Prudence assent to the opinion: “I must take a walk”? Nature does not allow this. For Prudence looks after the interests of its possessor, and not of its own self. Prudence cannot walk or be seated. Accordingly, it does not possess the power of assent, and it is not a living thing possessed of reason. But if virtue is a living thing, it is rational. But it is not rational; therefore it is not a living thing. 20. If virtue is a living thing, and virtue is a Good – is not, then, every Good a living thing? It is. Our school professes it.

Now to save a father’s life is a Good; it is also a Good to pronounce one’s opinion judiciously in the senate, and it is a Good to hand down just opinions; therefore the act of saving a father’s life is a living thing, also the act of pronouncing judicious opinions. We have carried this absurd argument so far that you cannot keep from laughing outright: wise silence is a Good, and so is a frugal dinner; therefore silence and dining are living things. 21. Indeed I shall never cease to tickle my mind and to make sport for myself by means of this nice nonsense. Justice and Bravery, if they are living things, are certainly of the earth. Now every earthly living thing gets cold or hungry or thirsty; therefore, Justice goes a-cold, Bravery is hungry,

and Kindness craves a drink!

22. And what next? Should I not ask our honourable opponents what shape these living beings have? Is it that of man, or horse, or wild beast? If they are given a round shape, like that of a god, I shall ask whether greed and luxury and madness are equally round. For these, too, are “living things.” If I find that they give a rounded shape to these also, I shall go so far as to ask whether a modest gait is a living thing; they must admit it, according to their argument, and proceed to say that a gait is a living thing, and a rounded living thing, at that!

23. Now do not imagine that I am the first one of our school who does not speak from rules but has his own opinion: Cleanthes and his pupil Chrysippus could not agree in defining the act of walking. Cleanthes held that it was spirit transmitted to the feet from the primal essence, while Chrysippus maintained that it was the primal essence in itself. Why, then, following the example of Chrysippus himself, should not every man claim his own freedom, and laugh down all these “living things,” so numerous that the universe itself cannot contain them? 24. One might say: “The virtues are not many living things, and yet they are living things. For just as an individual may be both poet and orator in one, even so these virtues are living things, but they are not many. The soul is the same; it can be at the same time just and prudent and brave, maintaining itself in a certain attitude towards each virtue.” 25. The dispute is settled, and we are therefore agreed. For I shall admit, meanwhile, that the soul is a living thing with the proviso that later on I may cast my final vote; but I deny that the acts of the soul are living beings. Otherwise, all words and all verses would be alive; for if prudent speech is a Good, and every Good a living thing, then speech is a living thing. A prudent line of poetry is a Good; everything alive is a Good; therefore, the line of poetry is a living thing. And so “Arms and the man I sing,” is a living thing; but they cannot call it rounded, because it has six feet! 26. “This whole proposition,” you say, “which we are at this moment discussing, is a puzzling fabric.” I split with laughter whenever I reflect that solecisms and barbarisms and syllogisms are living things, and, like an artist, I give to each a fitting likeness. Is this what we discuss with contracted brow and wrinkled forehead? I

cannot say now, after Caelius, “What melancholy trifling!” It is more than this; it is absurd. Why do we not rather discuss something which is useful and wholesome to ourselves, seeking how we may attain the virtues, and finding the path which will take us in that direction?

27. Teach me, not whether Bravery be a living thing, but prove that no living thing is happy without bravery, that is, unless it has grown strong to oppose hazards and has overcome all the strokes of chance by rehearsing and anticipating their attack. And what is Bravery? It is the impregnable fortress for our mortal weakness; when a man has surrounded himself therewith, he can hold out free from anxiety during life’s siege; for he is using his own strength and his own weapons. 28. At this point I would quote you a saying of our philosopher Posidonius: “There are never any occasions when you need think yourself safe because you wield the weapons of Fortune; fight with your own! Fortune does not furnish arms against herself; hence men equipped against their foes are unarmed against Fortune herself.”

29. Alexander, to be sure, harried and put to flight the Persians, the Hyrcanians, the Indians, and all the other races that the Orient spreads even to the Ocean; but he himself, as he slew one friend or lost another, would lie in the darkness lamenting sometimes his crime, and sometimes his loss; he, the conqueror of so many kings and nations, was laid low by anger and grief! For he had made it his aim to win control over everything except his emotions. 30. Oh with what great mistakes are men obsessed, who desire to push their limits of empire beyond the seas, who judge themselves most prosperous when they occupy many provinces with their soldiery and join new territory to the old! Little do they know of that kingdom which is on an equality with the heavens in greatness! 31. Self-Command is the greatest command of all. Let her teach me what a hallowed thing is the Justice which ever regards another’s good and seeks nothing for itself except its own employment. It should have nothing to do with ambition and reputation; it should satisfy itself.

Let each man convince himself of this before all else – “I must be just without reward.” And that is not enough; let him convince himself also of this: “May I take pleasure in devoting myself of my own free will to uphold this noblest of virtues.” Let all his thoughts

be turned as far as possible from personal interests. You need not look about for the reward of a just deed; a just deed in itself offers a still greater return. ³² Fasten deep in your mind that which I remarked a short space above: that it makes no difference how many persons are acquainted with your uprightness. Those who wish their virtue to be advertised are not striving for virtue but for renown. Are you not willing to be just without being renowned? Nay, indeed you must often be just and be at the same time disgraced. And then, if you are wise, let ill repute, well won, be a delight. Farewell.

CXIV. On Style as a Mirror of Character

1. You have been asking me why, during certain periods, a degenerate style of speech comes to the fore, and how it is that men's wits have gone downhill into certain vices – in such a way that exposition at one time has taken on a kind of puffed-up strength, and at another has become mincing and modulated like the music of a concert piece. You wonder why sometimes bold ideas – bolder than one could believe – have been held in favour, and why at other times one meets with phrases that are disconnected and full of innuendo, into which one must read more meaning than was intended to meet the ear. Or why there have been epochs which maintained the right to a shameless use of metaphor. For answer, here is a phrase which you are wont to notice in the popular speech – one which the Greeks have made into a proverb: “Man's speech is just like his life.”² Exactly as each individual man's actions seem to speak, so people's style of speaking often reproduces the general character of the time, if the morale of the public has relaxed and has given itself over to effeminacy. Wantonness in speech is proof of public luxury, if it is popular and fashionable, and not confined to one or two individual instances.³ A man's ability cannot possibly be of one sort and his soul of another. If his soul be wholesome, well-ordered, serious, and restrained, his ability also is sound and sober. Conversely, when the one degenerates, the other is also contaminated. Do you not see that if a man's soul has become sluggish, his limbs drag and his feet move indolently? If it is womanish, that one can detect the effeminacy by his very gait? That a keen and confident soul quickens the step? That madness in the soul, or anger (which resembles madness), hastens our bodily movements from walking to rushing?

And how much more do you think that this affects one's ability, which is entirely interwoven with the soul, – being moulded thereby, obeying its commands, and deriving therefrom its laws! ⁴ How Maecenas lived is too well-known for present comment. We know how he walked, how effeminate he was, and how he desired to display himself; also, how unwilling he was that his vices should escape notice. What, then? Does not the looseness of his speech

match his ungirt attire? Are his habits, his attendants, his house, his wife, any less clearly marked than his words? He would have been a man of great powers, had he set himself to his task by a straight path, had he not shrunk from making himself understood, had he not been so loose in his style of speech also. You will therefore see that his eloquence was that of an intoxicated man – twisting, turning, unlimited in its slackness.

5. What is more unbecoming than the words: “A stream and a bank covered with long-tressed woods”? And see how “men plough the channel with boats and, turning up the shallows, leave gardens behind them.” Or, “He curls his lady-locks, and bills and coos, and starts a-sighing, like a forest lord who offers prayers with down-bent neck.” Or, “An unregenerate crew, they search out people at feasts, and assail households with the wine-cup, and, by hope, exact death.” Or, “A Genius could hardly bear witness to his own festival”; or “threads of tiny tapers and crackling meal”; “mothers or wives clothing the hearth.”

6. Can you not at once imagine, on reading through these words, that this was the man who always paraded through the city with a flowing tunic? For even if he was discharging the absent emperor’s duties, he was always in undress when they asked him for the countersign. Or that this was the man who, as judge on the bench, or as an orator, or at any public function, appeared with his cloak wrapped about his head, leaving only the ears exposed, like the millionaire’s runaway slaves in the farce? Or that this was the man who, at the very time when the state was embroiled in civil strife, when the city was in difficulties and under martial law, was attended in public by two eunuchs – both of them more men than himself? Or that this was the man who had but one wife, and yet was married countless times? 7. These words of his, put together so faultily, thrown off so carelessly, and arranged in such marked contrast to the usual practice, declare that the character of their writer was equally unusual, unsound, and eccentric. To be sure, we bestow upon him the highest praise for his humanity; he was sparing with the sword and refrained from bloodshed; and he made a show of his power only in the course of his loose living; but he spoiled, by such preposterous finickiness of style, this genuine praise, which was his due. 8. For it is

evident that he was not really gentle, but effeminate, as is proved by his misleading word-order, his inverted expressions, and the surprising thoughts which frequently contain something great, but in finding expression have become nerveless. One would say that his head was turned by too great success.

This fault is due sometimes to the man, and sometimes to his epoch. 9. When prosperity has spread luxury far and wide, men begin by paying closer attention to their personal appearance. Then they go crazy over furniture. Next, they devote attention to their houses – how to take up more space with them, as if they were country-houses, how to make the walls glitter with marble that has been imported over seas, how to adorn a roof with gold, so that it may match the brightness of the inlaid floors. After that, they transfer their exquisite taste to the dinner-table, attempting to court approval by novelty and by departures from the customary order of dishes, so that the courses which we are accustomed to serve at the end of the meal may be served first, and so that the departing guests may partake of the kind of food which in former days was set before them on their arrival.

10. When the mind has acquired the habit of scorning the usual things of life, and regarding as mean that which was once customary, it begins to hunt for novelties in speech also; now it summons and displays obsolete and old-fashioned words; now it coins even unknown words or misshapes them; and now a bold and frequent metaphorical usage is made a special feature of style, according to the fashion which has just become prevalent. 11. Some cut the thoughts short, hoping to make a good impression by leaving the meaning in doubt and causing the hearer to suspect his own lack of wit. Some dwell upon them and lengthen them out. Others, too, approach just short of a fault – for a man must really do this if he hopes to attain an imposing effect – but actually love the fault for its own sake. In short, whenever you notice that a degenerate style pleases the critics, you may be sure that character also has deviated from the right standard.

Just as luxurious banquets and elaborate dress are indications of disease in the state, similarly a lax style, if it be popular, shows that the mind (which is the source of the word) has lost its balance.

Indeed you ought not to wonder that corrupt speech is welcomed not merely by the more squalid mob but also by our more cultured throng; for it is only in their dress and not in their judgments that they differ. ¹² You may rather wonder that not only the effects of vices, but even vices themselves, meet with approval. For it has ever been thus: no man's ability has ever been approved without something being pardoned. Show me any man, however famous; I can tell you what it was that his age forgave in him, and what it was that his age purposely overlooked. I can show you many men whose vices have caused them no harm, and not a few who have been even helped by these vices. Yes, I will show you persons of the highest reputation, set up as models for our admiration; and yet if you seek to correct their errors, you destroy them; for vices are so intertwined with virtues that they drag the virtues along with them. ¹³ Moreover, style has no fixed laws; it is changed by the usage of the people, never the same for any length of time. Many orators hark back to earlier epochs for their vocabulary, speaking in the language of the Twelve Tables. Gracchus, Crassus, and Curio, in their eyes, are too refined and too modern; so back to Appius and Coruncanius! Conversely, certain men, in their endeavour to maintain nothing but well-worn and common usages, fall into a humdrum style. ¹⁴ These two classes, each in its own way, are degenerate; and it is no less degenerate to use no words except those which are conspicuous, high-sounding, and poetical, avoiding what is familiar and in ordinary usage. One is, I believe, as faulty as the other: the one class are unreasonably elaborate, the other are unreasonably negligent; the former depilate the leg, the latter not even the armpit.

¹⁵ Let us now turn to the arrangement of words. In this department, what countless varieties of fault I can show you! Some are all for abruptness and unevenness of style, purposely disarranging anything which seems to have a smooth flow of language. They would have jolts in all their transitions; they regard as strong and manly whatever makes an uneven impression on the ear. With some others it is not so much an "arrangement" of words as it is a setting to music; so wheedling and soft is their gliding style. ¹⁶ And what shall I say of that arrangement in which words are put off and, after being long waited for, just manage to come in at the end of

a period? Or again of that softly-concluding style, Cicero-fashion, with a gradual and gently poised descent always the same and always with the customary arrangement of the rhythm! Nor is the fault only in the style of the sentences, if they are either petty and childish, or debasing, with more daring than modesty should allow, or if they are flowery and cloying, or if they end in emptiness, accomplishing mere sound and nothing more.

17. Some individual makes these vices fashionable – some person who controls the eloquence of the day; the rest follow his lead and communicate the habit to each other. Thus when Sallust was in his glory, phrases were lopped off, words came to a close unexpectedly, and obscure conciseness was equivalent to elegance. L. Arruntius, a man of rare simplicity, author of a historical work on the Punic War, was a member and a strong supporter of the Sallust school. There is a phrase in Sallust: *exercitum argento fecit*, meaning thereby that he *recruited* an army by means of money. Arruntius began to like this idea; he therefore inserted the verb *facio* all through his book. Hence, in one passage, *fugam nostris fecere*; in another, *Hiero, rex Syracusanorum, bellum fecit*; and in another, *quae audita Panhormitanos dedere Romanis fecere*. 18. I merely desired to give you a taste; his whole book is interwoven with such stuff as this. What Sallust reserved for occasional use, Arruntius makes into a frequent and almost continual habit – and there was a reason: for Sallust used the words as they occurred to his mind, while the other writer went afield in search of them. So you see the results of copying another man's vices. 19. Again, Sallust said: *aquis hiemantibus*. Arruntius, in his first book on the Punic War, uses the words: *repente hiemavit tempestas*. And elsewhere, wishing to describe an exceptionally cold year, he says: *totus hiemavit annus*. And in another passage: *inde sexaginta onerarias leves praeter militem et necessarios nautarum hiemante aquilone misit*; and he continues to bolster many passages with this metaphor. In a certain place, Sallust gives the words: *inter arma civilia aequi bonique famas petit*; and Arruntius cannot restrain himself from mentioning at once, in the first book, that there were extensive “reminders” concerning Regulus.

20. These and similar faults, which imitation stamps upon one's

style, are not necessarily indications of loose standards or of debased mind; for they are bound to be personal and peculiar to the writer, enabling one to judge thereby of a particular author's temperament; just as an angry man will talk in an angry way, an excitable man in a flurried way, and an effeminate man in a style that is soft and unresisting. 21. You note this tendency in those who pluck out, or thin out, their beards, or who closely shear and shave the upper lip while preserving the rest of the hair and allowing it to grow, or in those who wear cloaks of outlandish colours, who wear transparent togas, and who never deign to do anything which will escape general notice; they endeavour to excite and attract men's attention, and they put up even with censure, provided that they can advertise themselves. That is the style of Maecenas and all the others who stray from the path, not by hazard, but consciously and voluntarily. 22. This is the result of great evil in the soul. As in the case of drink, the tongue does not trip until the mind is overcome beneath its load and gives way or betrays itself; so that intoxication of style – for what else than this can I call it? – never gives trouble to anyone unless the soul begins to totter. Therefore, I say, take care of the soul; for from the soul issue our thoughts, from the soul our words, from the soul our dispositions, our expressions, and our very gait. When the soul is sound and strong, the style too is vigorous, energetic, manly; but if the soul lose its balance, down comes all the rest in ruins.

23. If but the king be safe, your swarm will live
Harmonious; if he die, the bees revolt.

The soul is our king. If it be safe, the other functions remain on duty and serve with obedience; but the slightest lack of equilibrium in the soul causes them to waver along with it. And when the soul has yielded to pleasure, its functions and actions grow weak, and any undertaking comes from a nerveless and unsteady source. 24. To persist in my use of this simile – our soul is at one time a king, at another a tyrant. The king, in that he respects things honourable, watches over the welfare of the body which is entrusted to his charge, and gives that body no base, no ignoble commands. But an uncontrolled, passionate, and effeminate soul changes kingship into that most dread and detestable quality – tyranny; then it becomes a

prey to the uncontrolled emotions, which dog its steps, elated at first, to be sure, like a populace idly sated with a largess which will ultimately be its undoing, and spoiling what it cannot consume. 25. But when the disease has gradually eaten away the strength, and luxurious habits have penetrated the marrow and the sinews, such a soul exults at the sight of limbs which, through its overindulgence, it has made useless; instead of its own pleasures, it views those of others; it becomes the go-between and witness of the passions which, as the result of self-gratification, it can no longer feel. Abundance of delights is not so pleasing a thing to that soul as it is bitter, because it cannot send all the dainties of yore down through the over-worked throat and stomach, because it can no longer whirl in the maze of eunuchs and mistresses, and it is melancholy because a great part of its happiness is shut off, through the limitations of the body.

26. Now is it not madness, Lucilius, for none of us to reflect that he is mortal? Or frail? Or again that he is but one individual? Look at our kitchens, and the cooks, who bustle about over so many fires; is it, think you, for a single belly that all this bustle and preparation of food takes place? Look at the old brands of wine and store-houses filled with the vintages of many ages; is it, think you, a single belly that is to receive the stored wine, sealed with the names of so many consuls, and gathered from so many vineyards? Look, and mark in how many regions men plough the earth, and how many thousands of farmers are tilling and digging; is it, think you, for a single belly that crops are planted in Sicily and Africa? 27. We should be sensible, and our wants more reasonable, if each of us were to take stock of himself, and to measure his bodily needs also, and understand how little he can consume, and for how short a time! But nothing will give you so much help toward moderation as the frequent thought that life is short and uncertain here below; whatever you are doing, have regard to death. Farewell.

CXV. On the Superficial Blessings

1. I wish, my dear Lucilius, that you would not be too particular with regard to words and their arrangement; I have greater matters than these to commend to your care. You should seek what to write, rather than how to write it – and even that not for the purpose of writing but of feeling it, that you may thus make what you have felt more your own and, as it were, set a seal on it. 2. Whenever you notice a style that is too careful and too polished, you may be sure that the mind also is no less absorbed in petty things. The really great man speaks informally and easily; whatever he says, he speaks with assurance rather than with pains.

You are familiar with the young dandies, natty as to their beards and locks, fresh from the bandbox; you can never expect from them any strength or any soundness. Style is the garb of thought: if it be trimmed, or dyed, or treated, it shows that there are defects and a certain amount of flaws in the mind. Elaborate elegance is not a manly garb. 3. If we had the privilege of looking into a good man's soul, oh what a fair, holy, magnificent, gracious, and shining face should we behold – radiant on the one side with justice and temperance, on another with bravery and wisdom! And, besides these, thriftiness, moderation, endurance, refinement, affability, and – though hard to believe – love of one's fellow-men, that Good which is so rare in man, all these would be shedding their own glory over that soul. There, too, forethought combined with elegance and, resulting from these, a most excellent greatness of soul (the noblest of all these virtues) – indeed what charm, O ye heavens, what authority and dignity would they contribute! What a wonderful combination of sweetness and power! No one could call such a face lovable without also calling it worshipful. 4. If one might behold such a face, more exalted and more radiant than the mortal eye is wont to behold, would not one pause as if struck dumb by a visitation from above, and utter a silent prayer, saying: "May it be lawful to have looked upon it!"? And then, led on by the encouraging kindness of his expression, should we not bow down and worship? Should we not, after much contemplation of a far superior countenance,

surpassing those which we are wont to look upon, mild-eyed and yet flashing with life-giving fire – should we not then, I say, in reverence and awe, give utterance to those famous lines of our poet Vergil:

5. O maiden, words are weak! Thy face is more

Than mortal, and thy voice rings sweeter far

Than mortal man's;

Blest be thou; and, whoe'er thou art, relieve

Our heavy burdens.

And such a vision will indeed be a present help and relief to us, if we are willing to worship it. But this worship does not consist in slaughtering fattened bulls, or in hanging up offerings of gold or silver, or in pouring coins into a temple treasury; rather does it consist in a will that is reverent and upright.

6. There is none of us, I declare to you, who would not burn with love for this vision of virtue, if only he had the privilege of beholding it; for now there are many things that cut off our vision, piercing it with too strong a light, or clogging it with too much darkness. If, however, as certain drugs are wont to be used for sharpening and clearing the eyesight, we are likewise willing to free our mind's eye from hindrances, we shall then be able to perceive virtue, though it be buried in the body – even though poverty stand in the way, and even though lowliness and disgrace block the path. We shall then, I say, behold that true beauty, no matter if it be smothered by unloveliness. 7. Conversely, we shall get a view of evil and the deadening influences of a sorrow-laden soul – in spite of the hindrance that results from the widespread gleam of riches that flash round about, and in spite of the false light – of official position on the one side or great power on the other – which beats pitilessly upon the beholder.

8. Then it will be in our power to understand how contemptible are the things we admire – like children who regard every toy as a thing of value, who cherish necklaces bought at the price of a mere penny as more dear than their parents or than their brothers. And what, then, as Aristo says, is the difference between ourselves and these children, except that we elders go crazy over paintings and sculpture, and that

our folly costs us dearer? Children are pleased by the smooth and variegated pebbles which they pick up on the beach, while we take delight in tall columns of veined marble brought either from Egyptian sands or from African deserts to hold up a colonnade or a dining-hall large enough to contain a city crowd; 9. we admire walls veneered with a thin layer of marble, although we know the while what defects the marble conceals. We cheat our own eyesight, and when we have overlaid our ceilings with gold, what else is it but a lie in which we take such delight? For we know that beneath all this gilding there lurks some ugly wood.

Nor is such superficial decoration spread merely over walls and ceilings; nay, all the famous men whom you see strutting about with head in air, have nothing but a gold-leaf prosperity. Look beneath, and you will know how much evil lies under that thin coating of titles. 10. Note that very commodity which holds the attention of so many magistrates and so many judges, and which creates both magistrates and judges – that money, I say, which ever since it began to be regarded with respect, has caused the ruin of the true honour of things; we become alternately merchants and merchandise, and we ask, not what a thing truly is, but what it costs; we fulfil duties if it pays, or neglect them if it pays, and we follow an honourable course as long as it encourages our expectations, ready to veer across to the opposite course if crooked conduct shall promise more. 11. Our parents have instilled into us a respect for gold and silver; in our early years the craving has been implanted, settling deep within us and growing with our growth. Then too the whole nation, though at odds on every other subject, agrees upon this; this is what they regard, this is what they ask for their children, this is what they dedicate to the gods when they wish to show their gratitude – as if it were the greatest of all man's possessions! And finally, public opinion has come to such a pass that poverty is a hissing and a reproach, despised by the rich and loathed by the poor.

12. Verses of poets also are added to the account – verses which lend fuel to our passions, verses in which wealth is praised as if it were the only credit and glory of mortal man. People seem to think that the immortal gods cannot give any better gift than wealth – or even possess anything better:

13. The Sun-god's palace, set with pillars tall,
And flashing bright with gold.
Or they describe the chariot of the Sun:
Gold was the axle, golden eke the pole,

And gold the tires that bound the circling wheels,
And silver all the spokes within the wheels.

And finally, when they would praise an epoch as the best, they call it the "Golden Age." 14. Even among the Greek tragic poets there are some who regard pelf as better than purity, soundness, or good report:

Call me a scoundrel, only call me rich!
All ask how great my riches are, but none
Whether my soul is good.
None asks the means or source of your estate,
But merely how it totals.
All men are worth as much as what they own.
What is most shameful for us to possess?
Nothing!
If riches bless me, I should love to live;
Yet I would rather die, if poor.
A man dies nobly in pursuit of wealth.
Money, that blessing to the race of man,

Cannot be matched by mother's love, or lisp
Of children, or the honour due one's sire.
And if the sweetness of the lover's glance
Be half so charming, Love will rightly stir
The hearts of gods and men to adoration.

15. When these last-quoted lines were spoken at a performance of one of the tragedies of Euripides, the whole audience rose with one accord to hiss the actor and the play off the stage. But Euripides jumped to his feet, claimed a hearing, and asked them to wait for the conclusion and see the destiny that was in store for this man who gaped after gold. Bellerophon, in that particular drama, was to pay

the penalty which is exacted of all men in the drama of life. 16. For one must pay the penalty for all greedy acts; although the greed is enough of a penalty in itself. What tears and toil does money wring from us! Greed is wretched in that which it craves and wretched in that which it wins! Think besides of the daily worry which afflicts every possessor in proportion to the measure of his gain! The possession of riches means even greater agony of spirit than the acquisition of riches. And how we sorrow over our losses – losses which fall heavily upon us, and yet seem still more heavy! And finally, though Fortune may leave our property intact, whatever we cannot gain in addition, is sheer loss!

17. “But,” you will say to me, “people call yonder man happy and rich; they pray that some day they may equal him in possessions.” Very true. What, then? Do you think that there is any more pitiable lot in life than to possess misery and hatred also? Would that those who are bound to crave wealth could compare notes with the rich man! Would that those who are bound to seek political office could confer with ambitious men who have reached the most sought-after honours! They would then surely alter their prayers, seeing that these grandees are always gaping after new gain, condemning what is already behind them. For there is no one in the world who is contented with his prosperity, even if it comes to him on the run. Men complain about their plans and the outcome of their plans; they always prefer what they have failed to win.

18. So philosophy can settle this problem for you, and afford you, to my mind, the greatest boon that exists – absence of regret for your own conduct. This is a sure happiness; no storm can ruffle it; but you cannot be steered safely through by any subtly woven words, or any gently flowing language. Let words proceed as they please, provided only your soul keeps its own sure order, provided your soul is great and holds unruffled to its ideals, pleased with itself on account of the very things which displease others, a soul that makes life the test of its progress, and believes that its knowledge is in exact proportion to its freedom from desire and its freedom from fear. Farewell.

CXVI. On Self-Control

1. The question has often been raised whether it is better to have moderate emotions, or none at all. Philosophers of our school reject the emotions; the Peripatetics keep them in check. I, however, do not understand how any half-way disease can be either wholesome or helpful. Do not fear; I am not robbing you of any privileges which you are unwilling to lose! I shall be kindly and indulgent towards the objects for which you strive – those which you hold to be necessary to our existence, or useful, or pleasant; I shall simply strip away the vice. For after I have issued my prohibitions against the desires, I shall still allow you to wish that you may do the same things fearlessly and with greater accuracy of judgment, and to feel even the pleasures more than before; and how can these pleasures help coming more readily to your call, if you are their lord rather than their slave!

2. “But,” you object, “it is natural for me to suffer when I am bereaved of a friend; grant some privileges to tears which have the right to flow! It is also natural to be affected by men’s opinions and to be cast down when they are unfavourable; so why should you not allow me such an honourable aversion to bad opinion?”

There is no vice which lacks some plea; there is no vice that at the start is not modest and easily entreated; but afterwards the trouble spreads more widely. If you allow it to begin, you cannot make sure of its ceasing. 3. Every emotion at the start is weak. Afterwards, it rouses itself and gains strength by progress; it is more easy to forestall it than to forgo it. Who does not admit that all the emotions flow as it were from a certain natural source? We are endowed by Nature with an interest in our own well-being; but this very interest, when overindulged, becomes a vice. Nature has intermingled pleasure with necessary things – not in order that we should seek pleasure, but in order that the addition of pleasure may make the indispensable means of existence attractive to our eyes. Should it claim rights of its own, it is luxury.

Let us therefore resist these faults when they are demanding entrance, because, as I have said, it is easier to deny them admittance

than to make them depart. 4. And if you cry: "One should be allowed a certain amount of grieving, and a certain amount of fear." I reply that the "certain amount" can be too long-drawn-out, and that it will refuse to stop short when you so desire. The wise man can safely control himself without becoming over-anxious; he can halt his tears and his pleasures at will; but in our case, because it is not easy to retrace our steps, it is best not to push ahead at all. 5. I think that Panaetius gave a very neat answer to a certain youth who asked him whether the wise man should become a lover: "As to the wise man, we shall see later; but you and I, who are as yet far removed from wisdom, should not trust ourselves to fall into a state that is disordered, uncontrolled, enslaved to another, contemptible to itself. If our love be not spurned, we are excited by its kindness; if it be scorned, we are kindled by our pride. An easily won love hurts us as much as one which is difficult to win; we are captured by that which is compliant, and we struggle with that which is hard. Therefore, knowing our weakness, let us remain quiet. Let us not expose this unstable spirit to the temptations of drink, or beauty, or flattery, or anything that coaxes and allures."

6. Now that which Panaetius replied to the question about love may be applied, I believe, to all the emotions. In so far as we are able, let us step back from slippery places; even on dry ground it is hard enough to take a sturdy stand. 7. At this point, I know, you will confront me with that common complaint against the Stoics: "Your promises are too great, and your counsels too hard. We are mere manikins, unable to deny ourselves everything. We shall sorrow, but not to any great extent; we shall feel desires, but in moderation; we shall give way to anger, but we shall be appeased." 8. And do you know why we have not the power to attain this Stoic ideal? It is because we refuse to believe in our power. Nay, of a surety, there is something else which plays a part: it is because we are in love with our vices; we uphold them and prefer to make excuses for them rather than shake them off. We mortals have been endowed with sufficient strength by nature, if only we use this strength, if only we concentrate our powers and rouse them all to help us or at least not to hinder us. The reason is unwillingness, the excuse, inability. Farewell.

CXVII. On Real Ethics as Superior to Syllogistic Subtleties

1. You will be fabricating much trouble for me, and you will be unconsciously embroiling me in a great discussion, and in considerable bother, if you put such petty questions as these; for in settling them I cannot disagree with my fellow-Stoics without impairing my standing among them, nor can I subscribe to such ideas without impairing my conscience. Your query is, whether the Stoic belief is true: that wisdom is a Good, but that *being wise* is not a Good. I shall first set forth the Stoic view, and then I shall be bold enough to deliver my own opinion.

2. We of the Stoic school believe that the Good is corporeal, because the Good is active, and whatever is active is corporeal. That which is good, is helpful. But, in order to be helpful, it must be active; so, if it is active, it is corporeal. They (the Stoics) declare that wisdom is a Good; it therefore follows that one must also call wisdom corporeal. 3. But they do not think that *being wise* can be rated on the same basis. For it is incorporeal and accessory to something else, in other words, wisdom; hence it is in no respect active or helpful.

“What, then?” is the reply; “Why do we not say that *being wise* is a Good?” We do say so; but only by referring it to that on which it depends – in other words, wisdom itself. 4. Let me tell you what answers other philosophers make to these objectors, before I myself begin to form my own creed and to take my place entirely on another side. “Judged in that light,” they say, “not even *living happily* is a Good. Willy nilly, such persons ought to reply that the happy life is a Good, but that *living happily* is not a Good.” 5. And this objection is also raised against our school: “You wish to be wise. Therefore, *being wise* is a thing to be desired. And if it be a thing to be desired it is a Good.” So our philosophers are forced to twist their words and insert another syllable into the word “desired,” – a syllable which our language does not normally allow to be inserted. But, with your permission, I shall add it. “That which is good,” they say, “is a thing

to be desired; the *desirable* thing is that which falls to our lot after we have attained the Good. For the desirable is not sought as a Good; it is an accessory to the Good after the Good has been attained.”

6. I myself do not hold the same view, and I judge that our philosophers have come down to this argument because they are already bound by the first link in the chain and for that reason may not alter their definition. People are wont to concede much to the things which all men take for granted; in our eyes the fact that all men agree upon something is a proof of its truth. For instance, we infer that the gods exist, for this reason, among others – that there is implanted in everyone an idea concerning deity, and there is no people so far beyond the reach of laws and customs that it does not believe at least in gods of some sort. And when we discuss the immortality of the soul, we are influenced in no small degree by the general opinion of mankind, who either fear or worship the spirits of the lower world. I make the most of this general belief: you can find no one who does not hold that wisdom is a Good, and being wise also. 7. I shall not appeal to the populace, like a conquered gladiator; let us come to close quarters, using our own weapons.

When something affects a given object, is it outside the object which it affects, or is it inside the object it affects? If it is inside the object it affects, it is as corporeal as the object which it affects. For nothing can affect another object without touching it, and that which touches is corporeal. If it is outside, it withdraws after having affected the object. And withdrawal means motion. And that which possesses motion, is corporeal. 8. You expect me, I suppose, to deny that “race” differs from “running,” that “heat” differs from “being hot,” that “light” differs from “giving light.” I grant that these pairs vary, but hold that they are not in separate classes. If good health is an indifferent quality, then so is *being in good health*; if beauty is an indifferent quality, then so is *being beautiful*. If justice is a Good, then so is *being just*. And if baseness is an evil, then it is an evil to be base – just as much as, if sore eyes are an evil, the state of having sore eyes is also an evil. Neither quality, you may be sure, can exist without the other. He who is wise is a man of wisdom; he who is a man of wisdom is wise. So true it is that we cannot doubt the quality of the one to equal the quality of the other, that they are both

regarded by certain persons as one and the same.

9. Here is a question, however, which I should be glad to put: granted that all things are either good or bad or indifferent – in what class does *being wise* belong? People deny that it is a Good; and, as it obviously is not an evil, it must consequently be one of the “media.” But we mean by the “medium,” or the “indifferent” quality that which can fall to the lot of the bad no less than to the good – such things as money, beauty, or high social position. But the quality of *being wise* can fall to the lot of the good man alone; therefore *being wise* is not an indifferent quality. Nor is it an evil, either; because it cannot fall to the lot of the bad man; therefore, it is a Good. That which the good man alone can possess, is a Good; now *being wise* is the possession of the good man only; therefore it is a Good. 10. The objector replies: “It is only an accessory of wisdom.” Very well, then, I say, this quality which you call *being wise* – does it actively produce wisdom, or is it a passive concomitant of wisdom? It is corporeal in either case. For that which is acted upon and that which acts, are alike corporeal; and, if corporeal, each is a Good. The only quality which could prevent it from being a Good, would be incorporeality.

11. The Peripatetics believe that there is no distinction between *wisdom* and *being wise*, since either of these implies the other also. Now do you suppose that any man can *be wise* except one who possesses wisdom? Or that anyone who *is wise* does not possess wisdom? 12. The old masters of dialectic, however, distinguish between these two conceptions; and from them the classification has come right down to the Stoics. What sort of a classification this is, I shall explain: A field is one thing, and the possession of the field another thing; of course, because “possessing the field” refers to the possessor rather than to the field itself. Similarly, wisdom is one thing and *being wise* another. You will grant, I suppose, that these two are separate ideas – the possessed and the possessor: wisdom being that which one possesses, and he who *is wise* its possessor. Now wisdom is Mind perfected and developed to the highest and best degree. For it is the art of life. And what is *being wise*? I cannot call it “Mind Perfected,” but rather that which falls to the lot of him who possesses a “mind perfected”; thus a good mind is one thing,

and the so-called possession of a good mind another.

13. “There are,” it is said, “certain natural classes of bodies; we say: ‘This is a man,’ ‘this is a horse.’ Then there attend on the bodily natures certain movements of the mind which declare something about the body. And these have a certain essential quality which is sundered from body; for example: ‘I see Cato walking.’ The senses indicate this, and the mind believes it. What I see, is *body*, and upon this I concentrate my eyes and my mind. Again, I say: ‘Cato walks.’ What I say,” they continue, “is not body; it is a certain declarative fact concerning body – called variously an ‘utterance,’ a ‘declaration,’ a ‘statement.’ Thus, when we say ‘wisdom,’ we mean something *pertaining* to body; when we say ‘*he is wise*,’ we are speaking *concerning* body. And it makes considerable difference whether you mention the person directly, or speak concerning the person.”

14. Supposing for the present that these are two separate conceptions (for I am not yet prepared to give my own opinion); what prevents the existence of still a third – which is none the less a Good? I remarked a little while ago that a “field” was one thing, and the “possession of a field” another; of course, for possessor and possessed are of different natures; the latter is the land, and the former is the man who owns the land. But with regard to the point now under discussion, both are of the same nature – the possessor of wisdom, and wisdom itself. 15. Besides, in the one case that which is possessed is one thing, and he who possesses it is another; but in this case the possessed and the possessor come under the same category. The field is owned by virtue of law, wisdom by virtue of nature. The field can change hands and go into the ownership of another; but wisdom never departs from its owner. Accordingly, there is no reason why you should try to compare things that are so unlike one another. I had started to say that these can be two separate conceptions, and yet that both can be Goods – for instance, wisdom and the wise man being two separate things and yet granted by you to be equally good. And just as there is no objection to regarding both wisdom and the possessor of wisdom as Goods, so there is no objection to regarding as a good both wisdom and the possession of wisdom, – in other words, *being wise*. 16. For I only wish to be a wise

man in order to *be wise*. And what then? Is not that thing a Good without the possession of which a certain other thing cannot be a Good? You surely admit that wisdom, if given without the right to be used, is not to be welcomed! And wherein consists the use of wisdom? In *being wise*; that is its most valuable attribute; if you withdraw this, wisdom becomes superfluous. If processes of torture are evil, then being tortured is an evil – with this reservation, indeed, that if you take away the consequences, the former are not evil. Wisdom is a condition of “mind perfected,” and *being wise* is the employment of this “mind perfected.” How can the employment of that thing not be a Good, which without employment is not a Good?

17. If I ask you whether wisdom is to be desired, you admit that it is. If I ask you whether the employment of wisdom is to be desired, you also admit the fact; for you say that you will not receive wisdom if you are not allowed to employ it. Now that which is to be desired is a Good. *Being wise* is the employment of wisdom, just as it is of eloquence to make a speech, or of the eyes to see things. Therefore, *being wise* is the employment of wisdom, and the employment of wisdom is to be desired. Therefore *being wise* is a thing to be desired; and if it is a thing to be desired, it is a Good.

18. Lo, these many years I have been condemning myself for imitating these men at the very time when I am arraigning them, and of wasting words on a subject that is perfectly clear. For who can doubt that, if heat is an evil, it is also an evil to be hot? Or that, if cold is an evil, it is an evil to be cold? Or that, if life is a Good, so is *being alive*? All such matters are on the outskirts of wisdom, not in wisdom itself. But our abiding-place should be in wisdom itself.

19. Even though one takes a fancy to roam, wisdom has large and spacious retreats: we may investigate the nature of the gods, the fuel which feeds the constellations, or all the varied courses of the stars; we may speculate whether our affairs move in harmony with those of the stars, whether the impulse to motion comes from thence into the minds and bodies of all, and whether even these events which we call fortuitous are fettered by strict laws and nothing in this universe is unforeseen or unregulated in its revolutions. Such topics have nowadays been withdrawn from instruction in morals, but they uplift the mind and raise it to the dimensions of the subject which it

discusses; the matters, however, of which I was speaking a while ago, wear away and wear down the mind, not (as you and yours maintain) whetting, but weakening it. 20. And I ask you, are we to fritter away that necessary study which we owe to greater and better themes, in discussing a matter which may perhaps be wrong and is certainly of no avail? How will it profit me to know whether wisdom is one thing, and *being wise* another? How will it profit me to know that the one is, and the other is not, a Good? Suppose I take a chance, and gamble on this prayer: "Wisdom for you, and *being wise* for me!" We shall come out even.

21. Try rather to show me the way by which I may attain those ends. Tell me what to avoid, what to seek, by what studies to strengthen my tottering mind, how I may rebuff the waves that strike me abeam and drive me from my course, by what means I may be able to cope with all my evils, and by what means I can be rid of the calamities that have plunged in upon me and those into which I myself have plunged. Teach me how to bear the burden of sorrow without a groan on my part, and how to bear prosperity without making others groan; also, how to avoid waiting for the ultimate and inevitable end, and to beat a retreat of my own free will, when it seems proper to me to do so. 22. I think nothing is baser than to pray for death. For if you wish to live, why do you pray for death? And if you do not wish to live, why do you ask the gods for that which they gave you at birth? For even as, against your will, it has been settled that you must die some day, so the time when you shall wish to die is in your own hands. The one fact is to you a necessity, the other a privilege.

23. I read lately a most disgraceful doctrine, uttered (more shame to him!) by a learned gentleman: "So may I die as soon as possible!" Fool, thou art praying for something that is already thine own! "So may I die as soon as possible!" Perhaps thou didst grow old while uttering these very words! At any rate, what is there to hinder? No one detains thee; escape by whatsoever way thou wilt! Select any portion of Nature, and bid it provide thee with a means of departure! These, namely, are the elements, by which the world's work is carried on – water, earth, air. All these are no more the causes of life than they are the ways of death. 24. "So may I die as soon as

possible!” And what is thy wish with regard to this “as soon as possible”? What day dost thou set for the event? It may be sooner than thy prayer requests. Words like this come from a weak mind, from one that courts pity by such cursing; he who prays for death does not wish to die. Ask the gods for life and health; if thou art resolved to die, death’s reward is to have done with prayers.

25. It is with such problems as these, my dear Lucilius, that we should deal, by such problems that we should mould our minds. This is wisdom, this is what *being wise* means – not to bandy empty subtleties in idle and petty discussions. Fortune has set before you so many problems – which you have not yet solved – and are you still splitting hairs? How foolish it is to practise strokes after you have heard the signal for the fight! Away with all these dummy-weapons; you need armour for a fight to the finish. Tell me by what means sadness and fear may be kept from disturbing my soul, by what means I may shift off this burden of hidden cravings. Do something!

26. “Wisdom is a Good, but *being wise* is not a Good;” such talk results for us in the judgment that we are not wise, and in making a laughing-stock of this whole field of study – on the ground that it wastes its effort on useless things. Suppose you knew that this question was also debated: whether future wisdom is a Good? For, I beseech you, how could one doubt whether barns do not feel the weight of the harvest that is to come, and that boyhood does not have premonitions of approaching young manhood by any brawn and power? The sick person, in the intervening period, is not helped by the health that is to come, any more than a runner or a wrestler is refreshed by the period of repose that will follow many months later.

27. Who does not know that what is yet to be is not a Good, for the very reason that it is yet to be? For that which is good is necessarily helpful. And unless things are in the present, they cannot be helpful; and if a thing is not helpful, it is not a Good; if helpful, it is already. I shall be a wise man some day; and this Good will be mine when I shall be a wise man, but in the meantime it is non-existent. A thing must exist first, then may be of a certain kind. 28. How, I ask you, can that which is still nothing be already a Good? And in what better way do you wish it to be proved to you that a certain thing is not, than to say: “It is yet to be”? For it is clear that something which is on the

way has not yet arrived. "Spring will follow": I know that winter is here now. "Summer will follow:" I know that it is not summer. The best proof to my mind that a thing is not yet present is that it is yet to be. ²⁹ I hope some day to be wise, but meanwhile I am not wise. For if I possessed that Good, I should now be free from this Evil. Some day I shall be wise; from this very fact you may understand that I am not yet wise. I cannot at the same time live in that state of Good and in this state of Evil; the two ideas do not harmonize, nor do Evil and Good exist together in the same person.

³⁰. Let us rush past all this clever nonsense, and hurry on to that which will bring us real assistance. No man who is anxiously running after a midwife for his daughter in her birth-pangs will stop to read the praetor's edict or the order of events at the games. No one who is speeding to save his burning house will scan a checker-board to speculate how the imprisoned piece can be freed. ³¹. But good heavens! – In your case all sorts of news are announced on all sides – your house afire, your children in danger, your country in a state of siege, your property plundered. Add to this shipwreck, earthquakes, and all other objects of dread; harassed amid these troubles, are you taking time for matters which serve merely for mental entertainment? Do you ask what difference there is between wisdom and *being wise*? Do you tie and untie knots while such a ruin is hanging over your head? ³². Nature has not given us such a generous and free-handed space of time that we can have the leisure to waste any of it. Mark also how much is lost even when men are very careful: people are robbed of one thing by ill-health and of another thing by illness in the family; at one time private, at another public, business absorbs the attention; and all the while sleep shares our lives with us.

Out of this time, so short and swift, that carries us away in its flight, of what avail is it to spend the greater part on useless things? ³³. Besides, our minds are accustomed to entertain rather than to cure themselves, to make an aesthetic pleasure out of philosophy, when philosophy should really be a remedy. What the distinction is between wisdom and *being wise* I do not know; but I do know that it makes no difference to me whether I know such matters or am ignorant of them. Tell me: when I have found out the difference between wisdom and *being wise*, shall I be wise?

Why then do you occupy me with the words rather than with the works of wisdom? Make me braver, make me calmer, make me the equal of Fortune, make me her superior. And I can be her superior, if I apply to this end everything that I learn. Farewell.

CXVIII. On the Vanity of Place-Seeking

1. You have been demanding more frequent letters from me. But if we compare the accounts, you will not be on the credit side. We had indeed made the agreement that your part came first, that you should write the first letters, and that I should answer. However, I shall not be disagreeable; I know that it is safe to trust you, so I shall pay in advance, and yet not do as the eloquent Cicero bids Atticus do: "Even if you have nothing to say, write whatever enters your head."
2. For there will always be something for me to write about, even omitting all the kinds of news with which Cicero fills his correspondence: what candidate is in difficulties, who is striving on borrowed resources and who on his own; who is a candidate for the consulship relying on Caesar, or on Pompey, or on his own strong-box; what a merciless usurer is Caecilius, out of whom his friends cannot screw a penny for less than one per cent each month.

But it is preferable to deal with one's own ills, rather than with another's – to sift oneself and see for how many vain things one is a candidate, and cast a vote for none of them. 3. This, my dear Lucilius, is a noble thing, this brings peace and freedom – to canvass for nothing, and to pass by all the elections of Fortune. How can you call it enjoyable, when the tribes are called together and the candidates are making offerings in their favourite temples – some of them promising money gifts and others doing business by means of an agent, or wearing down their hands with the kisses of those to whom they will refuse the least finger-touch after being elected – when all are excitedly awaiting the announcement of the herald, do you call it enjoyable, I say, to stand idle and look on at this Vanity Fair without either buying or selling? 4. How much greater joy does one feel who looks without concern, not merely upon the election of a praetor or of a consul, but upon that great struggle in which some are seeking yearly honours, and others permanent power, and others the triumph and the prosperous outcome of war, and others riches, or marriage and offspring, or the welfare of themselves and their relatives! What a great-souled action it is to be the only person who is canvassing for nothing, offering prayers to no man, and saying: "Fortune, I have

nothing to do with you. I am not at your service. I know that men like Cato are spurned by you, and men like Vatinius made by you. I ask no favours.” This is the way to reduce Fortune to the ranks.

5. These, then, are the things about which we may write in turn, and this is the ever fresh material which we may dig out as we scan the restless multitudes of men, who, in order to attain something ruinous, struggle on through evil to evil, and seek that which they must presently shun or even find surfeiting. 6. For who was ever satisfied, after attainment, with that which loomed up large as he prayed for it? Happiness is not, as men think, a greedy thing; it is a lowly thing; for that reason it never gluts a man’s desire. You deem lofty the objects you seek, because you are on a low level and hence far away from them; but they are mean in the sight of him who has reached them. And I am very much mistaken if he does not desire to climb still higher; that which you regard as the top is merely a rung on the ladder. 7. Now all men suffer from ignorance of the truth; deceived by common report, they make for these ends as if they were good, and then, after having won their wish, and suffered much, they find them evil, or empty, or less important than they had expected. Most men admire that which deceives them at a distance, and by the crowd good things are supposed to be big things.

8. Now, lest this happen also in our own case, let us ask what is the Good. It has been explained in various ways; different men have described it in different ways. Some define it in this way. “That which attracts and calls the spirit to itself is a Good.” But the objection at once comes up – what if it does attract, but straight to ruin? You know how seductive many evils are. That which is true differs from that which looks like the truth; hence the Good is connected with the true, for it is not good unless it is also true. But that which attracts and allures, is only *like* the truth; it steals your attention, demands your interest, and draws you to itself. 9. Therefore, some have given this definition: “That is good which inspires desire for itself, or rouses towards itself the impulse of a struggling soul.” There is the same objection to this idea; for many things rouse the soul’s impulses, and yet the search for them is harmful to the seeker. The following definition is better: “That is good which rouses the soul’s impulse towards itself in accordance with nature, and is worth

seeking only when it begins to be thoroughly worth seeking.” It is by this time an honourable thing; for that is a thing completely worth seeking.

10. The present topic suggests that I state the difference between the Good and the honourable. Now they have a certain quality which blends with both and is inseparable from either: nothing can be good unless it contains an element of the honourable, and the honourable is necessarily good. What, then, is the difference between these two qualities? The honourable is the perfect Good, and the happy life is fulfilled thereby; through its influence other things also are rendered good. 11. I mean something like this: there are certain things which are neither good nor bad – as military or diplomatic service, or the pronouncing of legal decisions. When such pursuits have been honourably conducted, they begin to be good, and they change over from the “indifferent” class into the Good. The Good results from partnership with the honourable, but the honourable is good in itself. The Good springs from the honourable, but the latter from itself. What is good might have been bad; what is honourable could never have been anything but good.

12. Some have defined as follows: “That is good which is according to nature.” Now attend to my own statement: that which is good is according to nature, but that which is according to nature does not also become immediately good; for many things harmonize with nature, but are so petty that it is not suitable to call them good. For they are unimportant and deserve to be despised. But there is no such thing as a very small and despicable good, for, as long as it is scanty, it is not good, and when it begins to be good, it ceases to be scanty. How, then, can the Good be recognized? Only if it is completely according to nature.

13. People say: “You admit that that which is good is according to nature; for this is its peculiar quality. You admit, too, that there are other things according to nature, which, however, are not good. How then can the former be good, and the latter not? How can there be an alteration in the peculiar quality of a thing, when each has, in common with the other, the special attribute of being in accord with nature?” 14. Surely because of its magnitude. It is no new idea that certain objects change as they grow. A person, once a child, becomes

a youth; his peculiar quality is transformed; for the child could not reason, but the youth possesses reason. Certain things not only grow in size as they develop, but grow into something else. ¹⁵ Some reply: "But that which becomes greater does not necessarily become different. It matters not at all whether you pour wine into a flask or into a vat; the wine keeps its peculiar quality in both vessels. Small and large quantities of honey are not distinct in taste." But these are different cases which you mention; for wine and honey have a uniform quality; no matter how much the quantity is enlarged, the quality is the same. ¹⁶ For some things endure according to their kind and their peculiar qualities, even when they are enlarged.

There are others, however, which, after many increments, are altered by the last addition; there is stamped upon them a new character, different from that of yore. One stone makes an archway – the stone which wedges the leaning sides and holds the arch together by its position in the middle. And why does the last addition, although very slight, make a great deal of difference? Because it does not increase; it fills u. Some things, through development, put off their former shape and are altered into a new figure. When the mind has for a long time developed some idea, and in the attempt to grasp its magnitude has become weary, that thing begins to be called "infinite." And then this has become something far different from what it was when it seemed great but finite. In the same way we have thought of something as difficult to divide; at the very end, as the task grows more and more hard, the thing is found to be "indivisible." Similarly, from that which could scarcely or with difficulty be moved we have advanced on and on – until we reach the "immovable." By the same reasoning a certain thing was according to nature; its greatness has altered it into some other peculiar quality and has rendered it a Good. Farewell.

CXIX. On Nature as our Best Provider

1. Whenever I have made a discovery, I do not wait for you to cry “Shares!” I say it to myself in your behalf. If you wish to know what it is that I have found, open your pocket; it is clear profit. What I shall teach you is the ability to become rich as speedily as possible. How keen you are to hear the news! And rightly; I shall lead you by a short cut to the greatest riches. It will be necessary, however, for you to find a loan; in order to be able to do business, you must contract a debt, although I do not wish you to arrange the loan through a middle-man, nor do I wish the brokers to be discussing your rating. 2. I shall furnish you with a ready creditor, Cato’s famous one, who says: “Borrow from yourself!” No matter how small it is, it will be enough if we can only make up the deficit from our own resources. For, my dear Lucilius, it does not matter whether you crave nothing, or whether you possess something. The important principle in either case is the same – freedom from worry.

But I do not counsel you to deny anything to nature – for nature is insistent and cannot be overcome; she demands her due – but you should know that anything in excess of nature’s wants is a mere “extra” and is not necessary. 3. If I am hungry, I must eat. Nature does not care whether the bread is the coarse kind or the finest wheat; she does not desire the stomach to be entertained, but to be filled. And if I am thirsty, Nature does not care whether I drink water from the nearest reservoir, or whether I freeze it artificially by sinking it in large quantities of snow. Nature orders only that the thirst be quenched; and it does not matter whether it be a golden, or crystal, or murrine goblet, or a cup from Tibur, or the hollow hand. 4. Look to the end, in all matters, and then you will cast away superfluous things. Hunger calls me; let me stretch forth my hand to that which is nearest; my very hunger has made attractive in my eyes whatever I can grasp. A starving man despises nothing.

5. Do you ask, then, what it is that has pleased me? It is this noble saying which I have discovered: “The wise man is the keenest seeker for the riches of nature.” “What”, you ask, “will you present me with an empty plate? What do you mean? I had already arranged my

coffers; I was already looking about to see some stretch of water on which I might embark for purposes of trade, some state revenues that I might handle, and some merchandise that I might acquire. That is deceit – showing me poverty after promising me riches.” But, friend, do you regard a man as poor to whom nothing is wanting? “It is, however,” you reply, “thanks to himself and his endurance, and not thanks to his fortune.” Do you, then, hold that such a man is not rich, just because his wealth can never fail? 6. Would you rather have much, or enough? He who has much desires more – a proof that he has not yet acquired enough; but he who has enough has attained that which never fell to the rich man’s lot – a stopping-point. Do you think that this condition to which I refer is not riches, just because no man has ever been proscribed as a result of possessing them? Or because sons and wives have never thrust poison down one’s throat for that reason? Or because in war-time these riches are unmolested? Or because they bring leisure in time of peace? Or because it is not dangerous to possess them, or troublesome to invest them?

7. “But one possesses too little, if one is merely free from cold and hunger and thirst.” Jupiter himself however, is no better off. Enough is never too little, and not-enough is never too much. Alexander was poor even after his conquest of Darius and the Indies. Am I wrong? He seeks something which he can really make his own, exploring unknown seas, sending new fleets over the Ocean, and, so to speak, breaking down the very bars of the universe. But that which is enough for nature, is not enough for man. 8. There have been found persons who crave something more after obtaining everything; so blind are their wits and so readily does each man forget his start after he has got under way. He who was but lately the disputed lord of an unknown corner of the world, is dejected when, after reaching the limits of the globe, he must march back through a world which he has made his own. 9. Money never made a man rich; on the contrary, it always smites men with a greater craving for itself. Do you ask the reason for this? He who possesses more begins to be able to possess still more.

To sum up, you may hale forth for our inspection any of the millionaires whose names are told off when one speaks of Crassus and Licinus. Let him bring along his rating and his present property

and his future expectations, and let him add them all together: such a man, according to my belief, is poor; according to yours, he may be poor some day. ¹⁰ He, however, who has arranged his affairs according to nature's demands, is free from the fear, as well as from the sensation, of poverty. And in order that you may know how hard it is to narrow one's interests down to the limits of nature – even this very person of whom we speak, and whom you call poor, possesses something actually superfluous. ¹¹ Wealth, however, blinds and attracts the mob, when they see a large bulk of ready money brought out of a man's house, or even his walls crusted with abundance of gold, or a retinue that is chosen for beauty of physique, or for attractiveness of attire. The prosperity of all these men looks to public opinion; but the ideal man, whom we have snatched from the control of the people and of Fortune, is happy inwardly. ¹² For as far as those persons are concerned, in whose minds bustling poverty has wrongly stolen the title of riches – these individuals have riches just as we say that we “have a fever,” when really the fever has *us*. Conversely, we are accustomed to say: “A fever grips him.” And in the same way we should say: “Riches grip him.” There is therefore no advice – and of such advice no one can have too much – which I would rather give you than this: that you should measure all things by the demands of Nature; for these demands can be satisfied either without cost or else very cheaply. Only, do not mix any vices with these demands. ¹³ Why need you ask how your food should be served, on what sort of table, with what sort of silver, with what well-matched and smooth-faced young servants? Nature demands nothing except mere food.

Dost seek, when thirst inflames thy throat, a cup of gold?

Dost scorn all else but peacock's flesh or turbot
When the hunger comes upon thee?

¹⁴ Hunger is not ambitious; it is quite satisfied to come to an end; nor does it care very much what food brings it to an end. Those things are but the instruments of a luxury which is not “happiness”; a luxury which seeks how it may prolong hunger even after repletion, how to stuff the stomach, not to fill it, and how to rouse a thirst that

has been satisfied with the first drink. Horace's words are therefore most excellent when he says that it makes no difference to one's thirst in what costly goblet, or with what elaborate state, the water is served. For if you believe it to be of importance how curly-haired your slave is, or how transparent is the cup which he offers you, you are not thirsty.

15. Among other things, Nature has bestowed upon us this special boon: she relieves sheer necessity of squeamishness. The superfluous things admit of choice; we say: "That is not suitable "; "this is not well recommended"; "that hurts my eyesight." The Builder of the universe, who laid down for us the laws of life, provided that we should exist in well-being, but not in luxury. Everything conducive to our well-being is prepared and ready to our hands; but what luxury requires can never be got together except with wretchedness and anxiety.

16. Let us therefore use this boon of Nature by reckoning it among the things of high importance; let us reflect that Nature's best title to our gratitude is that whatever we want because of sheer necessity we accept without squeamishness. Farewell.

CXX. More about Virtue

1. Your letter roamed, over several little problems, but finally dwelt upon this alone, asking for explanation: “How do we acquire a knowledge of that which is good and that which is honourable?” In the opinion of other schools, these two qualities are distinct; among our followers, however, they are merely divided. 2. This is what I mean: Some believe the Good to be that which is useful; they accordingly bestow this title upon riches, horses, wine, and shoes; so cheaply do they view the Good, and to such base uses do they let it descend. They regard as honourable that which agrees with the principle of right conduct – such as taking dutiful care of an old father, relieving a friend’s poverty, showing bravery on a campaign, and uttering prudent and well-balanced opinions. 3. We, however, do make the Good and the honourable two things, but we make them out of one: only the honourable can be good; also, the honourable is necessarily good. I hold it superfluous to add the distinction between these two qualities, inasmuch as I have mentioned it so many times. But I shall say this one thing – that we regard nothing as good which can be put to wrong use by any person. And you see for yourself to what wrong uses many men put their riches, their high position, or their physical powers.

To return to the matter on which you desire information: “How we first acquire the knowledge of that which is good and that which is honourable.” 4. Nature could not teach us this directly; she has given us the seeds of knowledge, but not knowledge itself. Some say that we merely happened upon this knowledge; but it is unbelievable that a vision of virtue could have presented itself to anyone by mere chance. We believe that it is inference due to observation, a comparison of events that have occurred frequently; our school of philosophy hold that the honourable and the good have been comprehended by analogy. Since the word “analogy” has been admitted to citizen rank by Latin scholars, I do not think that it ought to be condemned, but I do think it should be brought into the citizenship which it can justly claim. I shall, therefore, make use of the word, not merely as admitted, but as established.

Now what this “analogy” is, I shall explain. 5. We understood what bodily health was: and from this basis we deduced the existence of a certain mental health also. We knew, too, bodily strength, and from this basis we inferred the existence of mental sturdiness. Kindly deeds, humane deeds, brave deeds, had at times amazed us; so we began to admire them as if they were perfect. Underneath, however, there were many faults, hidden by the appearance and the brilliancy of certain conspicuous acts; to these we shut our eyes. Nature bids us amplify praiseworthy things – everyone exalts renown beyond the truth. And thus from such deeds we deduced the conception of some great good. 6. Fabricius rejected King Pyrrhus’s gold, deeming it greater than a king’s crown to be able to scorn a king’s money. Fabricius also, when the royal physician promised to give his master poison, warned Pyrrhus to beware of a plot. The selfsame man had the resolution to refuse either to be won over by gold or to win by poison. So we admired the hero, who could not be moved by the promises of the king or against the king, who held fast to a noble ideal, and who – is anything more difficult? – was in war sinless; for he believed that wrongs could be committed even against an enemy, and in that extreme poverty which he had made his glory, shrank from receiving riches as he shrank from using poison. “Live,” he cried, “O Pyrrhus, thanks to me, and rejoice, instead of grieving as you have done till now, that Fabricius cannot be bribed!”

7. Horatius Cocles blocked the narrow bridge alone, and ordered his retreat to be cut off, that the enemy’s path might be destroyed; then he long withstood his assailants until the crash of the beams, as they collapsed with a huge fall, rang in his ears. When he looked back and saw that his country, through his own danger, was free from danger, “Whoever,” he cried, “wishes to pursue me this way, let him come!” He plunged headlong, taking as great care to come out arm’d from the midst of the dashing river-channel as he did to come out unhurt; he returned, preserving the glory of his conquering weapons, as safely as if he had come back over the bridge.

8. These deeds and others of the same sort have revealed to us a picture of virtue. I will add something which may perhaps astonish you: evil things have sometimes offered the appearance of what is honourable, and that which is best has been manifested through, its

opposite. For there are, as you know, vices which are next-door to virtues; and even that which is lost and debased can resemble that which is upright. So the spendthrift falsely imitates the liberal man – although it matters a great deal whether a man knows how to give, or does not know how to save, his money. I assure you, my dear Lucilius, there are many who do not give, but simply throw away and I do not call a man liberal who is out of temper with his money. Carelessness looks like ease, and rashness like bravery. 9. This resemblance has forced us to watch carefully and to distinguish between things which are by outward appearance closely connected, but which actually are very much at odds with one another; and in watching those who have become distinguished as a result of some noble effort, we have been forced to observe what persons have done some deed with noble spirit and lofty impulse, but have done it only once. We have marked one man who is brave in war and cowardly in civil affairs, enduring poverty courageously and disgrace shamefacedly; we have praised the deed but we have despised the man. 10. Again, we have marked another man who is kind to his friends and restrained towards his enemies, who carries on his political and his personal business with scrupulous devotion, not lacking in long-suffering where there is anything that must be endured, and not lacking in prudence when action is to be taken. We have marked him giving with lavish hand when it was his duty to make a payment, and, when he had to toil, striving resolutely and lightening his bodily weariness by his resolution. Besides, he has always been the same, consistent in all his actions, not only sound in his judgment but trained by habit to such an extent that he not only can act rightly, but cannot help acting rightly. We have formed the conception that in such a man perfect virtue exists.

11. We have separated this perfect virtue into its several parts. The desires had to be reined in, fear to be suppressed, proper actions to be arranged, debts to be paid; we therefore included self-restraint, bravery, prudence, and justice – assigning to each quality its special function. How then have we formed the conception of virtue? Virtue has been manifested to us by this man's order, propriety, steadfastness, absolute harmony of action, and a greatness of soul that rises superior to everything. Thence has been derived our

conception of the happy life, which flows along with steady course, completely under its own control. 12. How then did we discover this fact? I will tell you: that perfect man, who has attained virtue, never cursed his luck, and never received the results of chance with dejection; he believed that he was citizen and soldier of the universe, accepting his tasks as if they were his orders. Whatever happened, he did not spurn it, as if it were evil and borne in upon him by hazard; he accepted it as if it were assigned to be his duty. "Whatever this may be," he says, "it is my lot; it is rough and it is hard, but I must work diligently at the task."

13. Necessarily, therefore, the man has shown himself great who has never grieved in evil days and never bewailed his destiny; he has given a clear conception of himself to many men; he has shone forth like a light in the darkness and has turned towards himself the thoughts of all men, because he was gentle and calm and equally compliant with the orders of man and of God. 14. He possessed perfection of soul, developed to its highest capabilities, inferior only to the mind of God – from whom a part flows down even into this heart of a mortal. But this heart is never more divine than when it reflects upon its mortality, and understands that man was born for the purpose of fulfilling his life, and that the body is not a permanent dwelling, but a sort of inn (with a brief sojourn at that) which is to be left behind when one perceives that one is a burden to the host. 15. The greatest proof, as I maintain, my dear Lucilius, that the soul proceeds from loftier heights, is if it judges its present situation lowly and narrow, and is not afraid to depart. For he who remembers whence he has come knows whither he is to depart. Do we not see how many discomforts drive us wild, and how ill-assorted is our fellowship with the flesh? 16. We complain at one time of our headaches, at another of our bad digestions, at another of our hearts and our throats. Sometimes the nerves trouble us, sometimes the feet; now it is diarrhoea, and again it is catarrh; we are at one time full-blooded, at another anaemic; now this thing troubles us, now that, and bids us move away: it is just what happens to those who dwell in the house of another.

17. But we, to whom such corruptible bodies have been allotted, nevertheless set eternity before our eyes, and in our hopes grasp at

the utmost space of time to which the life of man can be extended, satisfied with no income and with no influence. What can be more shameless or foolish than this? Nothing is enough for us, though we must die some day, or rather, are already dying; for we stand daily nearer the brink, and every hour of time thrusts us on towards the precipice over which we must fall. ¹⁸ See how blind our minds are! What I speak of as in the future is happening at this minute, and a large portion of it has already happened; for it consists of our past lives. But we are mistaken in fearing the last day, seeing that each day, as it passes, counts just as much to the credit of death. The failing step does not produce, it merely announces, weariness. The last hour reaches, but every hour approaches, death. Death wears us away, but does not whirl us away.

For this reason the noble soul, knowing its better nature, while taking care to conduct itself honourably and seriously at the post of duty where it is placed, counts none of these extraneous objects as its own, but uses them as if they were a loan, like a foreign visitor hastening on his way. ¹⁹ When we see a person of such steadfastness, how can we help being conscious of the image of a nature so unusual? Particularly if, as I remarked, it was shown to be true greatness by its consistency. It is indeed consistency that abides; false things do not last. Some men are like Vatinius or like Cato by turns; at times they do not think even Curius stern enough, or Fabricius poor enough, or Tubero sufficiently frugal and contented with simple things; while at other times they vie with Licinus in wealth, with Apicius in banqueting, or with Maecenas in daintiness. ²⁰ The greatest proof of an evil mind is unsteadiness, and continued wavering between pretence of virtue and love of vice.

He'd have sometimes two hundred slaves at hand

And sometimes ten. He'd speak of kings and grand
Moguls and naught but greatness. Then he'd say:
"Give me a three-legged table and a tray
Of good clean salt, and just a coarse-wove gown
To keep the cold out." If you paid him down
(So sparing and content!) a million cool,
In five short days he'd be a penceless fool.

21. The men I speak of are of this stamp; they are like the man whom Horatius Flaccus describes – a man never the same, never even like himself; to such an extent does he wander off into opposites. Did I say many are so? It is the case with almost all. Everyone changes his plans and prayers day by day. Now he would have a wife, and now a mistress; now he would be king, and again he strives to conduct himself so that no slave is more cringing; now he puffs himself up until he becomes unpopular; again, he shrinks and contracts into greater humility than those who are really unassuming; at one time he scatters money, at another he steals it. 22. That is how a foolish mind is most clearly demonstrated: it shows first in this shape and then in that, and is never like itself – which is, in my opinion, the most shameful of qualities. Believe me, it is a great rôle – to play the rôle of one man. But nobody can be one person except the wise man; the rest of us often shift our masks. At times you will think us thrifty and serious, at other times wasteful and idle. We continually change our characters and play a part contrary to that which we have discarded. You should therefore force yourself to maintain to the very end of life's drama the character which you assumed at the beginning. See to it that men be able to praise you; if not, let them at least identify you. Indeed, with regard to the man whom you saw but yesterday, the question may properly be asked: "Who is he?" So great a change has there been! Farewell.

CXXI. On Instinct in Animals

1. You will bring suit against me, I feel sure, when I set forth for you to-day's little problem, with which we have already fumbled long enough. You will cry out again: "What has this to do with character?" Cry out if you like, but let me first of all match you with other opponents, against whom you may bring suit – such as Posidonius and Archidemus; these men will stand trial. I shall then go on to say that whatever deals with character does not necessarily produce good character. 2. Man needs one thing for his food, another for his exercise, another for his clothing, another for his instruction, and another for his pleasure. Everything, however, has reference to man's needs, although everything does not make him better. Character is affected by different things in different ways: some things serve to correct and regulate character, and others investigate its nature and origin. 3. And when I seek the reason why Nature brought forth man, and why she set him above other animals, do you suppose that I have left character-study in the rear? No; that is wrong. For how are you to know what character is desirable, unless you have discovered what is best suited to man? Or unless you have studied his nature? You can find out what you should do and what you should avoid, only when you have learned what you owe to your own nature.

4. "I desire," you say, "to learn how I may crave less, and fear less. Rid me of my unreasoning beliefs. Prove to me that so-called felicity is fickle and empty, and that the word easily admits of a syllable's increase." I shall fulfil your want, encouraging your virtues and lashing your vices. People may decide that I am too zealous and reckless in this particular; but I shall never cease to hound wickedness, to check the most unbridled emotions, to soften the force of pleasures which will result in pain, and to cry down men's prayers. Of course I shall do this; for it is the greatest evils that we have prayed for, and from that which has made us give thanks comes all that demands consolation.

5. Meanwhile, allow me to discuss thoroughly some points which may seem now to be rather remote from the present inquiry. We were

once debating whether all animals had any feelings about their “constitution.” That this is the case is proved particularly by their making motions of such fitness and nimbleness that they seem to be trained for the purpose. Every being is clever in its own line. The skilled workman handles his tools with an ease born of experience; the pilot knows how to steer his ship skilfully; the artist can quickly lay on the colours which he has prepared in great variety for the purpose of rendering the likeness, and passes with ready eye and hand from palette to canvas. In the same way an animal is agile in all that pertains to the use of its body. 6. We are apt to wonder at skilled dancers because their gestures are perfectly adapted to the meaning of the piece and its accompanying emotions, and their movements match the speed of the dialogue. But that which art gives to the craftsman, is given to the animal by nature. No animal handles its limbs with difficulty, no animal is at a loss how to use its body. This function they exercise immediately at birth. They come into the world with this knowledge; they are born full-trained.

7. But people reply: “The reason why animals are so dexterous in the use of their limbs is that if they move them unnaturally, they will feel pain. They are *compelled* to do thus, according to your school, and it is fear rather than will-power which moves them in the right direction.” This idea is wrong. Bodies driven by a compelling force move slowly; but those which move of their own accord possess alertness. The proof that it is not fear of pain which prompts them thus, is, that even when pain checks them they struggle to carry out their natural motions. 8. Thus the child who is trying to stand and is becoming used to carry his own weight, on beginning to test his strength, falls and rises again and again with tears until through painful effort he has trained himself to the demands of nature. And certain animals with hard shells, when turned on their backs, twist and grope with their feet and make motions side-ways until they are restored to their proper position. The tortoise on his back feels no suffering; but he is restless because he misses his natural condition, and does not cease to shake himself about until he stands once more upon his feet.

9. So all these animals have a consciousness of their physical constitution, and for that reason can manage their limbs as readily as

they do; nor have we any better proof that they come into being equipped with this knowledge than the fact that no animal is unskilled in the use of its body. ¹⁰ But some object as follows: "According to your account, one's constitution consists of a ruling power in the soul which has a certain relation towards the body. But how can a child comprehend this intricate and subtle principle, which I can scarcely explain even to you? All living creatures should be born logicians, so as to understand a definition which is obscure to the majority of Roman citizens!" ¹¹ Your objection would be true if I spoke of living creatures as understanding "a definition of constitution," and not "their actual constitution." Nature is easier to understand than to explain; hence, the child of whom we were speaking does not understand what "constitution" is, but understands *its own* constitution. He does not know what "a living creature" is, but he feels that he is an animal. ¹² Moreover, that very constitution of his own he only understands confusedly, cursorily, and darkly. We also know that we possess souls, but we do not know the essence, the place, the quality, or the source, of the soul. Such as is the consciousness of our souls which we possess, ignorant as we are of their nature and position, even so all animals possess a consciousness of their own constitutions. For they must necessarily feel this, because it is the same agency by which they feel other things also; they must necessarily have a feeling of the principle which they obey and by which they are controlled. ¹³ Every one of us understands that there is something which stirs his impulses, but he does not know what it is. He knows that he has a sense of striving, although he does not know what it is or its source. Thus even children and animals have a consciousness of their primary element, but it is not very clearly outlined or portrayed.

¹⁴ "You maintain, do you," says the objector, "that every living thing is at the start adapted to its constitution, but that man's constitution is a reasoning one, and hence man is adapted to himself not merely as a living, but as a reasoning, being? For man is dear to himself in respect of that wherein he is a man. How, then, can a child, being not yet gifted with reason, adapt himself to a reasoning constitution?" ¹⁵ But each age has its own constitution, different in the case of the child, the boy, and the old man; they are all adapted to

the constitution wherein they find themselves. The child is toothless, and he is fitted to this condition. Then his teeth grow, and he is fitted to that condition also. Vegetation also, which will develop into grain and fruits, has a special constitution when young and scarcely peeping over the tops of the furrows, another when it is strengthened and stands upon a stalk which is soft but strong enough to bear its weight, and still another when the colour changes to yellow, prophesies threshing-time, and hardens in the ear – no matter what may be the constitution into which the plant comes, it keeps it, and conforms thereto. 16. The periods of infancy, boyhood, youth, and old age, are different; but I, who have been infant, boy, and youth, am still the same. Thus, although each has at different times a different constitution, the adaptation of each to its constitution is the same. For nature does not consign boyhood or youth, or old age, to me; it consigns me to them. Therefore, the child is adapted to that constitution which is his at the present moment of childhood, not to that which will be his in youth. For even if there is in store for him any higher phase into which he must be changed, the state in which he is born is also according to nature. 17. First of all, the living being is adapted to itself, for there must be a pattern to which all other things may be referred. I seek pleasure; for whom? For myself. I am therefore looking out for myself. I shrink from pain; on behalf of whom? Myself. Therefore, I am looking out for myself. Since I gauge all my actions with reference to my own welfare, I am looking out for myself before all else. This quality exists in all living beings – not engrafted but inborn.

18. Nature brings up her own offspring and does not cast them away; and because the most assured security is that which is nearest, every man has been entrusted to his own self. Therefore, as I have remarked in the course of my previous correspondence, even young animals, on issuing from the mother's womb or from the egg, know at once of their own accord what is harmful for them, and avoid death-dealing things. They even shrink when they notice the shadow of birds of prey which flit overhead.

No animal, when it enters upon life, is free from the fear of death.

19. People may ask: "How can an animal at birth have an understanding of things wholesome or destructive?" The first

question, however, is *whether* it can have such understanding, and not *how* it can understand. And it is clear that they have such understanding from the fact that, even if you add understanding, they will act no more adequately than they did in the first place. Why should the hen show no fear of the peacock or the goose, and yet run from the hawk, which is a so much smaller animal not even familiar to the hen? Why should young chickens fear a cat and not a dog.? These fowls clearly have a presentiment of harm – one not based on actual experiments; for they avoid a thing before they can possibly have experience of it. 20. Furthermore, in order that you may not suppose this to be the result of chance, they do not shrink from certain other things which you would expect them to fear, nor do they ever forget vigilance and care in this regard; they all possess equally the faculty of avoiding what is destructive. Besides, their fear does not grow as their lives lengthen.

Hence indeed it is evident that these animals have not reached such a condition through experience; it is because of an inborn desire for self-preservation. The teachings of experience are slow and irregular; but whatever Nature communicates belongs equally to everyone, and comes immediately. 21. If, however, you require an explanation, shall I tell you how it is that every living thing tries to understand that which is harmful? It feels that it is constructed of flesh; and so it perceives to what an extent flesh may be cut or burned or crushed, and what animals are equipped with the power of doing this damage; it is of animals of this sort that it derives an unfavourable and hostile idea. These tendencies are closely connected; for each animal at the same time consults its own safety, seeking that which helps it, and shrinks from that which will harm it. Impulses towards useful objects, and revulsion from the opposite, are according to nature; without any reflection to prompt the idea, and without any advice, whatever Nature has prescribed, is done.

22. Do you not see how skillful bees are in building their cells? How completely harmonious in sharing and enduring toil? Do you not see how the spider weaves a web so subtle that man's hand cannot imitate it; and what a task it is to arrange the threads, some directed straight towards the centre, for the sake of making the web solid, and others running in circles and lessening in thickness – for

the purpose of tangling and catching in a sort of net the smaller insects for whose ruin the spider spreads the web? ²³. This art is born, not taught; and for this reason no animal is more skilled than any other. You will notice that all spider-webs are equally fine, and that the openings in all honeycomb cells are identical in shape. Whatever art communicates is uncertain and uneven; but Nature's assignments are always uniform. Nature has communicated nothing except the duty of taking care of themselves and the skill to do so; that is why living and learning begin at the same time. ²⁴. No wonder that living things are born with a gift whose absence would make birth useless. This is the first equipment that Nature granted them for the maintenance of their existence – the quality of adaptability and self-love. They could not survive except by desiring to do so. Nor would this desire alone have made them prosper, but without it nothing could have prospered. In no animal can you observe any low esteem, or even any carelessness, of self. Dumb beasts, sluggish in other respects, are clever at living. So you will see that creatures which are useless to others are alert for their own preservation. Farewell.

CXXII. On Darkness as a Veil for Wickedness

1. The day has already begun to lessen. It has shrunk considerably, but yet will still allow a goodly space of time if one rises, so to speak, with the day itself. We are more industrious, and we are better men if we anticipate the day and welcome the dawn; but we are base churls if we lie dozing when the sun is high in the heavens, or if we wake up only when noon arrives; and even then to many it seems not yet dawn. 2. Some have reversed the functions of light and darkness; they open eyes sodden with yesterday's debauch only at the approach of night. It is just like the condition of those peoples whom, according to Vergil, Nature has hidden away and placed in an abode directly opposite to our own:

When in our face the Dawn with panting steeds

Breathes down, for them the ruddy evening kindles
Her late-lit fires.

It is not the country of these men, so much as it is their life, that is "directly opposite" to our own. 3. There may be Antipodes dwelling in this same city of ours who, in Cato's words, "have never seen the sun rise or set." Do you think that these men know how to live, if they do not know when to live? Do these men fear death, if they have buried themselves alive? They are as weird as the birds of night. Although they pass their hours of darkness amid wine and perfumes, although they spend the whole extent of their unnatural waking hours in eating dinners – and those too cooked separately to make up many courses – they are not really banqueting; they are conducting their own funeral services. And the dead at least have their banquets by daylight.

But indeed to one who is active no day is long. So let us lengthen our lives; for the duty and the proof of life consist in action. Cut short the night: use some of it for the day's business. 4. Birds that are being prepared for the banquet, that they may be easily fattened through lack of exercise, are kept in darkness; and similarly, if men vegetate without physical activity, their idle bodies are overwhelmed

with flesh, and in their self-satisfied retirement the fat of indolence grows upon them. Moreover, the bodies of those who have sworn allegiance to the hours of darkness have a loathsome appearance. Their complexions are more alarming than those of anaemic invalids; they are lackadaisical and flabby with dropsy; though still alive, they are already carrion. But this, to my thinking, would be among the least of their evils. How much more darkness there is in their souls! Such a man is internally dazed; his vision is darkened; he envies the blind. And what man ever had eyes for the purpose of seeing in the dark?

5. You ask me how this depravity comes upon the soul – this habit of reversing the daylight and giving over one's whole existence to the night? All vices rebel against Nature; they all abandon the appointed order. It is the motto of luxury to enjoy what is unusual, and not only to depart from that which is right, but to leave it as far behind as possible, and finally even take a stand in opposition thereto. 6. Do you not believe that men live contrary to Nature who drink fasting, who take wine into empty veins, and pass to their food in a state of intoxication? And yet this is one of youth's popular vices – to perfect their strength in order to drink on the very threshold of the bath, amid the unclad bathers; nay even to soak in wine and then immediately to rub off the sweat which they have promoted by many a hot glass of liquor! To them, a glass after lunch or one after dinner is *bourgeois*; it is what the country squires do, who are not connoisseurs in pleasure. This unmixed wine delights them just because there is no food to float in it, because it readily makes its way into their muscles; this boozing pleases them just because the stomach is empty.

7. Do you not believe that men live contrary to Nature who exchange the fashion of their attire with women? Do not men live contrary to Nature who endeavour to look fresh and boyish at an age unsuitable for such an attempt? What could be more cruel or more wretched? Cannot time and man's estate ever carry such a person beyond an artificial boyhood? 8. Do not men live contrary to Nature who crave roses in winter, or seek to raise a spring flower like the lily by means of hot-water heaters and artificial changes of temperature? Do not men live contrary to Nature who grow fruit-trees on the top of

a wall? Or raise waving forests upon the roofs and battlements of their houses – the roots starting at a point to which it would be outlandish for the tree-tops to reach? Do not men live contrary to Nature who lay the foundations of bathrooms in the sea and do not imagine that they can enjoy their swim unless the heated pool is lashed as with the waves of a storm?

9. When men have begun to desire all things in opposition to the ways of Nature, they end by entirely abandoning the ways of Nature. They cry: “It is daytime – let us go to sleep! It is the time when men rest: now for exercise, now for our drive, now for our lunch! Lo, the dawn approaches: it is dinner-time! We should not do as mankind do. It is low and mean to live in the usual and conventional way. Let us abandon the ordinary sort of day. Let us have a morning that is a special feature of ours, peculiar to ourselves!”¹⁰ Such men are, in my opinion, as good as dead. Are they not all but present at a funeral – and before their time too – when they live amid torches and tapers? I remember that this sort of life was very fashionable at one time: among such men as Acilius Buta, a person of praetorian rank, who ran through a tremendous estate and on confessing his bankruptcy to Tiberius, received the answer: “You have waked up too late!”¹¹ Julius Montanus was once reading a poem aloud he was a middling good poet, noted for his friendship with Tiberius, as well as his fall from favour. He always used to fill his poems with a generous sprinkling of sunrises and sunsets. Hence, when a certain person was complaining that Montanus had read all day long, and declared that no man should attend any of his readings, Natta Pinarius remarked: “I couldn’t make a fairer bargain than this: I am ready to listen to him from sunrise to sunset!”¹² Montanus was reading, and had reached the words:

‘Gins the bright morning to spread forth his flames clear-burning;
the red dawn

Scatters its light; and the sad-eyed swallow returns to her nestlings,
Bringing the chatterers’ food, and with sweet bill sharing and
serving.

Then Varus, a Roman knight, the hanger-on of Marcus Vinicius,

and a sponger at elegant dinners which he earned by his degenerate wit, shouted: "Bed-time for Buta!" ¹³. And later, when Montanus declaimed

Lo, now the shepherds have folded their flocks, and the slow-moving darkness

'Gins to spread silence o'er lands that are drowsily lulled into slumber,

this same Varus remarked: "What? Night already? I'll go and pay my morning call on Buta!" You see, nothing was more notorious than Buta's upside-down manner of life. But this life, as I said, was fashionable at one time. ¹⁴. And the reason why some men live thus is not because they think that night in itself offers any greater attractions, but because that which is normal gives them no particular pleasure; light being a bitter enemy of the evil conscience, and, when one craves or scorns all things in proportion as they have cost one much or little, illumination for which one does not pay is an object of contempt. Moreover, the luxurious person wishes to be an object of gossip his whole life; if people are silent about him, he thinks that he is wasting his time. Hence he is uncomfortable whenever any of his actions escape notoriety.

Many men eat up their property, and many men keep mistresses. If you would win a reputation among such persons, you must make your programme not only one of luxury but one of notoriety; for in such a busy community wickedness does not discover the ordinary sort of scandal. ¹⁵. I heard Pedo Albinovanus, that most attractive story-teller, speaking of his residence above the town-house of Sextus Papinius. Papinius belonged to the tribe of those who shun the light. "About nine o'clock at night I hear the sound of whips. I ask what is going on, and they tell me that Papinius is going over his accounts. About twelve there is a strenuous shouting; I ask what the matter is, and they say he is exercising his voice. About two A.M. I ask the significance of the sound of wheels; they tell me that he is off for a drive. ¹⁶. And at dawn there is a tremendous flurry-calling of slaves and butlers, and pandemonium among the cooks. I ask the meaning of this also, and they tell me that he has called for his cordial and his appetizer, after leaving the bath. His dinner," said Pedo, "never went beyond the day, for he lived very sparingly; he

was lavish with nothing but the night. Accordingly, if you believe those who call him tight-fisted and mean, you will call him also a ‘slave of the lamp.’”

17. You should not be surprised at finding so many special manifestations of the vices; for vices vary, and there are countless phases of them, nor can all their various kinds be classified. The method of maintaining righteousness is simple; the method of maintaining wickedness is complicated, and has infinite opportunity to swerve. And the same holds true of character; if you follow nature, character is easy to manage, free, and with very slight shades of difference; but the sort of person I have mentioned possesses badly warped character, out of harmony with all things, including himself.

18. The chief cause, however, of this disease seems to me to be a squeamish revolt from the normal existence. Just as such persons mark themselves off from others in their dress, or in the elaborate arrangement of their dinners, or in the elegance of their carriages; even so they desire to make themselves peculiar by their way of dividing up the hours of their day. They are unwilling to be wicked in the conventional way, because notoriety is the reward of their sort of wickedness. Notoriety is what all such men seek – men who are, so to speak, *living backwards*.

19. For this reason, Lucilius, let us keep to the way which Nature has mapped out for us, and let us not swerve therefrom. If we follow Nature, all is easy and unobstructed; but if we combat Nature, our life differs not a whit from that of men who row against the current. Farewell.

CXXIII. On the Conflict between Pleasure and Virtue

1. Wearied with the discomfort rather than with the length of my journey, I have reached my Alban villa late at night, and I find nothing in readiness except myself. So I am getting rid of fatigue at my writing-table: I derive some good from this tardiness on the part of my cook and my baker. For I am communing with myself on this very topic – that nothing is heavy if one accepts it with a light heart, and that nothing need provoke one's anger if one does not add to one's pile of troubles by getting angry. 2. My baker is out of bread; but the overseer, or the house-steward, or one of my tenants can supply me therewith. "Bad bread!" you say. But just wait for it; it will become good. Hunger will make even such bread delicate and of the finest flavour. For that reason I must not eat until hunger bids me; so I shall wait and shall not eat until I can either get good bread or else cease to be squeamish about it. 3. It is necessary that one grow accustomed to slender fare: because there are many problems of time and place which will cross the path even of the rich man and one equipped for pleasure, and bring him up with a round turn. To have whatsoever he wishes is in no man's power; it is in his power not to wish for what he has not, but cheerfully to employ what comes to him. A great step towards independence is a good-humoured stomach, one that is willing to endure rough treatment.

4. You cannot imagine how much pleasure I derive from the fact that my weariness is becoming reconciled to itself; I am asking for no slaves to rub me down, no bath, and no other restorative except time. For that which toil has accumulated, rest can lighten. This repast, whatever it may be, will give me more pleasure than an inaugural banquet. 5. For I have made trial of my spirit on a sudden – a simpler and a truer test. Indeed, when a man has made preparations and given himself a formal summons to be patient, it is not equally clear just how much real strength of mind he possesses; the surest proofs are those which one exhibits off-hand, viewing one's own troubles not only fairly but calmly, not flying into fits of temper or

wordy wranglings, supplying one's own needs by not craving something which was really due, and reflecting that our habits may be unsatisfied, but never our own real selves. 6. How many things are superfluous we fail to realize until they begin to be wanting; we merely used them not because we needed them but because we had them. And how much do we acquire simply because our neighbours have acquired such things, or because most men possess them! Many of our troubles may be explained from the fact that we live according to a pattern, and, instead of arranging our lives according to reason, are led astray by convention.

There are things which, if done by the few, we should refuse to imitate; yet when the majority have begun to do them, we follow along – just as if anything were more honourable because it is more frequent! Furthermore, wrong views, when they have become prevalent, reach, in our eyes, the standard of righteousness. 7. Everyone now travels with Numidian outriders preceding him, with a troop of slave-runners to clear the way; we deem it disgraceful to have no attendants who will elbow crowds from the road, or will prove, by a great cloud of dust, that a high dignitary is approaching! Everyone now possesses mules that are laden with crystal and myrrhine cups carved by skilled artists of great renown; it is disgraceful for all your baggage to be made up of that which can be rattled along without danger. Everyone has pages who ride along with ointment-covered faces so that the heat or the cold will not harm their tender complexions; it is disgraceful that none of your attendant slave-boys should show a healthy cheek, not covered with cosmetics.

8. You should avoid conversation with all such persons: they are the sort that communicate and engraft their bad habits from one to another. We used to think that the very worst variety of these men were those who vaunted their words; but there are certain men who vaunt their wickedness. Their talk is very harmful; for even though it is not at once convincing, yet they leave the seeds of trouble in the soul, and the evil which is sure to spring into new strength follows us about even when we have parted from them. 9. Just as those who have attended a concert carry about in their heads the melodies and the charm of the songs they have heard – a proceeding which interferes with their thinking and does not allow them to concentrate upon

serious subjects, – even so the speech of flatterers and enthusiasts over that which is depraved sticks in our minds long after we have heard them talk. It is not easy to rid the memory of a catching tune; it stays with us, lasts on, and comes back from time to time. Accordingly, you should close your ears against evil talk, and right at the outset, too; for when such talk has gained an entrance and the words are admitted and are in our minds, they become more shameless. 10. And then we begin to speak as follows: “Virtue, Philosophy, Justice – this is a jargon of empty words. The only way to be happy is to do yourself well. To eat, drink, and spend your money is the only real life, the only way to remind yourself that you are mortal. Our days flow on, and life – which we cannot restore – hastens away from us. Why hesitate to come to our senses? This life of ours will not always admit pleasures; meantime, while it can do so, while it clamours for them, what profit lies in imposing thereupon frugality? Therefore get ahead of death, and let anything that death will filch from you be squandered now upon yourself. You have no mistress, no favourite slave to make your mistress envious; you are sober when you make your daily appearance in public; you dine as if you had to show your account-book to ‘Papa’; but *that* is not living, it is merely going shares in someone else’s existence. 11. And what madness it is to be looking out for the interests of your heir, and to deny yourself everything, with the result that you turn friends into enemies by the vast amount of the fortune you intend to leave! For the more the heir is to get from you, the more he will rejoice in your taking-off! All those sour fellows who criticize other men’s lives in a spirit of priggishness and are real enemies to their own lives, playing schoolmaster to the world – you should not consider them as worth a farthing, nor should you hesitate to prefer good living to a good reputation.”

12. These are voices which you ought to shun just as Ulysses did; he would not sail past them until he was lashed to the mast. They are no less potent; they lure men from country, parents, friends, and virtuous ways; and by a hope that, if not base, is ill-starred, they wreck them upon a life of baseness. How much better to follow a straight course and attain a goal where the words “pleasant” and “honourable” have the same meaning! 13. This end will be possible

for us if we understand that there are two classes of objects which either attract us or repel us. We are attracted by such things as riches, pleasures, beauty, ambition, and other such coaxing and pleasing objects; we are repelled by toil, death, pain, disgrace, or lives of greater frugality. We ought therefore to train ourselves so that we may avoid a fear of the one or a desire for the other. Let us fight in the opposite fashion: let us retreat from the objects that allure, and rouse ourselves to meet the objects that attack.

14. Do you not see how different is the method of descending a mountain from that employed in climbing upwards? Men coming down a slope bend backwards; men ascending a steep place lean forward. For, my dear Lucilius, to allow yourself to put your body's weight ahead when coming down, or, when climbing up, to throw it backward is to comply with vice. The pleasures take one down hill but one must work upwards toward that which is rough and hard to climb; in the one case let us throw our bodies forward, in the others let us put the check-rein on them.

15. Do you believe me to be stating now that only those men bring ruin to our ears, who praise pleasure, who inspire us with fear of pain – that element which is in itself provocative of fear? I believe that we are also injured by those who masquerade under the disguise of the Stoic school and at the same time urge us on into vice. They boast that only the wise man and the learned is a lover. “He alone has wisdom in this art; the wise man too is best skilled in drinking and feasting. Our study ought to be this alone: up to what age the bloom of love can endure!” 16. All this may be regarded as a concession to the ways of Greece; we ourselves should preferably turn our attention to words like these: “No man is good by chance. Virtue is something which must be learned. Pleasure is low, petty, to be deemed worthless, shared even by dumb animals – the tiniest and meanest of whom fly towards pleasure. Glory is an empty and fleeting thing, lighter than air. Poverty is an evil to no man unless he kick against the goads. Death is not an evil; why need you ask? Death alone is the equal privilege of mankind. Superstition is the misguided idea of a lunatic; it fears those whom it ought to love; it is an outrage upon those whom it worships. For what difference is there between denying the gods and dishonouring them?”

17. You should learn such principles as these, nay rather you should learn them by heart; philosophy ought not to try to explain away vice. For a sick man, when his physician bids him live recklessly, is doomed beyond recall. Farewell.

CXXIV. On the True Good as Attained by Reason

1. Full many an ancient precept could I give,

Didst thou not shrink, and feel it shame to learn
Such lowly duties.

But you do not shrink, nor are you deterred by any subtleties of study. For your cultivated mind is not wont to investigate such important subjects in a free-and-easy manner. I approve your method in that you make everything count towards a certain degree of progress, and in that you are disgruntled only when nothing can be accomplished by the greatest degree of subtlety. And I shall take pains to show that this is the case now also. Our question is, whether the Good is grasped by the senses or by the understanding; and the corollary thereto is that it does not exist in dumb animals or little children.

2. Those who rate pleasure as the supreme ideal hold that the Good is a matter of the senses; but we Stoics maintain that it is a matter of the understanding, and we assign it to the mind. If the senses were to pass judgment on what is good, we should never reject any pleasure; for there is no pleasure that does not attract, no pleasure that does not please. Conversely, we should undergo no pain voluntarily; for there is no pain that does not clash with the senses. 3. Besides, those who are too fond of pleasure and those who fear pain to the greatest degree would in that case not deserve reproof. But we condemn men who are slaves to their appetites and their lusts, and we scorn men who, through fear of pain, will dare no manly deed. But what wrong could such men be committing if they looked merely to the senses as arbiters of good and evil? For it is to the senses that you and yours have entrusted the test of things to be sought and things to be avoided!

4. Reason, however, is surely the governing element in such a matter as this; as reason has made the decision concerning the happy life, and concerning virtue and honour also, so she has made the

decision with regard to good and evil. For with them the vilest part is allowed to give sentence about the better, so that the senses – dense as they are, and dull, and even more sluggish in man than in the other animals, – pass judgment on the Good. 5. Just suppose that one should desire to distinguish tiny objects by the touch rather than by the eyesight! There is no special faculty more subtle and acute than the eye, that would enable us to distinguish between good and evil. You see, therefore, in what ignorance of truth a man spends his days and how abjectly he has overthrown lofty and divine ideals, if he thinks that the sense of touch can pass judgment upon the nature of the Supreme Good and the Supreme Evil! 6. He says: “Just as every science and every art should possess an element that is palpable and capable of being grasped by the senses (their source of origin and growth), even so the happy life derives its foundation and its beginnings from things that are palpable, and from that which falls within the scope of the senses. Surely you admit that the happy life takes its beginnings from things palpable to the senses.” 7. But we define as “happy” those things that are in accord with Nature. And that which is in accord with Nature is obvious and can be seen at once – just as easily as that which is complete. That which is according to Nature, that which is given us as a gift immediately at our birth, is, I maintain, not a Good, but the beginning of a Good. You, however, assign the Supreme Good, pleasure, to mere babies, so that the child at its birth begins at the point whither the perfected man arrives. You are placing the tree-top where the root ought to be. 8. If anyone should say that the child, hidden in its mother’s womb, of unknown sex too, delicate, unformed, and shapeless – if one should say that this child is already in a state of goodness, he would clearly seem to be astray in his ideas. And yet how little difference is there between one who has just lately received the gift of life, and one who is still a hidden burden in the bowels of the mother! They are equally developed, as far as their understanding of good or evil is concerned; and a child is as yet no more capable of comprehending the Good than is a tree or any dumb beast.

But why is the Good non-existent in a tree or in a dumb beast? Because there is no reason there, either. For the same cause, then, the Good is non-existent in a child, for the child also has no reason; the

child will reach the Good only when he reaches reason. 9. There are animals without reason, there are animals not yet endowed with reason, and there are animals who possess reason, but only incompletely; in none of these does the Good exist, for it is reason that brings the Good in its company. What, then, is the distinction between the classes which I have mentioned? In that which does not possess reason, the Good will never exist. In that which is not yet endowed with reason, the Good cannot be existent at the time. And in that which possesses reason but only incompletely, the Good is capable of existing, but does not yet exist. 10. This is what I mean, Lucilius: the Good cannot be discovered in any random person, or at any random age; and it is as far removed from infancy as last is from first, or as that which is complete from that which has just sprung into being. Therefore, it cannot exist in the delicate body, when the little frame has only just begun to knit together. Of course not – no more than in the seed. 11. Granting the truth of this, we understand that there is a certain kind of Good of a tree or in a plant; but this is not true of its first growth, when the plant has just begun to spring forth out of the ground. There is a certain Good of wheat: it is not yet existent, however, in the swelling stalk, nor when the soft ear is pushing itself out of the husk, but only when summer days and its appointed maturity have ripened the wheat. Just as Nature in general does not produce her Good until she is brought to perfection, even so man's Good does not exist in man until both reason and man are perfected. 12. And what is this Good? I shall tell you: it is a free mind, an upright mind, subjecting other things to itself and itself to nothing. So far is infancy from admitting this Good that boyhood has no hope of it, and even young manhood cherishes the hope without justification; even our old age is very fortunate if it has reached this Good after long and concentrated study. If this, then, is the Good, the good is a matter of the understanding.

13. "But," comes the retort, "you admitted that there is a certain Good of trees and of grass; then surely there can be a certain Good of a child also." But the true Good is not found in trees or in dumb animals the Good which exists in them is called good only by courtesy. "Then what is it?" you say. Simply that which is in accord with the nature of each. The real Good cannot find a place in dumb

animals – not by any means; its nature is more blest and is of a higher class. And where there is no place for reason, the Good does not exist. 14. There are four natures which we should mention here: of the tree, animal, man, and God. The last two, having reasoning power, are of the same nature, distinct only by virtue of the immortality of the one and the mortality of the other. Of one of these, then – to wit God – it is Nature that perfects the Good; of the other – to wit man – pains and study do so. All other things are perfect only in their particular nature, and not truly perfect, since they lack reason.

Indeed, to sum up, that alone is perfect which is perfect according to nature as a whole, and nature as a whole is possessed of reason. Other things can be perfect according to their kind. 15. That which cannot contain the happy life cannot contain that which produces the happy life; and the happy life is produced by Goods alone. In dumb animals there is not a trace of the happy life, nor of the means whereby the happy life is produced; in dumb animals the Good does not exist. 16. The dumb animal comprehends the present world about him through his senses alone. He remembers the past only by meeting with something which reminds his senses; a horse, for example, remembers the right road only when he is placed at the starting-point. In his stall, however, he has no memory of the road, no matter how often he may have stepped along it. The third state – the future – does not come within the ken of dumb beasts.

17. How, then, can we regard as perfect the nature of those who have no experience of time in its perfection? For time is three-fold, – past, present, and future. Animals perceive only the time which is of greatest moment to them within the limits of their coming and going – the present. Rarely do they recollect the past – and that only when they are confronted with present reminders. 18. Therefore the Good of a perfect nature cannot exist in an imperfect nature; for if the latter sort of nature should possess the Good, so also would mere vegetation. I do not indeed deny that dumb animals have strong and swift impulses toward actions which seem according to nature, but such impulses are confused and disordered. The Good however, is never confused or disordered.

19. “What!” you say, “do dumb animals move in disturbed and ill-

ordered fashion?" I should say that they moved in disturbed and ill-ordered fashion, if their nature admitted of order; as it is, they move in accordance with their nature. For that is said to be "disturbed" which can also at some other time be "not disturbed"; so, too, that is said to be in a state of trouble which can be in a state of peace. No man is vicious except one who has the capacity of virtue; in the case of dumb animals their motion is such as results from their nature. 20. But, not to weary you, a certain sort of good will be found in a dumb animal, and a certain sort of virtue, and a certain sort of perfection – but neither the Good, nor virtue, nor perfection in the absolute sense. For this is the privilege of reasoning beings alone, who are permitted to know the cause, the degree, and the means. Therefore, good can exist only in that which possesses reason.

21. Do you ask now whither our argument is tending, and of what benefit it will be to your mind? I will tell you: it exercises and sharpens the mind, and ensures, by occupying it honourably, that it will accomplish some sort of good. And even that is beneficial which holds men back when they are hurrying into wickedness. However, I will say this also: I can be of no greater benefit to you than by revealing the Good that is rightly yours, by taking you out of the class of dumb animals, and by placing you on a level with God. 22. Why, pray, do you foster and practise your bodily strength? Nature has granted strength in greater degree to cattle and wild beasts. Why cultivate your beauty? After all your efforts, dumb animals surpass you in comeliness. Why dress your hair with such unending attention? Though you let it down in Parthian fashion, or tie it up in the German style, or, as the Scythians do, let it flow wild – yet you will see a mane of greater thickness tossing upon any horse you choose, and a mane of greater beauty bristling upon the neck of any lion. And even after training yourself for speed, you will be no match for the hare. 23. Are you not willing to abandon all these details – wherein you must acknowledge defeat, striving as you are for something that is not your own and come back to the Good that is really yours?

And what is this Good? It is a clear and flawless mind, which rivals that of God, raised far above mortal concerns, and counting nothing of its own to be outside itself. You are a reasoning animal.

What Good, then, lies within you? Perfect reason. Are you willing to develop this to its farthest limits – to its greatest degree of increase?

24. Only consider yourself happy when all your joys are born of reason, and when – having marked all the objects which men clutch at, or pray for, or watch over – you find nothing which you will desire; mind, I do not say *prefer*. Here is a short rule by which to measure yourself, and by the test of which you may feel that you have reached perfection: “You will come to your own when you shall understand that those whom the world calls fortunate are really the most unfortunate of all.” Farewell.

Appendix

Ep. xciv. deals, on the whole, with the question whether doctrines without precepts are enough for the student and the philosopher; Ep. xcv. whether precepts without doctrines will suffice. Seneca concludes that they are both necessary and are complementary to one another, especially in view of the complicated life which one is called upon to live, with its many duties and choices. The terms discussed, with some of the Greek original definitions, may be summed up as follows:-

(1) The outward expressions of ἐπιστήμη (*scientia*, knowledge) and of the κοινὰ ἔννοιαι (*notiones communes*, προλήψεις, innate ideas) are found in the form of ἀξιώματα (*pronuntiata*, incontrovertible statements), δόγματα (*placita, decreta, scita*, doctrines, tenets, dogmas, principles). Determined by ὅροι (*definitiones*, definitions), they are tested by their ἀξία (*honestum*, moral value), by the κριτήριον (*norma iudicii*, standard of judgement) or κανὼν (*lex, regula*, etc.), and by the ὀρθὸς λόγος (*recta ratio*, universal law, etc.). By such means the doctrines of philosophy are contrasted with δόξα (*opinio*) and with a κατάληψις (*cognitio* or *comprehensio*) which falls short of completeness and perfection. Conduct which results from a thorough understanding and performance of such doctrines is κατόρθωμα (τέλειον καθήκον, *perfectum officium*, “absolute duty”).

(2) The *pars praeceptiva* (παραινετική) of philosophy, which deals with “average duty” (καθήκον, *commune* or *medium officium*), is approved, among others, by Posidonius, Cicero (see the *De Officiis*), and Seneca. It is related to active living and to the ἀδιάφορα (*media* or *indifferentia*) (see Subject Index) which play so large a rôle in the individual’s daily existence. This department of “counsel,” “admonition,” or “advice” has many forms. For παραινέσεις (*monitio*) are needed: the λόγος προτρεπτικός (*exhortatio*), τόπος ὑποθετικός (*suasio*), ἀποτροπή (*dissuasio*), ἐπιτίμησις (*obiurgatio*), λόγος παραμυθητικός (*consolatio*), αἰτιολογία (*causarum inquisitio*), ἡθολογία (*descriptio*), and all the gamut of precepts which run from blame to praise. These are

reinforced by ἀπόδειξις (*probatio*, *argumentum*, proof) and by such helps as χρεῖαι, ἀπομνημονεύματα (*sententiae*, proverbs, maxims).

By such stages of advancement, προκοπή (*progressio*), and relying upon παραδείγματα (*exempla*), one rises, through practical precepts and the observance of duties, to an appreciation of the virtues, the contemplative mastery of the Universe, and to the Supreme Good, conformity with Nature (ὁμολογουμένως τῇ φύσει ζῆν, *vivere convenienter naturae*).

The Essays



Agrippina the Younger (19/23 AD-59 AD). In 49, Claudius' fourth wife had Seneca recalled to Rome to tutor her son Nero, then twelve years old. On Claudius' death in 54, she secured recognition of Nero, rather than Claudius' son Britannicus, as Emperor.

ON ANGER



Translated by Aubrey Stewart

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Book I.

I.

YOU have demanded of me, Novatus, that I should write how anger may be soothed, and it appears to me that you are right in feeling especial fear of this passion, which is above all others hideous and wild: for the others have some alloy of peace and quiet, but this consists wholly in action and the impulse of grief, raging with an utterly inhuman lust for arms, blood and tortures, careless of itself provided it hurts another, rushing upon the very point of the sword, and greedy for revenge even when it drags the avenger to ruin with itself. Some of the wisest of men have in consequence of this called anger a short madness: for it is equally devoid of self control, regardless of decorum, forgetful of kinship, obstinately engrossed in whatever it begins to do, deaf to reason and advice, excited by trifling causes, awkward at perceiving what is true and just, and very like a falling rock which breaks itself to pieces upon the very thing which it crushes. That you may know that they whom anger possesses are not sane, look at their appearance; for as there are distinct symptoms which mark madmen, such as a bold and menacing air, a gloomy brow, a stern face, a hurried walk, restless hands, changed colour, quick and strongly-drawn breathing; the signs of angry men, too, are the same: their eyes blaze and sparkle, their whole face is a deep red with the blood which boils up from the bottom of their heart, their lips quiver, their teeth are set, their hair bristles and stands on end, their breath is laboured and hissing, their joints crack as they twist them about, they groan, bellow, and burst into scarcely intelligible talk, they often clap their hands together and stamp on the ground with their feet, and their whole body is highly-strung and plays those tricks which mark a distraught mind, so as to furnish an ugly and shocking picture of self-perversion and excitement. You cannot tell whether this vice is more execrable or more disgusting. Other vices can be concealed and cherished in secret; anger shows itself openly and appears in the countenance, and the greater it is, the more plainly it boils forth. Do you not see how in all animals certain signs appear before they proceed to mischief, and how their entire bodies put off their usual quiet appearance and stir

up their ferocity? Boars foam at the mouth and sharpen their teeth by rubbing them against trees, bulls toss their horns in the air and scatter the sand with blows of their feet, lions growl, the necks of enraged snakes swell, mad dogs have a sullen look — there is no animal so hateful and venomous by nature that it does not, when seized by anger, show additional fierceness. I know well that the other passions, can hardly be concealed, and that lust, fear, and boldness give signs of their presence and may be discovered beforehand, for there is no one of the. stronger passions that does not affect the countenance: what then is the difference between them and anger? Why, that the other passions are visible, but that this is conspicuous.

II.

Next, if you choose to view its results and the mischief that it does, no plague has cost the human race more dear: you will see slaughterings and poisonings, accusations and counter-accusations, sacking of cities, ruin of whole peoples, the persons of princes sold into slavery by auction, torches applied to roofs, and fires not merely confined within city-walls but making whole tracts of country glow with hostile flame. See the foundations of the most celebrated cities hardly now to be discerned; they were ruined by anger. See deserts extending for many miles without an inhabitant: they have been desolated by anger. See all the chiefs whom tradition mentions as instances of ill fate; anger stabbed one of them in his bed, struck down another, though he was protected by the sacred rights of hospitality, tore another to pieces in the very home of the laws and in sight of the crowded forum, bade one shed his own blood by the parricide hand of his son, another to have his royal throat cut by the hand of a slave, another to stretch out his limbs on the cross: and hitherto I am speaking merely of individual cases. What, if you were to pass from the consideration of those single men against whom anger has broken out to view whole assemblies cut down by the sword, the people butchered by the soldiery let loose upon it, and whole nations condemned to death in one common ruin . . .” as though by men who either freed themselves from our charge or despised our authority? Why, wherefore is the people angry with gladiators, and so unjust as to think itself wronged if they do not die cheerfully? It thinks itself scorned, and by looks, gestures, and excitement turns itself from a mere spectator into an adversary. Everything of this sort is not anger, but the semblance of anger, like that of boys who want to beat the ground when they have fallen upon it, and who often do not even know why they are angry, but are merely angry without any reason or having received any injury, yet not without some semblance of injury received, or without some wish to exact a penalty for it. Thus they are deceived by the likeness of blows, and are appeased by the pretended tears of those who deprecate their wrath, and thus an unreal grief is healed by an unreal

revenge.

III.

“We often are angry,” says our adversary, “not with men who have hurt us, but with men who are going to hurt us: so you may be sure that anger is not born of injury.” It is true that we are angry with those who are going to hurt us, but they do already hurt us in intention, and one who is going to do an injury is already doing it. “The weakest of men,” argues he, “are often angry with the most powerful: so you may be sure that anger is not a desire to punish their antagonist — for men do not desire to punish him when they cannot hope to do so.” In the first place, I spoke of a desire to inflict punishment, not a power to do so: now men desire even what they cannot obtain. In the next place, no one is so low in station as not to be able to hope to inflict punishment even upon the greatest of men: we all are powerful for mischief. Aristotle’s definition differs little from mine: for he declares anger to be a desire to repay suffering. It would be a long task to examine the differences between his definition and mine: it may be urged against both of them that wild beasts become angry without being excited by injury, and without any idea of punishing others or requiting them with pain: for, even though they do these things, these are not what they aim at doing. We must admit, however, that neither wild beasts nor any other creature except man is subject to anger: for, whilst anger is the foe of reason, it nevertheless does not arise in any place where reason cannot dwell. Wild beasts have impulses, fury, cruelty, combativeness: they have not anger any more than they have luxury: yet they indulge in some pleasures with less self-control than human beings. Do not believe the poet who says:

“The boar his wrath forgets, the stag forgets the hounds,

The bear forgets how ‘midst the herd he leaped with frantic bounds.”

When he speaks of beasts being angry he means that they are excited, roused up: for indeed they know no more how to be angry than they know how to pardon. Dumb creatures have not human feelings, but have certain impulses which resemble them: for if it were not so, if they could feel love and hate, they would likewise be

capable of friendship and enmity, of disagreement and agreement. Some traces of these qualities exist even in them, though properly all of them, whether good or bad, belong to the human breast alone. To no creature besides man has been given wisdom, foresight, industry, and reflexion. To animals not only human virtues but even human vices are forbidden: their whole constitution, mental and bodily, is unlike that of human beings: in them the royal and leading principle is drawn from another source, as, for instance, they possess a voice, yet not a clear one, but indistinct and incapable of forming words: a tongue, but one which is fettered and not sufficiently nimble for complex movements: so, too, they possess intellect, the greatest attribute of all, but in a rough and inexact condition. It is, consequently, able to grasp those visions and semblances which rouse it to action, but only in a cloudy and indistinct fashion. It follows from this that their impulses and outbreaks are violent, and that they do not feel fear, anxieties, grief, or anger, but some semblances of these feelings: wherefore they quickly drop them and adopt the converse of them: they graze after showing the most vehement rage and terror, and after frantic bellowing and plunging they straightway sink into quiet sleep.

IV.

What anger is has been sufficiently explained. The difference between it and irascibility is evident: it is the same as that between a drunken man and a drunkard; between a frightened man and a coward. It is possible for an angry man not to be irascible; an irascible man may sometimes not be angry. I shall omit the other varieties of anger, which the Greeks distinguish by various names, because we have no distinctive words for them in our language, although we call men bitter and harsh, and also peevish, frantic, clamorous, surly and fierce: all of which are different forms of irascibility. Among these you may class sulkiness, a refined form of irascibility; for there are some sorts of anger which go no further than noise, while some are as lasting as they are common: some are fierce in deed, but inclined to be sparing of words: some expend themselves in bitter words and curses: some do not go beyond complaining and turning one's back: some are great, deep-seated, and brood within a man: there are a thousand other forms of a multiform evil.

V.

We have now finished our enquiry as to what anger is, whether it exists in any other creature besides man, what the difference is between it and irascibility, and how many forms it possesses. Let us now enquire whether anger be in accordance with nature, and whether it be useful and worth entertaining in some measure.

Whether it be according to nature will become evident if we consider man's nature, than which what is more gentle while it is in its proper condition? Yet what is more cruel than anger? What is more affectionate to others than man? Yet what is more savage against them than anger? Mankind is born for mutual assistance, anger for mutual ruin: the former loves society, the latter estrangement. The one loves to do good, the other to do harm ; the one to help even strangers, the other to attack even its dearest friends. The one is ready even to sacrifice itself for the good of others, the other to plunge into peril provided it drags others with it. Who, then, can be more ignorant of nature than he who classes this cruel and hurtful vice as belonging to her best and most polished work? Anger, as we have said, is eager to punish; and that such a desire should exist in man's peaceful breast is least of all according to his nature; for human life is founded on benefits and harmony and is bound together into an alliance for the common help of all, not by terror, but by love towards one another.

VI.

“What, then? Is not correction sometimes necessary?” Of course it is; but with discretion, not with anger; for it does not injure, but heals under the guise of injury. We char crooked spearshafts to straighten them, and force them by driving in wedges, not in order to break them, but to take the bends out of them; and, in like manner, by applying pain to the body or mind we correct dispositions which have been rendered crooked by vice. So the physician at first, when dealing with slight disorders, tries not to make much change in his patient’s daily habits, to regulate his food, drink, and exercise, and to improve his health merely by altering the order in which he takes them. The next step is to see whether an alteration in their amount will be of service. If neither alteration of the order or of the amount is of use, he cuts off some and reduces others. If even this does not answer, he forbids food, and disburdens the body by fasting. If milder remedies have proved useless he opens a vein; if the extremities are injuring the body and infecting it with disease he lays his hands upon the limbs; yet none of his treatment is considered harsh if its result is to give health. Similarly, it is the duty of the chief administrator of the laws, or the ruler of a state, to correct ill-disposed men, as long as he is able, with words, and even with gentle ones, that he may persuade them to do what they ought, inspire them with a love of honour and justice, and cause them to hate vice and set store upon virtue. He must then pass on to severer language, still confining himself to advising and reprimanding; last of all he must betake himself to punishments, yet still making them slight and temporary. He ought to assign extreme punishments only to extreme crimes, that no one may die unless it be even to the criminal’s own advantage that he should die. He will differ from the physician in one point alone; for whereas physicians render it easy to die for those to whom they cannot grant the boon of life, he will drive the condemned out of life with ignominy and disgrace, not because he takes pleasure in any man’s being punished, for the wise man is far from such inhuman ferocity, but that they may be a warning to all men, and that, since they would not be useful when alive, the state

may at any rate profit by their death. Man's nature is not, therefore, desirous of inflicting punishment; neither, therefore, is anger in accordance with man's nature, because that is desirous of inflicting punishment. I will also adduce Plato's argument — for what harm is there in using other men's arguments, so far as they are on our side? "A good man," says he, "does not do any hurt: it is only punishment which hurts. Punishment, therefore, does not accord with a good man: wherefore anger does not do so either, because punishment and anger accord one with another. If a good man takes no pleasure in punishment, he will also take no pleasure in that state of mind to which punishment gives pleasure: consequently anger is not natural to man."

VII.

May it not be that, although anger be not natural, it may be right to adopt it, because it often proves useful? It rouses the spirit and excites it; and courage does nothing grand in war without it, unless its flame be supplied from this source; this is the goad which stirs up bold men and sends them to encounter perils. Some therefore consider it to be best to control anger, not to banish it utterly, but to cut off its extravagances, and force it to keep within useful bounds, so as to retain that part of it without which action will become languid and all strength and activity of mind will die away.

In the first place, it is easier to banish dangerous passions than to rule them; it is easier not to admit them than to keep them in order when admitted; for when they have established themselves in possession of the mind they are more powerful than the lawful ruler, and will in no wise permit themselves to be weakened or abridged. In the next place, Reason herself, who holds the reins, is only strong while she remains apart from the passions; if she mixes and befouls herself with them she becomes no longer able to restrain those whom she might once have cleared out of her path; for the mind, when once excited and shaken up, goes whither the passions drive it. There are certain things whose beginnings lie in our own power, but which, when developed, drag us along by their own force and leave us no retreat. Those who have flung themselves over a precipice have no control over their movements, nor can they stop or slacken their pace when once started, for their own headlong and irremediable rashness has left no room for either reflexion or remorse, and they cannot help going to lengths which they might have avoided. So, also, the mind, when it has abandoned itself to anger, love, or any other passion, is unable to check itself: its own weight and the downward tendency of vices must needs carry the man off and hurl him into the lowest depth.

VIII.

The best plan is to reject straightway the first incentives to anger, to resist its very beginnings, and to take care not to be betrayed into it: for if once it begins to carry us away, it is hard to get back again into a healthy condition, because reason goes for nothing when once passion has been admitted to the mind, and has by our own free will been given a certain authority, it will for the future do as much as it chooses, not only as much as you will allow it. The enemy, I repeat, must be met and driven back at the outermost frontier-line: for when he has once entered the city and passed its gates, he will not allow his prisoners to set bounds to his victory. The mind does not stand apart and view its passions from without, so as not to permit them to advance further than they ought, but it is itself changed into a passion, and is therefore unable to check what once was useful and wholesome strength, now that it has become degenerate and misapplied: for passion and reason, as I said before, have not distinct and separate provinces, but consist of the changes of the mind itself for better or for worse. How then can reason recover itself when it is conquered and held down by vices, when it has given way to anger? or how can it extricate itself from a confused mixture, the greater part of which consists of the lower qualities? "But," argues our adversary, "some men when in anger control themselves." Do they so far control themselves that they do nothing which anger dictates, or somewhat? If they do nothing thereof, it becomes evident that anger is not essential to the conduct of affairs, although your sect advocated it as possessing greater strength than reason. Finally, I ask, is anger stronger or weaker than reason? If stronger, how can reason impose any check upon it, since it is only the less powerful that obey: if weaker, then reason is competent to effect its ends without anger, and does not need the help of a less powerful quality. "But some angry men remain consistent and control themselves." When do they do so? It is when their anger is disappearing and leaving them of its own accord, not when it was red-hot, for then it was more powerful than they. "What then? do not men, even in the height of their anger, sometimes let their enemies go whole and unhurt, and refrain from

injuring them?" They do: but when do they do so? It is when one passion overpowers another, and either fear or greed gets the upper hand for a while. On such occasions, it is not thanks to reason that anger is stilled, but owing to an untrustworthy and fleeting truce between the passions.

IX.

In the next place, anger has nothing useful in itself, and does not rouse up the mind to warlike deeds: for a virtue, being self-sufficient, never needs the assistance of a vice: whenever it needs an impetuous effort, it does not become angry, but rises to the occasion, and excites or soothes itself as far as it deems requisite, just as the machines which hurl darts may be twisted to a greater or lesser degree of tension at the manager's pleasure. "Anger," says Aristotle, "is necessary, nor can any fight be won without it, unless it fills the mind, and kindles up the spirit. It must, however, be made use of, not as a general, but as a soldier." Now this is untrue; for if it listens to reason and follows whither reason leads, it is no longer anger, whose characteristic is obstinacy: if, again, it is disobedient and will not be quiet when ordered, but is carried away by its own willful and headstrong spirit, it is then as useless an aid to the mind as a soldier who disregards the sounding of the retreat would be to a general. If, therefore, anger allows limits to be imposed upon it, it must be called by some other name, and ceases to be anger, which I understand to be unbridled and unmanageable: and if it does not allow limits to be imposed upon it, it is harmful and not to be counted among aids: wherefore either anger is not anger, or it is useless: for if any man demands the infliction of punishment, not because he is eager for the punishment itself, but because it is right to inflict it, he ought not to be counted as an angry man: that will be the useful soldier, who knows how to obey orders: the passions cannot obey any more than they can command.

X.

For this cause reason will never call to its aid blind and fierce impulses, over whom she herself possesses no authority, and which she never can restrain save by setting against them similar and equally powerful passions, as for example, fear against anger, anger against sloth, greed against timidity. May virtue never come to such a pass, that reason should fly for aid to vices! The mind can find no safe repose there, it must needs be shaken and tempest-tossed if it be safe only because of its own defects, if it cannot be brave without anger, diligent without greed, quiet without fear: such is the despotism under which a man must live if he becomes the slave of a passion. Are you not ashamed to put virtues under the patronage of vices? Then, too, reason ceases to have any power if she can do nothing without passion, and begins to be equal and like unto passion; for what difference is there between them if passion without reason be as rash as reason without passion is helpless? They are both on the same level, if one cannot exist without the other. Yet who could endure that passion should be made equal to reason? "Then," says our adversary, "passion is useful, provided it be moderate." Nay, only if it be useful by nature: but if it be disobedient to authority and reason, all that we gain by its moderation is that the less there is of it, the less harm it does: wherefore a moderate passion is nothing but a moderate evil.

XI.

“But,” argues he, “against our enemies anger is necessary.” In no case is it less necessary; since our attacks ought not to be disorderly, but regulated and under control. What, indeed, is it except anger, so ruinous to itself, that overthrows barbarians, who have so much more bodily strength than we, and are so much better able to endure fatigue? Gladiators, too, protect themselves by skill, but expose themselves to wounds when they are angry. Moreover, of what use is anger, when the same end can be arrived at by reason? Do you suppose that a hunter is angry with the beasts he kills? Yet he meets them when they attack him, and follows them when they flee from him, all of which is managed by reason without anger. When so many thousands of Cimbri and Teutones poured over the Alps, what was it that caused them to perish so completely, that no messenger, only common rumour, carried the news of that great defeat to their homes, except that with them anger stood in the place of courage? and anger, although sometimes it overthrows and breaks to pieces whatever it meets, yet is more often its own destruction. Who can be braver than the Germans? who charge more boldly? who have more love of arms, among which they are born and bred, for which alone they care, to the neglect of everything else? Who can be more hardened to undergo every hardship, since a large part of them have no store of clothing for the body, no shelter from the continual rigour of the climate: yet Spaniards and Gauls, and even the unwarlike races of Asia and Syria cut them down before the main legion comes within sight, nothing but their own irascibility exposing them to death. Give but intelligence to those minds, and discipline to those bodies of theirs, which now are ignorant of vicious refinements, luxury, and wealth, — to say nothing more, we should certainly be obliged to go back to the ancient Roman habits of life. By what did Fabius restore the shattered forces of the state, except by knowing how to delay and spin out time, which angry men know not how to do? The empire, which then was at its last gasp, would have perished if Fabius had been as daring as anger urged him to be: but he took thought about the condition of affairs, and after counting his force, no

part of which could be lost without everything being lost with it, he laid aside thoughts of grief and revenge, turning his sole attention to what was profitable and to making the most of his opportunities, and conquered his anger before he conquered Hannibal. What did Scipio do? Did he not leave behind Hannibal and the Carthaginian army, and all with whom he had a right to be angry, and carry over the war into Africa with such deliberation that he made his enemies think him luxurious and lazy? What did the second Scipio do? Did he not remain a long, long time before Numantia, and bear with calmness the reproach to himself and to his country that Numantia took longer to conquer than Carthage? By blockading and investing his enemies, he brought them to such straits that they perished by their own swords. Anger, therefore, is not useful even in wars or battles: for it is prone to rashness, and while trying to bring others into danger, does not guard itself against danger. The most trustworthy virtue is that which long and carefully considers itself, controls itself, and slowly and deliberately brings itself to the front.

XII.

“What, then,” asks our adversary, “is a good man not to be angry if he sees his father murdered or his mother outraged?” No, he will not be angry, but will avenge them, or protect them. Why do you fear that filial piety will not prove a sufficient spur to him even without anger? You may as well say— “What then? When a good man sees his father or his son being cut down, I suppose he will not weep or faint,” as we see women do whenever any trifling rumour of danger reaches them. The good man will do his duty without disturbance or fear, and he will perform the duty of a good man, so as to do nothing unworthy of a man. My father will be murdered: then I will defend him: he has been slain, then I will avenge him, not because I am grieved, but because it is my duty. “Good men are made angry by injuries done to their friends.” When you say this, Theophrastus, you seek to throw discredit upon more manly maxims; you leave the judge and appeal to the mob: because everyone is angry when such things befall his own friends, you suppose that men will decide that it is their duty to do what they do: for as a rule every man considers a passion which he recognises to be a righteous one. But he does the same thing if the hot water is not ready for his drink, if a glass be broken, or his shoe splashed with mud. It is not filial piety, but weakness of mind that produces this anger, as children weep when they lose their parents, just as they do when they lose their toys. To feel anger on behalf of one’s friends does not show a loving, but a weak mind: it is admirable and worthy conduct to stand forth as the defender of one’s parents, children, friends, and countrymen, at the call of duty itself, acting of one’s own free will, forming a deliberate judgment, and looking forward to the future, not in an impulsive, frenzied fashion. No passion is more eager for revenge than anger, and for that very reason it is unapt to obtain it: being over hasty and frantic, like almost all desires, it hinders itself in the attainment of its own object, and therefore has never been useful either in peace or war: for it makes peace like war, and when in arms forgets that Mars belongs to neither side, and falls into the power of the enemy, because it is not in its own. In the next place, vices ought not to be

received into common use because on some occasions they have effected somewhat: for so also fevers are good for certain kinds of ill-health, but nevertheless it is better to be altogether free from them: it is a hateful mode of cure to owe one's health to disease. Similarly, although anger, like poison, or falling headlong, or being shipwrecked, may have unexpectedly done good, yet it ought not on that account to be classed as wholesome, for poisons have often proved good for the health.

XIII.

Moreover, qualities which we ought to possess become better and more desirable the more extensive they are: if justice is a good thing, no one will say that it would be better if any part were subtracted from it; if bravery is a good thing, no one would wish it to be in any way curtailed: consequently the greater anger is, the better it is, for whoever objected to a good thing being increased? But it is not expedient that anger should be increased: therefore it is not expedient that it should exist at all, for that which grows bad by increase cannot be a good thing. "Anger is useful," says our adversary, "because it makes men more ready to fight." According to that mode of reasoning, then, drunkenness also is a good thing, for it makes men insolent and daring, and many use their weapons better when the worse for liquor: nay, according to that reasoning, also, you may call frenzy and madness essential to strength, because madness often makes men stronger. Why, does not fear often by the rule of contraries make men bolder, and does not the terror of death rouse up even arrant cowards to join battle? Yet anger, drunkenness, fear, and the like, are base and temporary incitements to action, and can furnish no arms to virtue, which has no need of vices, although they may at times be of some little assistance to sluggish and cowardly minds. No man becomes braver through anger, except one who without anger would not have been brave at all: anger does not therefore come to assist courage, but to take its place. What are we to say to the argument that, if anger were a good thing it would attach itself to all the best men? Yet the most irascible of creatures are infants, old men, and sick people. Every weakling is naturally prone to complaint.

XIV.

It is impossible, says Theophrastus, for a good man not to be angry with bad men. By this reasoning, the better a man is, the more irascible he will be: yet will he not rather be more tranquil, more free from passions, and hating no one: indeed, what reason has he for hating sinners, since it is error that leads them into such crimes? now it does not become a sensible man to hate the erring, since if so he will hate himself: let him think how many things he does contrary to good morals, how much of what he has done stands in need of pardon, and he will soon become angry with himself also, for no righteous judge pronounces a different judgment in his own case and in that of others. No one, I affirm, will be found who can acquit himself. Every one when he calls himself innocent looks rather to external witnesses than to his own conscience. How much more philanthropic it is to deal with the erring in a gentle and fatherly spirit, and to call them into the right course instead of hunting them down? When a man is wandering about our fields because he has lost his way, it is better to place him on the right path than to drive him away.

XV.

The sinner ought, therefore, to be corrected both by warning and by force, both by gentle and harsh means, and may be made a better man both towards himself and others by chastisement, but not by anger: for who is angry with the patient whose wounds he is tending ? “But they cannot be corrected, and there is nothing in them that is gentle or that admits of good hope.” Then let them be removed from mortal society, if they are likely to deprave everyone with whom they come in contact, and let them cease to be bad men in the only way in which they can: yet let this be done without hatred: for what reason have I for hating the man to whom I am doing the greatest good, since I am rescuing him from himself? Does a man hate his own limbs when he cuts them off? That is not an act of anger, but a lamentable method of healing. We knock mad dogs on the head, we slaughter fierce and savage bulls, and we doom scabby sheep to the knife, lest they should infect our flocks: we destroy monstrous births, and we also drown our children if they are born weakly or unnaturally formed; to separate what is useless from what is sound is an act, not of anger, but of reason. Nothing becomes one who inflicts punishment less than anger, because the punishment has all the more power to work reformation if the sentence be pronounced with deliberate judgment. This is why Socrates said to the slave, “I would strike you, were I not angry.” He put off the correction of the slave to a calmer season; at the moment, he corrected himself. Who can boast that he has his passions under control, when Socrates did not dare to trust himself to his anger?

XVI.

We do not, therefore, need an angry chastiser to punish the erring and wicked: for since anger is a crime of the mind, it is not right that sins should be punished by sin. "What! am I not to be angry with a robber, or a poisoner?" No: for I am not angry with myself when I bleed myself. I apply all kinds of punishment as remedies. You are as yet only in the first stage of error, and do not go wrong seriously, although you do so often: then I will try to amend you by a reprimand given first in private and then in public. You, again, have gone too far to be restored to virtue by words alone; you must be kept in order by disgrace. For the next, some stronger measure is required, something that he can feel must be branded upon him; you, sir, shall be sent into exile and to a desert place. The next man's thorough villainy needs harsher remedies: chains and public imprisonment must be applied to him. You, lastly, have an incurably vicious mind, and add crime to crime: you have come to such a pass, that you are not influenced by the arguments which are never wanting to recommend evil, but sin itself is to you a sufficient reason for sinning: you have so steeped your whole heart in wickedness, that wickedness cannot be taken from you without bringing your heart with it. Wretched man! you have long sought to die; we will do you good service, we will take away that madness from which you suffer, and to you who have so long lived a misery to yourself and to others, we will give the only good thing which remains, that is, death. Why should I be angry with a man just when I am doing him good: sometimes the truest form of compassion is to put a man to death. If I were a skilled and learned physician, and were to enter a hospital, or a rich man's house, I should not have prescribed the same treatment for all the patients who were suffering from various diseases. I see different kinds of vice in the vast number of different minds, and am called in to heal the whole body of citizens: let us seek for the remedies proper for each disease. This man may be cured by his own sense of honour, that one by travel, that one by pain, that one by want, that one by the sword. If, therefore, it becomes my duty as a magistrate to put on black robes, and summon an assembly by the

sound of a trumpet, I shall walk to the seat of judgment not in a rage or in a hostile spirit, but with the countenance of a judge; I shall pronounce the formal sentence in a grave and gentle rather than a furious voice, and shall bid them proceed sternly, yet not angrily. Even when I command a criminal to be beheaded, when I sew a parricide up in a sack, when I send a man to be punished by military law, when I fling a traitor or public enemy down the Tarpeian Rock, I shall be free from anger, and shall look and feel just as though I were crushing snakes and other venomous creatures. "Anger is necessary to enable us to punish." What? Do you think that the law is angry with men whom it does not know, whom it has never seen, who it hopes will never exist? We ought, therefore, to adopt the law's frame of mind, which does not become angry, but merely defines offences: for, if it is right for a good man to be angry at wicked crimes, it will also be right for him to be moved with envy at the prosperity of wicked men: what, indeed, is more scandalous than that in some cases the very men, for whose deserts no fortune could be found bad enough, should flourish and actually be the spoiled children of success? Yet he will see their affluence without envy, just as he sees their crimes without anger: a good judge condemns wrongful acts, but does not hate them. "What then? when the wise man is dealing with something of this kind, will his mind not be affected by it and become excited beyond its usual wont?" I admit that it will: he will experience a slight and trifling emotion; for, as Zeno says, "Even in the mind of the wise man, a scar remains after the wound is quite healed." He will, therefore, feel certain hints and semblances of passions; but he will be free from the passions themselves.

XVII.

Aristotle says that “certain passions, if one makes a proper use of them, act as arms “: which would be true if, like weapons of war, they could be taken up or laid aside at the pleasure of their wielder. These arms, which Aristotle assigns to virtue, fight of their own accord, do not wait to be seized by the hand, and possess a man instead of being possessed by him. We have no need of external weapons, nature has equipped us sufficiently by giving us reason. She has bestowed this weapon upon us, which is strong, imperishable, and obedient to our will, not uncertain or capable of being turned against its master. Reason suffices by itself not merely to take thought for the future, but to manage our affairs: what, then, can be more foolish than for reason to beg anger for protection, that is, for what is certain to beg of what is uncertain? what is trustworthy of what is faithless? what is whole of what is sick? What, indeed? since reason is far more powerful by itself even in performing those operations in which the help of anger seems especially needful: for when reason has decided that a particular thing should be done, she perseveres in doing it; not being able to find anything better than herself to exchange with. She, therefore, abides by her purpose when it has once been formed; whereas anger is often overcome by pity: for it possesses no firm strength, but merely swells like an empty bladder, and makes a violent beginning, just like the winds which rise from the earth and are caused by rivers and marshes, which blow furiously without any continuance: anger begins with a mighty rush, and then falls away, becoming fatigued too soon: that which but lately thought of nothing but cruelty and novel forms of torture, is become quite softened and gentle when the time comes for punishment to be inflicted. Passion soon cools, whereas reason is always consistent: yet even in cases where anger has continued to burn, it often happens that although there may be many who deserve to die, yet after the death of two or three it ceases to slay. Its first onset is fierce, just as the teeth of snakes when first roused from their lair are venomous, but become harmless after repeated bites have exhausted their poison. Consequently those who are equally guilty

are not equally punished, and often he who has done less is punished more, because he fell in the way of anger when it was fresher. It is altogether irregular; at one time it runs into undue excess, at another it falls short of its duty: for it indulges its own feelings and gives sentence according to its caprices, will not listen to evidence, allows the defence no opportunity of being heard, clings to what it has wrongly assumed, and will not suffer its opinion to be wrested from it, even when it is a mistaken one.

XVIII.

Reason gives each side time to plead; moreover, she herself demands adjournment, that she may have sufficient scope for the discovery of the truth; whereas anger is in a hurry: reason wishes to give a just decision; anger wishes its decision to be thought just: reason looks no further than the matter in hand; anger is excited by empty matters hovering on the outskirts of the case: it is irritated by anything approaching to a confident demeanour, a loud voice, an unrestrained speech, dainty apparel, high-flown pleading, or popularity with the public. It often condemns a man because it dislikes his patron; it loves and maintains error even when truth is staring it in the face. It hates to be proved wrong, and thinks it more honourable to persevere in a mistaken line of conduct than to retract it. I remember Gnaeus Piso, a man who was free from many vices, yet of a perverse disposition, and one who mistook harshness for consistency. In his anger he ordered a soldier to be led off to execution because he had returned from furlough without his comrade, as though he must have murdered him if he could not show him. When the man asked for time for search, he would not grant it: the condemned man was brought outside the rampart, and was just offering his neck to the axe, when suddenly there appeared his comrade who was thought to be slain. Hereupon the centurion in charge of the execution bade the guardsman sheathe his sword, and led the condemned man back to Piso, to restore to him the innocence which Fortune had restored to the soldier. They were led into his presence by their fellow soldiers amid the great joy of the whole camp, embracing one another and accompanied by a vast crowd. Piso mounted the tribunal in a fury and ordered them both to be executed, both him who had not murdered and him who had not been slain. What could be more unworthy than this? Because one was proved to be innocent, two perished. Piso even added a third: for he actually ordered the centurion, who had brought back the condemned man, to be put to death. Three men were set up to die in the same place because one was innocent. O, how clever is anger at inventing reasons for its frenzy! "You," it says, "I order to be executed, because you have

been condemned to death: you, because you have been the cause of your comrade's condemnation, and you, because when ordered to put him to death you disobeyed your general." He discovered the means of charging them with three crimes, because he could find no crime in them.

XIX.

Irascibility, I say, has this fault — it is loath to be ruled: it is angry with the truth itself, if it comes to light against its will: it assails those whom it has marked for its victims with shouting and riotous noise and gesticulation of the entire body, together with reproaches and curses. Not thus does reason act: but if it must be so, she silently and quietly wipes out whole households, destroys entire families of the enemies of the state, together with their wives and children, throws down their very dwellings, levels them with the ground, and roots out the names of those who are the foes of liberty. This she does without grinding her teeth or shaking her head, or doing anything unbecoming to a judge, whose countenance ought to be especially calm and composed at the time when he is pronouncing an important sentence. “What need is there,” asks Hieronymus, “for you to bite your own lips when you want to strike some one?” What would he have said, had he seen a proconsul leap down from the tribunal, snatch the fasces from the lictor, and tear his own clothes because those of others were not torn as fast as he wished. “Why need you upset the table, throw down the drinking cups, knock yourself against the columns, tear your hair, smite your thigh and your breast? How vehement do you suppose anger to be, if it thus turns back upon itself, because it cannot find vent on another as fast as it wishes? Such men, therefore, are held back by the bystanders and are begged to become reconciled with themselves. But he who while free from anger assigns to each man the penalty which he deserves, does none of these things. He often lets a man go after detecting his crime, if his penitence for what he has done gives good hope for the future, if he perceives that the man’s wickedness is not deeply rooted in his mind, but is only, as the saying is, skindeep. He will grant impunity in cases where it will hurt neither the receiver nor the giver. In some cases he will punish great crimes more leniently than lesser ones, if the former were the result of momentary impulse, not of cruelty, while the latter were instinct with secret, under-hand, long-practised craftiness. The same fault, committed by two separate men, will not be visited by him with the same penalty, if the one was

guilty of it through carelessness, the other with a premeditated intention of doing mischief. In all dealing with crime he will remember that the one form of punishment is meant to make bad men better, and the other to put them out of the way. In either case he will look to the future, not to the past: for, as Plato says, "no wise man punishes any one because he has sinned, but that he may sin no more: for what is past cannot be recalled, but what is to come may be checked." Those, too, whom he wishes to make examples of the ill success of wickedness, he executes publicly, not merely in order that they themselves may die, but that by dying they may deter others from doing likewise. You see how free from any mental disturbance a man ought to be who has to weigh and consider all this, when he deals with a matter which ought to be handled with the utmost care, I mean, the power of life and death. The sword of justice is ill-placed in the hands of an angry man.

XX.

Neither ought it to be believed that anger contributes anything to magnanimity: what it gives is not magnanimity but vain glory. The increase which disease produces in bodies swollen with morbid humours is not healthy growth, but bloated corpulence. All those whose madness raises them above human considerations, believe themselves to be inspired with high and sublime ideas; but there is no solid ground beneath, and what is built without foundation is liable to collapse in ruin. Anger has no ground to stand upon, and does not rise from a firm and enduring foundation, but is a windy, empty quality, as far removed from true magnanimity as fool-hardiness from courage, boastfulness from confidence, gloom from austerity, cruelty from strictness. There is, I say, a great difference between a lofty and a proud mind: anger brings about nothing grand or beautiful. On the other hand, to be constantly irritated seems to me to be the part of a languid and unhappy mind, conscious of its own feebleness, like folk with diseased bodies covered with sores, who cry out at the lightest touch. Anger, therefore, is a vice which for the most part affects women and children. "Yet it affects men also." Because many men, too, have womanish or childish intellects. "But what are we to say? do not some words fall from angry men which appear to flow from a great mind?" Yes, to those who know not what true greatness is: as, for example, that foul and hateful saying, "Let them hate me, provided they fear me," which you may be sure was written in Sulla's time. I know not which was the worse of the two things he wished for, that he might be hated or that he might be feared. It occurs to his mind that someday people will curse him, plot against him, crush him: what prayer does he add to this? May all the gods curse him — for discovering a cure for hate so worthy of it. "Let them hate." How? "Provided they obey me?" No! "Provided they approve of me?" No! How then? "Provided they fear me!" I would not even be loved upon such terms. Do you imagine that this was a very spirited saying? You are wrong: this is not greatness, but monstrosity. You should not believe the words of angry men, whose speech is very loud and menacing, while their mind within them is as

timid as possible: nor need you suppose that the most eloquent of men, Titus Livius, was right in describing somebody as being “of a great rather than a good disposition.” The things cannot be separated: he must either be good or else he cannot be great, because I take greatness of mind to mean that it is unshaken, sound throughout, firm and uniform to its very foundation; such as cannot exist in evil dispositions. Such dispositions may be terrible, frantic, and destructive, but cannot possess greatness; because greatness rests upon goodness, and owes its strength to it. “Yet by speech, action, and all outward show they will make one think them great.” True, they will say something which you may think shows a great spirit, like Gaius Caesar, who when angry with heaven because it interfered with his ballet-dancers, whom he imitated more carefully than he attended to them when they acted, and because it frightened his revels by its thunders, surely ill-directed, challenged Jove to fight, and that to the death, shouting the Homeric verse : —

“Carry me off, or I will carry thee!

How great was his madness! He must have believed either that he could not be hurt even by Jupiter himself, or that he could hurt even Jupiter itself. I imagine that this saying of his had no small weight in nerving the minds of the conspirators for their task: for it seemed to be the height of endurance to bear one who could not bear Jupiter.

XXI.

There is therefore nothing great or noble in anger, even when it seems to be powerful and to condemn both gods and men alike. Anyone who thinks that anger produces greatness of mind, would think that luxury produces it: such a man wishes to rest on ivory, to be clothed with purple, and roofed with gold; to remove lands, embank seas, hasten the course of rivers, suspend woods in the air. He would think that avarice shows greatness of mind: for the avaricious man broods over heaps of gold and silver, treats whole provinces as merely fields on his estate, and has larger tracts of country under the charge of single bailiffs than those which consuls once drew lots to administer. He would think that lust shows greatness of mind: for the lustful man swims across straits, castrates troops of boys, and puts himself within reach of the swords of injured husbands with complete scorn of death. Ambition, too, he would think shows greatness of mind: for the ambitious man is not content with office once a year, but, if possible, would fill the calendar of dignities with his name alone, and cover the whole world with his titles. It matters nothing to what heights or lengths these passions may proceed: they are narrow, pitiable, grovelling. Virtue alone is lofty and sublime, nor is anything great which is not at the same time tranquil.

Book II

I.

MY first book, *Novatus*, had a more abundant subject: for carriages roll easily down hill: now we must proceed to drier matters. The question before us is whether anger arises from deliberate choice or from impulse, that is, whether it acts of its own accord or like the greater part of those passions which spring up within us without our knowledge. It is necessary for our debate to stoop to the consideration of these matters, in order that it may afterwards be able to rise to loftier themes; for likewise in our bodies the parts which are first set in order are the bones, sinews, and joints, which are by no means fair to see, albeit they are the foundation of our frame and essential to its life: next to them come the parts of which all beauty of face and appearance consists; and after these, colour, which above all else charms the eye, is applied last of all, when the rest of the body is complete. There is no doubt that anger is roused by the appearance of an injury being done: but the question before us is, whether anger straightway follows the appearance, and springs up without assistance from the mind, or whether it is roused with the sympathy of the mind. Our (the Stoics') opinion is, that anger can venture upon nothing by itself, without the approval of mind: for to conceive the idea of a wrong having been done, to long to avenge it, and to join the two propositions, that we ought not to have been injured and that it is our duty to avenge our injuries, cannot belong to a mere impulse which is excited without our consent. That impulse is a simple act; this is a complex one, and composed of several parts. The man understands something to have happened: he becomes indignant thereat: he condemns the deed; and he avenges it. All these things cannot be done without his mind agreeing to those matters which touched him.

II.

Whither, say you, does this inquiry tend? That we may know what anger is: for if it springs up against our will, it never will yield to reason: because all the motions which take place without our volition are beyond our control and unavoidable, such as shivering when cold water is poured over us, or shrinking when we are touched in certain places. Men's hair rises up at bad news, their faces blush at indecent words, and they are seized with dizziness when looking down a precipice; and as it is not in our power to prevent any of these things, no reasoning can prevent their taking place. But anger can be put to flight by wise maxims; for it is a voluntary defect of the mind, and not one of those things which are evolved by the conditions of human life, and which, therefore, may happen even to the wisest of us. Among these and in the first place must be ranked that thrill of the mind which seizes us at the thought of wrongdoing. We feel this even when witnessing the mimic scenes of the stage, or when reading about things that happened long ago. We often feel angry with Clodius for banishing Cicero, and with Antonius for murdering him. Who is not indignant with the wars of Marius, the proscriptions of Sulla? who is not enraged against Theodotus and Achillas and the boy king who dared to commit a more than boyish crime? Sometimes songs excite us, and quickened rhythm and the martial noise of trumpets; so, too, shocking pictures and the dreadful sight of tortures, however well deserved, affect our minds. Hence it is that we smile when others are smiling, that a crowd of mourners makes us sad, and that we take a glowing interest in another's battles; all of which feelings are not anger, any more than that which clouds our brow at the sight of a stage shipwreck is sadness, or what we feel, when we read how Hannibal after Cannae beset the walls of Rome, can be called fear. All these are emotions of minds which are loath to be moved, and are not passions, but rudiments which may grow into passions. So, too, a soldier starts at the sound of a trumpet, although he may be dressed as a civilian and in the midst of a profound peace, and camp horses prick up their ears at the clash of arms. It is said that Alexander, when Xenophantus was singing, laid his hand upon his

weapons.

III.

None of these things which casually influence the mind deserve to be called passions: the mind, if I may so express it, rather suffers passions to act upon itself than forms them. A passion, therefore, consists not in being affected by the sights which are presented to us, but in giving way to our feelings and following up these chance promptings: for whoever imagines that paleness, bursting into tears, lustful feelings, deep sighs, sudden flashes of the eyes, and so forth, are signs of passion and betray the state of the mind, is mistaken, and does not understand that these are merely impulses of the body. Consequently, the bravest of men often turns pale while he is putting on his armour; when the signal for battle is given, the knees of the boldest soldier shake for a moment; the heart even of a great general leaps into his mouth just before the lines clash together, and the hands and feet even of the most eloquent orator grow stiff and cold while he is preparing to begin his speech. Anger must not merely move, but break out of bounds, being an impulse: now, no impulse can take place without the consent of the mind: for it cannot be that we should deal with revenge and punishment without the mind being cognisant of them. A man may think himself injured, may wish to avenge his wrongs, and then may be persuaded by some reason or other to give up his intention and calm down: I do not call that anger, it is an emotion of the mind which is under the control of reason. Anger is that which goes beyond reason and carries her away with it: wherefore the first confusion of a man's mind when struck by what seems an injury is no more anger than the apparent injury itself: it is the subsequent mad rush, which not only receives the impression of the apparent injury, but acts upon it as true, that is anger, being an exciting of the mind to revenge, which proceeds from choice and deliberate resolve. There never has been any doubt that fear produces flight, and anger a rush forward; consider, therefore, whether you suppose that anything can be either sought or avoided without the participation of the mind.

IV.

Furthermore, that you may know in what manner passions begin and swell and gain spirit, learn that the first emotion is involuntary, and is, as it were, a preparation for a passion, and a threatening of one. The next is combined with a wish, though not an obstinate one, as, for example, "It is my duty to avenge myself, because I have been injured," or "It is right that this man should be punished, because he has committed a crime." The third emotion is already beyond our control, because it overrides reason, and wishes to avenge itself, not if it be its duty, but whether or no. We are not able by means of reason to escape from that first impression on the mind, any more than we can escape from those things which we have mentioned as occurring to the body: we cannot prevent other people's yawns tempting us to yawn: we cannot help winking when fingers are suddenly darted at our eyes. Reason is unable to overcome these habits, which perhaps might be weakened by practice and constant watchfulness: they differ from an emotion which is brought into existence and brought to an end by a deliberate mental act.

V.

We must also enquire whether those whose cruelty knows no bounds, and who delight in shedding human blood, are angry when they kill people from whom they have received no injury, and who they themselves do not think have done them any injury; such as were Apollodorus or Phalaris. This is not anger, it is ferocity: for it does not do hurt because it has received injury: but is even willing to receive injury, provided it may do hurt. It does not long to inflict stripes and mangle bodies to avenge its wrongs, but for its own pleasure. What then are we to say? This evil takes its rise from anger; for anger, after it has by long use and indulgence made a man forget mercy, and driven all feelings of human fellowship from his mind, passes finally into cruelty. Such men therefore laugh, rejoice, enjoy themselves greatly, and are as unlike as possible in countenance to angry men, since cruelty is their relaxation. It is said that when Hannibal saw a trench full of human blood, he exclaimed, "O, what a beauteous sight!" How much more beautiful would he have thought it, if it had filled a river or a lake? Why should we wonder that you should be charmed with this sight above all others, you who were born in bloodshed and brought up amid slaughter from a child? Fortune will follow you and favour your cruelty for twenty years, and will display to you everywhere the sight that you love. You will behold it both at Trasumene and at Cannae, and lastly at your own city of Carthage. Volesus, who not long ago, under the Emperor Augustus, was proconsul of Asia Minor, after he had one day beheaded three hundred persons, strutted out among the corpses with a haughty air, as though he had performed some grand and notable exploit, and exclaimed in Greek, "What a kingly action!" What would this man have done, had he been really a king? This was not anger, but a greater and an incurable disease.

VI.

“Virtue,” argues our adversary, “ought to be angry with what is base, just as she approves of what is honourable.” What should we think if he said that virtue ought to be both mean and great; yet this is what he means, when he wants her to be raised and lowered, because joy at a good action is grand and glorious, while anger at another’s sin is base and befits a narrow mind: and virtue will never be guilty of imitating vice while she is repressing it; she considers anger to deserve punishment for itself, since it often is even more criminal than the faults with which it is angry. To rejoice and be glad is the proper and natural function of virtue: it is as much beneath her dignity to be angry, as to mourn: now, sorrow is the companion of anger, and all anger ends in sorrow, either from remorse or from failure. Secondly, if it be the part of the wise man to be angry with sins, he will be more angry the greater they are, and will often be angry: from which it follows that the wise man will not only be angry but irascible. Yet if we do not believe that great and frequent anger can find any place in the wise man’s mind, why should we not set him altogether free from this passion? for there can be no limit, if he ought to be angry in proportion to what every man does: because he will either be unjust if he is equally angry at unequal crimes, or he will be the most irascible of men, if he blazes into wrath as often as crimes deserve his anger.

VII.

What, too, can be more unworthy of the wise man, than that his passions should depend upon the wickedness of others? If so, the great Socrates will no longer be able to return home with the same expression of countenance with which he set out. Moreover, if it be the duty of the wise man to be angry at base deeds, and to be excited and saddened at crimes, then is there nothing more unhappy than the wise man, for all his life will be spent in anger and grief. What moment will there be at which he will not see something deserving of blame? whenever he leaves his house, he will be obliged to walk among men who are criminals, misers, spendthrifts, profligates, and who are happy in being so: he can turn his eyes in no direction without their finding something to shock them. He will faint, if he demands anger from himself as often as reason calls for it. All these thousands who are hurrying to the law courts at break of day, how base are their causes, and how much baser their advocates? One impugns his father's will, when he would have done better to deserve it; another appears as the accuser of his mother; a third comes to inform against a man for committing the very crime of which he himself is yet more notoriously guilty. The judge, too, is chosen to condemn men for doing what he himself has done, and the audience takes the wrong side, led astray by the fine voice of the pleader.

VIII.

Why need I dwell upon individual cases? Be assured, when you see the Forum crowded with a multitude, the Saepta swarming with people, or the great Circus, in which the greater part of the people find room to show themselves at once, that among them there are as many vices as there are men. Among those whom you see in the garb of peace there is no peace: for a small profit any one of them will attempt the ruin of another: no one can gain anything save by another's loss. They hate the fortunate and despise the unfortunate: they grudgingly endure the great, and oppress the small: they are fired by diverse lusts: they would wreck everything for the sake of a little pleasure or plunder: they live as though they were in a school of gladiators, fighting with the same people with whom they live: it is like a society of wild beasts, save that beasts are tame with one another, and refrain from biting their own species, whereas men tear one another, and gorge themselves upon one another. They differ from dumb animals in this alone, that the latter are tame with those who feed them, whereas the rage of the former preys on those very persons by whom they were brought up.

IX.

The wise man will never cease to be angry, if he once begins, so full is every place of vices and crimes. More evil is done than can be healed by punishment: men seem engaged in a vast race of wickedness. Every day there is greater eagerness to sin, less modesty. Throwing aside all reverence for what is better and more just, lust rushes whithersoever it thinks fit, and crimes are no longer committed by stealth, they take place before our eyes, and wickedness has become so general and gained such a footing in everyone's breast that innocence is no longer rare, but no longer exists. Do men break the law singly, or a few at a time? Nay, they rise in all quarters at once, as though obeying some universal signal, to wipe out the boundaries of right and wrong.

“Host is not safe from guest,
Father-in-law from son; but seldom love
Exists ‘twixt brothers; wives long to destroy
Their husbands, husbands long to slay their wives,
Stepmothers deadly aconite prepare
And child-heirs wonder when their sires will die.”

And how small a part of men's crimes are these! The poet has not described one people divided into two hostile camps, parents and children enrolled on opposite sides, Rome set on fire by the hand of a Roman, troops of fierce horsemen scouring the country to track out the hiding-places of the proscribed, wells defiled with poison, plagues created by human hands, trenches dug by children round their beleaguered parents, crowded prisons, conflagrations that consume whole cities, gloomy tyrannies, secret plots to establish despotisms and ruin peoples, and men glorying in those deeds which, as long as it was possible to repress them, were counted as crimes — I mean rape, debauchery, and lust Add to these, public acts of national bad faith, broken treaties, everything that cannot defend itself carried off as plunder by the stronger, knaveries, thefts, frauds, and disownings of debt such as three of our present law-courts would not suffice to deal with. If you want the wise man to be as angry as the atrocity of men's crimes requires, he must not merely be angry,

but must go mad with rage.

X.

You will rather think that we should not be angry with people's faults; for what shall we say of one who is angry with those who stumble in the dark, or with deaf people who cannot hear his orders, or with children, because they forget their duty and interest themselves in the games and silly jokes of their companions? What shall we say if you choose to be angry with weaklings for being sick, for growing old, or becoming fatigued? Among the other misfortunes of humanity is this, that men's intellects are confused, and they not only cannot help going wrong, but love to go wrong. To avoid being angry with individuals, you must pardon the whole mass, you must grant forgiveness to the entire human race. If you are angry with young and old men because they do wrong, you will be angry with infants also, for they soon will do wrong. Does anyone become angry with children, who are too young to comprehend distinctions? Yet, to be a human being is a greater and a better excuse than to be a child. Thus are we born, as creatures liable to as many disorders of the mind as of the body; not dull and slow-witted, but making a bad use of our keenness of wit, and leading one another into vice by our example. He who follows others who have started before him on the wrong road is surely excusable for having wandered on the highway. A general's severity may be shown in the case of individual deserters; but where a whole army deserts, it must needs be pardoned. What is it that puts a stop to the wise man's anger? It is the number of sinners. He perceives how unjust and how dangerous it is to be angry with vices which all men share. Heraclitus, whenever he came out of doors and beheld around him such a number of men who were living wretchedly, nay, rather perishing wretchedly, used to weep: he pitied all those who met him joyous and happy. He was of a gentle but too weak disposition: and he himself was one of those for whom he ought to have wept. Democritus, on the other hand, is said never to have appeared in public without laughing; so little did men's serious occupations appear serious to him. What room is there for anger? Everything ought either to move us to tears or to laughter. The wise man will not be angry with sinners. Why not? Because he

knows that no one is born wise, but becomes so: he knows that very few wise men are produced in any age, because he thoroughly understands the circumstances of human life. Now, no sane man is angry with nature: for what should we say if a man chose to be surprised that fruit did not hang on the thickets of a forest, or to wonder at bushes and thorns not being covered with some useful berry? No one is angry when nature excuses a defect. The wise man, therefore, being tranquil, and dealing candidly with mistakes, not an enemy to but an improver of sinners, will go abroad every day in the following frame of mind:— “Many men will meet me who are drunkards, lustful, ungrateful, greedy, and excited by the frenzy of ambition.” He will view all these as benignly as a physician does his patients. When a man’s ship leaks freely through its opened seams, does he become angry with the sailors or the ship itself? No; instead of that, he tries to remedy it: he shuts out some water, bales out some other, closes all the holes that he can see, and by ceaseless labour counteracts those which are out of sight and which let water into the hold; nor does he relax his efforts because as much water as he pumps out runs in again. We need a long-breathed struggle against permanent and prolific evils; not, indeed, to quell them, but merely to prevent their overpowering us.

XI.

“Anger,” says our opponent, “is useful, because it avoids contempt, and because it frightens bad men.” Now, in the first place, if anger is strong in proportion to its threats, it is hateful for the same reason that it is terrible: and it is more dangerous to be hated than to be despised. If, again, it is without strength, it is much more exposed to contempt, and cannot avoid ridicule: for what is more flat than anger when it breaks out into meaningless ravings? Moreover, because some things are somewhat terrible, they are not on that account desirable: nor does wisdom wish it to be said of the wise man, as it is of a wild beast, that the fear which he inspires is as a weapon to him. Why, do we not fear fever, gout, consuming ulcers? and is there, for that reason, any good in them? nay; on the other hand, they are all despised and thought to be foul and base, and are for this very reason feared. So, too, anger is in itself hideous and by no means to be feared; yet it is feared by many, just as a hideous mask is feared by children. How can we answer the fact that terror always works back to him who inspired it, and that no one is feared who is himself at peace? At this point it is well that you should remember that verse of Laberius, which, when pronounced in the theatre during the height of the civil war, caught the fancy of the whole people as though it expressed the national feeling: —

“He must fear many, whom so many fear.”

Thus has nature ordained, that whatever becomes great by causing fear to others is not free from fear itself. How disturbed lions are at the faintest noises! How excited those fiercest of beasts become at strange shadows, voices, or smells! Whatever is a terror to others, fears for itself. There can be no reason, therefore, for any wise man to wish to be feared, and no one need think that anger is anything great because it strikes terror, since even the most despicable things are feared, as, for example, noxious vermin whose bite is venomous: and since a string set with feathers stops the largest herds of wild beasts and guides them into traps, it is no wonder that from its effect it should be named a “Scarer.” Foolish creatures are frightened by foolish things: the movement of chariots and the sight of their wheels

turning round drives lions back into their cage: elephants are frightened at the cries of pigs: and so also we fear anger just as children fear the dark, or wild beasts fear red feathers: it has in itself nothing solid or valiant, but it affects feeble minds.

XII.

“Wickedness,” says our adversary,” must be removed from the system of nature, if you wish to remove anger: neither of which things can be done.” In the first place, it is possible for a man not to be cold, although according to the system of nature it may be winter-time, nor yet to suffer from heat, although it be summer according to the almanac. He may be protected against the inclement time of the year by dwelling in a favoured spot, or he may have so trained his body to endurance that it feels neither heat nor cold. Next, reverse this saying: — You must remove anger from your mind before you can take virtue into the same, because vices and virtues cannot combine, and none can at the same time be both an angry man and a good man, any more than he can be both sick and well. “It is not possible,” says he, “ to remove anger altogether from the mind, nor does human nature admit of it.” Yet there is nothing so hard and difficult that the mind of man cannot overcome it, and with which unremitting study will not render him familiar, nor are there any passions so fierce and independent that they cannot be tamed by discipline. The mind can carry out whatever orders it gives itself: some have succeeded in never smiling: some have forbidden themselves wine, sexual intercourse, or even drink of all kinds. Some, who are satisfied with short hours of rest, have learned to watch for long periods without weariness. Men have learned to run upon the thinnest ropes even when slanting, to carry huge burdens, scarcely within the compass of human strength, or to dive to enormous depths and suffer themselves to remain under the sea without any chance of drawing breath. There are a thousand other instances in which application has conquered all obstacles, and proved that nothing which the mind has set itself to endure is difficult. The men whom I have just mentioned gain either no reward or one that is unworthy of their unwearied application; for what great thing does a man gain by applying his intellect to walking upon a tight rope? or to placing great burdens upon his shoulders? or to keeping sleep from his eyes? or to reaching the bottom of the sea? and yet their patient labour brings all these things to pass for a

trifling reward. Shall not we then call in the aid of patience, we whom such a prize awaits, the unbroken calm of a happy life? How great a blessing is it to escape from anger, that chief of all evils, and therewith from frenzy, ferocity, cruelty, and madness, its attendants?

XIII.

There is no reason why we should seek to defend such a passion as this or excuse its excesses by declaring it to be either useful or unavoidable. What vice, indeed, is without its defenders ? yet this is no reason why you should declare anger to be ineradicable. The evils from which we suffer are curable, and since we were born with a natural bias towards good, nature herself will help us if we try to amend our lives. Nor is the path to virtue steep and rough, as some think it to be: it may be reached on level ground. This is no untrue tale which I come to tell you: the road to happiness is easy; do you only enter upon it with good luck and the good help of the gods themselves. It is much harder to do what you are doing. What is more restful than a mind at peace, and what more toilsome than anger? What is more at leisure than clemency, what fuller of business than cruelty? Modesty keeps holiday while vice is overwhelmed with work. In fine, the culture of any of the virtues is easy, while vices require a great expense. Anger ought to be removed from our minds: even those who say that it ought to be kept low admit this to some extent: let it be got rid of altogether; there is nothing to be gained by it. Without it we can more easily and more justly put an end to crime, punish bad men, and amend their lives. The wise man will do his duty in all things without the help of any evil passion, and will use no auxiliaries which require watching narrowly lest they get beyond his control.

XIV.

Anger, then, must never become a habit with us, but we may sometimes affect to be angry when we wish to rouse up the dull minds of those whom we address, just as we rouse up horses who are slow at starting with goads and firebrands. We must sometimes apply fear to persons upon whom reason makes no impression: yet to be angry is of no more use than to grieve or to be afraid. "What? do not circumstances arise which provoke us to anger?" Yes: but at those times above all others we ought to choke down our wrath. Nor is it difficult to conquer our spirit, seeing that athletes, who devote their whole attention to the basest parts of themselves, nevertheless are able to endure blows and pain, in order to exhaust the strength of the striker, and do not strike when anger bids them, but when opportunity invites them. It is said that Pyrrhus, the most celebrated trainer for gymnastic contests, used habitually to impress upon his pupils not to lose their tempers: for anger spoils their science, and thinks only how it can hurt: so that often reason counsels patience while anger counsels revenge, and we, who might have survived our first misfortunes, are exposed to worse ones. Some have been driven into exile by their impatience of a single contemptuous word, have been plunged into the deepest miseries because they would not endure the most trifling wrong in silence, and have brought upon themselves the yoke of slavery because they were too proud to give up the least part of their entire liberty.

XV.

“That you may be sure,” says our opponent, “that anger has in it something noble, pray look at the free nations, such as the Germans and Scythians, who are especially prone to anger.” The reason of this is that stout and daring intellects are liable to anger before they are tamed by discipline; for some passions engraft themselves upon the better class of dispositions only, just as good land, even when waste, grows strong brushwood, and the trees are tall which stand upon a fertile soil. In like manner, dispositions which are naturally bold produce irritability, and, being hot and fiery, have no mean or trivial qualities, but their energy is misdirected, as happens with all those who without training come to the front by their natural advantages alone, whose minds, unless they be brought under control, degenerate from a courageous temper into habits of rashness and reckless daring. “What? are not milder spirits linked with gentler vices, such as tenderness of heart, love, and bashfulness?” Yes, and therefore I can often point out to you a good disposition by its own faults: yet their being the proofs of a superior nature does not prevent their being vices. Moreover, all those nations which are free because they are wild, like lions or wolves, cannot command any more than they can obey: for the strength of their intellect is not civilized, but fierce and unmanageable: now, no one is able to rule unless he is also able to be ruled. Consequently, the empire of the world has almost always remained in the hands of those nations who enjoy a milder climate. Those who dwell near the frozen north have uncivilized temper

“Just on the model of their native skies,”
as the poet has it.

XVI.

Those animals, urges our opponent, are held to be the most generous who have large capacity for anger. He is mistaken when he holds up creatures who act from impulse instead of reason as patterns for men to follow, because in man reason takes the place of impulse. Yet even with animals, all do not alike profit by the same thing. Anger is of use to lions, timidity to stags, boldness to hawks, flight to doves. What if I declare that it is not even true that the best animals are the most prone to anger? I may suppose that wild beasts, who gain their food by rapine, are better the angrier they are; but I should praise oxen and horses who obey the rein for their patience. What reason, however, have you for referring mankind to such wretched models, when you have the universe and God, whom he alone of animals imitates because he alone comprehends Him?" The most irritable men," says he, "are thought to be the most straightforward of all." Yes, because they are compared with swindlers and sharpers, and appear to be simple because they are outspoken. I should not call such men simple, but heedless. We give this title of "simple" to all fools, gluttons, spendthrifts, and men whose vices lie on the surface.

XVII.

“An orator,” says our opponent, “sometimes speaks better when he is angry.” Not so, but when he pretends to be angry: for so also actors bring down the house by their playing, not when they are really angry, but when they act the angry man well: and in like manner, in addressing a jury or a popular assembly, or in any other position in which the minds of others have to be influenced at our pleasure, we must ourselves pretend to feel anger, fear, or pity before we can make others feel them, and often the pretence of passion will do what the passion itself could not have done. “The mind which does not feel anger,” says he, “is feeble.” True, if it has nothing stronger than anger to support it. A man ought to be neither robber nor victim, neither tender-hearted nor cruel. The former belongs to an over-weak mind, the latter to an over-hard one. Let the wise man be moderate, and when things have to be done somewhat briskly, let him call force, not anger, to his aid.

XVIII.

Now that we have discussed the questions propounded concerning anger, let us pass on to the consideration of its remedies. These, I imagine, are two-fold: the one class preventing our becoming angry, the other preventing our doing wrong when we are angry. As with the body we adopt a certain regimen to keep ourselves in health, and use different rules to bring back health when lost, so likewise we must repel anger in one fashion and quench it in another. That we may avoid it, certain general rules of conduct which apply to all men's lives must be impressed upon us. We may divide these into such as are of use during the education of the young and in after-life. Education ought to be carried on with the greatest and most salutary assiduity: for it is easy to mould minds while they are still tender, but it is difficult to uproot vices which have grown up with ourselves.

XIX.

A hot mind is naturally the most prone to anger: for as there are four elements, consisting of fire, air, earth, and water, so there are powers corresponding and equivalent to each of these, namely, hot, cold, dry, and moist. Now the mixture of the elements is the cause of the diversities of lands and of animals, of bodies and of character, and our dispositions incline to one or the other of these according as the strength of each element prevails in us. Hence it is that we call some regions wet or dry, warm or cold. The same distinctions apply likewise to animals and mankind; it makes a great difference how much moisture or heat a man contains; his character will partake of whichever element has the largest share in him. A warm temper of mind will make men prone to anger; for fire is full of movement and vigour; a mixture of coldness makes men cowards, for cold is sluggish and contracted. Because of this, some of our Stoics think that anger is excited in our breasts by the boiling of the blood round the heart: indeed, that place is assigned to anger for no other reason than because the breast is the warmest part of the whole body. Those who have more moisture in them become angry by slow degrees, because they have no heat ready at hand, but it has to be obtained by movement; wherefore the anger of women and children is sharp rather than strong, and arises on lighter provocation. At dry times of life anger is violent and powerful, yet without increase, and adding little to itself, because as heat dies away cold takes its place. Old men are testy and full of complaints, as also are sick people and convalescents, and all whose store of heat has been consumed by weariness or loss of blood. Those who are wasted by thirst or hunger are in the same condition, as also are those whose frame is naturally bloodless and faints from want of generous diet. Wine kindles anger, because it increases heat; according to each man's disposition, some fly into a passion when they are heavily drunk, some when they are slightly drunk: nor is there any other reason than this why yellow-haired, ruddy-complexioned people should be excessively passionate, seeing that they are naturally of the colour which others put on during anger; for their blood is hot and easily set in motion.

XX.

But just as nature makes some men prone to anger, so there are many other causes which have the same power as nature. Some are brought into this condition by disease or bodily injury, others by hard work, long watching, nights of anxiety, ardent longings, and love: and everything else which is hurtful to the body or the spirit inclines the distempered mind to find fault. All these, however, are but the beginning and causes of anger. Habit of mind has very great power, and, if it be harsh, increases the disorder. As for nature, it is difficult to alter it, nor may we change the mixture of the elements which was formed once for all at our birth: yet knowledge will be so far of service, that we should keep wine out of the reach of hot-tempered men, which Plato thinks ought also to be forbidden to boys, so that fire be not made fiercer. Neither should such men be over-fed: for if so, their bodies will swell, and their minds will swell with them. Such men ought to take exercise, stopping short, however, of fatigue, in order that their natural heat may be abated, but not exhausted, and their excess of fiery spirit may be worked off. Games also will be useful: for moderate pleasure relieves the mind and brings it to a proper balance. With those temperaments which incline to moisture, or dryness and stiffness, there is no danger of anger, but there is fear of greater vices, such as cowardice, moroseness, despair, and suspiciousness: such dispositions therefore ought to be softened, comforted, and restored to cheerfulness: and since we must make use of different remedies for anger and for sullenness, and these two vices require not only unlike, but absolutely opposite modes of treatment, let us always attack that one of them which is gaining the mastery.

XXI.

It is, I assure you, of the greatest service to boys that they should be soundly brought up, yet to regulate their education is difficult, because it is our duty to be careful neither to cherish a habit of anger in them, nor to blunt the edge of their spirit. This needs careful watching, for both qualities, both those which are to be encouraged, and those which are to be checked, are fed by the same things; and even a careful watcher may be deceived by their likeness. A boy's spirit is increased by freedom and depressed by slavery: it rises when praised, and is led to conceive great expectations of itself: yet this same treatment produces arrogance and quickness of temper: we must therefore guide him between these two extremes, using the curb at one time and the spur at another. He must undergo no servile or degrading treatment; he never must beg abjectly for anything, nor must he gain anything by begging; let him rather receive it for his own sake, for his past good behaviour, or for his promises of future good conduct. In contests with his comrades we ought not to allow him to become sulky or fly into a passion: let us see that he be on friendly terms with those whom he contends with, so that in the struggle itself he may learn to wish not to hurt his antagonist but to conquer him: whenever he has gained the day or done something praiseworthy, we should allow him to enjoy his victory, but not to rush into transports of delight: for joy leads to exultation, and exultation leads to swaggering and excessive self-esteem. We ought to allow him some relaxation, yet not yield him up to laziness and sloth, and we ought to keep him far beyond the reach of luxury, for nothing makes children more prone to anger than a soft and fond bringing-up, so that the more only children are indulged, and the more liberty is given to orphans, the more they are corrupted. He to whom nothing is ever denied, will not be able to endure a rebuff, whose anxious mother always wipes away his tears, whose *paedagogus* is made to pay for his shortcomings. Do you not observe how a man's anger becomes more violent as he rises in station? This shows itself especially in those who are rich and noble, or in great place, when the favouring gale has roused all the most

empty and trivial passions of their minds. Prosperity fosters anger, when a man's proud ears are surrounded by a mob of flatterers, saying, "That man [?] answer you! you do not act according to your dignity, you lower yourself." And so forth, with all the language which can hardly be resisted even by healthy and originally well-principled minds. Flattery, then, must be kept well out of the way of children. Let a child hear the truth, and sometimes fear it: let him always reverence it. Let him rise in the presence of his elders. Let him obtain nothing by flying into a passion: let him be given when he is quiet what was refused him when he cried for it: let him behold, but not make use of his father's wealth: let him be reproved for what he does wrong. It will be advantageous to furnish boys with even-tempered teachers and *paedagogi*: what is soft and unformed clings to what is near, and takes its shape: the habits of young men reproduce those of their nurses and *paedagogi*. Once, a boy who was brought up in Plato's house went home to his parents, and, on seeing his father shouting with passion, said, "I never saw anyone at Plato's house act like that." I doubt not that he learned to imitate his father sooner than he learned to imitate Plato. Above all, let his food be scanty, his dress not costly, and of the same fashion as that of his comrades: if you begin by putting him on a level with many others, he will not be angry when someone is compared with him.

XXII.

These precepts, however, apply to our children: in ourselves the accident of birth and our education no longer admits of either mistakes or advice; we must deal with what follows. Now we ought to fight against the first causes of evil: the cause of anger is the belief that we are injured; this belief, therefore, should not be lightly entertained. We ought not to fly into a rage even when the injury appears to be open and distinct: for some false things bear the semblance of truth. We should always allow some time- to elapse, for time discloses the truth. Let not our ears be easily lent to calumnious talk: let us know and be on our guard against this fault of human nature, that we are willing to believe what we are unwilling to listen to, and that we become angry before we have formed our opinion. What shall I say? we are influenced not merely by calumnies but by suspicions, and at the very look and smile of others we may fly into a rage with innocent persons because we put the worst construction upon it. We ought, therefore, to plead the cause of the absent against ourselves, and to keep Our anger in abeyance: for a punishment which has been postponed may yet be inflicted, but when once inflicted cannot be recalled.

XXIII.

Everyone knows the story of the tyrannicide who, being caught before he had accomplished his task, and being tortured by Hippias to make him betray his accomplices, named the friends of the tyrant who stood around, and everyone to whom he knew the tyrant's safety was especially dear. As the tyrant ordered each man to be slain as he was named, at last the man, being asked if anyone else remained, said, "You remain alone, for I have left no one else alive to whom you are dear." Anger had made the tyrant lend his assistance to the tyrant-slayer, and cut down his guards with his own sword. How far more spirited was Alexander, who after reading his mother's letter warning him to beware of poison from his physician, Philip, nevertheless drank undismayed the medicine which Philip gave him! He felt more confidence in his friend: he deserved that his friend should be innocent, and deserved that his conduct should make him innocent. I praise Alexander's doing this all the more because he was above all men prone to anger; but the rarer moderation is among kings, the more it deserves to be praised. The great Gaius Caesar, who proved such a merciful conqueror in the civil war, did the same thing; he burned a packet of letters addressed to Gnaeus Pompeius by persons who had been thought to be either neutrals or on the other side. Though he was never violent in his anger, yet he preferred to put it out of his power to be angry: he thought that the kindest way to pardon each of them was not to know what his offence had been.

XXIV.

Readiness to believe what we hear causes very great mischief; we ought often not even to listen, because in some cases it is better to be deceived than to suspect deceit. We ought to free our minds of suspicion and mistrust, those most untrustworthy causes of anger. "This man's greeting was far from civil; that one would not receive my kiss; one cut short a story I had begun to tell; another did not ask me to dinner; another seemed to view me with aversion." Suspicion will never lack grounds: what we want is straightforwardness, and a kindly interpretation of things. Let us believe nothing unless it forces itself upon our sight and is unmistakable, and let us reprove ourselves for being too ready to believe, as often as our suspicions prove to be groundless: for this discipline will render us habitually slow to believe what we hear.

XXV.

Another consequence of this will be, that we shall not be exasperated by the slightest and most contemptible trifles. It is mere madness to be put out of temper because a slave is not quick, because the water we are going to drink is lukewarm or because our couch is disarranged or our table carelessly laid. A man must be in a miserably bad state of health if he shrinks from a gentle breath of wind ; his eyes must be diseased if they are distressed by the sight of white clothing; he must be broken down with debauchery if he feels pain at seeing another man work. It is said that there was one Mindyrides, a citizen of Sybaris, who one day seeing a man digging and vigorously brandishing a mattock, complained that the sight made him weary, and forbade the man to work where he could see him. The same man complained that he had suffered from the rose-leaves upon which he lay. being folded double. When pleasures have corrupted both the body and the mind, nothing seems endurable, not indeed because it is hard, but because he who has to bear it is soft: for why should we be driven to frenzy by any one's coughing and sneezing, or by a fly not being driven away with sufficient care, or by a dog's hanging about us, or a key dropping from a careless servant's hand? Will one whose ears are agonised by the noise of a bench being dragged along the floor be able to endure with unruffled mind the rude language of party strife, and the abuse which speakers in the forum or the senate house heap upon their opponents? Will he who is angry with his slave for icing his drink badly, be able to endure hunger, or the thirst of a long march in summer? Nothing, therefore, nourishes anger more than excessive and dissatisfied luxury: the mind ought to be hardened by rough treatment, so as not to feel any blow that is not severe.

XXVI.

We are angry, either with those who can, or with those who cannot do us an injury. To the latter class belong some inanimate things, such as a book, which we often throw away when it is written in letters too small for us to read, or tear up when it is full of mistakes, or clothes which we destroy because we do not like them. How foolish to be angry with such things as these, which neither deserve nor feel our anger! "But of course it is their makers who really affront us." I answer that, in the first place, we often become angry before making this distinction clear in our minds, and secondly, perhaps even the makers might put forward some reasonable excuses: one of them, it may be, could not make them any better than he did, and it is not through any disrespect to you that he was unskilled in his trade: another may have done his work so without any intention of insulting you: and, finally, what can be more crazy than to discharge upon things the ill-feeling which one has accumulated against persons? Yet as it is the act of a madman to be angry with inanimate objects, so also is it to be angry with dumb animals, which can do us no wrong because they are not able to form a purpose; and we cannot call anything a wrong unless it be done intentionally. They are, therefore, able to hurt us, just as a sword or a stone may do so, but they are not able to do us a wrong. Yet some men think themselves insulted when the same horses which are docile with one rider are restive with another, as though it were through their deliberate choice, and not through habit and cleverness of handling that some horses are more easily managed by some men than by others. And as it is foolish to be angry with them, so it is to be angry with children, and with men who have little more sense than children: for all these sins, before a just judge, ignorance would be as effective an excuse as innocence.

XXVII.

There are some things which are unable to hurt us, and whose power is exclusively beneficial and salutary, as, for example, the immortal gods, who neither wish nor are able to do harm: for their temperament is naturally gentle and tranquil, and no more likely to wrong others than to wrong themselves. Foolish people who know not the truth hold them answerable for storms at sea, excessive rain, and long winters, whereas all the while these phenomena by which we suffer or profit take place without any reference whatever to us: it is not for our sake that the universe causes summer and winter to succeed one another; these have a law of their own, according to which their divine functions are performed. We think too much of ourselves, when we imagine that we are worthy to have such prodigious revolutions effected for our sake: so, then, none of these things take place in order to do us an injury, nay, on the contrary, they all tend to our benefit. I have said that there are some things which cannot hurt us, and some which would not. To the latter class belong good men in authority, good parents, teachers, and judges, whose punishments ought to be submitted to by us in the same spirit in which we undergo the surgeon's knife, abstinence from food, and such like things which hurt us for our benefit. Suppose that we are being punished; let us think not only of what we suffer, but of what we have done: let us sit in judgement on our past life. Provided we are willing to tell ourselves the truth, we shall certainly decide that our crimes deserve a harder measure than they have received.

XXVIII.

If we desire to be impartial judges of all that takes place, we must first convince ourselves of this, that no one of us is faultless: for it is from this that most of our indignation proceeds. "I have not sinned, I have done no wrong." Say, rather, you do not admit that you have done any wrong. We are infuriated at being reprov'd, either by reprimand or actual chastisement, although we are sinning at that very time, by adding insolence and obstinacy to our wrong-doings. Who is there that can declare himself to have broken no laws? Even if there be such a man, what a stinted innocence it is, merely to be innocent by the letter of the law. How much further do the rules of duty extend than those of the law! how many things which are not to be found in the statute book, are demanded by filial feeling, kindness, generosity, equity, and honour? Yet we are not able to warrant ourselves even to come under that first narrowest definition of innocence: we have done what was wrong, thought what was wrong, wished for what was wrong, and encouraged what was wrong: in some cases we have only remained innocent because we did not succeed. When we think of this, let us deal more justly with sinners, and believe that those who scold us are right: in any case let us not be angry with ourselves (for with whom shall we not be angry, if we are angry even with our own selves ?), and least of all with the gods: for whatever we suffer befalls us not by any ordinance of theirs but of the common law of all flesh. "But diseases and pains attack us." Well, people who live in a crazy dwelling must have some way of escape from it. Someone will be said to have spoken ill of you: think whether you did not first speak ill of him: think of how many persons you have yourself spoken ill. Let us not, I say, suppose that others are doing us a wrong, but are repaying one which we have done them, that some are acting with good intentions, some under compulsion, some in ignorance, and let us believe that even he who does so intentionally and knowingly did not wrong us merely for the sake of wronging us, but was led into doing so by the attraction of saying something witty, or did whatever he did, not out of any spite against us, but because he himself could not succeed unless he

pushed us back. We are often offended by flattery even while it is being lavished upon us: yet whoever recalls to his mind how often he himself has been the victim of undeserved suspicion, how often fortune has given his true service an appearance of wrong-doing, how many persons he has begun by hating and ended by loving, will be able to keep himself from becoming angry straightway, especially if he silently says to himself when each offence is committed: "I have done this very thing myself." Where, however, will you find so impartial a judge? The same man who lusts after everyone's wife, and thinks that a woman's belonging to someone else is a sufficient reason for adoring her, will not allow anyone else to look at his own wife. No man expects such exact fidelity as a traitor: the perjurer himself takes vengeance of him who breaks his word: the pettifogging lawyer is most indignant at an action being brought against him: the man who is reckless of his own chastity cannot endure any attempt upon that of his slaves. We have other men's vices before our eyes, and our own behind our backs: hence it is that a father, who is worse than his son, blames the latter for giving extravagant feasts, and disapproves of the least sign of luxury in another, although he was wont to set no bounds to it in his own case; hence it is that despots are angry with homicides, and thefts are punished by those who despoil temples. A great part of mankind is not angry with sins, but with sinners. Regard to our own selves will make us more moderate, if we inquire of ourselves : — have we ever committed any crime of this sort? have we ever fallen into this kind of error? is it for our interest that we should condemn this conduct?

XXIX.

The greatest remedy for anger is delay: beg anger to grant you this at the first, not in order that it may pardon the offence, but that it may form a right judgment about it :- if it delays, it will come to an end. Do not attempt to quell it all at once, for its first impulses are fierce; by plucking away its parts we shall remove the whole. We are made angry by some things which we learn at second-hand, and by some which we ourselves hear or see. Now, we ought to be slow to believe what is told us. Many tell lies in order to deceive us, and many because they are themselves deceived. Some seek to win our favour by false accusations, and invent wrongs in order that they may appear angry at our having suffered them. One man lies out of spite, that he may set trusting friends at variance; some because they are suspicious, and wish to see sport, and watch from a safe distance those whom they have set by the ears. If you were about to give sentence in court about ever so small a sum of money, you would take nothing as proved without a witness, and a witness would count for nothing except on his oath. You would allow both sides to be heard : you would allow them time: you would not despatch the matter at one sitting, because the oftener it is handled the more distinctly the truth appears. And do you condemn your friend offhand? Are you angry with him before you hear his story, before you have cross-examined him, before he can know either who is his accuser or with what he is charged. Why then, just now, in the case which you just tried, did you hear what was said on both sides? This very man who has informed against your friend, will say no more if he be obliged to prove what he says. "You need not," says he, "bring me forward as a witness; if I am brought forward I shall deny what I have said; unless you excuse me from appearing I shall never tell you anything." At the same time he spurs you on and withdraws himself from the strife and battle. The man who will tell you nothing save in secret hardly tells you anything at all. What can be more unjust than to believe in secret, and to be angry openly?

XXX.

Some offences we ourselves witness: in these cases let us examine the disposition and purpose of the offender. Perhaps he is a child; let us pardon his youth, he knows not whether he is doing wrong: or he is a father; he has either rendered such great services, as to have won the right even to wrong us — or perhaps this very act which offends us is his chief merit: or a woman; well, she made a mistake. The man did it because he was ordered to do it. Who but an unjust person can be angry with what is done under compulsion? You had hurt him: well, there is no wrong in suffering the pain which you have been the first to inflict. Suppose that your opponent is a judge; then you ought to take his opinion rather than your own: or that he is a king; then, if he punishes the guilty, yield to him because he is just, and if he punishes the innocent, yield to him because he is powerful. Suppose that it is a dumb animal or as stupid as a dumb animal: then, if you are angry with it, you will make yourself like it. Suppose that it is a disease or a misfortune; it will take less effect upon you if you bear it quietly: or that it is a god; then you waste your time by being angry with him as much as if you prayed him to be angry with someone else. Is it a good man who has wronged you? do not believe it: is it a bad one? do not be surprised at this; he will pay to someone else the penalty which he owes to you — indeed, by his sin he has already punished himself.

XXXI.

There are, as I have stated, two cases which produce anger: first, when we appear to have received an injury, about which enough has been said, and, secondly, when we appear to have been treated unjustly: this must now be discussed. Men think some things unjust because they ought not to suffer them, and some because they did not expect to suffer them: we think what is unexpected is beneath our deserts. Consequently, we are especially excited at what befalls us contrary to our hope and expectation: and this is why we are irritated at the smallest trifles in our own domestic affairs, and why we call our friends' carelessness deliberate injury. How is it, then, asks our opponent, that we are angered by the injuries inflicted by our enemies? It is because we did not expect those particular injuries, or, at any rate, not on so extensive a scale. This is caused by our excessive self-love: we think that we ought to remain uninjured even by our enemies: every man bears within his breast the mind of a despot, and is willing to commit excesses, but unwilling to submit to them. Thus it is either ignorance or arrogance that makes us angry: ignorance of common facts; for what is there to wonder at in bad men committing evil deeds? what novelty is there in your enemy hurting you, your friend quarrelling with you, your son going wrong, or your servant doing amiss? Fabius was wont to say that the most shameful excuse a general could make was "I did not think." I think it the most shameful excuse that a man can make. Think of everything, expect everything: even with men of good character something queer will crop up: human nature produces minds that are treacherous, ungrateful, greedy, and impious: when you are considering what any man's morals may be, think what those of mankind are. When you are especially enjoying yourself, be especially on your guard: when everything seems to you to be peaceful, be sure that mischief is not absent, but only asleep. Always believe that something will occur to offend you. A pilot never spreads all his canvas abroad so confidently as not to keep his tackle for shortening sail ready for use. Think, above all, how base and hateful is the power of doing mischief, and how unnatural in man, by

whose kindness even fierce animals are rendered tame. See how bulls yield their necks to the yoke, how elephants allow boys and women to dance on their backs unhurt, how snakes glide harmlessly over our bosoms and among our drinking-cups, how within their dens bears and lions submit to be handled with complacent mouths, and wild beasts fawn upon their master: let us blush to have exchanged habits with wild beasts. It is a crime to injure one's country: so it is, therefore, to injure any of our countrymen, for he is a part of our country; if the whole be sacred, the parts must be sacred too. Therefore it is also a crime to injure any man: for he is your fellow-citizen in a larger state. What, if the hands were to wish to hurt the feet? or the eyes to hurt the hands? As all the limbs act in unison, because it is the interest of the whole body to keep each one of them safe, so men should spare one another, because they are born for society. The bond of society, however, cannot exist unless it guards and loves all its members. We should not even destroy vipers and water-snakes and other creatures whose teeth and claws are dangerous, if we were able to tame them as we do other animals, or to prevent their being a peril to us: neither ought we, therefore, to hurt a man because he has done wrong, but lest he should do wrong, and our punishment should always look to the future, and never to the past, because it is inflicted in a spirit of precaution, not of anger: for if everyone who has a crooked and vicious disposition were to be punished, no one would escape punishment.

XXXII.

“But anger possesses a certain pleasure of its own, and it is sweet to pay back the pain you have suffered.” Not at all; it is not honourable to requite injuries by injuries, in the same way as it is to repay benefits by benefits. In the latter case it is a shame to be conquered; in the former it is a shame to conquer. Revenge and retaliation are words which men use and even think to be righteous, yet they do not greatly differ from wrong-doing, except in the order in which they are done: he who renders pain for pain has more excuse for his sin; that is all. Someone who did not know Marcus Cato struck him in the public bath in his ignorance, for who would knowingly have done him an injury? Afterwards when he was apologizing, Cato replied, “I do not remember being struck.” He thought it better to ignore the insult than to revenge it. You ask, “Did no harm befall that man for his insolence?” No, but rather much good; he made the acquaintance of Cato. It is the part of a great mind to despise wrongs done to it; the most contemptuous form of revenge is not to deem one’s adversary worth taking vengeance upon. Many have taken small injuries much more seriously to heart than they need, by revenging them: that man is great and noble who like a large wild animal hears unmoved the tiny curs that bark at him.

XXXIII.

“We are treated,” says our opponent,” with more respect if we revenge our injuries.” If we make use of revenge merely as a remedy, let us use it without anger, and not regard revenge as pleasant, but as useful: yet often it is better to pretend not to have received an injury than to avenge it. The wrongs of the powerful must not only be borne, but borne with a cheerful countenance: they will repeat the wrong if they think they have inflicted it. This is the worst trait of minds rendered arrogant by prosperity, they hate those whom they have injured. Everyone knows the saying of the old courtier, who, when someone asked him how he had achieved the rare distinction of living at court till he reached old age, replied, “By receiving wrongs and returning thanks for them.” It is often so far from expedient to avenge our wrongs, that it will not do even to admit them. Gaius Caesar, offended at the smart clothes and well-dressed hair of the son of Pastor, a distinguished Roman knight, sent him to prison. When the father begged that his son might suffer no harm, Gaius, as if reminded by this to put him to death, ordered him to be executed, yet, in order to mitigate his brutality to the father, invited him that very day to dinner. Pastor came with a countenance which betrayed no ill will. Caesar pledged him in a glass of wine, and set a man to watch him. The wretched creature went through his part, feeling as though he were drinking his son’s blood: the emperor sent him some perfume and a garland, and gave orders to watch whether he used them: he did so. On the very day on which he had buried, nay, on which he had not even buried his son, he sat down as one of a hundred guests, and, old and gouty as he was, drank to an extent which would have been hardly decent on a child’s birthday; he shed no tear the while; he did not permit his grief to betray itself by the slightest sign; he dined just as though his entreaties had gained his son’s life. You ask me why he did so? he had another son. What did Priam do in the Iliad? Did he not conceal his wrath and embrace the knees of Achilles? did he not raise to his lips that death-dealing hand, stained with the blood of his son, and sup with his slayer? True! but there were no perfumes and garlands, and his fierce enemy

encouraged him with many soothing words to eat, not to drain huge goblets with a guard standing over him to see that he did it. Had he only feared for himself, the father would have treated the tyrant with scorn: but love for his son quenched his anger: he deserved the emperor's permission to leave the banquet and gather up the bones of his son: but, meanwhile, that kindly and polite youth the emperor would not even permit him to do this, but tormented the old man with frequent invitations to drink, advising him thereby to lighten his sorrows. He, on the other hand, appeared to be in good spirits, and to have forgotten what had been done that day: he would have lost his second son had he proved an unacceptable guest to the murderer of his eldest.

XXXIV.

We must, therefore, refrain from anger, whether he who provokes us be on a level with ourselves, or above us, or below us. A contest with one's equal is of uncertain issue, with one's superior is folly, and with one's inferior is contemptible. It is the part of a mean and wretched man to turn and bite one's biter: even mice and ants show their teeth if you put your hand to them, and all feeble creatures think that they are hurt if they are touched. It will make us milder tempered to call to mind any services which he with whom we are angry may have done us, and to let his deserts balance his offence. Let us also reflect, how much credit the tale of our forgiveness will confer upon us, how many men may be made into valuable friends by forgiveness. One of the lessons which Sulla's cruelty teaches us is not to be angry with the children of our enemies, whether they be public or private; for he drove the sons of the proscribed into exile. Nothing is more unjust than that any one should inherit the quarrels of his father. Whenever we are loath to pardon anyone, let us think whether it would be to our advantage that all men should be inexorable. He who refuses to pardon, how often has he begged it for himself? how often has he grovelled at the feet of those whom he spurns from his own? How can we gain more glory than by turning anger into friendship? what more faithful allies has the Roman people than those who have been its most unyielding enemies? where would the empire be to-day, had not a wise foresight united the conquered and the conquerors? If anyone is angry with you, meet his anger by returning benefits for it: a quarrel which is only taken up on one side falls to the ground: it takes two men to fight. But suppose that there is an angry struggle on both sides, even then, he is the better man who first gives way; the winner is the real loser. He struck you; well then, do you fall back: if you strike him in turn you will give him both an opportunity and an excuse for striking you again: you will not be able to withdraw yourself from the struggle when you please.

XXXV.

Does anyone wish to strike his enemy so hard, as to leave his own hand in the wound, and not to be able, to recover his balance after the blow? yet such a weapon is anger: it is scarcely possible to draw it back. We are careful to choose for ourselves light weapons, handy and manageable swords: shall we not avoid these clumsy, unwieldy, and never-to-be-recalled impulses of the mind? The only swiftness of which men approve is that which, when bidden, checks itself and proceeds no further, and which can be guided, and reduced from a run to a walk: we know that the sinews are diseased when they move against our will. A man must be either aged or weakly who runs when he wants to walk: let us think that those are the most powerful and the soundest operations of our minds, which act under our own control, not at their own caprice. Nothing, however, will be of so much service as to consider, first, the hideousness, and, secondly, the danger of anger. No passion bears a more troubled aspect: it befouls the fairest face, makes fierce the expression which before was peaceful. From the angry “all grace has fled;” though their clothing may be fashionable, they will trail it on the ground and take no heed of their appearance; though their hair be smoothed down in a comely manner by nature or art, yet it will bristle up in sympathy with their mind. The veins become swollen, the breast will be shaken by quick breathing, the man’s neck will be swelled as he roars forth his frantic talk: then, too, his limbs will tremble, his hands will be restless, his whole body will sway hither and thither. What, think you, must be the state of his mind within him, when its appearance without is so shocking? how far more dreadful a countenance he bears within his own breast, how far keener pride, how much more violent rage, which will burst him unless it finds some vent? Let us paint anger looking like those who are dripping with the blood of foemen or savage beasts, or those who are just about to slaughter them — like those monsters of the nether world fabled by the poet to be girt with serpents and breathing flame, when they sally forth from hell, most frightful to behold, in order that they may kindle wars, stir up strife between nations, and overthrow peace; let us paint her eyes glowing

with fire, her voice hissing, roaring, grating, and making worse sounds if worse there be, while she brandishes weapons in both hands, for she cares not to protect herself, gloomy, stained with blood, covered with scars and livid with her own blows, reeling like a maniac, wrapped in a thick cloud, dashing hither and thither, spreading desolation and panic, loathed by everyone and by herself above all, willing, if otherwise she cannot hurt her foe, to overthrow alike- earth, sea, and heaven, harmful and hateful at the same time. Or, if we are to see her, let her be such as our poets have described her— “There with her blood-stained scourge Bellona fights, And Discord in her riven robe delights,” [13] or, if possible, let some even more dreadful aspect be invented for this dreadful passion.

XXXVI.

Some angry people, as Sextius remarks, have been benefited by looking at the glass: they have been struck by so great an alteration in their own appearance: they have been, as it were, brought into their own presence and have not recognized themselves: yet how small a part of the real hideousness of anger did that reflected image in the mirror reproduce? Could the mind be displayed or made to appear through any substance, we should be confounded when we beheld how black and stained, how agitated, distorted, and swollen it looked: even at present it is very ugly when seen through all the screens of blood, bones, and so forth: what would it be, were it displayed uncovered? You say, that you do not believe that any one was ever scared out of anger by a mirror: and why not? because when he came to the mirror to change his mind, he had changed it already: to angry men no face looks fairer than one that is fierce and savage and such as they wish to look like. We ought rather to consider, how many men anger itself has injured. Some in their excessive heat have burst their veins; some by straining their voices beyond their strength have vomited blood, or have injured their sight by too violently injecting humours into their eyes, and have fallen sick when the fit passed off. No way leads more swiftly to madness: many have, consequently, remained always in the frenzy of anger, and, having once lost their reason, have never recovered it. Ajax was driven mad by anger, and driven to suicide by madness. Men, frantic with rage, call upon heaven to slay their children, to reduce themselves to poverty, and to ruin their houses, and yet declare that they are not either angry or insane. Enemies to their best friends, dangerous to their nearest and dearest, regardless of the laws save where they injure, swayed by the smallest trifles, unwilling to lend their ears to the advice or the services of their friends, they do everything by main force, and are ready either to fight with their swords or to throw themselves upon them, for the greatest of all evils, and one which surpasses all vices, has gained possession of them. Other passions gain a footing in the mind by slow degrees: anger's conquest is sudden and complete, and, moreover, it makes all

other passions subservient to itself. It conquers the warmest love: men have thrust swords through the bodies of those whom they loved, and have slain those in whose arms they have lain. Avarice, that sternest and most rigid of passions, is trampled underfoot by anger, which forces it to squander its carefully collected wealth and set fire to its house and all its property in one heap. Why, has not even the ambitious man been known to fling away the most highly valued ensigns of rank, and to refuse high office when it was offered to him? There is no passion over which anger does not bear absolute rule.

Book III

I.

WE will now, my Novatus, attempt to do that which you so especially long to do, that is, to drive out anger from our minds, or at all events to curb it and restrain its impulses. This may sometimes be done openly and without concealment, when we are only suffering from a slight attack of this mischief, and at other times it must be done secretly, when our anger is excessively hot, and when every obstacle thrown in its way increases it and makes it blaze higher. It is important to know how great and how fresh its strength may be, and whether it can be driven forcibly back and suppressed, or whether we must give way to it until its first storm blow over, lest it sweep away with it our remedies themselves. We must deal with each case according to each man's character: some yield to entreaties, others are rendered arrogant and masterful by submission: we may frighten some men out of their anger, while some may be turned from their purpose by reproaches, some by acknowledging oneself to be in the wrong, some by shame, and some by delay, a tardy remedy for a hasty disorder; which we ought only to use when all others have failed: for other passions admit of having their case put off, and may be healed at a later time; but the eager and self-destructive violence of anger does not grow up by slow degrees, but reaches its full height as soon as it begins. Nor does it, like other vices, merely disturb men's minds, but it takes them away, and torments them till they are incapable of restraining themselves and eager for the common ruin of all men, nor does it rage merely against its object, but against every obstacle which it encounters on its way. The other vices move our minds; anger hurls them headlong. If we are not able to withstand our passions, yet at any rate our passions ought to stand firm: but anger grows more and more powerful, like lightning flashes or hurricanes, or any other things which cannot stop themselves because they do not proceed along, but fall from above. Other vices affect our judgment, anger affects our sanity: others come in mild attacks and grow unnoticed, but men's minds plunge abruptly into anger. There is no passion that is more frantic, more destructive to its own self; it is arrogant if successful, and frantic if it fails. Even when defeated it

does not grow weary, but if chance places its foe beyond its reach, it turns its teeth against itself. Its intensity is in no way regulated by its origin: for it rises to the greatest heights from the most trivial beginnings.

II.

It passes over no time of life; no race of men is exempt from it: some nations have been saved from the knowledge of luxury by the blessing of poverty; some through their active and wandering habits have escaped from sloth; those whose manners are unpolished and whose life is rustic know not chicanery and fraud and all the evils to which the courts of law give birth: but there is no race which is not excited by anger, which is equally powerful with Greeks and barbarians, and is just as ruinous among law-abiding folk as among those whose only law is that of the stronger. Finally, the other passions seize upon individuals anger is the only one which sometimes possesses a whole state. No entire people ever fell madly in love with a woman, nor did any nation ever set its affections altogether upon gain and profit. Ambition attacks single individuals; ungovernable rage is the only passion that affects nations. People often fly into a passion by troops; men and women, old men and boys, princes and populace all act alike, and the whole multitude, after being excited by a very few words, outdoes even its exciter: men betake themselves straight-way to fire and sword, and proclaim a war against their neighbours or wage one against their countrymen. Whole houses are burned with the entire families which they contain, and he who but lately was honoured for his popular eloquence now finds that his speech moves people to rage. Legions aim their darts at their commander; the whole populace quarrels with the nobles; the senate, without waiting for troops to be levied or appointing a general, hastily chooses leaders, for its anger chases well-born men through the houses of Rome, and puts them to death with its own hand. Ambassadors are outraged, the law of nations violated, and an unnatural madness seizes the state. Without allowing time for the general excitement to subside, fleets are straightway launched and laden with a hastily enrolled soldiery. Without organization, without taking any auspices, the populace rushes into the field guided only by its own anger, snatches up whatever comes first to hand by way of arms, and then atones by a great defeat for the reckless audacity of its anger. This is usually the fate of savage nations when they plunge

into war: as soon as their easily excited minds are roused by the appearance of wrong having been done them, they straightway hasten forth, and, guided only by their wounded feelings, fall like an avalanche upon our legions, without either discipline, fear, or precaution, and willfully seeking for danger. They delight in being struck, in pressing forward to meet the blow, writhing their bodies along the weapon, and perishing by a wound which they themselves make.

III.

“No doubt,” you say, “anger is very powerful and ruinous: point out, therefore, how it may be cured.” Yet, as I stated in my former books, Aristotle stands forth in defence of anger, and forbids it to be uprooted, saying that it is the spur of virtue, and that when it is taken away, our minds become weaponless, and slow to attempt great exploits. It is therefore essential to prove its unseemliness and ferocity, and to place distinctly before our eyes how monstrous a thing it is that one man should rage against another, with what frantic violence he rushes to destroy alike himself and his foe, and overthrows those very things whose fall he himself must share. What, then? can anyone call this man sane, who, as though caught up by a hurricane, does not go but is driven, and is the slave of a senseless disorder? He does not commit to another the duty of revenging him, but himself exacts it, raging alike in thought and deed, butchering those who are dearest to him, and for whose loss he himself will ere long weep. Will any one give this passion as an assistant and companion to virtue, although it disturbs calm reason, without which virtue can do nothing? The strength which a sick man owes to a paroxysm of disease is neither lasting nor wholesome, and is strong only to its own destruction. You need not, therefore, imagine that I am wasting time over a useless task in defaming anger, as though men had not made up their minds about it, when there is someone, and he, too, an illustrious philosopher, who assigns it services to perform, and speaks of it as useful and supplying energy for battles, for the management of business, and indeed for everything which requires to be conducted with spirit. Lest it should delude any one into thinking that on certain occasions and in certain positions it may be useful, we must show its unbridled and frenzied madness, we must restore to it its attributes, the rack, the cord, the dungeon, and the cross, the fires lighted round men’s buried bodies, the hook that drags both living men and corpses, the different kinds of fetters, and of punishments, the mutilations of limbs, the branding of the forehead, the dens of savage beasts. Anger should be represented as standing among these her instruments, growling in an

ominous and terrible fashion, herself more shocking than any of the means by which she gives vent to her fury.

IV.

There may be some doubt about the others, but at any rate no passion has a worse look. We have described the angry man's appearance in our former books, how sharp and keen he looks, at one time pale as his blood is driven inwards and backwards, at another with all the heat and fire of his body directed to his face, making it reddish-coloured as if stained with blood, his eyes now restless and starting out of his head, now set motionless in one fixed gaze. Add to this his teeth, which gnash against one another, as though he wished to eat somebody, with exactly the sound of a wild boar sharpening his tusks: add also the cracking of his joints, the involuntary wringing of his hands, the frequent slaps he deals himself on the chest, his hurried breathing and deep-drawn sighs, his reeling body, his abrupt broken speech, and his trembling lips, which sometimes he draws tight as he hisses some curse through them. By Hercules, no wild beast, neither when tortured by hunger, or with a weapon struck through its vitals, not even when it gathers its last breath to bite its slayer, looks so shocking as a man raging with anger. Listen, if you have leisure, to his words and threats: how dreadful is the language of his agonized mind! Would not every man wish to lay aside anger when he sees that it begins by injuring himself? When men employ anger as the most powerful of agents, consider it to be a proof of power, and reckon a speedy revenge among the greatest blessings of great prosperity, would you not wish me to warn them that he who is the slave of his own anger is not powerful, nor even free? Would you not wish me to warn all the more industrious and circumspect of men, that while other evil passions assail the base, anger gradually obtains dominion over the minds even of learned and in other respects sensible men? So true is that, that some declare anger to be a proof of straight-forwardness, and it is commonly believed that the best-natured people are prone to it.

V.

You ask me, whither does all this tend? To prove, I answer, that no one should imagine himself to be safe from anger, seeing that it rouses up even those who are naturally gentle and quiet to commit savage and violent acts. As strength of body and assiduous care of the health avail nothing against a pestilence, which attacks the strong and weak alike, so also steady and good-humoured people are just as liable to attacks of anger as those of unsettled character, and in the case of the former it is both more to be ashamed of and more to be feared, because it makes a greater alteration in their habits. Now as the first thing is not to be angry, the second to lay aside our anger, and the third to be able to heal the anger of others as well as our own, I will set forth first how we may avoid falling into anger; next, how we may set ourselves free from it, and, lastly, how we may restrain an angry man, appease his wrath, and bring him back to his right mind.

We shall succeed in avoiding anger, if from time to time we lay before our minds all the vices connected with anger, and estimate it at its real value: it must be prosecuted before us and convicted: its evils must be thoroughly investigated and exposed. That we may see what it is, let it be compared with the worst vices. Avarice scrapes together and amasses riches for some better man to use: anger spends money; few can indulge in it for nothing. How many slaves an angry master drives to run away or to commit suicide! how much more he loses by his anger than the value of what he originally became angry about! Anger brings grief to a father, divorce to a husband, hatred to a magistrate, failure to a candidate for office. It is worse than luxury, because luxury enjoys its own pleasure, while anger enjoys another's pain. It is worse than either spitefulness or envy; for they wish that someone may become unhappy, while anger wishes to make him so: they are pleased when evil befalls one by accident, but anger cannot wait upon Fortune; it desires to injure its victim personally, and is not satisfied merely with his being injured. Nothing is more dangerous than jealousy: it is produced by anger. Nothing is more ruinous than war: it is the outcome of powerful men's anger; and

even the anger of humble private persons, though without arms or armies, is nevertheless war. Moreover, even if we pass over its immediate consequences, such as heavy losses, treacherous plots, and the constant anxiety produced by strife, anger pays a penalty at the same moment that it exacts one: it forswears human feelings. The latter urge us to love, anger urges us to hatred: the latter bid us do men good, anger bids us do them harm. Add to this that, although its rage arises from an excessive self-respect and appears to show high spirit, it really is contemptible and mean: for a man must be inferior to one by whom he thinks himself despised, whereas the truly great mind, which takes a true estimate of its own value, does not revenge an insult because it does not feel it. As weapons rebound from a hard surface, and solid substances hurt those who strike them, so also no insult can make a really great mind sensible of its presence, being weaker than that against which it is aimed. How far more glorious is it to throw back all wrongs and insults from oneself, like one wearing armour of proof against all weapons, for revenge is an admission that we have been hurt. That cannot be a great mind which is disturbed by injury. He who has hurt you must be either stronger or weaker than yourself. If he be weaker, spare him: if he be stronger, spare yourself.

VI.

There is no greater proof of magnanimity than that nothing which befalls you should be able to move you to anger. The higher region of the universe, being more excellently ordered and near to the stars, is never gathered into clouds, driven about by storms, or whirled round by cyclones: it is free from all disturbance: the lightnings flash in the region below it. In like manner a lofty mind, always placid and dwelling in a serene atmosphere, restraining within itself all the impulses from which anger springs, is modest, commands respect, and remains calm and collected: none of which qualities will you find in an angry man: for who, when under the influence of grief and rage, does not first get rid of bashfulness? who, when excited and confused and about to attack someone, does not fling away any habits of shamefacedness he may have possessed? what angry man attends to the number or routine of his duties? who uses moderate language? Who keeps any part of his body quiet? who can guide himself when in full career? We shall find much profit in that sound maxim of Democritus which defines peace of mind to consist in not labouring much, or too much for our strength, either in public or private matters. A man's day, if he is engaged in many various occupations, never passes so happily that no man or no thing should give rise to some offence which makes the mind ripe for anger. Just as when one hurries through the crowded parts of the city one cannot help jostling many people, and one cannot help slipping at one place, being hindered at another, and splashed at another, so when one's life is spent in disconnected pursuits and wanderings, one must meet with many troubles and many accusations. One man deceives our hopes, another delays their fulfillment, another destroys them: our projects do not proceed according to our intention. No one is so favoured by Fortune as to find her always on his side if he tempts her often: and from this it follows that he who sees several enterprises turn out contrary to his wishes becomes dissatisfied with both men and things, and on the slightest provocation flies into a rage with people, with undertakings, with places, with fortune, or with himself. In order, therefore, that the mind may be at peace, it ought not to be

hurried hither and thither, nor, as I said before, wearied by labour at great matters, or matters whose attainment is beyond its strength. It is easy to fit one's shoulder to a light burden, and to shift it from one side to the other without dropping it: but we have difficulty in bearing the burdens which others' hands lay upon us, and when overweighted by them we fling them off upon our neighbours. Even when we do stand upright under our load, we nevertheless reel beneath a weight which is beyond our strength.

VII.

Be assured that the same rule applies both to public and private life: simple and manageable undertakings proceed according to the pleasure of the person in charge of them, but enormous ones, beyond his capacity to manage, are not easily undertaken. When he has got them to administer, they hinder him, and press hard upon him, and just as he thinks that success is within his grasp, they collapse, and carry him with them: thus it comes about that a man's wishes are often disappointed if he does not apply himself to easy tasks, yet wishes that the tasks which he undertakes may be easy. Whenever you would attempt anything, first form an estimate both of your own powers, of the extent of the matter which you are undertaking, and of the means by which you are to accomplish it: for if you have to abandon your work when it is half done, the disappointment will sour your temper. In such cases, it makes a difference whether one is of an ardent or of a cold and unenterprising temperament: for failure will rouse a generous spirit to anger, and will move a sluggish and dull one to sorrow. Let our undertakings, therefore, be neither petty nor yet presumptuous and reckless: let our hopes not range far from home: let us attempt nothing which if we succeed will make us astonished at our success.

VIII.

Since we know not how to endure an injury, let us take care not to receive one: we should live with the quietest and easiest-tempered persons, not with anxious or with sullen ones: for our own habits are copied from those with whom we associate, and just as some bodily diseases are communicated by touch, so also the mind transfers its vices to its neighbours. A drunkard leads even those who reproach him to grow fond of wine: profligate society will, if permitted, impair the morals even of robust-minded men: avarice infects those nearest it with its poison. Virtues do the same thing in the opposite direction, and improve all those with whom they are brought in contact: it is as good for one of unsettled principles to associate with better men than himself as for an invalid to live in a warm country with a healthy climate. You will understand how much may be effected this way, if you observe how even wild beasts grow tame by dwelling among us, and how no animal, however ferocious, continues to be wild, if it has long been accustomed to human companionship: all its savageness becomes softened, and amid peaceful scenes is gradually forgotten. We must add to this, that the man who lives with quiet people is not only improved by their example, but also by the fact that he finds no reason for anger and does not practise his vice: it will, therefore, be his duty to avoid all those who he knows will excite his anger. You ask, who these are: many will bring about the same thing by various means; a proud man will offend you by his disdain, a talkative man by his abuse, an impudent man by his insults, a spiteful man by his malice, a quarrelsome man by his wrangling, a braggart and liar by his vain-gloriousness: you will not endure to be feared by a suspicious man, conquered by an obstinate one, or scorned by an ultra-refined one: Choose straightforward, good-natured, steady people, who will not provoke your wrath, and will bear with it. Those whose dispositions are yielding, polite and suave, will be of even greater service, provided they do not flatter, for excessive obsequiousness irritates bad-tempered men. One of my own friends was a good man indeed, but too prone to anger, and it was as dangerous to flatter him as to curse him. Caelius the orator, it is well

known, was the worst-tempered man possible. It is said that once he was dining in his own chamber with an especially long-suffering client, but had great difficulty when thrown thus into a man's society to avoid quarrelling with him. The other thought it best to agree to whatever he said, and to play second fiddle, but Caelius could not bear his obsequious agreement, and exclaimed, "Do contradict me in something, that there may be two of us!" Yet even he, who was angry at not being angry, soon recovered his temper, because he had no one to fight with. If, then, we are conscious of an irascible disposition, let us especially choose for our friends those who will look and speak as we do: they will pamper us and lead us into a bad habit of listening to nothing that does not please us, but it will be good to give our anger respite and repose. Even those who are naturally crabbed and wild will yield to caresses: no creature continues either angry or frightened if you pat him. Whenever a controversy seems likely to be longer or more keenly disputed than usual, let us check its first beginnings, before it gathers strength. A dispute nourishes itself as it proceeds, and takes hold of those who plunge too deeply into it: it is easier to stand aloof than to extricate oneself from a struggle.

IX.

Irascible men ought not to meddle with the more serious class of occupations, or, at any rate, ought to stop short of weariness in the pursuit of them; their mind ought not to be engaged upon hard subjects, but handed over to pleasing arts: let it be softened by reading poetry, and interested by legendary history: let it be treated with luxury and refinement. Pythagoras used to calm his troubled spirit by playing upon the lyre: and who does not know that trumpets and clarions are irritants, just as some airs are lullabies and soothe the mind? Green is good for wearied eyes, and some colours are grateful to weak sight, while the brightness of others is painful to it. In the same way cheerful pursuits soothe unhealthy minds. We must avoid law courts, pleadings, verdicts, and everything else that aggravates our fault, and we ought no less to avoid bodily weariness; for it exhausts all that is quiet and gentle in us, and rouses bitterness. For this reason those who cannot trust their digestion, when they are about to transact business of importance always allay their bile with food, for it is peculiarly irritated by fatigue, either because it draws the vital heat into the middle of the body, and injures the blood and stops its circulation by the clogging of the veins, or else because the worn-out and weakened body reacts upon the mind: this is certainly the reason why those who are broken by ill health or age are more irascible than other men. Hunger also and thirst should be avoided for the same reason; they exasperate and irritate men's minds: it is an old saying that "a weary man is quarrelsome ": and so also is a hungry or a thirsty man, or one who is suffering from any cause whatever: for just as sores pain one at the slightest touch, and afterwards even at the fear of being touched, so an unsound mind takes offence at the slightest things, so that even a greeting, a letter, a speech, or a question, provokes some men to anger.

X.

That which is diseased can never bear to be handled without complaining: it is best, therefore, to apply remedies to oneself as soon as we feel that anything is wrong, to allow oneself as little licence as possible in speech, and to restrain one's impetuosity: now it is easy to detect the first growth of our passions: the symptoms precede the disorder. Just as the signs of storms and rain come before the storms themselves, so there are certain forerunners of anger, love, and all the storms which torment our minds. Those who suffer from epilepsy know that the fit is coming on if their extremities become cold, their sight fails, their sinews tremble, their memory deserts them, and their head swims: they accordingly check the growing disorder by applying the usual remedies: they try to prevent the loss of their senses by smelling or tasting some drug; they battle against cold and stiffness of limbs by hot fomentations; or, if all remedies fail, they retire apart, and faint where no one sees them fall. It is useful for a man to understand his disease, and to break its strength before it becomes developed. Let us see what it is that especially irritates us. Some men take offence at insulting words, others at deeds: one wishes his pedigree, another his person, to be treated with respect. This man wishes to be considered especially fashionable, that man to be thought especially learned: one cannot bear pride, another cannot bear obstinacy. One thinks it beneath him to be angry with his slaves, another is cruel at home, but gentle abroad. One imagines that he is proposed for office because he is unpopular, another thinks himself insulted because he is not proposed. People do not all take offence in the same way; you ought then to know what your own weak point is, that you may guard it with especial care.

XI.

It is better not to see or to hear everything: many causes of offence may pass by us, most of which are disregarded by the man who ignores them. Would you not be irascible? then be not inquisitive. He who seeks to know what is said about him, who digs up spiteful tales even if they were told in secret, is himself the destroyer of his own peace of mind. Some stories may be so construed as to appear to be insults: wherefore it is best to put some aside, to laugh at others, and to pardon others. There are many ways in which anger may be checked; most things may be turned into jest. It is said that Socrates when he was given a box on the ear, merely said that it was a pity a man could not tell when he ought to wear his helmet out walking. It does not so much matter how an injury is done, as how it is borne; and I do not see how moderation can be hard to practise, when I know that even despots, though success and impunity combine to swell their pride, have sometimes restrained their natural ferocity. At any rate, tradition informs us that once, when a guest in his cups bitterly reproached Pisistratus, the despot of Athens, for his cruelty, many of those present offered to lay hands on the traitor, and one said one thing and one another to kindle his wrath, he bore it coolly, and replied to those who were egging him on, that he was no more angry with the man than he should be with one who ran against him blindfold.

XII.

A large part of mankind manufacture their own grievances either by entertaining unfounded suspicions or by exaggerating trifles. Anger often comes to us, but we often go to it. It ought never to be sent for: even when it falls in our way it ought to be flung aside. No one says to himself, "I myself have done or might have done this very thing which I am angry with another for doing." No one considers the intention of the doer, but merely the thing done . yet we ought to think about him, and whether he did it intentionally or accidentally, under compulsion or under a mistake, whether he did it out of hatred for us, or to gain something for himself, whether he did it to please himself or to serve a friend. In some cases the age, in others the worldly fortunes of the culprit may render it humane or advantageous to bear with him and put up with what he has done. Let us put ourselves in the place of him with whom we are angry: at present an overweening conceit of our own importance makes us prone to anger, and we are quite willing to do to others what we cannot endure should be done to ourselves. No one will postpone his anger: yet delay is the best remedy for it, because it allows its first glow to subside, and gives time for the cloud which darkens the mind either to disperse or at any rate to become less dense. Of these wrongs which drive you frantic, some will grow lighter after an interval, not of a day, but even of an hour: some will vanish altogether. Even if you gain nothing by your adjournment, still what you do after it will appear to be the result of mature deliberation, not of anger. If you want to find out the truth about anything, commit the task to time: nothing can be accurately discerned at a time of disturbance. Plato, when angry with his slave, could not prevail upon himself to wait, but straightway ordered him to take off his shirt and present his shoulders to the blows which he meant to give him with his own hand: then, when he perceived that he was angry, he stopped the hand which he had raised in the air, and stood like one in act to strike. Being asked by a friend who happened to come in, what he was doing, he answered: "I am making an angry man expiate his crime." He retained the posture of one about to give way to passion,

as if struck with astonishment at its being so degrading to a philosopher, forgetting the slave, because he had found another still more deserving of punishment. He therefore denied himself the exercise of authority over his own household, and once, being rather angry at some fault, said, "Speusippus, will you please to correct that slave with stripes; for I am in a rage." He would not strike him, for the very reason for which another man would have struck him. "I am in a rage," said he; "I should beat him more than I ought: I should take more pleasure than I ought in doing so: let not that slave fall into the power of one who is not in his own power." Can anyone wish to grant the power of revenge to an angry man, when Plato himself gave up his own right to exercise it? While you are angry, you ought not to be allowed to do anything. "Why?" do you ask? Because when you are angry there is nothing that you do not wish to be allowed to do.

XIII.

Fight hard with yourself and if you cannot conquer anger, do not let it conquer you: you have begun to get the better of it if it does not show itself, if it is not given vent. Let us conceal its symptoms, and as far as possible keep it secret and hidden. It will give us great trouble to do this, for it is eager to burst forth, to kindle our eyes and to transform our face; but if we allow it to show itself in our outward appearance, it is our master. Let it rather be locked in the innermost recesses of our breast, and be borne by us, not bear us: nay, let us replace all its symptoms by their opposites; let us make our countenance more composed than usual, our voice milder, our step slower. Our inward thoughts gradually become influenced by our outward demeanour. With Socrates it was a sign of anger when he lowered his voice, and became sparing of speech; it was evident at such times that he was exercising restraint over himself. His friends, consequently, used to detect him acting thus, and convict him of being angry; nor was he displeased at being charged with concealment of anger; indeed, how could he help being glad that many men should perceive his anger, yet that none should feel it? they would however, have felt it had not he granted to his friends the same right of criticizing his own conduct which he himself assumed over theirs. How much more needful is it for us to do this? let us beg all our best friends to give us their opinion with the greatest freedom at the very time when we can bear it least, and never to be compliant with us when we are angry. While we are in our right senses, while we are under our own control, let us call for help against so powerful an evil, and one which we regard with such unjust favour. Those who cannot carry their wine discreetly, and fear to be betrayed into some rash and insolent act, give their slaves orders to take them away from the banquet when they are drunk; those who know by experience how unreasonable they are when sick give orders that no one is to obey them when they are in ill health. It is best to prepare obstacles beforehand for vices which are known, and above all things so to tranquilize our mind that it may bear the most sudden and violent shocks either without feeling anger, or, if anger be provoked by the

extent of some unexpected wrong, that it may bury it deep, and not betray its wound. That it is possible to do this will be seen, if I quote a few of an abundance of examples, from which we may learn both how much evil there is in anger, when it exercises entire dominion over men in supreme power, and how completely it can control itself when over-awed by fear.

XIV.

King Cambyses was excessively addicted to wine. Præxaspes was the only one of his closest friends who advised him to drink more sparingly, pointing out how shameful a thing drunkenness was in a king, upon whom all eyes and ears were fixed. Cambyses answered, "That you may know that I never lose command of myself, I will presently prove to you that both my eyes and my hands are fit for service after I have been drinking." Hereupon he drank more freely than usual, using larger cups, and when heavy and besotted with wine ordered his reprover's son to go beyond the threshold and stand there with his left hand raised above his head; then he bent his bow and pierced the youth's heart, at which he had said that he aimed. He then had his breast cut open, showed the arrow sticking exactly into the heart, and, looking at the boy's father, risked whether his hand was not steady enough. He replied, that Apollo himself could not have taken better aim. God confound such a man, a slave in mind, if not in station! He actually praised an act which he ought not to have endured to witness. He thought that the breast of his son being torn asunder, and his heart quivering with its wound, gave him an opportunity of making a complimentary speech. He ought to have raised a dispute with him about his success, and have called for another shot, that the king might be pleased to prove upon the person of the father that his hand was even steadier than when he shot the son. What a savage king! what a worthy mark for all his follower's arrows! Yet though we curse him for making his banquet end in cruelty and death, still it was worse to praise that arrow-shot than to shoot it. We shall see hereafter how a father ought to bear himself when standing over the corpse of his son, whose murder he had both caused and witnessed: the matter which we are now discussing, has been proved, I mean, that anger can be suppressed. He did not curse the king, he did not so much as let fall a single inauspicious word, though he felt his own heart as deeply wounded as that of his son. He may be said to have done well in choking down his words; for though he might have spoken as an angry man, yet he could not have expressed what he felt as a father. He may, I repeat, be thought to

have behaved with greater wisdom on that occasion than when he tried to regulate the drink of one who was better employed in drinking wine than in drinking blood, and who granted men peace while his hands were busy with the winecup. He, therefore, added one more to the number of those who have shown to their bitter cost how little kings care for their friends' good advice.

XV.

I have no doubt that Harpagus must have given some such advice to the king of the Persians and of himself, in anger at which the king placed Harpagus's own children before him on the dinner-table for him to eat, and asked him from time to time, whether he liked the seasoning. Then, when he saw that he was satiated with his own misery, he ordered their heads to be brought to him, and asked him how he liked his entertainment. The wretched man did not lose his readiness of speech; his face did not change. "Every kind of dinner," said he, "is pleasant at the king's table." What did he gain by this obsequiousness? He avoided being invited a second time to dinner, to eat what was left of them. I do not forbid a father to blame the act of his king, or to seek for some revenge worthy of so bloodthirsty a monster, but in the meanwhile I gather from the tale this fact, that even the anger which arises from unheard of outrages can be concealed, and forced into using language which is the very reverse of its meaning. This way of curbing anger is necessary, at least for those who have chosen this sort of life and who are admitted to dine at a king's table; this is how they must eat and drink, this is how they must answer, and how they must laugh at their own deaths. Whether life is worth having at such a price, we shall see hereafter; that is another question. Let us not console so sorry a crew, or encourage them to submit to the orders of their butchers; let us point out that however slavish a man's condition may be, there is always a path to liberty open to him, unless his mind be diseased. It is a man's own fault if he suffers, when by putting an end to himself he can put an end to his misery. To him whose king aimed arrows at the breasts of his friends, and to him whose master gorged fathers with the hearts of their children, I would say "Madman, why do you groan? for what are you waiting? for some enemy to avenge you by the destruction of your entire nation, or for some powerful king to arrive from a distant land? Wherever you turn your eyes you may see an end to your woes. Do you see that precipice? Down that lies the road to liberty; do you see that sea? that river? that well? Liberty sits at the bottom of them. Do you see that tree? stunted, blighted, dried up though it

be, yet liberty hangs from its branches. Do you see your own throat, your own neck, your own heart? they are so many ways of escape from slavery. Are these modes which I point out too laborious, and needing much strength and courage? do you ask what path leads to liberty? I answer, any vein in your body.

XVI.

As long, however, as we find nothing in our life so unbearable as to drive us to suicide, let us, in whatever position we may be, set anger far from us: it is destructive to those who are its slaves. All its rage turns to its own misery, and authority becomes all the more irksome the more obstinately it is resisted. It is like a wild animal whose struggles only pull the noose by which it is caught tighter; or like birds who, while flurriedly trying to shake themselves free, smear birdlime onto all their feathers. No yoke is so grievous as not to hurt him who struggles against it more than him who yields to it: the only way to alleviate great evils is to endure them and to submit to do what they compel. This control of our passions, and especially of this mad and unbridled passion of anger, is useful to subjects, but still more useful to kings. All is lost when a man's position enables him to carry out whatever anger prompts him to do; nor can power long endure if it be exercised to the injury of many, for it becomes endangered as soon as common fear draws together those who bewail themselves separately. Many kings, therefore, have fallen victims, some to single individuals, others to entire peoples, who have been forced by general indignation to make one man the minister of their wrath. Yet many kings have indulged their anger as though it were a privilege of royalty, like Darius, who, after the dethronement of the Magian, was the first ruler of the Persians and of the greater part of the East: for when he declared war against the Scythians who bordered on the empire of the East, Oeobazus, an aged noble, begged that one of his three sons might be left at home to comfort his father, and that the king might be satisfied with the services of two of them. Darius promised him more than he asked for, saying that he would allow all three to remain at home, and flung their dead bodies before their father's eyes. He would have been harsh, had he taken them all to the war with him. How much more good-natured was Xerxes, who, when Pythias, the father of five sons, begged for one to be excused from service, permitted him to choose which he wished for. He then tore the son whom the father had chosen into two halves, placed one on each side of the road, and, as it

were, purified his army by means of this propitiatory victim. He therefore had the end which he deserved, being defeated, and his army scattered far and wide in utter rout, while he in the midst of it walked among the corpses of his soldiers, seeing on all sides the signs of his own overthrow.

XVII.

So ferocious in their anger were those kings who had no learning, no tincture of polite literature: now I will show you King Alexander (the Great), fresh from the lap of Aristotle, who with his own hand while at table stabbed Clitus, his dearest friend, who had been brought up with him, because he did not flatter him enough, and was too slow in transforming himself from a free man and a Macedonian into a Persian slave. Indeed he shut up Lysimachus, who was no less his friend than Clitus, in a cage with a lion; yet did this make Lysimachus, who escaped by some happy chance from the lion's teeth, any gentler when he became a king? Why, he mutilated his own friend, Telesphorus the Rhodian, cutting off his nose and ears, and kept him for a long while in a den, like some new and strange animal, after the hideousness of his hacked and disfigured face had made him no longer appear to be human, assisted by starvation and the squalid filth of a body left to wallow in its own dung! Besides this, his hands and knees, which the narrowness of his abode forced him to use instead of his feet, became hard and callous, while his sides were covered with sores by rubbing against the walls, so that his appearance was no less shocking than frightful, and his punishment turned him into so monstrous a creature that he was not even pitied. Yet, however unlike a man he was who suffered this, even more unlike was he who inflicted it.

XVIII.

Would to heaven that such savagery had contented itself with foreign examples, and that barbarity in anger and punishment had not been imported with other outlandish vices into our Roman manners! Marcus Marius, to whom the people erected a statue in every street, to whom they made offerings of incense and wine, had, by the command of Lucius Sulla, his legs broken, his eyes pulled out, his hands cut off, and his whole body gradually torn to pieces limb by limb, as if Sulla killed him as many times as he wounded him. Who was it who carried out Sulla's orders? who but Catiline, already practising his hands in every sort of wickedness? He tore him to pieces before the tomb of Quintus Catulus, an unwelcome burden to the ashes of that gentlest of men, above which one who was no doubt a criminal, yet nevertheless the idol of the people, and who was not undeserving of love, although men loved him beyond all reason, was forced to shed his blood drop by drop. Though Marius deserved such tortures, yet it was worthy of Sulla to order them, and of Catiline to execute them; but it was unworthy of the State to be stabbed by the swords of her enemy and her avenger alike. Why do I pry into ancient history? quite lately Gaius Caesar flogged and tortured Sextus Papinius, whose father was a consular, Betilienas Bassus, his own quaestor, and several others, both senators and knights, on the same day, not to carry out any judicial inquiry, but merely to amuse himself. Indeed, so impatient was he of any delay in receiving the pleasure which his monstrous cruelty never delayed in asking, that when walking with some ladies and senators in his mother's gardens, along the walk between the colonnade and the river, he struck off some of their heads by lamplight. What did he fear? what public or private danger could one night threaten him with? how very small a favour it would have been to wait until morning, and not to kill the Roman people's senators in his slippers?

XIX.

It is to the purpose that we should know how haughtily his cruelty was exercised, although someone might suppose that we are wandering from the subject and embarking on a digression; but this digression is itself connected with unusual outbursts of anger. He beat senators with rods; he did it so often that he made men able to say, "It is the custom." He tortured them with all the most dismal engines in the world, with the cord, the boots, the rack, the fire, and the sight of his own face. Even to this we may answer, "To tear three senators to pieces with stripes and fire like criminal slaves was no such great crime for one who had thoughts of butchering the entire Senate, who was wont to wish that the Roman people had but one neck, that he might concentrate into one day and one blow all the wickedness which he divided among so many places and times. Was there ever anything so unheard-of as an execution in the night-time? Highway robbery seeks for the shelter of darkness, but the more public an execution is, the more power it has as an example and lesson. Here I shall be met by: "This, which you are so surprised at, was the daily habit of that monster; this was what he lived for, watched for, sat up at night for." Certainly one could find no one else who would have ordered all those whom he condemned to death to have their mouths closed by a sponge being fastened in them, that they might not have the power even of uttering a sound. What dying man was ever forbidden to groan? He feared that the last agony might find too free a voice, that he might hear what would displease him. He knew, moreover, that there were countless crimes, with which none but a dying man would dare to reproach him. When sponges were not forthcoming, he ordered the wretched men's clothes to be torn up, and the rags stuffed into their mouths. What savagery was this? Let a man draw his last breath: give room for his soul to escape through: let it not be forced to leave the body through a wound. It becomes tedious to add to this that in the same night he sent centurions to the houses of the executed men and made an end of their fathers also, that is to say, being a compassionate-minded man, he set them free from sorrow: for it is not my intention to

describe the ferocity of Gaius, but the ferocity of anger, which does not merely vent its rage upon individuals, but rends in pieces whole nations, and even lashes cities, rivers, and things which have no sense of pain.

XX.

Thus, the king of the Persians cut off the noses of a whole nation in Syria, wherefore the place is called Rhinocolura. Do you think that he was merciful, because he did not cut their heads off altogether? no, he was delighted at having invented a new kind of punishment. Something of the same kind would have befallen the Æthiopians, who on account of their prodigiously long lives are called Macrobiotæ; for, because they did not receive slavery with hands uplifted to heaven in thankfulness, and sent an embassy which used independent, or what kings call insulting language, Cambyses became wild with rage, and, without any store of provisions, or any knowledge of the roads, started with all his fighting men through an arid and trackless waste, where during the first day's march the necessaries of life failed, and the country itself furnished nothing, being barren and uncultivated, and untrodden by the foot of man. At first the tenderest parts of leaves and shoots of trees relieved their hunger, then hides softened by fire, and anything else that their extremity drove them to use as food. When as they proceeded neither roots nor herbs were to be found in the sand, and they found a wilderness destitute even of animal life, they chose each tenth man by lot and made of him a meal which was more cruel than hunger. Rage still drove the king madly forwards, until after he had lost one part of his army and eaten another he began to fear that he also might be called upon to draw the lot for his life; then at last he gave the order for retreat. Yet all the while his well-bred hawks were not sacrificed, and the means of feasting were carried for him on camels, while his soldiers were drawing lots for who should miserably perish, and who should yet more miserably live.

XXI.

This man was angry with an unknown and inoffensive nation, which nevertheless was able to feel his wrath; but Cyrus was angry with a river. When hurrying to besiege Babylon, since in making war it is above all things important to seize one's opportunity, he tried to ford the wide-spread river Gyndes, which it is hardly safe to attempt even when the river has been dried up by the summer heat and is at its lowest. Here one of the white horses which drew the royal chariot was washed away, and his loss moved the king to such violent rage, that he swore to reduce the river which had carried off his royal retinue to so low an ebb that even women should walk across it and trample upon it. He thereupon devoted all the resources of his army to this object, and remained working until by cutting one hundred and eighty channels across the bed of the river he divided it into three hundred and sixty brooks, and left the bed dry, the waters flowing through other channels. Thus he lost time, which is very important in great operations, and lost, also, the soldiers' courage, which was broken by useless labour, and the opportunity of falling upon his enemy unprepared, while he was waging against the river the war which he had declared against his foes. This frenzy, for what else can you call it, has befallen Romans also, for G. Caesar destroyed a most beautiful villa at Herculaneum because his mother was once imprisoned in it, and has thus made the place notorious by its misfortune; for while it stood, we used to sail past it without noticing it, but now people inquire why it is in ruins.

XXII.

These should be regarded as examples to be avoided, and what I am about to relate, on the contrary, to be followed, being examples of gentle and lenient conduct in men who both had reasons for anger and power to avenge themselves. What could have been easier than for Antigonus to order those two common soldiers to be executed who leaned against their king's tent while doing what all men especially love to do, and run the greatest danger by doing, I mean while they spoke evil of their king. Antigonus heard all they said, as was likely, since there was only a piece of cloth between the speakers and the listener, who gently raised it, and said "Go a little further off, for fear the king should hear you." He also on one night, hearing some of his soldiers invoking everything that was evil upon their king for having brought them along that road and into that impassable mud, went to those who were in the greatest difficulties, and having extricated them without their knowing who was their helper, said, "Now curse Antigonus, by whose fault you have fallen into this trouble, but bless the man who has brought you out of this slough." This same Antigonus bore the abuse of his enemies as good-naturedly as that of his countrymen; thus when he was besieging some Greeks in a little fort, and they, despising their enemy through their confidence in the strength of their position, cut many jokes upon the ugliness of Antigonus, at one time mocking him for his shortness of stature, at another for his broken nose, he answered, "I rejoice, and expect some good fortune because I have a Silenus in my camp." After he had conquered these witty folk by hunger, his treatment of them was to form regiments of those who were fit for service, and sell the rest by public auction; nor would he, said he, have done this had it not been better that men who had such evil tongues should be under the control of a master.

XXIII.

This man's grandson was Alexander, who used to hurl his lance at his guests, who, of the two friends which I have mentioned above, exposed one to the rage of a wild beast, and the other to his own; yet of these two men, he who was exposed to the lion survived. He did not derive this vice from his grandfather, nor even from his father; for it was an especial virtue of Philip's to endure insults patiently, and was a great safeguard of his kingdom. Demochares, who was surnamed Parrhesiastes on account of his unbridled and impudent tongue, came on an embassy to him with other ambassadors from Athens. After graciously listening to what they had to say, Philip said to them, "Tell me, what can I do that will please the Athenians?" Demochares took him up, and answered, "Hang yourself." All the bystanders expressed their indignation at so brutal an answer, but Philip bade them be silent, and let this Thersites depart safe and sound. "But do you," said he, "you other ambassadors, tell the Athenians that those who say such things are much more arrogant than those who hear them without revenging themselves." The late Emperor Augustus also did and said many memorable things, which prove that he was not under the dominion of anger. Timagenes, the historical writer, made some remarks upon him, his wife, and his whole family: nor did his jests fall to the ground, for nothing spreads more widely or is more in people's mouths than reckless wit. Caesar often warned him to be less audacious in his talk, and as he continued to offend, forbade him his house. Timagenes after this passed the later years of his life as the guest of Asinius Pollio, and was the favourite of the whole city: the closing of Caesar's door did not close any other door against him. He read aloud the history which he wrote after this, but burned the books which contained the doings of Augustus Caesar. He was at enmity with Caesar, but yet no one feared to be his friend, no one shrank from him as though he were blasted by lightning: although he fell from so high a place, yet someone was found to catch him in his lap. Caesar, I say, bore this with patience, and was not even irritated by the historian's having laid violent hands upon his own glories and acts: he never

complained of the man who afforded his enemy shelter, but merely said to Asinius Pollio “You are keeping a wild beast:” then, when the other would have excused his conduct, he stopped him, and said “Enjoy, my Pollio, enjoy his friendship.” When Pollio said, “If you order me, Caesar, I will straightway forbid him my house,” he answered, “Do you think that I am likely to do this, after having made you friends again?” for formerly Pollio had been angry with Timagenes, and ceased to be angry with him for no other reason than that Caesar began to be so.

XXIV.

Let everyone, then, say to himself, whenever he is provoked, "Am I more powerful than Philip? yet he allowed a man to curse him with impunity. Have I more authority in my own house than the Emperor Augustus possessed throughout the world? yet he was satisfied with leaving the society of his maligner. Why should I make my slave atone by stripes and manacles for having answered me too loudly or having put on a stubborn look, or muttered something which I did not catch? Who am I, that it should be a crime to shock my ears? Many men have forgiven their enemies: shall I not forgive men for being lazy, careless, and gossiping?" We ought to plead age as an excuse for children, sex for women, freedom for a stranger, familiarity for a house-servant. Is this his first offence? think how long he has been acceptable. Has he often done wrong, and in many other cases? then let us continue to bear what we have borne so long. Is he a friend? then he did not intend to do it. Is he an enemy? then in doing it he did his duty. If he be a sensible man, let us believe his excuses; if a fool, let us grant him pardon; whatever he may be, let us say to ourselves on his behalf, that even the wisest of men are often in fault, that no one is so alert that his carefulness never betrays itself, that no one is of so ripe a judgment that his serious mind cannot be goaded by circumstances into some hotheaded action, that, in fine, no one, however much he may fear to give offence, can help doing so even while he tries to avoid it.

XXV.

As it is a consolation to a humble man in trouble that the greatest are subject to reverses of fortune, and a man weeps more calmly over his dead son in the corner of his hovel if he sees a piteous funeral proceed out of the palace as well; so one bears injury or insult more calmly if one remembers that no power is so great as to be above the reach of harm. Indeed, if even the wisest do wrong, who cannot plead a good excuse for his faults? Let us look back upon our own youth, and think how often we then were too slothful in our duty, too impudent in our speech, too intemperate in our cups. Is anyone angry then let us give him enough time to reflect upon what he has done, and he will correct his own self. But suppose he ought to pay the penalty of his deeds: well, that is no reason why we should act as he does. It cannot be doubted that he who regards his tormentor with contempt raises himself above the common herd and looks down upon them from a loftier position: it is the property of true magnanimity not to feel the blows which it may receive. So does a huge wild beast turn slowly and gaze at yelping curs: so does the wave dash in vain against a great cliff. The man who is not angry remains unshaken by injury: he who is angry has been moved by it. He, however, whom I have described as being placed too high for any mischief to reach him, holds as it were the highest good in his arms: he can reply, not only to any man, but to fortune herself: "Do what you will, you are too feeble to disturb my serenity: this is forbidden by reason, to whom I have entrusted the guidance of my life: to become angry would do me more harm than your violence can do me. 'More harm?' say you. Yes, certainly: I know how much injury you have done me, but I cannot tell to what excesses anger might not carry me."

XXVI.

You say, "I cannot endure it: injuries are hard to bear." You lie; for how can anyone not be able to bear injury, if he can bear to be angry? Besides, what you intend to do is to endure both injury and anger. Why do you bear with the delirium of a sick man, or the ravings of a madman, or the impudent blows of a child? Because, of course, they evidently do not know what they are doing: a man be not responsible for his actions, what does it matter by what malady he became so : the plea of ignorance holds equally good in every case. "What then?" say you, "shall he not be punished?" He will be, even supposing that you do not wish it: for the greatest punishment for having done harm is the sense of having done it, and no one is more severely punished than he who is given over to the punishment of remorse. In the next place, we ought to conder the whole state of mankind, in order to pass a just judgment on all the occurrences of life: for it is unjust to blame individuals for a vice which is common to all. The colour of an Æthiop is not remarkable among this own people, nor is any man in Germany ashamed of red hair rolled into a knot. You cannot call anything peculiar or disgraceful in a particular man if it is the general characteristic of his nation. Now, the cases which I have quoted are defended only by the usage of one out-of-the-way quarter of the world: see now, how far more deserving of pardon those crimes are which are spread abroad among all mankind. We all are hasty and careless, we all are untrustworthy, dissatisfied, and ambitious: nay, why do I try to hide our common wickedness by a too partial description? we all are bad. Every one of us therefore will find in his own breast the vice which he blames in another. Why do you remark how pale this man, or how lean that man is? there is a general pestilence. Let us therefore be more gentle one to another: we are bad men, living among bad men: there is only one thing which can afford us peace, and that is to agree to forgive one another. "This man has already injured me," say you, "and I have not yet injured him." No, but you have probably injured someone else, and you will injure him some day. Do not form your judgment by one hour, or one day: consider the whole tendency of your mind: even

though you have done no evil, yet you are capable of doing it.

XXVII.

How far better is it to heal an injury than to avenge it? Revenge takes up much time, and throws itself in the way of many injuries while it is smarting under one. We all retain our anger longer than we feel our hurt: how far better it were to take the opposite course and not meet one mischief by another. Would anyone think himself to be in his perfect mind if he were to return kicks to a mule or bites to a dog?" These creatures," you say, "know not that they are doing wrong." Then, in the first place, what an unjust judge you must be if a man has less chance of gaining your forgiveness than a beast! Secondly, if animals are protected from your anger by their want of reason, you ought to treat all foolish men in the like manner: for if a man has that mental darkness which excuses all the wrong-doings of dumb animals, what difference does it make if in other respects he be unlike a dumb animal? He has sinned. Well, is this the first time, or will this be the last time? Why, you should not believe him even if he said, "Never will I do so again." He will sin, and another will sin against him, and all his life he will wallow in wickedness. Savagery must be met by kindness: we ought to use, to a man in anger, the argument which is so effective with one in grief, that is, "Shall you leave off this at some time, or never? If you will do so at some time, how better is it that you should abandon anger than that anger should abandon you? Or, will this excitement never leave you? Do you see to what an unquiet life you condemn yourself? for what will be the life of one who is always swelling with rage?" Add to this, that after you have worked yourself up into a rage, and have from time to time renewed the cranes of your excitement, yet your anger will depart from you of its own accord, and time will sap its strength: how much better then is it that it should be overcome by you than by itself?

XXVIII.

If you are angry, you will quarrel first with this man, and then with that: first with slaves, then with freedmen: first with parents, then with children: first with acquaintances, then with strangers: for there are grounds for anger in every case, unless your mind steps in and intercedes with you: your frenzy will drag you from one place to another, and from thence to elsewhere, your madness will constantly meet with newly-occurring irritants, and will never depart from you. Tell me, miserable man, what time you will have for loving? O, what good time you are wasting on an evil thing! How much better it would be to win friends, and disarm enemies: to serve the state, or to busy oneself with one's private affairs, rather than to cast about for what harm you can do to somebody, what wound you can inflict either upon his social position, his fortune, or his person, although you cannot succeed in doing so without a struggle and risk to yourself, even if your antagonist be inferior to you. Even supposing that he were handed over to you in chains, and that you were at liberty to torture him as much as you please, yet even then excessive violence in striking a blow often causes us to dislocate a joint, or entangles a sinew in the teeth which it has broken. Anger makes many men cripples, or invalids, even when it meets with an unresisting victim: and besides this, no creature is so weak that it can be destroyed without any danger to its destroyer: sometimes grief, sometimes chance, puts the weakest on a level with the strongest. What shall we say of the fact that the greater part of the things which enrage us are insults, not injuries? It makes a great difference whether a man thwarts my wishes or merely fails to carry them out, whether he robs me or does not give me anything: yet we count it all the same whether a man takes anything from us or refuses to give anything to us, whether he extinguishes our hope or defers it, whether his object be to hinder us or to help himself, whether he acts out of love for someone or out of hatred for us. Some men are bound to oppose us not only on the ground of justice, but of honour: one is defending his father, another his brother, another his country, another his friend: yet we do not forgive men for doing what we should

blame them for not doing; nay, though one can hardly believe it, we often think well of an act, and ill of the man who did it. But, by Hercules, a great and just man looks with respect at the bravest of his enemies, and the most obstinate defender of his freedom and his country, and wishes that he had such a man for his own countryman and soldier.

XXIX.

It is shameful to hate him whom you praise: but how much more shameful is it to hate a man for something for which he deserves to be pitied? If a prisoner of war, who has suddenly been reduced to the condition of a slave, still retains some remnants of liberty, and does not run nimbly to perform foul and toilsome tasks, if, having grown slothful by long rest, he cannot run fast enough to keep pace with his master's horse or carriage, if sleep overpowers him when weary with many days and nights of watching, if he refuses to undertake farm work, or does not do it heartily when brought away from the idleness of city service and put to hard labour, we ought to make a distinction between whether a man cannot or will not do it: we should pardon many slaves, if we began to judge them before we began to be angry with them: as it is, however, we obey our first impulse, and then, although we may prove to have been excited about mere trifles, yet we continue to be angry, lest we should seem to have begun to be angry without cause; and, most unjust of all, the injustice of our anger makes us persist in it all the more; for we nurse it and inflame it, as though to be violently angry proved our anger to be just.

XXX.

How much better is it to observe how trifling, how inoffensive are the first beginnings of anger? You will see that men are subject to the same influences as dumb animals: we are put out by trumpery, futile matters. Bulls are excited by red colour, the asp raises its head at a shadow, bears or lions are irritated at the shaking of a rag, and all creatures who are naturally fierce and wild are alarmed at trifles. The same thing befalls men both of restless and of sluggish disposition; they are seized by suspicions, sometimes to such an extent that they call slight benefits injuries: and these form the most common and certainly the most bitter subject for anger: for we become angry with our dearest friends for having bestowed less upon us than we expected, and less than others have received from them: yet there is a remedy at hand for both these grievances. Has he favoured our rival more than ourselves? then let us enjoy what we have without making any comparisons. A man will never be well off to whom it is a torture to see any one better off than himself. Have I less than I hoped for? well, perhaps I hoped for more than I ought. This it is against which we ought to be especially on our guard: from hence arises the most destructive anger, sparing nothing, not even the holiest. The Emperor Julius was not stabbed by so many enemies as by friends whose insatiable hopes he had not satisfied. He was willing enough to do so, for no one ever made a more generous use of victory, of whose fruits he kept nothing for himself save the power of distributing them; but how could he glut such unconscionable appetites, when each man coveted as much as any one man could possess? This was why he saw his fellow-soldiers standing round his chair with drawn swords, Tillius Cimber, though he had a short time before been the keenest defender of his party, and others who only became Pompeians after Pompeius was dead. This it is which has turned the arms of kings against them, and made their trustiest followers meditate the death of him for whom and before whom they once would have been glad to die.

XXXI.

No man is satisfied with his own lot if he fixes his attention on that of another: and this leads to our being angry even with the gods, because somebody precedes us, though we forget of how many we take precedence, and that when a man envies few people, he must be followed in the background by a huge crowd of people who envy him. Yet so churlish is human nature, that, however much men may have received, they think themselves wronged if they are able to receive still more. "He gave me the praetorship. Yes, but I had hoped for the consulship. He bestowed the twelve axes upon me: true, but he did not make me a regular consul. He allowed me to give my name to the year, but he did not help me to the priesthood. I have been elected a member of the college: but why only of one? He has bestowed upon me every honour that the state affords: yes, but he has added nothing to my private fortune. What he gave me he was obliged to give to somebody: he brought out nothing from his own pocket." Rather than speak thus, thank him for what you have received: wait for the rest, and be thankful that you are not yet too full to contain more: there is a pleasure in having something left to hope for. Are you preferred to everyone? then rejoice at holding the first place in the thoughts of your friend. Or are many others preferred before you? then think how many more are below you than there are above you. Do you ask, what is your greatest fault? It is, that you keep your accounts wrongly: you set a high value upon what you give, and a low one upon what you receive.

XXXII.

Let different qualities in different people keep us from quarrelling with them . let us fear to be angry with some, feel ashamed of being angry with others, and disdain to be angry with others. We do a fine thing, indeed, when we send a wretched slave to the workhouse! Why are we in such a hurry to flog him at once, to break his legs straightway? we shall not lose our boasted power if we defer its exercise. Let us wait for the time when we ourselves can give orders: at present we speak under constraint from anger. When it has passed away we shall see what amount of damage has been done; for this is what we are especially liable to make mistakes about: we use the sword, and capital punishment, and we appoint chains, imprisonment, and starvation to punish a crime which deserves only flogging with a light scourge. "In what way," say you, "do you bid us look at those things by which we think ourselves injured, that we may see how paltry, pitiful, and childish they are?" Of all things I would charge you to take to yourself a magnanimous spirit, and behold how low and sordid all these matters are about which we squabble and run to and fro till we are out of breath; to anyone who entertains any lofty and magnificent ideas, they are not worthy of a thought.

XXXIII.

The greatest hullabaloo is about money: this it is which wearies out the law-courts, sows strife between father and son, concocts poisons, and gives swords to murderers just as to soldiers: it is stained with our blood: on account of it husbands and wives wrangle all night long, crowds press round the bench of magistrates, kings rage and plunder, and overthrow communities which it has taken the labour of centuries to build, that they may seek for gold and silver in the ashes of their cities. Do you like to look at your money-bags lying in the corner? it is for these that men shout till their eyes start from their heads, that the law-courts ring with the din of trials, and that jurymen brought from great distances sit to decide which man's covetousness is the more equitable. What shall we say if it be not even for a bag of money, but for a handful of coppers or a shilling scored up by a slave that some old man, soon to die without an heir, bursts with rage? what if it be an invalid money-lender whose feet are distorted by the gout, and who can no longer use his hands to count with, who calls for his interest of one thousandth a month, and by his sureties demands his pence even during the paroxysms of his disease? If you were to bring to me all the money from all our mines, which we are at this moment sinking, if you were to bring to-night all that is concealed in hoards, where avarice returns money to the earth from whence it came, and pity that it ever was dug out — all that mass I should not think worthy to cause a wrinkle on the brow of a good man. What ridicule those things deserve which bring tears into our eyes!

XXXIV.

Come now, let us enumerate the other causes of anger: they are food, drink, and the showy apparatus connected with them, words, insults, disrespectful movements of the body, suspicions, obstinate cattle, lazy slaves, and spiteful construction put upon other men's words, so that even the gift of language to mankind becomes reckoned among the wrongs of nature. Believe me, the things which cause us such great heat are trifles, the sort of things that children fight and squabble over: there is nothing serious, nothing important in all that we do with such gloomy faces. It is, I repeat, the setting a great value on trifles that is the cause of your anger and madness. This man wanted to rob me of my inheritance, that one has brought a charge against me before persons whom I had long courted with great expectations, that one has coveted my mistress. A wish for the same things, which ought to have been a bond of friendship, becomes a source of quarrels and hatred. A narrow path causes quarrels among those who pass up and down it; a wide and broadly spread road may be used by whole tribes without jostling. Those objects of desire of yours cause strife and disputes among those who covet the same things, because they are petty, and cannot be given to one man without being taken away from another.

XXXV.

You are indignant at being answered back by your slave, your freedman, your wife, or your client: and then you complain of the state having lost the freedom which you have destroyed in your own house: then again if he is silent when you question him, you call it sullen obstinacy. Let him both speak and be silent, and laugh too. "In the presence of his master?" you ask. Nay, say rather "in the presence of the house-father." Why do you shout? why do you storm? why do you in the middle of dinner call for a whip, because the slaves are talking, because a crowd as large as a public meeting is not as silent as the wilderness? You have ears, not merely that you may listen to musical sounds, softly and sweetly drawn out and harmonized: you ought to hear laughter and weeping, coaxing and quarrelling, joy and sorrow, the human voice and the roaring and barking of animals. Miserable one! why do you shudder at the noise of a slave, at the rattling of brass or the banging of a door? you cannot help hearing the thunder, however refined you may be. You may apply these remarks about your ears with equal truth to your eyes, which are just as dainty, if they have been badly schooled: they are shocked at stains and dirt, at silver plate which is not sufficiently bright, or at a pool whose water is not clear down to the bottom. Those same eyes which can only endure to see the most variegated marble, and that which has just been scoured bright, which will look at no table whose wood is not marked with a network of veining, and which at home are loath to tread upon anything that is not more precious than gold, will, when out of doors, gaze most calmly upon rough and miry paths, will see unmoved that the greater number of persons that meet them are shabbily dressed, and that the walls of the houses are rotten, full of cracks, and uneven. What, then, can be the reason that they are not distressed out of doors by sights which would shock them in their own home, unless it be that their temper is placid and long-suffering in one case, sulky and fault-finding in the other?

XXXVI.

All our senses should be educated into strength: they are naturally able to endure much, provided that the spirit forbears to spoil them. The spirit ought to be brought up for examination daily. It was the custom of Sextius when the day was over, and he had betaken himself to rest, to inquire of his spirit: "What bad habit of yours have you cured to-day? what vice have you checked? in what respect are you better?" Anger will cease, and become more gentle, if it knows that every day it will have to appear before the judgment seat. What can be more admirable than this fashion of discussing the whole of the day's events? how sweet is the sleep which follows this self-examination? how calm, how sound, and careless is it when our spirit has either received praise or reprimand, and when our secret inquisitor and censor has made his report about our morals? I make use of this privilege, and daily plead my cause before myself: when the lamp is taken out of my sight, and my wife, who knows my habit, has ceased to talk, I pass the whole day in review before myself, and repeat all that I have said and done: I conceal nothing from myself, and omit nothing: for why should I be afraid of any of my shortcomings, when it is in my power to say, "I pardon you this time: see that you never do that anymore? In that dispute you spoke too contentiously: do not for the future argue with ignorant people: those who have never been taught are unwilling to learn. You reprimanded that man with more freedom than you ought, and consequently you have offended him instead of amending his ways: in dealing with other cases of the kind, you should look carefully, not only to the truth of what you say, but also whether the person to whom you speak can bear to be told the truth." A good man delights in receiving advice: all the worst men are the most impatient of guidance.

XXXVII.

At the dinner-table some jokes and sayings intended to give you pain have been directed against you: avoid feasting with low people. Those who are not modest even when sober become much more recklessly impudent after drinking. You have seen your friend in a rage with the porter of some lawyer or rich man, because he has sent him back when about to enter, and you yourself on behalf of your friend have been in a rage with the meanest of slaves. Would you then be angry with a chained house-dog? Why, even he, after a long bout of barking, becomes gentle if you offer him food. So draw back and smile; for the moment your porter fancies himself to be somebody, because he guards a door which is beset by a crowd of litigants; for the moment he who sits within is prosperous and happy, and thinks that a street-door through which it is hard to gain entrance is the mark of a rich and powerful man; he knows not that the hardest door of all to open is that of the prison. Be prepared to submit to much. Is anyone surprised at being cold in winter? at being sick at sea? or at being jostled in the street? The mind is strong enough to bear those evils for which it is prepared. When you are not given a sufficiently distinguished place at table you have begun to be angry with your fellow-guests, with your host, and with him who is preferred above you. Idiot! What difference can it make what part of the couch you rest upon? Can a cushion give you honour or take it away? You have looked askance at somebody, because he has spoken slightly of your talents; will you apply this rule to yourself? If so, Ennius, whose poetry you do not care for, would have hated you. Hortensius, if you had found fault with his speeches, would have quarreled with you, and Cicero, if you had laughed at his poetry, would have been your enemy. A candidate for office, will you resent men's votes?

XXXVIII.

Someone has offered you an insult? Not a greater one, probably, than was offered to the Stoic philosopher Diogenes, in whose face an insolent young man spat just when he was lecturing upon anger. He bore it mildly and wisely. "I am not angry," said he, "but I am not sure that I ought not to be angry." Yet how much better did our Cato behave? When he was pleading, one Lentulus, whom our fathers remember as a demagogue and passionate man, spat all the phlegm he could muster upon his forehead. Cato wiped his face, and said, "Lentulus, I shall declare to all the world that men are mistaken when they say that you are wanting in cheek."

XXXIX.

We have now succeeded, my Novatus, in properly regulating our own minds: they either do not feel anger or are above it: let us next see how we may soothe the wrath of others, for we do not only wish to be whole, but to heal. You should not attempt to allay the first burst of anger by words: it is deaf and frantic: we must give it scope; our remedies will only be effective when it slackens. We do not meddle with men's eyes when they are swollen, because we should only irritate their hard stiffness by touching them, nor do we try to cure other diseases when at their height: the best treatment in the first stage of illness is rest. "Of how very little value," say you, "is your remedy, if it appeases anger which is subsiding of its own accord?" In the first place, I answer, it makes it end quicker: in the next, it prevents a relapse. It can render harmless even the violent impulse which it dares not soothe: it will put out of the way all weapons which might be used for revenge: it will pretend to be angry, in order that its advice may have more weight as coming from an assistant and comrade in grief. It will invent delays, and postpone immediate punishment while a greater one is being sought for : it will use every artifice to give the man a respite from his frenzy. If his anger be unusually strong, it will inspire him with some irresistible feeling of shame or of fear: if weak, it will make use of conversation on amusing or novel subjects, and by playing upon his curiosity lead him to forget his passion. We are told that a physician, who was forced to cure the king's daughter, and could not without using the knife, conveyed a lancet to her swollen breast concealed under the sponge with which he was fomenting it. The same girl, who would have shrunk from the remedy if he had applied it openly, bore the pain because she did not expect it. Some diseases can only be cured by deceit.

XL.

To one class of men you will say, "Beware, lest your anger give pleasure to your foes:" to the other, "Beware lest your greatness of mind and the reputation it bears among most people for strength become impaired. I myself, by Hercules, am scandalized at your treatment and am grieved beyond measure, but we must wait for a proper opportunity. He shall pay for what he has done; be well assured of that: when you are able you shall return it to him with interest." To reprove a man when he is angry is to add to his anger by being angry oneself. You should approach him in different ways and in a compliant fashion, unless perchance you be so great a personage that you can quash his anger, as the Emperor Augustus did when he was dining with Vedius Pollio. One of the slaves had broken a crystal goblet of his: Vedius ordered him to be led away to die, and that too in no common fashion: he ordered him to be thrown to feed the muraenae, some of which fish, of great size, he kept in a tank. Who would not think that he did this out of luxury? but it was out of cruelty. The boy slipped through the hands of those who tried to seize him, and flung himself at Caesar's feet in order to beg for nothing more than that he might die in some different way, and not be eaten. Caesar was shocked at this novel form of cruelty, and ordered him to be let go, and, in his place, all the crystal ware which he saw before him to be broken, and the tank to be filled up. This was the proper way for Caesar to reprove his friend: he made a good use of his power. What are you, that when at dinner you order men to be put to death, and mangled by an unheard-of form of torture? Are a man's bowels to be torn asunder because your cup is broken? You must think a great deal of yourself, if even when the emperor is present you order men to be executed.

XLI.

If any one's power is so great that he can treat anger with the tone of a superior let him crush it out of existence, but only if it be of the kind of which I have just spoken, fierce, inhuman, bloodthirsty, and incurable save by fear of something more powerful than itself...let us give the mind that peace which is given by constant meditation upon wholesome maxims, by good actions, and by a mind directed to the pursuit of honour alone. Let us set our own conscience fully at rest, but make no efforts to gain credit for ourselves: so long as we deserve well, let us be satisfied, even if we should be ill spoken of. "But the common herd admires spirited actions, and bold men are held in honour, while quiet ones are thought to be indolent." True, at first sight they may appear to be so: but as soon as the even tenor of their life proves that this quietude arises not from dullness but from peace of mind, then that same populace respects and reverences them. There is, then, nothing useful in that hideous and destructive passion of anger, but on the contrary, every kind of evil, fire and sword. Anger tramples self-restraint under-foot, steeps its hands in slaughter, scatters abroad the limbs of its children: it leaves no place unsoiled by crime, it has no thoughts of glory, no fears of disgrace, and when once anger has hardened into hatred, no amendment is possible.

XLII.

Let us be free from this evil, let us clear our minds of it, and extirpate root and branch a passion which grows again wherever the smallest particle of it finds a resting-place. Let us not moderate anger, but get rid of it altogether: what can moderation have to do with an evil habit? We shall succeed in doing this, if only we exert ourselves. Nothing will be of greater service than to bear in mind that we are mortal: let each man say to himself and to his neighbour, "Why should we, as though we were born to live forever, waste our tiny span of life in declaring anger against any one? why should days, which we might spend in honourable enjoyment, be misapplied in grieving and torturing others? Life is a matter which does not admit of waste, and we have no spare time to throw away. Why do we rush into the fray? why do we go out of our way to seek disputes? why do we, forgetful of the weakness of our nature, undertake mighty feuds, and, frail though we be, summon up all our strength to cut down other men? Ere long, fever or some other bodily ailment will make us unable to carry on this warfare of hatred which we so implacably wage: death will soon part the most vigorous pair of combatants. Why do we make disturbances and spend our lives in rioting? fate hangs over our heads, scores up to our account the days as they pass, and is ever drawing nearer and nearer. The time which you have marked for the death of another perhaps includes your own."

XLIII.

Instead of acting thus, why do you not rather draw together what there is of your short life, and keep it peaceful for others and for yourself? why do you not rather make yourself beloved by everyone while you live, and regretted by everyone when you die? Why do you wish to tame that man's pride, because he takes too lofty a tone with you? why do you try with all your might to crush that other who snaps and snarls at you, a low and contemptible wretch, but spiteful and offensive to his betters? Master, why are you angry with your slave? Slave, why are you angry with your master? Client, why are you angry with your patron? Patron, why are you angry with your client? Wait but a little while. See, here comes death, who will make you all equals. We often see at a morning performance in the arena a battle between a bull and a bear, fastened together, in which the victor, after he has torn the other to pieces, is himself slain. We do just the same thing: we worry someone who is connected with us, although the end of both victor and vanquished is at hand, and that soon. Let us rather pass the little remnant of our lives in peace and quiet: may no one loathe us when we lie dead. A quarrel is often brought to an end by a cry of "Fire!" in the neighbourhood, and the appearance of a wild beast parts the highwayman from the traveller: men have no leisure to battle with minor evils when menaced by some overpowering terror. What have we to do with fighting and ambuscades? do you want anything more than death to befall him with whom you are angry? well, even though you sit quiet, he will be sure to die. You waste your pains: you want to do what is certain to be done. You say, "I do not wish necessarily to kill him, but to punish him by exile, or public disgrace, or loss of property." I can more easily pardon one who wishes to give his enemy a wound than one who wishes to give him a blister: for the latter is not only bad, but petty-minded. Whether you are thinking of extreme or slighter punishments, how very short is the time during which either your victim is tortured or you enjoy an evil pleasure in another's pain? This breath that we hold so dear will soon leave us: in the meantime, while we draw it, while we live among human beings, let us practise

humanity: let us not be a terror or a danger to anyone. Let us keep our tempers in spite of losses, wrongs, abuse or sarcasm, and let us endure with magnanimity our shortlived troubles: while we are considering what is due to ourselves, as the saying is, and worrying ourselves, death will be upon us.

ON THE SHORTNESS OF LIFE



Translated by John W. Basore

Composed circa 49 AD, *De Brevitate Vitae* is a moral essay addressed to Seneca's friend Paulinus. In the text, Seneca discusses several Stoic principles on the nature of time, arguing that men waste much of it in meaningless pursuits. He goes on to explain that nature gives each of us enough time to do what is really important and that the individual must allot his time accordingly. In general, claims Seneca, time can be best used in the study of philosophy.

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I.

The majority of mortals, Paulinus, complain bitterly of the spitefulness of Nature, because we are born for a brief span of life, because even this space that has been granted to us rushes by so speedily and so swiftly that all save a very few find life at an end just when they are getting ready to live. Nor is it merely the common herd and the unthinking crowd that bemoan what is, as men deem it, an universal ill; the same feeling has called forth complaint also from men who were famous. It was this that made the greatest of physicians exclaim that "life is short, art is long;" it was this that led Aristotle, while expostulating with Nature, to enter an indictment most unbecoming to a wise man — that, in point of age, she has shown such favour to animals that they drag out five or ten lifetimes, but that a much shorter limit is fixed for man, though he is born for so many and such great achievements. It is not that we have a short space of time, but that we waste much of it. Life is long enough, and it has been given in sufficiently generous measure to allow the accomplishment of the very greatest things if the whole of it is well invested. But when it is squandered in luxury and carelessness, when it is devoted to no good end, forced at last by the ultimate necessity we perceive that it has passed away before we were aware that it was passing. So it is — the life we receive is not short, but we make it so, nor do we have any lack of it, but are wasteful of it. Just as great and princely wealth is scattered in a moment when it comes into the hands of a bad owner, while wealth however limited, if it is entrusted to a good guardian, increases by use, so our life is amply long for him who orders it properly.

II.

Why do we complain of Nature? She has shown herself kindly; life, if you know how to use it, is long. But one man is possessed by an avarice that is insatiable, another by a toilsome devotion to tasks that are useless; one man is besotted with wine, another is paralyzed by sloth; one man is exhausted by an ambition that always hangs upon the decision of others, another, driven on by the greed of the trader, is led over all lands and all seas by the hope of gain; some are tormented by a passion for war and are always either bent upon inflicting danger upon others or concerned about their own; some there are who are worn out by voluntary servitude in a thankless attendance upon the great; many are kept busy either in the pursuit of other men's fortune or in complaining of their own; many, following no fixed aim, shifting and inconstant and dissatisfied, are plunged by their fickleness into plans that are ever new; some have no fixed principle by which to direct their course, but Fate takes them unawares while they loll and yawn — so surely does it happen that I cannot doubt the truth of that utterance which the greatest of poets delivered with all the seeming of an oracle: "The part of life we really live is small." For all the rest of existence is not life, but merely time. Vices beset us and surround us on every side, and they do not permit us to rise anew and lift up our eyes for the discernment of truth, but they keep us down when once they have overwhelmed us and we are chained to lust. Their victims are never allowed to return to their true selves; if ever they chance to find some release, like the waters of the deep sea which continue to heave even after the storm is past, they are tossed about, and no rest from their lusts abides. Think you that I am speaking of the wretches whose evils are admitted? Look at those whose prosperity men flock to behold; they are smothered by their blessings. To how many are riches a burden! From how many do eloquence and the daily straining to display their powers draw forth blood! How many are pale from constant pleasures! To how many does the throng of clients that crowd about them leave no freedom! In short, run through the list of all these men from the lowest to the highest — this man desires an advocate, this

one answers the call, that one is on trial, that one defends him, that one gives sentence; no one asserts his claim to himself, everyone is wasted for the sake of another. Ask about the men whose names are known by heart, and you will see that these are the marks that distinguish them: A cultivates B and B cultivates C; no one is his own master. And then certain men show the most senseless indignation — they complain of the insolence of their superiors, because they were too busy to see them when they wished an audience! But can anyone have the hardihood to complain of the pride of another when he himself has no time to attend to himself? After all, no matter who you are, the great man does sometimes look toward you even if his face is insolent, he does sometimes condescend to listen to your words, he permits you to appear at his side; but you never deign to look upon yourself, to give ear to yourself. There is no reason, therefore, to count anyone in debt for such services, seeing that, when you performed them, you had no wish for another's company, but could not endure your own.

III.

Though all the brilliant intellects of the ages were to concentrate upon this one theme, never could they adequately express their wonder at this dense darkness of the human mind. Men do not suffer anyone to seize their estates, and they rush to stones and arms if there is even the slightest dispute about the limit of their lands, yet they allow others to trespass upon their life — nay, they themselves even lead in those who will eventually possess it. No one is to be found who is willing to distribute his money, yet among how many does each one of us distribute his life! In guarding their fortune men are often closefisted, yet, when it comes to the matter of wasting time, in the case of the one thing in which it is right to be miserly, they show themselves most prodigal. And so I should like to lay hold upon someone from the company of older men and say: “I see that you have reached the farthest limit of human life, you are pressing hard upon your hundredth year, or are even beyond it; come now, recall your life and make a reckoning. Consider how much of your time was taken up with a moneylender, how much with a mistress, how much with a patron, how much with a client, how much in wrangling with your wife, how much in punishing your slaves, how much in rushing about the city on social duties. Add the diseases which we have caused by our own acts, add, too, the time that has lain idle and unused; you will see that you have fewer years to your credit than you count. Look back in memory and consider when you ever had a fixed plan, how few days have passed as you had intended, when you were ever at your own disposal, when your face ever wore its natural expression, when your mind was ever unperturbed, what work you have achieved in so long a life, how many have robbed you of life when you were not aware of what you were losing, how much was taken up in useless sorrow, in foolish joy, in greedy desire, in the allurements of society, how little of yourself was left to you; you will perceive that you are dying before your season!” What, then, is the reason of this? You live as if you were destined to live forever, no thought of your frailty ever enters your head, of how much time has already gone by you take no heed. You squander time as if you drew

from a full and abundant supply, though all the while that day which you bestow on some person or thing is perhaps your last. You have all the fears of mortals and all the desires of immortals. You will hear many men saying: "After my fiftieth year I shall retire into leisure, my sixtieth year shall release me from public duties." And what guarantee, pray, have you that your life will last longer? Who will suffer your course to be just as you plan it? Are you not ashamed to reserve for yourself only the remnant of life, and to set apart for wisdom only that time which cannot be devoted to any business? How late it is to begin to live just when we must cease to live! What foolish forgetfulness of mortality to postpone wholesome plans to the fiftieth and sixtieth year, and to intend to begin life at a point to which few have attained!

IV.

You will see that the most powerful and highly placed men let drop remarks in which they long for leisure, acclaim it, and prefer it to all their blessings. They desire at times, if it could be with safety, to descend from their high pinnacle; for, though nothing from without should assail or shatter, Fortune of its very self comes crashing down.

The deified Augustus, to whom the gods vouchsafed more than to any other man, did not cease to pray for rest and to seek release from public affairs; all his conversation ever reverted to this subject — his hope of leisure. This was the sweet, even if vain, consolation with which he would gladden his labours — that he would one day live for himself. In a letter addressed to the senate, in which he had promised that his rest would not be devoid of dignity nor inconsistent with his former glory, I find these words: “But these matters can be shown better by deeds than by promises. Nevertheless, since the joyful reality is still far distant, my desire for that time most earnestly prayed for has led me to forestall some of its delight by the pleasure of words.” So desirable a thing did leisure seem that he anticipated it in thought because he could not attain it in reality. He who saw everything depending upon himself alone, who determined the fortune of individuals and of nations, thought most happily of that future day on which he should lay aside his greatness. He had discovered how much sweat those blessings that shone throughout all lands drew forth, how many secret worries they concealed. Forced to pit arms first against his countrymen, then against his colleagues, and lastly against his relatives, he shed blood on land and sea.

Through Macedonia, Sicily, Egypt, Syria, and Asia, and almost all countries he followed the path of battle, and when his troops were weary of shedding Roman blood, he turned them to foreign wars. While he was pacifying the Alpine regions, and subduing the enemies planted in the midst of a peaceful empire, while he was extending its bounds even beyond the Rhine and the Euphrates and the Danube, in Rome itself the swords of Murena, Caepio, Lepidus, Egnatius, and others were being whetted to slay him. Not yet had he

escaped their plots, when his daughter and all the noble youths who were bound to her by adultery as by a sacred oath, oft alarmed his failing years — and there was Paulus, and a second time the need to fear a woman in league with an Antony. When he had cut away these ulcers together with the limbs themselves, others would grow in their place; just as in a body that was overburdened with blood, there was always a rupture somewhere. And so he longed for leisure, in the hope and thought of which he found relief for his labours. This was the prayer of one who was able to answer the prayers of mankind.

V.

Marcus Cicero, long flung among men like Catiline and Clodius and Pompey and Crassus, some open enemies, others doubtful friends, as he is tossed to and fro along with the state and seeks to keep it from destruction, to be at last swept away, unable as he was to be restful in prosperity or patient in adversity — how many times does he curse that very consulship of his, which he had lauded without end, though not without reason! How tearful the words he uses in a letter written to Atticus, when Pompey the elder had been conquered, and the son was still trying to restore his shattered arms in Spain! “Do you ask,” he said, “what I am doing here? I am lingering in my Tusculan villa half a prisoner.” He then proceeds to other statements, in which he bewails his former life and complains of the present and despairs of the future. Cicero said that he was “half a prisoner.” But, in very truth, never will the wise man resort to so lowly a term, never will he be half a prisoner — he who always possesses an undiminished and stable liberty, being free and his own master and towering over all others. For what can possibly be above him who is above Fortune?

VI.

When Livius Drusus, a bold and energetic man, had with the support of a huge crowd drawn from all Italy proposed new laws and the evil measures of the Gracchi, seeing no way out for his policy, which he could neither carry through nor abandon when once started on, he is said to have complained bitterly against the life of unrest he had had from the cradle, and to have exclaimed that he was the only person who had never had a holiday even as a boy. For, while he was still a ward and wearing the dress of a boy, he had had the courage to commend to the favour of a jury those who were accused, and to make his influence felt in the law-courts, so powerfully, indeed, that it is very well known that in certain trials he forced a favourable verdict. To what lengths was not such premature ambition destined to go? One might have known that such precocious hardihood would result in great personal and public misfortune. And so it was too late for him to complain that he had never had a holiday when from boyhood he had been a trouble-maker and a nuisance in the forum. It is a question whether he died by his own hand; for he fell from a sudden wound received in his groin, some doubting whether his death was voluntary, no one, whether it was timely.

It would be superfluous to mention more who, though others deemed them the happiest of men, have expressed their loathing for every act of their years, and with their own lips have given true testimony against themselves; but by these complaints they changed neither themselves nor others. For when they have vented their feelings in words, they fall back into their usual round. Heaven knows! such lives as yours, though they should pass the limit of a thousand years, will shrink into the merest span; your vices will swallow up any amount of time. The space you have, which reason can prolong, although it naturally hurries away, of necessity escapes from you quickly; for you do not seize it, you neither hold it back, nor impose delay upon the swiftest thing in the world, but you allow it to slip away as if it were something superfluous and that could be replaced.

VII.

But among the worst I count also those who have time for nothing but wine and lust; for none have more shameful engrossments. The others, even if they are possessed by the empty dream of glory, nevertheless go astray in a seemly manner; though you should cite to me the men who are avaricious, the men who are wrathful, whether busied with unjust hatreds or with unjust wars, these all sin in more manly fashion. But those who are plunged into the pleasures of the belly and into lust bear a stain that is dishonourable. Search into the hours of all these people, see how much time they give to accounts, how much to laying snares, how much to fearing them, how much to paying court, how much to being courted, how much is taken up in giving or receiving bail, how much by banquets — for even these have now become a matter of business — , and you will see how their interests, whether you call them evil or good, do not allow them time to breathe.

Finally, everybody agrees that no one pursuit can be successfully followed by a man who is busied with many things — eloquence cannot, nor the liberal studies — since the mind, when its interests are divided, takes in nothing very deeply, but rejects everything that is, as it were, crammed into it. There is nothing the busy man is less busied with than living: there is nothing that is harder to learn. Of the other arts there are many teachers everywhere; some of them we have seen that mere boys have mastered so thoroughly that they could even play the master. It takes the whole of life to learn how to live, and — what will perhaps make you wonder more — it takes the whole of life to learn how to die. Many very great men, having laid aside all their encumbrances, having renounced riches, business, and pleasures, have made it their one aim up to the very end of life to know how to live; yet the greater number of them have departed from life confessing that they did not yet know — still less do those others know. Believe me, it takes a great man and one who has risen far above human weaknesses not to allow any of his time to be filched from him, and it follows that the life of such a man is very long because he has devoted wholly to himself whatever time he has

had. None of it lay neglected and idle; none of it was under the control of another, for, guarding it most grudgingly, he found nothing that was worthy to be taken in exchange for his time. And so that man had time enough, but those who have been robbed of much of their life by the public, have necessarily had too little of it.

And there is no reason for you to suppose that these people are not sometimes aware of their loss. Indeed, you will hear many of those who are burdened by great prosperity cry out at times in the midst of their throngs of clients, or their pleadings in court, or their other glorious miseries: "I have no chance to live." Of course you have no chance! All those who summon you to themselves, turn you away from your own self. Of how many days has that defendant robbed you? Of how many that candidate? Of how many that old woman wearied with burying her heirs? Of how many that man who is shamming sickness for the purpose of exciting the greed of the legacy-hunters? Of how many that very powerful friend who has you and your like on the list, not of his friends, but of his retinue? Check off, I say, and review the days of your life; you will see that very few, and those the refuse, have been left for you. That man who had prayed for the fasces, when he attains them, desires to lay them aside and says over and over: "When will this year be over!" That man gives games, and, after setting great value on gaining the chance to give them, now says: "When shall I be rid of them?" That advocate is lionized throughout the whole forum, and fills all the place with a great crowd that stretches farther than he can be heard, yet he says: "When will vacation time come?" Everyone hurries his life on and suffers from a yearning for the future and a weariness of the present. But he who bestows all of his time on his own needs, who plans out every day as if it were his last, neither longs for nor fears the morrow. For what new pleasure is there that any hour can now bring? They are all known, all have been enjoyed to the full. Mistress Fortune may deal out the rest as she likes; his life has already found safety. Something may be added to it, but nothing taken from it, and he will take any addition as the man who is satisfied and filled takes the food which he does not desire and yet can hold. And so there is no reason for you to think that any man has lived long because he has grey hairs or wrinkles; he has not lived long — he has existed long.

For what if you should think that that man had had a long voyage who had been caught by a fierce storm as soon as he left harbour, and, swept hither and thither by a succession of winds that raged from different quarters, had been driven in a circle around the same course? Not much voyaging did he have, but much tossing about.

VIII.

I am often filled with wonder when I see some men demanding the time of others and those from whom they ask it most indulgent. Both of them fix their eyes on the object of the request for time, neither of them on the time itself; just as if what is asked were nothing, what is given, nothing. Men trifle with the most precious thing in the world; but they are blind to it because it is an incorporeal thing, because it does not come beneath the sight of the eyes, and for this reason it is counted a very cheap thing — nay, of almost no value at all. Men set very great store by pensions and doles, and for these they hire out their labour or service or effort. But no one sets a value on time; all use it lavishly as if it cost nothing. But see how these same people clasp the knees of physicians if they fall ill and the danger of death draws nearer, see how ready they are, if threatened with capital punishment, to spend all their possessions in order to live! So great is the inconsistency of their feelings. But if each one could have the number of his future years set before him as is possible in the case of the years that have passed, how alarmed those would be who saw only a few remaining, how sparing of them would they be! And yet it is easy to dispense an amount that is assured, no matter how small it may be; but that must be guarded more carefully which will fail you know not when.

Yet there is no reason for you to suppose that these people do not know how precious a thing time is; for to those whom they love most devotedly they have a habit of saying that they are ready to give them a part of their own years. And they do give it, without realizing it; but the result of their giving is that they themselves suffer loss without adding to the years of their dear ones. But the very thing they do not know is whether they are suffering loss; therefore, the removal of something that is lost without being noticed they find is bearable. Yet no one will bring back the years, no one will bestow you once more on yourself. Life will follow the path it started upon, and will neither reverse nor check its course; it will make no noise, it will not remind you of its swiftness. Silent it will glide on; it will not prolong itself at the command of a king, or at the applause of the populace.

Just as it was started on its first day, so it will run; nowhere will it turn aside, nowhere will it delay. And what will be the result? You have been engrossed, life hastens by; meanwhile death will be at hand, for which, willy nilly, you must find leisure.

IX.

Can anything be sillier than the point of view of certain people — I mean those who boast of their foresight? They keep themselves very busily engaged in order that they may be able to live better; they spend life in making ready to live! They form their purposes with a view to the distant future; yet postponement is the greatest waste of life; it deprives them of each day as it comes, it snatches from them the present by promising something hereafter. The greatest hindrance to living is expectancy, which depends upon the morrow and wastes to-day. You dispose of that which lies in the hands of Fortune, you let go that which lies in your own. Whither do you look? At what goal do you aim? All things that are still to come lie in uncertainty; live straightway! See how the greatest of bards cries out, and, as if inspired with divine utterance, sings the saving strain:

The fairest day in hapless mortals' life
Is ever first to flee.

“Why do you delay,” says he, “Why are you idle? Unless you seize the day, it flees.” Even though you seize it, it still will flee; therefore you must vie with time’s swiftness in the speed of using it, and, as from a torrent that rushes by and will not always flow, you must drink quickly. And, too, the utterance of the bard is most admirably worded to cast censure upon infinite delay, in that he says, not “the fairest age,” but “the fairest day.” Why, to whatever length your greed inclines, do you stretch before yourself months and years in long array, unconcerned and slow though time flies so fast? The poet speaks to you about the day, and about this very day that is flying. Is there, then, any doubt that for hapless mortals, that is, for men who are engrossed, the fairest day is ever the first to flee? Old age surprises them while their minds are still childish, and they come to it unprepared and unarmed, for they have made no provision for it; they have stumbled upon it suddenly and unexpectedly, they did not notice that it was drawing nearer day by day. Even as conversation or reading or deep meditation on some subject beguiles the traveller,

and he finds that he has reached the end of his journey before he was aware that he was approaching it, just so with this unceasing and most swift journey of life, which we make at the same pace whether waking or sleeping; those who are engrossed become aware of it only at the end.

X.

Should I choose to divide my subject into heads with their separate proofs, many arguments will occur to me by which I could prove that busy men find life very short. But Fabianus, who was none of your lecture-room philosophers of to-day, but one of the genuine and old-fashioned kind, used to say that we must fight against the passions with main force, not with artifice, and that the battle-line must be turned by a bold attack, not by inflicting pinpricks; that sophistry is not serviceable, for the passions must be, not nipped, but crushed. Yet, in order that the victims of them may be censured, each for his own particular fault, I say that they must be instructed, not merely wept over.

Life is divided into three periods — that which has been, that which is, that which will be. Of these the present time is short, the future is doubtful, the past is certain. For the last is the one over which Fortune has lost control, is the one which cannot be brought back under any man's power. But men who are engrossed lose this; for they have no time to look back upon the past, and even if they should have, it is not pleasant to recall something they must view with regret. They are, therefore, unwilling to direct their thoughts backward to ill-spent hours, and those whose vices become obvious if they review the past, even the vices which were disguised under some allurements of momentary pleasure, do not have the courage to revert to those hours. No one willingly turns his thought back to the past, unless all his acts have been submitted to the censorship of his conscience, which is never deceived; he who has ambitiously coveted, proudly scorned, recklessly conquered, treacherously betrayed, greedily seized, or lavishly squandered, must needs fear his own memory. And yet this is the part of our time that is sacred and set apart, put beyond the reach of all human mishaps, and removed from the dominion of Fortune, the part which is disquieted by no want, by no fear, by no attacks of disease; this can neither be troubled nor be snatched away — it is an everlasting and unanxious possession. The present offers only one day at a time, and each by minutes; but all the days of past time will appear when you bid them,

they will suffer you to behold them and keep them at your will — a thing which those who are engrossed have no time to do. The mind that is untroubled and tranquil has the power to roam into all the parts of its life; but the minds of the engrossed, just as if weighted by a yoke, cannot turn and look behind. And so their life vanishes into an abyss; and as it does no good, no matter how much water you pour into a vessel, if there is no bottom to receive and hold it, so with time — it makes no difference how much is given; if there is nothing for it to settle upon, it passes out through the chinks and holes of the mind. Present time is very brief, so brief, indeed, that to some there seems to be none; for it is always in motion, it ever flows and hurries on; it ceases to be before it has come, and can no more brook delay than the firmament or the stars, whose ever unresting movement never lets them abide in the same track. The engrossed, therefore, are concerned with present time alone, and it is so brief that it cannot be grasped, and even this is filched away from them, distracted as they are among many things.

XI.

In a word, do you want to know how they do not “live long”? See how eager they are to live long! Decrepit old men beg in their prayers for the addition of a few more years; they pretend that they are younger than they are; they comfort themselves with a falsehood, and are as pleased to deceive themselves as if they deceived Fate at the same time. But when at last some infirmity has reminded them of their mortality, in what terror do they die, feeling that they are being dragged out of life, and not merely leaving it. They cry out that they have been fools, because they have not really lived, and that they will live henceforth in leisure if only they escape from this illness; then at last they reflect how uselessly they have striven for things which they did not enjoy, and how all their toil has gone for nothing. But for those whose life is passed remote from all business, why should it not be ample? None of it is assigned to another, none of it is scattered in this direction and that, none of it is committed to Fortune, none of it perishes from neglect, none is subtracted by wasteful giving, none of it is unused; the whole of it, so to speak, yields income. And so, however small the amount of it, it is abundantly sufficient, and therefore, whenever his last day shall come, the wise man will not hesitate to go to meet death with steady step.

XII.

Perhaps you ask whom I would call “the engrossed”? There is no reason for you to suppose that I mean only those whom the dogs that have at length been let in drive out from the law-court, those whom you see either gloriously crushed in their own crowd of followers, or scornfully in someone else’s, those whom social duties call forth from their own homes to bump them against someone else’s doors, or whom the praetor’s hammer keeps busy in seeking gain that is disreputable and that will one day fester. Even the leisure of some men is engrossed; in their villa or on their couch, in the midst of solitude, although they have withdrawn from all others, they are themselves the source of their own worry; we should say that these are living, not in leisure, but in busy idleness. Would you say that that man is at leisure who arranges with finical care his Corinthian bronzes, that the mania of a few makes costly, and spends the greater part of each day upon rusty bits of copper? Who sits in a public wrestling-place (for, to our shame I we labour with vices that are not even Roman) watching the wrangling of lads? Who sorts out the herds of his pack-mules into pairs of the same age and colour? Who feeds all the newest athletes? Tell me, would you say that those men are at leisure who pass many hours at the barber’s while they are being stripped of whatever grew out the night before? while a solemn debate is held over each separate hair? while either disarranged locks are restored to their place or thinning ones drawn from this side and that toward the forehead? How angry they get if the barber has been a bit too careless, just as if he were shearing a real man! How they flare up if any of their mane is lopped off, if any of it lies out of order, if it does not all fall into its proper ringlets! Who of these would not rather have the state disordered than his hair? Who is not more concerned to have his head trim rather than safe? Who would not rather be well barbered than upright? Would you say that these are at leisure who are occupied with the comb and the mirror? And what of those who are engaged in composing, hearing, and learning songs, while they twist the voice, whose best and simplest movement Nature designed to be straightforward, into the meanderings of some

indolent tune, who are always snapping their fingers as they beat time to some song they have in their head, who are overheard humming a tune when they have been summoned to serious, often even melancholy, matters? These have not leisure, but idle occupation. And their banquets, Heaven knows! I cannot reckon among their unoccupied hours, since I see how anxiously they set out their silver plate, how diligently they tie up the tunics of their pretty slave-boys, how breathlessly they watch to see in what style the wild boar issues from the hands of the cook, with what speed at a given signal smooth-faced boys hurry to perform their duties, with what skill the birds are carved into portions all according to rule, how carefully unhappy little lads wipe up the spittle of drunkards. By such means they seek the reputation of being fastidious and elegant, and to such an extent do their evils follow them into all the privacies of life that they can neither eat nor drink without ostentation. And I would not count these among the leisured class either — the men who have themselves borne hither and thither in a sedan-chair and a litter, and are punctual at the hours for their rides as if it were unlawful to omit them, who are reminded by someone else when they must bathe, when they must swim, when they must dine; so enfeebled are they by the excessive lassitude of a pampered mind that they cannot find out by themselves whether they are hungry! I hear that one of these pampered people — provided that you can call it pampering to unlearn the habits of human life — when he had been lifted by hands from the bath and placed in his sedan-chair, said questioningly: “Am I now seated?” Do you think that this man, who does not know whether he is sitting, knows whether he is alive, whether he sees, whether he is at leisure? I find it hard to say whether I pity him more if he really did not know, or if he pretended not to know this. They really are subject to forgetfulness of many things, but they also pretend forgetfulness of many. Some vices delight them as being proofs of their prosperity; it seems the part of a man who is very lowly and despicable to know what he is doing. After this imagine that the mimes fabricate many things to make a mock of luxury! In very truth, they pass over more than they invent, and such a multitude of unbelievable vices has come forth in this age, so clever in this one direction, that by now we can charge the mimes

with neglect. To think that there is anyone who is so lost in luxury that he takes another's word as to whether he is sitting down! This man, then, is not at leisure, you must apply to him a different term — he is sick, nay, he is dead; that man is at leisure, who has also a perception of his leisure. But this other who is half alive, who, in order that he may know the postures of his own body, needs someone to tell him — how can he be the master of any of his time?

XIII.

It would be tedious to mention all the different men who have spent the whole of their life over chess or ball or the practice of baking their bodies in the sun. They are not unoccupied whose pleasures are made a busy occupation. For instance, no one will have any doubt that those are laborious triflers who spend their time on useless literary problems, of whom even among the Romans there is now a great number. It was once a foible confined to the Greeks to inquire into what number of rowers Ulysses had, whether the Iliad or the Odyssey was written first, whether moreover they belong to the same author, and various other matters of this stamp, which, if you keep them to yourself, in no way pleasure your secret soul, and, if you publish them, make you seem more of a bore than a scholar. But now this vain passion for learning useless things has assailed the Romans also. In the last few days I heard someone telling who was the first Roman general to do this or that; Duilius was the first who won a naval battle, Curius Dentatus was the first who had elephants led in his triumph. Still, these matters, even if they add nothing to real glory, are nevertheless concerned with signal services to the state; there will be no profit in such knowledge, nevertheless it wins our attention by reason of the attractiveness of an empty subject. We may excuse also those who inquire into this — who first induced the Romans to go on board ship. It was Claudius, and this was the very reason he was surnamed Caudex, because among the ancients a structure formed by joining together several boards was called a *caudex*, whence also the Tables of the Law are called *codices*, and, in the ancient fashion, boats that carry provisions up the Tiber are even to-day called *codicariae*. Doubtless this too may have some point — the fact that Valerius Corvinus was the first to conquer Messana, and was the first of the family of the Valerii to bear the surname Messana because he had transferred the name of the conquered city to himself, and was later called Messala after the gradual corruption of the name in the popular speech. Perhaps you will permit someone to be interested also in this — the fact that Lucius Sulla was the first to exhibit loosed lions in the Circus, though at other times they were

exhibited in chains, and that javelin-throwers were sent by King Bocchus to despatch them? And, doubtless, this too may find some excuse — but does it serve any useful purpose to know that Pompey was the first to exhibit the slaughter of eighteen elephants in the Circus, pitting criminals against them in a mimic battle? He, a leader of the state and one who, according to report, was conspicuous among the leaders of old for the kindness of his heart, thought it a notable kind of spectacle to kill human beings after a new fashion. Do they fight to the death? That is not enough! Are they torn to pieces? That is not enough! Let them be crushed by animals of monstrous bulk! Better would it be that these things pass into oblivion lest hereafter some all-powerful man should learn them and be jealous of an act that was nowise human. O, what blindness does great prosperity cast upon our minds! When he was casting so many troops of wretched human beings to wild beasts born under a different sky, when he was proclaiming war between creatures so ill matched, when he was shedding so much blood before the eyes of the Roman people, who itself was soon to be forced to shed more. he then believed that he was beyond the power of Nature. But later this same man, betrayed by Alexandrine treachery, offered himself to the dagger of the vilest slave, and then at last discovered what an empty boast his surname was.

But to return to the point from which I have digressed, and to show that some people bestow useless pains upon these same matters — the man I mentioned related that Metellus, when he triumphed after his victory over the Carthaginians in Sicily, was the only one of all the Romans who had caused a hundred and twenty captured elephants to be led before his car; that Sulla was the last of the Roman's who extended the *pomerium*, which in old times it was customary to extend after the acquisition of Italian but never of provincial, territory. Is it more profitable to know this than that Mount Aventine, according to him, is outside the *pomerium* for one of two reasons, either because that was the place to which the plebeians had seceded, or because the birds had not been favourable when Remus took his auspices on that spot — and, in turn, countless other reports that are either crammed with falsehood or are of the same sort? For though you grant that they tell these things in good

faith, though they pledge themselves for the truth of what they write, still whose mistakes will be made fewer by such stories? Whose passions will they restrain? Whom will they make more brave, whom more just, whom more noble-minded? My friend Fabianus used to say that at times he was doubtful whether it was not better not to apply oneself to any studies than to become entangled in these.

XIV.

Of all men they alone are at leisure who take time for philosophy, they alone really live; for they are not content to be good guardians of their own lifetime only. They annex ever age to their own; all the years that have gone ore them are an addition to their store. Unless we are most ungrateful, all those men, glorious fashioners of holy thoughts, were born for us; for us they have prepared a way of life. By other men's labours we are led to the sight of things most beautiful that have been wrested from darkness and brought into light; from no age are we shut out, we have access to all ages, and if it is our wish, by greatness of mind, to pass beyond the narrow limits of human weakness, there is a great stretch of time through which we may roam. We may argue with Socrates, we may doubt with Carneades, find peace with Epicurus, overcome human nature with the Stoics, exceed it with the Cynics. Since Nature allows us to enter into fellowship with every age, why should we not turn from this paltry and fleeting span of time and surrender ourselves with all our soul to the past, which is boundless, which is eternal, which we share with our betters?

Those who rush about in the performance of social duties, who give themselves and others no rest, when they have fully indulged their madness, when they have every day crossed everybody's threshold, and have left no open door unvisited, when they have carried around their venal greeting to houses that are very far apart — out of a city so huge and torn by such varied desires, how few will they be able to see? How many will there be who either from sleep or self-indulgence or rudeness will keep them out! How many who, when they have tortured them with long waiting, will rush by, pretending to be in a hurry! How many will avoid passing out through a hall that is crowded with clients, and will make their escape through some concealed door as if it were not more discourteous to deceive than to exclude. How many, still half asleep and sluggish from last night's debauch, scarcely lifting their lips in the midst of a most insolent yawn, manage to bestow on yonder poor wretches, who break their own slumber in order to wait on that of

another, the right name only after it has been whispered to them a thousand times!

But we may fairly say that they alone are engaged in the true duties of life who shall wish to have Zeno, Pythagoras, Democritus, and all the other high priests of liberal studies, and Aristotle and Theophrastus, as their most intimate friends every day. No one of these will be “not at home,” no one of these will fail to have his visitor leave more happy and more devoted to himself than when he came, no one of these will allow anyone to leave him with empty hands; all mortals can meet with them by night or by day.

XV.

No one of these will force you to die, but all will teach you how to die; no one of these will wear out your years, but each will add his own years to yours; conversations with no one of these will bring you peril, the friendship of none will endanger your life, the courting of none will tax your purse. From them you will take whatever you wish; it will be no fault of theirs if you do not draw the utmost that you can desire. What happiness, what a fair old age awaits him who has offered himself as a client to these! He will have friends from whom he may seek counsel on matters great and small, whom he may consult every day about himself, from whom he may hear truth without insult, praise without flattery, and after whose likeness he may fashion himself.

We are wont to say that it was not in our power to choose the parents who fell to our lot, that they have been given to men by chance; yet *we* may be the sons of whomsoever we will. Households there are of noblest intellects; choose the one into which you wish to be adopted; you will inherit not merely their name, but even their property, which there will be no need to guard in a mean or niggardly spirit; the more persons you share it with, the greater it will become. These will open to you the path to immortality, and will raise you to a height from which no one is cast down. This is the only way of prolonging mortality — nay, of turning it into immortality. Honours, monuments, all that ambition has commanded by decrees or reared in works of stone, quickly sink to ruin; there is nothing that the lapse of time does not tear down and remove. But the works which philosophy has consecrated cannot be harmed; no age will destroy them, no age reduce them; the following and each succeeding age will but increase the reverence for them, since envy works upon what is close at hand, and things that are far off we are more free to admire. The life of the philosopher, therefore, has wide range, and he is not confined by the same bounds that shut others in. He alone is freed from the limitations of the human race; all ages serve him as if a god. Has some time passed by? This he embraces by recollection.

Is time present? This he uses. Is it still to come? This he anticipates.
He makes his life long by combining all times into one.

XVI.

But those who forget the past, neglect the present, and fear for the future have a life that is very brief and troubled; when they have reached the end of it, the poor wretches perceive too late that for such a long while they have been busied in doing nothing. Nor because they sometimes invoke death, have you any reason to think it any proof that they find life long. In their folly they are harassed by shifting emotions which rush them into the very things they dread; they often pray for death because they fear it. And, too, you have no reason to think that this is any proof that they are living a long time — the fact that the day often seems to them long, the fact that they complain that the hours pass slowly until the time set for dinner arrives; for, whenever their engrossments fail them, they are restless because they are left with nothing to do, and they do not know how to dispose of their leisure or to drag out the time. And so they strive for something else to occupy them, and all the intervening time is irksome; exactly as they do when a gladiatorial exhibition^b has been announced, or when they are waiting for the appointed time of some other show or amusement, they want to skip over the days that lie between. All postponement of something they hope for seems long to them. Yet the time which they enjoy is short and swift, and it is made much shorter by their own fault; for they flee from one pleasure to another and cannot remain fixed in one desire. Their days are not long to them, but hateful; yet, on the other hand, how scanty seem the nights which they spend in the arms of a harlot or in wine! It is this also that accounts for the madness of poets in fostering human frailties by the tales in which they represent that Jupiter under the enticement of the pleasures of a lover doubled the length of the night. For what is it but to inflame our vices to inscribe the name of the gods as their sponsors, and to present the excused indulgence of divinity as an example to our own weakness? Can the nights which they pay for so dearly fail to seem all too short to these men? They lose the day in expectation of the night, and the night in fear of the dawn.

XVII.

The very pleasures of such men are uneasy and disquieted by alarms of various sorts, and at the very moment of rejoicing the anxious thought comes over them: How long will these things last?" This feeling has led kings to weep over the power they possessed, and they have not so much delighted in the greatness of their fortune, as they have viewed with terror the end to which it must some time come. When the King of Persia, in all the insolence of his pride, spread his army over the vast plains and could not grasp its number but simply its measure, he shed copious tears because inside of a hundred years not a man of such a mighty army would be alive. But he who wept was to bring upon them their fate, was to give some to their doom on the sea, some on the land, some in battle, some in flight, and within a short time was to destroy all those for whose hundredth year he had such fear. And why is it that even their joys are uneasy from fear? Because they do not rest on stable causes, but are perturbed as groundlessly as they are born. But of what sort do you think those times are which even by their own confession are wretched, since even the joys by which they are exalted and lifted above mankind are by no means pure? All the greatest blessings are a source of anxiety, and at no time is fortune less wisely trusted than when it is best; to maintain prosperity there is need of other prosperity, and in behalf of the prayers that have turned out well we must make still other prayers. For everything that comes to us from chance is unstable, and the higher it rises, the more liable it is to fall. Moreover, what is doomed to perish brings pleasure to no one; very wretched, therefore, and not merely short, must the life of those be who work hard to gain what they must work harder to keep. By great toil they attain what they wish, and with anxiety hold what they have attained; meanwhile they take no account of time that will never more return. New engrossments take the place of the old, hope leads to new hope, ambition to new ambition. They do not seek an end of their wretchedness, but change the cause. Have we been tormented by our own public honours? Those of others take more of our time. Have we ceased to labour as candidates? We begin to canvass for

others. Have we got rid of the troubles of a prosecutor? We find those of a judge. Has a man ceased to be a judge? He becomes president of a court. Has he become infirm in managing the property of others at a salary? He is perplexed by caring for his own wealth. Have the barracks set Marius free? The consulship keeps him busy. Does Quintius hasten to get to the end of his dictatorship? He will be called back to it from the plough. Scipio will go against the Carthaginians before he is ripe for so great an undertaking; victorious over Hannibal, victorious over Antiochus, the glory of his own consulship, the surety for his brother's, did he not stand in his own way, he would be set beside Jove; but the discord of civilians will vex their preserver, and, when as a young man he had scorned honours that rivalled those of the gods, at length, when he is old, his ambition will take delight in stubborn exile. Reasons for anxiety will never be lacking, whether born of prosperity or of wretchedness; life pushes on in a succession of engrossments. We shall always pray for leisure, but never enjoy it.

XVIII.

And so, my dearest Paulinus, tear yourself away from the crowd, and, too much storm-tossed for the time you have lived, at length withdraw into a peaceful harbour. Think of how many waves you have encountered, how many storms, on the one hand, you have sustained in private life, how many, on the other, you have brought upon yourself in public life; long enough has your virtue been displayed in laborious and unceasing proofs — try how it will behave in leisure. The greater part of your life, certainly the better part of it, has been given to the state; take now some part of your time for yourself as well. And I do not summon you to slothful or idle inaction, or to drown all your native energy in slumbers and the pleasures that are dear to the crowd. That is not to rest; you will find far greater works than all those you have hitherto performed so energetically, to occupy you in the midst of your release and retirement. You, I know, manage the accounts of the whole world as honestly as you would a stranger's, as carefully as you would your own, as conscientiously as you would the state's. You win love in an office in which it is difficult to avoid hatred; but nevertheless believe me, it is better to have knowledge of the ledger of one's own life than of the corn-market. Recall that keen mind of yours, which is most competent to cope with the greatest subjects, from a service that is indeed honourable but hardly adapted to the happy life, and reflect that in all your training in the liberal studies, extending from your earliest years, you were not aiming at this — that it might be safe to entrust many thousand pecks of corn to your charge; you gave hope of something greater and more lofty. There will be no lack of men of tested worth and painstaking industry. But plodding oxen are much more suited to carrying heavy loads than thoroughbred horses, and who ever hampers the fleetness of such high-born creatures with a heavy pack? Reflect, besides, how much worry you have in subjecting yourself to such a great burden; your dealings are with the belly of man. A hungry people neither listens to reason, nor is appeased by justice, nor is bent by any entreaty. Very recently within those few day's after Gaius Caesar died — still grieving most deeply

(if the dead have any feeling) because he knew that the Roman people were alive and had enough food left for at any rate seven or eight days while he was building his bridges of boats and playing with the resources of the empire, we were threatened with the worst evil that can befall men even during a siege — the lack of provisions; his imitation of a mad and foreign and misproud king was very nearly at the cost of the city's destruction and famine and the general revolution that follows famine. What then must have been the feeling of those who had charge of the corn-market, and had to face stones, the sword, fire — and a Caligula? By the greatest subterfuge they concealed the great evil that lurked in the vitals of the state — with good reason, you may be sure. For certain maladies must be treated while the patient is kept in ignorance; knowledge of their disease has caused the death of many.

XIX.

Do you retire to these quieter, safer, greater things! Think you that it is just the same whether you are concerned in having corn from oversea poured into the granaries, unhurt either by the dishonesty or the neglect of those who transport it, in seeing that it does not become heated and spoiled by collecting moisture and tallies in weight and measure, or whether you enter upon these sacred and lofty studies with the purpose of discovering what substance, what pleasure, what mode of life, what shape God has; what fate awaits your soul; where Nature lays us to rest When we are freed from the body; what the principle is that upholds all the heaviest matter in the centre of this world, suspends the light on high, carries fire to the topmost part, summons the stars to their proper changes — and ether matters, in turn, full of mighty wonders? You really must leave the ground and turn your mind's eye upon these things! Now while the blood is hot, we must enter with brisk step upon the better course. In this kind of life there awaits much that is good to know — the love and practice of the virtues, forgetfulness of the passions, knowledge of living and dying, and a life of deep repose.

The condition of all who are engrossed is wretched, but most wretched is the condition of those who labour at engrossments that are not even their own, who regulate their sleep by that of another, their walk by the pace of another, who are under orders in case of the freest things in the world — loving and hating. If these wish to know how short their life is, let them reflect how small a part of it is their own.

XX.

And so when you see a man often wearing the robe of office, when you see one whose name is famous in the Forum, do not envy him; those things are bought at the price of life. They will waste all their years, in order that they may have one year reckoned by their name. Life has left some in the midst of their first struggles, before they could climb up to the height of their ambition; some, when they have crawled up through a thousand indignities to the crowning dignity, have been possessed by the unhappy thought that they have but toiled for an inscription on a tomb; some who have come to extreme old age, while they adjusted it to new hopes as if it were youth, have had it fail from sheer weakness in the midst of their great and shameless endeavours. Shameful is he whose breath leaves him in the midst of a trial when, advanced in years and still courting the applause of an ignorant circle, he is pleading for some litigant who is the veriest stranger; disgraceful is he who, exhausted more quickly by his mode of living than by his labour, collapses in the very midst of his duties; disgraceful is he who dies in the act of receiving payments on account, and draws a smile from his long delayed heir. I cannot pass over an instance which occurs to me. Sextus Turannius was an old man of long tested diligence, who, after his ninetieth year, having received release from the duties of his office by Gaius Caesar's own act, ordered himself to be laid out on his bed and to be mourned by the assembled household as if he were dead. The whole house bemoaned the leisure of its old master, and did not end its sorrow until his accustomed work was restored to him. Is it really such pleasure for a man to die in harness? Yet very many have the same feeling; their desire for their labour lasts longer than their ability; they fight against the weakness of the body, they judge old age to be a hardship on no other score than because it puts them aside. The law does not draft a soldier after his fiftieth year, it does not call a senator after his sixtieth; it is more difficult for men to obtain leisure from themselves than from the law. Meantime, while they rob and are being robbed, while they break up each other's repose, while they make each other wretched, their life is without

profit, without pleasure, without any improvement of the mind. No one keeps death in view, no one refrains from far-reaching hopes; some men, indeed, even arrange for things that lie beyond life — huge masses of tombs and dedications of public works and gifts for their funeral-pyres and ostentatious funerals. But, in very truth, the funerals of such men ought to be conducted by the light of torches and wax tapers, as though they had lived but the tiniest span.

THE PUMPKINIFICATION OF THE DIVINE CLAUDIUS



Translated by Allan Perley Ball

The *Apocolocyntosis divi Claudii* is a political satire on the Roman Emperor Claudius, ascribed to Seneca the Younger, though this had been called into question by some scholars. It is the only example of Menippean satire from the classical era that has survived. The title plays upon “apotheosis”, the process by which dead Roman Emperors were formally recognised as gods. The satire concerns Claudius’ death, his ascent to heaven and judgment by the gods, and his eventual descent to Hades. At each turn, Seneca mocks the Emperor’s personal failings, most notably his arrogant cruelty and his inarticulateness.

Seneca, if indeed he is the author, had a personal reason for satirising Claudius, as the Emperor had previously banished him to Corsica. In addition, the political climate after the Emperor’s death may have made attacks on him popular. However, alongside these personal considerations, Seneca appears also to have been concerned with what he saw as an overuse of apotheosis writing as a political tool. If an Emperor as flawed as Claudius could receive such treatment, he argued elsewhere, then people would cease to believe in the gods at all. Nevertheless, a reading of the text demonstrates that Seneca was not above flattery of the new emperor Nero, hoping he would live longer and be wiser than the legendary Nestor.



Claudius depicted as the Roman god Jupiter, Vatican Museum

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I wish to record an occurrence which took place in heaven on the third day before the Ides of October, in the new year which began our fortunate era. I am not going to be diverted by either fear or favor. I shall tell the unvarnished truth. If anybody asks me where I got my information, I say at once, I'll not answer if I don't want to. Who is going to make me? I know I have been free to do as I like since the day when he died who had made the proverb true: One must be born either king or fool. If I please to answer, I shall say what comes to my tongue. Who ever demanded affidavits from an historian? Still, if I must produce my authority, apply to the man who saw Drusilla going heavenward; he will say he saw Claudius limping along in the same direction. Willy-nilly, he has to see everything that happens in heaven; for he is the superintendent of the Appian road, by which you know both the divine Augustus and Tiberius Caesar went to join the gods. If you ask this man he will tell you privately; in presence of more than one he'll never speak a word. For since the day when he took oath in the Senate that he had seen Drusilla going up to heaven and in return for such good news nobody believed him, he has declared in so many words that he'll not testify about anything, not even if he should see a man murdered in the middle of the Forum. What I have heard from him, then, I state positively and plainly, so help him!

2

Now was come the season when Phoebus had narrowed the daylight, Shortening his journey, while sleep's dim hours were left to grow longer; Now victorious Cynthia was widening the bounds of her kingdom; Ugly-faced Winter was snatching away the rich glories of Autumn, So that the tardy vintager, seeing that Bacchus was aging, Hastily, here and there, was plucking the clusters forgotten.

I presume I shall be better understood if I say that the month was October and the day October thirteenth; the exact hour I cannot tell you — it's easier to get philosophers to agree than timepieces — but it was between noon and one o'clock.

"Too clumsily put!" you will say. "All the poets are unsatisfied to describe sunrises and sunsets, so that they are even tackling the middle of the day: are you going to neglect so good an hour?"

Phoebus already had passed the highest point of his circuit, Wearily shaking the reins as his car drew nearer the evening, Leading away the half-spent light on its down-dipping pathway.

3

Claudius began to give up the ghost, but couldn't find a way out for it. Then Mercury, who had always had a fancy for his character, led aside one of the three Fates and said: "Why, O hard-hearted woman, do you let the wretched man be tormented? Isn't he ever to have a rest, after being tortured so long? It is the sixty-fourth year that he has been afflicted with life. What grudge have you got against him and the nation? For once let the prophets tell the truth, who have been taking him off every year, every month even, since he was made emperor. And still it's no wonder if they go wrong and nobody knows his hour; for nobody ever made any account of his being born. Do what is necessary:

'Give him over to death: let a better man reign in his place.'"

But Clotho remarked, "I swear I intended to give him a trifle more time, till he should make citizens out of the few that are left outside — for he had made up his mind to see everybody, Greeks, Gauls, Spaniards, Britons, wearing togas. However, since it is perhaps a good thing to have a few foreigners left as a nucleus, and since you wish it, it shall be attended to." Then she opened a bandbox and brought out three spindles; one was that of Augurinus, the next was Baba's, the third Claudius'. "I will have these three die at short intervals within a year," she said, "and not send him off unattended. For it isn't right that one who has been in the habit of seeing so many thousands of people following him about, going ahead of him, and all around him, should all of a sudden be left alone. For a while he will be satisfied with these boon-companions."

Thus having spoken she wound up the thread on his spindle neglected, Breaking off the royal days of his stupid existence. Lachesis, waiting meanwhile, with tresses charmingly ordered, Crowning the locks on her brow with a wreath of Pierian laurel, Drew from a snowy fleece white strands which, cleverly fashioned, Under her artful fingers began with new colors to glisten: — Spun to a thread that drew the admiring gaze of her sisters. Changed was the common wool, until as a metal most precious, Golden the age that was winding down in that beautiful fillet. Ceaselessly they too labored; and bringing the finest of fleeces, Gayly they filled her hands, for sweet was the duty allotted. She, in her eagerness, hastened the work, nor was conscious of effort; Lightly the soft strands fell from the whirling point of her spindle, Passing the life of Tithonus, passing the lifetime of Nestor. Phoebus came with his singing, and, happy in anticipation, Joyously plied the plectrum, or aided the work of the spinners: Kept their hearts intent, with his song beguiling their labor. While beyond thought they rejoiced in their brother's music, their hands spun, Busily twining a destiny passing all human allotment, Wrought through the spell of Phoebus' lyre and his praise, as he bade them: "Stay not your hands, O Fateful Sisters, but make him a victor Over the barriers that limit the common lifetime of mortals; Let him be blessed with a grace and a beauty like mine, and in music Grant him no meaner gifts. An age of joy shall he bring men Weary for laws that await his restoring. Like Lucifer comes he, Putting the scattered stars to flight, or like Hesper at nightfall, Rising when stars return; or e'en as the Sun, — when Aurora First has dispelled the dark and blushing led forth the morning, — Brightly gleams on the world and renews his chariot's journey, So cometh Caesar; so in his glory shall Rome behold Nero. Thus do his radiant features gleam with a gentle effulgence, Graced by the flowing locks that fall encircling his shoulders."

Thus Apollo. But Lachesis, who herself, too, had a fondness for the handsomest of men, wrought with generous hand, and bestowed upon Nero many years from her own store. As for Claudius,

however, everybody gave orders

With joy and great content to send him out of doors.¹

And indeed he did go up the flume, and from that moment ceased to appear to be alive. He expired, moreover, while listening to comic actors, so you understand it isn't without reason that I am afraid of those fellows. His last words that were heard among men were these, after a louder utterance in the locality where he expressed himself the more easily: "Oh, dear! I think I have hurt² myself." Whether he had, I don't know; at any rate he was in the habit of hurting everything.

What happened afterward on earth it is superfluous to describe. For you know very well, and there is no danger that things which the universal joy had impressed upon the memory will slip from it; no one forgets his own good fortune. Listen to what happened in heaven: it is on the authority of the narrator. The news was brought to Jupiter that somebody had come, a rather tall man, quite gray-headed; that he was threatening something or other, for he kept shaking his head; and that he limped with his right foot. The messenger said he had asked of what nation he was, but his answer was mumbled in some kind of an incoherent noise; he didn't recognize the man's language, but he wasn't either Greek or Roman or of any known race. Then Jupiter told Hercules, who had travelled all over the world and was supposed to be acquainted with all the nations, to go and find out what sort of a man it was. Hercules at the first sight was a good deal disturbed, even though he was one who didn't fear any sort of monsters. When he beheld the aspect of this unknown specimen, its extraordinary gait, its voice belonging to no earthly creature but more like that of the monsters of the deep, hoarse and inarticulate, he thought that a thirteenth labor had come to him. When he looked more carefully, however, it appeared to be a man. He approached him and thus spoke, as was easiest for a Greek chap:

Who and whence art thou, and where are thy city and parents?

Claudius was delighted to find literary people there, hoping there would be some place for his histories. So he, too, in a Homeric verse, indicating himself to be Caesar, said:

Hence from Ilium the winds have among the Cicones cast me.

But the following verse would have been truer, and equally Homeric:

There their city I wasted; the people I slaughtered.

And he would have imposed upon the guileless Hercules, had not Fever been there, who alone had left her shrine and come with him. All the other divinities he had left behind at Rome. She said, "It is simple nonsense that he is giving you. I tell you — I who have lived with him for so many years — he was born at Lugudunum; you behold one of Marcus' citizens. As I'm telling you, he was born sixteen miles from Vienna, a genuine Gaul. And so as a Gaul ought to do, he captured Rome. Take my word for it, he was born at Lugudunum, where Licinus reigned for many years. But you, who have tramped more lands than any wandering muleteer, ought to know men from Lugudunum and that there are a good many miles between the Xanthus and the Rhone." At this point Claudius fired up and angrily grumbled as loudly as he could. What he was saying, nobody understood, except that he commanded Fever to be led away to punishment. With the familiar gesture of his limp hand, that was steady enough for the one purpose of decapitating people as he was accustomed, he had ordered her head to be struck off. You would suppose all those present were his freedmen, so little attention did any one pay him.

Then Hercules said, "Listen to me and stop talking nonsense. You have come to a place where the mice gnaw iron. Tell me the truth, quick, or I'll knock the silliness out of you." And in order to be more terrifying, he struck the attitude of a tragedian and said:

"Declare at once the place you call your natal town, Or else, by this tough cudgel smitten, down you go! This club has slaughtered many a mighty potentate. What's that, that in a muffled voice you're trying to say? Where is the land or race to own your shaky head? Speak out. Oh, I remember when afar I sought The triple-bodied king's domains, whose famous herd From the western sea I drove to the city of Inachus, I saw a hill above two rivers, towering high In face of Phoebus rising each day opposite, Where the broad Rhone pours by in swiftly moving flood, And Arar, pausing ere it lets its waters go, Silently laves the borders of its quiet pools. Is that the land that nursed you when you first drew breath?"

These things he said with spirit, and boldly enough. All the same, he was inwardly a good deal afraid of the madman's blow. Claudius, seeing the mighty hero, forgot his nonsense and perceived that while no one had been a match for him at Rome, here he didn't have the same advantage; a cock is master only on his own dunghill. So, as well as could be made out, this is what he appeared to say: "I did hope that you, Hercules, bravest of the gods, would stand by me before the others, and if any one had asked me who could vouch for me, I should have named you, who know me best. For if you recall, I was the one who held court before your temple all day long during the months of July and August. You know how many troubles I had there, listening to the lawyers day and night; and if you had fallen among those fellows, though you may think that you are pretty courageous, you would have preferred to clean Augeas' stables. I have cleaned out much more filth. But since I want" — 3

“It’s no wonder you have made an assault upon the senate-house; nothing is closed to you. Only tell us what sort of a god you want him to be made. He cannot be an Epicurean god, neither having himself any care nor causing any to others. A Stoic? How can he be ‘round,’ as Varro says, ‘without head or prepuce’? Yet there is something in him of the Stoic god, now I see. He has neither heart nor head. By Hercules, though, if me had asked this favor of Saturn, whose festival month the Saturnalian prince kept going the whole year long, he wouldn’t have got it; and surely he wouldn’t of Jove, whom so far as he possibly could he convicted of incest. For he put to death Silanus his son-in-law, just because the man preferred that his sister, prettiest of all the girls, so that everybody called her Venus, should be called his Juno. ‘Why his sister?’ you say, — in fact, I ask it. Think, you blockhead. At Athens that sort of thing is halfway allowed; at Alexandria altogether. ‘But since at Rome,’ you say, ‘the mice live on dainties.’ He’s going to straighten our crooked ways! He doesn’t know what goes on in his own chamber, and now ‘he searches the regions of heaven.’ He wants to become a god. Isn’t he satisfied that he has a temple in Britain; that the barbarians worship him and beseech him as a god that they may find him a merciful madman?”

At length it occurred to Jove that while ordinary persons are staying in the senate-house it is not permitted to express an opinion nor to argue. "I had allowed you to ask questions, Conscript Fathers," he said, "but you have brought out simply rubbish. I want you to observe the rules of the Senate. What will this person, whoever he is, think of us?"

When the said individual had been sent out, Father Janus was the first to be asked his opinion. He had been elected afternoon consul for the first of July, being a very shrewd man, who always sees at once both forward and backward. He spoke at some length, and fluently, because he lives in the Forum; but the stenographer could not follow, and therefore I do not report him, for fear of misquoting what he said. He said a good deal about the importance of the gods, and that this honor ought not to be given commonly. "Once," said he, "it was a great thing to be made a god, but now you have made the distinction a farce. And so lest my remarks seem to be dealing with personalities rather than with the case, I move that from this day forward no one shall be made a god, from among all those who eat the fruit of the corn-land or those whom the fruitful corn-land feeds. Whoever contrary to this decree of the Senate shall be made, called, or depicted as a god, is to be given to the hobgoblins, and to get a thrashing among the newly hired gladiators at the next show."

The next to be asked his opinion was Diespiter the son of Vica Porta, who was himself also a consul-elect, and a money-changer; by this business he supported himself, and he was accustomed to sell citizenships in a small way. Hercules approached him politely and gave him an admonitory touch on the ear. Accordingly he expressed his opinion in these words: "Whereas the divine Claudius is by blood related to the divine Augustus and no less also to the divine Augusta, his grandmother, who was made a goddess by his own orders, and whereas he far surpasses all mortals in wisdom, and it is for the public interest that there be some one who can join Romulus in 'eating of boiling hot-turnips,' I move that from this day the divine Claudius be a god, with title equally as good as that of any one who

has been made so before him, and that this event be added to the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid.”

The opinions were various, and Claudius seemed to be winning the vote. For Hercules, who saw that his iron was in the fire, kept running to this one and that one, saying, “Don’t go back on me; this is my personal affair. And then if you want anything, I’ll do it in my turn. One hand washes the other.”

Then the divine Augustus arose at the point for expressing his opinion, and discoursed with the utmost eloquence. “I call you to witness, Conscript Fathers,” said he, “that since I was made a god, I have never addressed you; I always mind my own business. And I can no longer disguise my feelings nor conceal the distress that shame makes all the greater. Was it for this that I secured peace on land and sea? For this did I make an end of civil wars? For this did I found the city on a basis of law, adorn it with monuments, that — what to say, Conscript Fathers, I cannot discover. All words are beneath my indignation. So in desperation I must take to the phrase of that most clever man, Messala Corvinus, ‘I am ashamed of my authority.’ This fellow, Conscript Fathers, who doesn’t seem to you as if he could disturb a fly, used to kill people as easily as a dog stops to rest. But why should I enumerate the many great men? I have no heart to lament public calamities when I behold those of my own family. And so I will pass over the former and describe these. For I know, even if my sister doesn’t know [as they say in Greek], my knee is nearer than my shin. That fellow whom you see there, hiding under my name for so many years, has shown his gratitude to me by slaying the two Julias, my great-granddaughters, one by the sword, the other by starvation, and L. Silanus, one of my great-great-grandsons. We shall see, Jupiter, whether in a bad case, and one which is certainly your own, you are going to be just. Tell me, divine Claudius, why you condemned any one of the men and women whom you put to death before you understood their cases, or even listened to them. Where is this kind of thing customary?”

It's not the way in heaven. Here is Jupiter, now, who has been ruling for so many years. One person's leg he has broken, Vulcan's whom

Snatching him by the foot, he hurled from the heavenly threshold; and he got angry at his wife and hung her up, but he didn't kill her, did he? But you have put to death Messalina, to whom I was as much a great-uncle as I was to you. 'I don't know,' you say? May the gods be hard on you! It is more shameful that you didn't know it than that you killed her. He has never ceased to follow up the dead-and-gone C. Caesar. The latter had killed his father-in-law; Claudius here, his son-in-law besides. Gaius forbade the sons of Crassus to be called Magnus; this man returned him the name, but took off his head. He killed in one household Crassus, Magnus, Scribonia, the Tristionias, and Assario; and they were aristocrats too, and Crassus besides so stupid that he was even qualified to reign. Now do you want to make this man a god? Look at his body, born when the gods were angry. And finally, if he can say three consecutive words together, he can have me as his slave. Who will worship this god? Who will believe in him? As long as you make such gods as he, nobody will believe that you are gods yourselves. In short, Conscript Fathers, if I have behaved myself honorably among you, if I have not answered anybody in an ungentlemanly manner, avenge my injuries. This is the resolution which I have to offer;" and he read as follows from his tablet: "Since the divine Claudius has killed his father-in-law Appius Silanus, his two sons-in-law Magnus Pompeius and L. Silanus, his daughter's father-in-law Crassus Frugi, a man as like himself as one egg is to another, Scribonia his daughter's mother-in-law, his wife Messalina, and others too numerous to mention, I propose that strict punishment be meted out to him, that he be granted no rest from adjudicating cases, and that he be got out of the way as soon as possible, departing from heaven within thirty days and from Olympus within three."

There was a division of the house, and this resolution was carried. Without delay the Cyllenian dragged him by the nape of his neck off from heaven toward the lower regions,

“Whence they say no man returns.”

While they were going down the Via Sacra, Mercury inquired what such a crowd of people could mean: whether it was Claudius' funeral. And indeed it was a most elegant and elaborate display, so that you would easily recognize that a god was being carried off to burial. There was so great a crowd of trumpeters, hornblowers, and players upon every kind of brass instruments, so great a concord, that even Claudius could hear it. Everybody was joyful and in high spirits. The Roman people walked about like free men. Only Agatho and a few pettifoggers were weeping, but their grief was plainly heartfelt. The real lawyers were coming out of their hiding-places, pale and thin, scarcely drawing breath, like people who were just coming to life again. One of them, when he had seen the pettifoggers getting their heads together and lamenting their calamity, came up and said, "I told you the Saturnalia wouldn't last forever." Claudius, when he saw his own funeral, understood that he was dead. For in a mighty great chorus they were chanting a dirge in anapests:

"Pour forth your tears, lift up woful voices; Let the Forum echo with sorrowful cries. Nobly has fallen a man most sagacious, Than whom no other ever was braver, Not in the whole world. He in the quick-spiced race could be victor Over the swiftest; he could rebellious Parthians scatter, chase with his flying Missiles the Persian, steadiest-handed, Bend back the bow which, driving the foeman Headlong in flight, should pierce him afar, while Gay-coated Medes turned their backs to disaster. Conqueror he of Britons beyond the Shores of the known sea: Even the dark-blue-shielded Brigantes Forced he to bend their necks to the fetters That Romulus forged, and Ocean himself To tremble before the Roman dominion. Mourn for the man than whom no one more quickly Was able to see the right in a lawsuit, Only at hearing one side of the quarrel, — Often not either. Where is the judge now Willing to listen to cases the year through? Thou shalt be given the office resigned thee By him who presides in the court of the shades, The lord of a hundred cities Cretaeon. Smite on your breasts, ye shysters forsaken, With hands of despair, O bribe-taking crew; Ye too, half-fledged poets, now should bewail;

And ye above all, who lately were able To gather great gains by shaking the dice-box.”

Claudius was delighted with his praises, and desired to stay longer to look on. But the Talthybius of the gods laid a hand on him and pulled him away, with his head covered so that nobody could recognize him, across the Campus Martius, and between the Tiber and the Arcade went down to the lower world. The freedman Narcissus had already gone ahead by a short cut to be ready to receive his patron, and as the latter was approaching he ran up, all sleek from the bath, and said: "What's this? Gods, among men?" "Hurry up," said Mercury, "and announce that we are coming." In less time than it takes to tell it, Narcissus skipped out. All the way being down hill, the descent was easy. And so, in spite of his gout, he came in twinkling to Pluto's door, where lay Cerberus, or as Horace says, "the beast with the hundred heads." Narcissus was a trifle scared — he had been accustomed to have a white dog as a pet — when he saw that huge, hairy black dog, which, on my word, is one that you wouldn't like to meet in the dark. And with a loud voice he said, "Claudius is coming." Then a crowd began to come forward with clapping of hands and chanting: "We have got him; let us rejoice!" Among them were C. Silius the consul-elect, Iuncus the ex-praetor, Sextus Traulus, M. Helvius, Trogus, Cotta, Vettius Valens, and Fabius, Roman knights whom Narcissus had ordered to execution. In the middle of this company of singers was Mnester the dancer, whom Claudius had made shorter for the sake of appearances. To Messalina — the report that Claudius had come quickly spread — they gathered; first of all, the freedmen Polybius, Myron, Harpocras, Amphaeus, and Pheronactus, all of whom Claudius had sent ahead in order that he might not be anywhere unprepared; then the two prefects Justus Catonius and Rufrius Pollio; then the Emperor's friends Saturnius Lusius and Pedo Pompeius and Lupus and Celer Asinius, of consular rank; finally his brother's daughter, his sister's daughter, his sons-in-law, his father-in-law, his mother-in-law, in fact all his relatives; and forming in line they came to meet Claudius. When he had seen them, he exclaimed: "Plenty of friends, everywhere! How did you come here?" Then said Pedo Pompeius:

“What are you talking about, you cruel villain? ‘How?’ did you ask? Well, who else but you has sent us here, you murderer of all your friends? Come to the court of justice. I’ll show you where our tribunal is.”

He led him to the bar of Aeacus, who conducted the trial under the Cornelian law against assassins. He asked that the court would enter the name, and recorded the accusation: Senators killed, thirty-five; Roman knights, two hundred and twenty-one; other persons, as many as the sands on the seashore. No one was found as counsel for the accused until at length P. Petronius came forward, an old boon companion of his, a man skilled in the Claudian tongue, and asked for a postponement. It was not granted. Pedit Pompeius spoke for the prosecution with loud shouts. The attorney for the defense wanted to begin his reply. Aeacus, most equitable of persons, forbade him and condemned Claudius after hearing only one side, saying: "Right will be done him if he be treated as he treated others." Then there was a tremendous silence. Everybody was struck dumb by the novelty of the procedure. They said the thing never happened before. To Claudius it seemed more unjust than new. Over the nature of the penalty there was a long discussion, as to what would be an appropriate sentence for him. Various ones said that if they made Tantalus' suffering too long he would perish of thirst unless somebody came to his rescue; and that poor Ixion's wheel ought at last to be stopped. But it was decided that no release should be given to any of the old ones, lest Claudius should sometime hope for the same in his turn. It was decided that a new punishment ought to be arranged, that for him must be devised some vain task and the hope of gratifying some desire, without end or consummation. Then Aeacus commanded him to gamble with a bottomless dice-box. And already he had begun to search for his constantly escaping dice and to accomplish nothing; for

Every time when he wanted to throw from his clattering dice-box,
Both of the dice escaped him by way of the hole in the bottom. Then
when he gathered them up and once more ventured to play them,
Over again they gave him the slip, and kept him pursuing, Constantly
baffling his hopes by skipping away through his fingers, Always
trickily sliding through with the same old deception, — Tiresome as
when poor Sisyphus reaches the top of his mountain Vainly to feel
his burden go rolling back from his shoulders.

Suddenly C. Caesar appeared and began to claim him as a slave.
He produced witnesses who had seen Claudius getting thrashed by
him with whips, with rods, and with his fists. The man was adjudged
to C. Caesar; Caesar presented him to Aeacus; the latter delivered
him to Menander his freedman, to be his law-clerk.

ON THE FIRMNESS OF THE WISE PERSON



Translated by Aubrey Stewart

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I.

I MIGHT truly say, Serenus, that there is as wide a difference between the Stoics and the other sects of philosophers as there is between men and women, since each class contributes an equal share to human society, but the one is born to command, the other to obey. The other philosophers deal with us gently and coaxingly, just as our accustomed family physicians usually do with our bodies, treating them not by the best and shortest method, but by that which we allow them to employ; whereas the Stoics adopt a manly course, and do not care about its appearing attractive to those who are entering upon it, but that it should as quickly as possible take us out of the world, and lead us to that lofty eminence which is so far beyond the scope of any missile weapon that it is above the reach of Fortune herself. "But the way by which we are asked to climb is steep and uneven." What then? Can heights be reached by a level path? Yet they are not so sheer and precipitous as some think. It is only the first part that has rocks and cliffs and no apparent outlet, just as many hills seen from a long way off appear abruptly steep and joined together, because the distance deceives our sight, and then, as we draw nearer, those very hills which our mistaken eyes had made into one gradually unfold themselves, those parts which seemed precipitous from afar assume a gently sloping outline. When just now mention was made of Marcus Cato, you whose mind revolts at injustice were indignant at Cato's own age having so little understood him, at its having allotted a place below Vatinius to one who towered above both Caesar and Pompeius; it seemed shameful to you, that when he spoke against some law in the Forum his toga was torn from him, and that he was hustled through the hands of a mutinous mob from the Rostra as far as the arch of Fabius, enduring all the bad language, spitting, and other insults of the frantic rabble.

II.

I then answered, that you had good cause to be anxious on behalf of the commonwealth, which Publius Clodius on the one side, Vatinius and all the greatest scoundrels on the other, were putting up for sale, and, carried away by their blind covetousness, did not understand that when they sold it they themselves were sold with it; I bade you have no fears on behalf of Cato himself, because the wise man can neither receive injury nor insult, and it is more certain that the immortal gods have given Cato as a pattern of a wise man to us, than that they gave Ulysses or Hercules to the earlier ages; for these our Stoics have declared were wise men, unconquered by labours, despisers of pleasure, and superior to all terrors. Cato did not slay wild beasts, whose pursuit belongs to huntsmen and countrymen, nor did he exterminate fabulous creatures with fire and sword, or live in times when it was possible to believe that the heavens could be supported on the shoulders of one man. In an age which had thrown off its belief in antiquated superstitions, and had carried material knowledge to its highest point, he had to struggle against that many-headed monster, ambition, against that boundless lust for power which the whole world divided among three men could not satisfy. He alone withstood the vices of a worn-out State, sinking into ruin through its own bulk; he upheld the falling commonwealth as far as it could be upheld by one man's hand, until at last his support was withdrawn, and he shared the crash which he had so long averted, and perished together with that from which it was impious to separate him — for Cato did not outlive freedom, nor did freedom outlive Cato. Think you that the people could do any wrong to such a man when they tore away his praetorship or his toga? when they bespattered his sacred head with the rinsings of their mouths? The wise man is safe, and no injury or insult can touch him.

III.

I think I see your excited and boiling temper. You are preparing to exclaim: "These are the things which take away all weight from your maxims ; you promise great matters, such as I should not even wish for, let alone believe to be possible, and then, after all your brave words, though you say that the wise man is not poor, you admit that he often is in want of servants, shelter, and food. You say that the wise man is not mad, yet you admit that he sometimes loses his reason, talks nonsense, and is driven to the wildest actions by the stress of his disorder. When you say that the wise man cannot be a slave, you do not deny that he will be sold, carry out orders, and perform menial services at the bidding of his master; so, for all your proud looks, you come down to the level of everyone else, and merely call things by different names. Consequently, I suspect that something of this kind lurks behind this maxim, which at first sight appears so beautiful and noble, 'that the wise man can neither receive injury nor insult.' It makes a great deal of difference whether you declare that the wise man is beyond feeling resentment, or beyond receiving injury; for if you say that he will bear it calmly, he has no special privilege in that, for he has developed a very common quality, and one which is learned by long endurance of wrong itself, namely, patience. If you declare that he can never receive an injury, that is, that no one will attempt to do him one, then I will throw up all my occupations in life and become a Stoic."

It has not been my object to decorate the wise man with mere imaginary verbal honours, but to raise him to a position where no injury will be permitted to reach him. "What? will there be no one to tease him, to try to wrong him?" There is nothing on earth so sacred as not to be liable to sacrilege; yet holy things exist on high none the less because there are men who strike at a greatness which is far above themselves, though with no hope of reaching it. The invulnerable is not that which is never struck, but that which is never wounded. In this class I will show you the wise man. Can we doubt that the strength which is never overcome in fight is more to be relied on than that which is never challenged, seeing that untested power is

untrustworthy, whereas that solidity which hurls back all attacks is deservedly regarded as the most trustworthy of all? In like manner you may know that the wise man, if no injury hurts him, is of a higher type than if none is offered to him, and I should call him a brave man whom war does not subdue and the violence of the enemy does not alarm, not him who enjoys luxurious ease amid a slothful people. I say, then, that such a wise man is invulnerable against all injury; it matters not, therefore, how many darts be hurled at him, since he can be pierced by none of them. Just as the hardness of some stones is impervious to steel, and adamant can neither be cut, broken, or ground, but blunts all instruments used upon it; just as some things cannot be destroyed by fire, but when encircled by flame still retain their hardness and shape; just as some tall projecting cliffs break the waves of the sea, and though lashed by them through many centuries, yet show no traces of their rage; even so the mind of the wise man is firm, and gathers so much strength, that it is as safe from injury as any of those things which I have mentioned.

IV.

“What then? Will there be no one who will try to do an injury to the wise man?” Yes, someone will try, but the injury will not reach him; for he is separated from the contact of his inferiors by so wide a distance that no evil impulse can retain its power of harm until it reaches him. Even when powerful men, raised to positions of high authority, and strong in the obedience of their dependents, strive to injure him, all their darts fall as far short of his wisdom as those which are shot upwards by bowstrings or catapults, which, although they rise so high as to pass out of sight, yet fall back again without reaching the heavens. Why, do you suppose that when that stupid king clouded the daylight with the multitude of his darts, that any arrow of them all went into the sun? or that when he flung his chains into the deep, that he was able to reach Neptune? Just as sacred things escape from the hands of men, and no injury is done to the godhead by those who destroy temples and melt down images, so whoever attempts to treat the wise man with impertinence, insolence, or scorn, does so in vain. “It would be better,” say you, “if no one wished to do so.” You are expressing a wish that the whole human race were inoffensive, which may hardly be; moreover, those who would gain by such wrongs not being done are those who would do them, not he who could not suffer from them even if they were done; nay, I know not whether wisdom is not best displayed by calmness in the midst of annoyances, just as the greatest proof of a general’s strength in arms and men consists in his quietness and confidence in the midst of an enemy’s country.

V.

If you think fit, my Serenus, let us distinguish between injury and insult. The former is naturally the more grievous, the latter less important, and grievous only to the thin-skinned, since it angers men but does not wound them. Yet such is the weakness of men's minds, that many think that there is nothing more bitter than insult; thus you will find slaves who prefer to be flogged to being slapped, and who think stripes and death more endurable than insulting words. To such a pitch of absurdity have we come that we suffer not only from pain, but from the idea of pain, like children, who are terror-stricken by darkness, misshapen masks, and distorted faces, and whose tears flow at hearing names unpleasing to their ears, at the movement of our fingers, and other things which they ignorantly shrink from with a sort of mistaken spasm. The object which injury proposes to itself is to do evil to someone. Now wisdom leaves no room for evil; to it, the only evil is baseness, which cannot enter into the place already occupied by virtue and honour. If, therefore, there can be no injury without evil, and no evil without baseness, and baseness cannot find any place with a man who is already filled with honour, it follows that no injury can reach the wise man; for if injury be the endurance of some evil, and the wise man can endure no evil, it follows that no injury takes effect upon the wise man. All injury implies a making less of that which it affects, and no one can sustain an injury without some loss either of his dignity, or of some part of his body, or of some of the things external to ourselves; but the wise man can lose nothing. He has invested everything in himself, has entrusted nothing to fortune, has his property in safety, and is content with virtue, which does not need casual accessories, and therefore can neither be increased or diminished; for virtue, as having attained to the highest position, has no room for addition to herself, and fortune can take nothing away save what she gave. Now fortune does not give virtue; therefore she does not take it away. Virtue is free, inviolable, not to be moved, not to be shaken, and so hardened against misfortunes that she cannot be bent, let alone overcome by them. She looks unflinchingly on while tortures are being prepared for her; she makes

no change of countenance, whether misery or pleasure be offered to her. The wise man therefore can lose nothing of whose loss he will be sensible, for he is the property of virtue alone, from whom he never can be taken away. He enjoys all other things at the good pleasure of fortune; but who is grieved at the loss of what is not his own? .If, injury can hurt none of those things which are the peculiar property of the wise man, because while his virtue is safe they are safe, then it is impossible that an injury should be done to a wise man. Demetrius, who was surnamed Poliorcetes, took Megara, and the philosopher Stilbo, when asked by him whether he had lost anything, answered, “No, I carry all my property about me.” Yet his inheritance had been given up to pillage, his daughters had been outraged by the enemy, his country had fallen under a foreign dominion, and it was the king, enthroned on high, surrounded by the spears of his victorious troops, who put this question to him; yet he struck the victory out of the king’s hands, and proved that, though the city was taken, he himself was not only unconquered but unharmed, for he bore with him those true goods which no one can lay hands upon. What was being plundered and carried away hither and thither he did not consider to be his own, but to be merely things which come and go at the caprice of fortune; therefore he had not loved them as his own, for the possession of all things which come from without is slippery and insecure.

VI.

Consider now, whether any thief, or false accuser, or headstrong neighbour, or rich man enjoying the power conferred by a childless old age, could do any injury to this man, from whom neither war nor an enemy whose profession was the noble art of battering city walls could take away anything. Amid the flash of swords on all sides, and the riot of the plundering soldiery, amid the flames and blood and ruin of the fallen city, amid the crash of temples falling upon their gods, one man was at peace. You need not therefore account that a reckless boast, for which I will give you a surety, if my words goes for nothing. Indeed, you would hardly believe so much constancy or such greatness of mind to belong to any man; but here a man comes forward to prove that you have no reason for doubting that one who is but of human birth can raise himself above human necessities, can tranquilly behold pains, losses, diseases, wounds, and great natural convulsions roaring around him, can bear adversity with calm and prosperity with moderation, neither yielding to the former nor trusting to the latter, that he can remain the same amid all varieties of fortune, and think nothing to be his own save himself, and himself too only as regards his better part. "Behold," says he, "I am here to prove to you that although, under the direction of that destroyer of so many cities, walls may be shaken by the stroke of the ram, lofty towers may be suddenly brought low by galleries and hidden mines, and mounds arise so high as to rival the highest citadel, yet that no siege engines can be discovered which can shake a well-established mind. I have just crept from amid the ruins of my house, and with conflagrations blazing all around I have escaped from the flames through blood. What fate has befallen my daughters, whether a worse one than that of their country, I know not. Alone and elderly, and seeing everything around me in the hands of the enemy, still I declare that my property is whole and untouched. I have, I hold whatever of mine I have ever had. There is no reason for you to suppose me conquered and yourself my conqueror. It is your fortune which has overcome mine. As for those fleeting possessions which change their owners, I know not where they are; what belongs to myself is with

me, and ever will be. I see rich men who have lost their estates; lustful men who have lost their loves, the courtesans whom they cherished at the cost of much shame; ambitious men who have lost the senate, the law courts, the places set apart for the public display of men's vices; usurers who have lost their account-books, in which avarice vainly enjoyed an unreal wealth; but I possess everything whole and uninjured. Leave me, and go and ask those who are weeping and lamenting over the loss of their money, who are offering their bare breasts to drawn swords in its defence, or who are fleeing from the enemy with weighty pockets." See then, Serenus, that the perfect man, full of human and divine virtues, can lose nothing; his goods are surrounded by strong and impassable walls. You cannot compare with them the walls of Babylon, which Alexander entered, nor the fortifications of Carthage and Numantia, won by one and the same hand, nor the Capitol and citadel of Rome, which are branded with the marks of the victors' insults; the ramparts which protect the wise man are safe from fire and hostile invasion; they afford no passage; they are lofty, impregnable, divine.

VII.

You have no cause for saying, as you are wont to do, that this wise man of ours is nowhere to be found; we do not invent him as an unreal glory of the human race, or conceive a mighty shadow of an untruth, but we have displayed and will display him just as we sketch him, though he may perhaps be uncommon, and only one appears at long intervals; for what is great and transcends the common ordinary type is not often produced; but this very Marcus Cato himself, the mention of whom started this discussion, was a man who I fancy even surpassed our model. Moreover, that which hurts must be stronger than that which is hurt. Now wickedness is not stronger than virtue; therefore the wise man cannot be hurt. Only the bad attempt to injure the good. Good men are at peace among themselves; bad ones are equally mischievous to the good and to one another. If a man cannot be hurt by one weaker than himself, and a bad man be weaker than a good one, and the good have no injury to dread, except from one unlike themselves; then, no injury takes effect upon the wise man; for by this time I need not remind you that no one save the wise man is good.

“If,” says our adversary, “Socrates was unjustly condemned, he received an injury.” At this point it is needful for us to bear in mind that it is possible for someone to do an injury to me, and yet for me not to receive it, as if any one were to steal something from my country-house and leave it in my town-house, that man would commit a theft, yet I should lose nothing. A man may become mischievous, and yet do no actual mischief: if a man lies with his own wife as if she were a stranger, he will commit adultery, but his wife will not; if a man gives me poison and the poison lose its strength when mixed with food, that man, by administering the poison, has made himself a criminal, even though he has done no hurt. A man is no less a brigand because his sword becomes entangled in his victim’s clothes and misses its mark. All crimes, as far as concerns their criminality, are completed before the actual deed is accomplished. Some crimes are of such a nature and bound by such conditions that the first part can take place without the

second, though the second cannot take place without the first. I will endeavour to explain these words: I can move my feet and yet not run; but I cannot run without moving my feet. I can be in the water without swimming; but if I swim, I cannot help being in the water. The matter of which we are treating is of this character: if I have received an injury, it is necessary that someone must have done it to me; but if an injury has been done me, it is not necessary that I should have received one; for many circumstances may intervene to avert the injury, as, for example, some chance may strike the hand that is aiming at us, and the dart, after it has been thrown, may swerve aside. So injuries of all kinds may by certain circumstances be thrown back and intercepted in mid-course, so that they may be done and yet not received.

VIII.

Moreover, justice can suffer nothing unjust, because contraries cannot co-exist; but an injury can only be done unjustly, therefore an injury cannot be done to the wise man. Nor need you wonder at no one being able to do him an injury; for no one can do him any good service either. The wise man lacks nothing which he can accept by way of a present, and the bad man can bestow nothing that is worthy of the wise man's acceptance; for he must possess it before he can bestow it, and he possesses nothing which the wise man would rejoice to have handed over to him. Consequently, no one can do either harm or good to the wise man, because divine things neither want help nor are capable of being hurt; and the wise man is near, indeed very near to the gods, being like a god in every respect save that he is mortal. As he presses forward and makes his way towards the life that is sublime, well-ordered, without fear, proceeding in a regular and harmonious course, tranquil, beneficent, made for the good of mankind useful both to itself and to others, he will neither long nor weep for anything that is grovelling. He who, trusting to reason, passes through human affairs with godlike mind, has no quarter from which he can receive injury. Do you suppose that I mean merely from no man? He cannot receive an injury even from fortune, which, whenever she contends with virtue, always retires beaten. If we accept with an undisturbed and tranquil mind that greatest terror of all, beyond which the angry laws and the most cruel masters have nothing to threaten us with, in which fortune's dominion is contained — if we know that death is not an evil, and therefore is not an injury either, we shall much more easily endure the other things, such as losses, pains, disgraces, changes of abode, bereavements, and partings, which do not overwhelm the wise man even if they all befall him at once, much less does he grieve at them when they assail him separately. And if he bears the injuries of fortune calmly, how much more will he bear those of powerful men, whom he knows to be the hands of fortune.

IX.

He therefore endures everything in the same spirit with which he endures the cold of winter and the severities of climate, fevers, diseases, and other chance accidents, nor does he entertain so high an opinion of any man as to suppose that he acts of set purpose, which belongs to the wise man alone. All other men have no plans, but only plots and deceits and irregular impulses of mind, which he reckons the same as pure accident; now, what depends upon pure accident cannot rage around us designedly. He reflects, also, that the largest sources of injury are to be found in those things by means of which danger is sought for against us, as, for example, by a suborned accuser, or a false charge, or by the stirring up against us of the anger of great men, and the other forms of the brigandage of civilized life. Another common type of injury is when a man loses some profit or prize for which he has long been angling, when an inheritance which he has spent great pains to render his own is left to someone else, or the favour of some noble house, through which he makes great gain, is taken from him. The wise man escapes all this, since he knows not what it is to live for hope or for fear. Add to this, that no one receives an injury unmoved, but is disturbed by the feeling of it. Now, the man free from mistakes has no disturbance; he is master of himself, enjoying a deep and tranquil repose of mind; for if an injury reaches him it moves and rouses him. But the wise man is without anger, which is caused by the appearance of injury, and he could not be free from anger unless he were also free from injury, which he knows cannot be done to him; hence it is that he is so upright and cheerful, hence he is elate with constant joy. So far, however, is he from shrinking from the encounter either of circumstances or of men, that he makes use of injury itself to make trial of himself and test his own virtue. Let us, I beseech you, show favour to this thesis and listen with impartial ears and minds while the wise man is being made exempt from injury; for nothing is thereby taken away from your insolence, your greediest lusts, your blind rashness and pride; it is without prejudice to your vices that this freedom is sought for the wise man; we do not strive to prevent your doing an injury, but to

enable him to sink all injuries beneath himself and protect himself from them by his own greatness of mind. So in the sacred games many have won the victory by patiently enduring the blows of their adversaries and so wearying them out. Think that the wise man belongs to this class, that of men who, by long and faithful practice, have acquired strength to endure and tire out all the violence of their enemies.

X.

Since we have now discussed the first part of our subject, let us pass on to the second, in which we will prove by arguments, some of which are our own, but which for the most part are Stoic commonplaces, that the wise man cannot be insulted. There is a lesser form of injury, which we must complain of rather than avenge, which the laws also have considered not to deserve any special punishment. This passion is produced by a meanness of mind which shrinks at any act or deed which treats it with disrespect. "He did not admit me to his house today, although he admitted others; he either turned haughtily away or openly laughed when I spoke;" or, "he placed me at dinner, not on the middle couch (the place of honour), but on the lowest one;" and other matters of the same sort; which I can call nothing but the whinings of a queasy spirit. These matters chiefly affect the luxuriously-nurtured and prosperous; for those who are pressed by worse evils have no time to notice such things as these. Through excessive idleness, dispositions naturally weak and womanish and prone to indulge in fancies through want of real injuries are disturbed at these things, the greater part of which arise from misunderstanding. He therefore who is affected by insult shows that he possesses neither sense nor trustfulness; for he considers it certain that he is scorned, and this vexation affects him with a certain sense of degradation, as he effaces himself and takes a lower room; whereas the wise man is scorned by no one, for he knows his own greatness, gives himself to understand that he allows no one to have such power over him, and as for all of what I should not so much call distress as uneasiness of mind, he does not overcome it, but never so much as feels it. Some other things strike the wise man, though they may not shake his principles, such as bodily pain and weakness, the loss of friends and children, and the ruin of his country in war-time. I do not say that the wise man does not feel these, for we do not ascribe to him the hardness of stone or iron; there is no virtue but is conscious of its own endurance. What then does he? He receives some blows, but when he has received them he rises superior to them, heals them, and brings them to an end; these more trivial

things he does not even feel, nor does he make use of his accustomed fortitude in the endurance of evil against them, but either takes no notice of them or considers them to deserve to be laughed at.

XI.

Besides this, as most insults proceed from those who are haughty and arrogant and bear their prosperity ill, he has something wherewith to repel this haughty passion, namely, that noblest of all the virtues, magnanimity, which passes over everything of that kind as like unreal apparitions in dreams and visions of the night, which have nothing in them substantial or true. At the same time he reflects that all men are too low to venture to look down upon what is so far above them. The Latin word “contumelia” is derived from the word contempt, because no one does that injury to another unless he regards him with contempt; and no one can treat his elders and betters with contempt, even though he does what contemptuous persons are wont to do; for children strike their parents’ faces, infants rumple and tear their mother’s hair, and spit upon her and expose what should be covered before her, and do not shrink from using dirty language; yet we do not call any of these things contemptuous. And why? Because he who does it is not able to show contempt. For the same reason the scurrilous raillery of our slaves against their masters amuses us, as their boldness only gains licence to exercise itself at the expense of the guests if they begin with the master; and the more contemptible and the more an object of derision each one of them is, the greater licence he gives his tongue. Some buy forward slave-boys for this purpose, cultivate their scurrility and send them to school that they may vent premeditated libels, which we do not call insults, but smart sayings; yet what madness, at one time to be amused and at another to be affronted by the same thing, and to call a phrase an outrage when spoken by a friend, and an amusing piece of raillery when used by a slave-boy!

XII.

In the same spirit in which we deal with boys, the wise man deals with all those whose childhood still endures after their youth is past and their hair is grey. What do men profit by age when their mind has all the faults of childhood and their defects are intensified by time? When they differ from children only in the size and appearance of their bodies, and are just as unsteady and capricious, eager for pleasure without discrimination, timorous and quiet through fear rather than through natural disposition? One cannot say that such men differ from children because the latter are greedy for knuckle-bones and nuts and coppers, while the former are greedy for gold and silver and cities; because the latter play amongst themselves at being magistrates, and imitate the purple-edged robe of state, the lictors' axes, and the judgment-seat, while the former play with the same things in earnest in the Campus Martins and the courts of justice; because the latter pile up the sand on the seashore into the likeness of houses, and the former, with an air of being engaged in important business, employ themselves in piling up stones and walls and roofs until they have turned what was intended for the protection of the body into a danger to it? Children and those more advanced in age both make the same mistake, but the latter deal with different and more important things; the wise man, therefore, is quite justified in treating the affronts which he receives from such men as jokes: and sometimes he corrects them, as he would children, by pain and punishment, not because he has received an injury, but because they have done one and in order that they may do so no more. Thus we break in animals with stripes, yet we are not angry with them when they refuse to carry their rider, but curb them in order that pain may overcome their obstinacy. Now, therefore, you know the answer to the question which was put to us, "Why, if the wise man receives neither injury nor insult, he punishes those who do these things?" He does not revenge himself, but corrects them.

XIII.

What, then, is there to prevent your believing this strength of mind to belong to the wise man, when you can see the same thing existing in others, though not from the same cause? — for what physician is angry with a crazy patient? who takes to heart the curses of a fever-stricken one who is denied cold water? The wise man retains in his dealings with all men this same habit of mind which the physician adopts in dealing with his patients, whose parts of shame he does not scorn to handle should they need treatment, nor yet to look at their solid and liquid evacuations, nor to endure their reproaches when frenzied by disease. The wise man knows that all those who strut about in purple-edged togas, healthy and embrowned, are brain-sick people, whom he regards as sick and full of follies. He is not, therefore, angry, should they in their sickness presume to bear themselves somewhat impertinently towards their physician, and in the same spirit as that in which he sets no value upon their titles of honour, he will set but little value upon their acts of disrespect to himself. He will not rise in his own esteem if a beggar pays his court to him, and he will not think it an affront if one of the dregs of the people does not return his greeting. So also he will not admire himself even if many rich men admire him; for he knows that they differ in no respect from beggars — nay, are even more wretched than they; for beggars want but a little, whereas rich men want a great deal. Again, he will not be moved if the King of the Medes, or Attalus, King of Asia, passes by him in silence with a scornful air when he offers his greeting; for he knows that such a man's position has nothing to render it more enviable than that of the man whose duty it is in some great household to keep the sick and mad servants in order. Shall I be put out if one of those who do business at the temple of Castor, buying and selling worthless slaves, does not return my salute, a man whose shops are crowded with throngs of the worst of bondmen? I trow not; for what good can there be in a man who owns none but bad men? As the wise man is indifferent to the courtesy or incivility of such a man, so is he to that of a king. "You own," says he, "the Parthians and Bactrians, but they are men whom

you keep in order by fear, they are people whose possession forbids you to unstring the bow, they are fierce enemies, on sale, and eagerly looking out for a new master.” He will not, then, be moved by an insult from any man for though all men differ one from another, yet the wise man regards them all as alike on account of their equal folly; for should he once lower himself to the point of being affected by either injury or insult, he could never feel safe afterwards, and safety is the especial advantage of the wise man, and he will not be guilty of showing respect to the man who has done him an injury by admitting that he has received one, because it necessarily follows that he who is disquieted at any one’s scorn would value that person’s admiration.

XIV.

Such madness possesses some men that they imagine it possible for an affront to be put upon them by a woman. What matters it who she may be, how many slaves bear her litter, how heavily her ears are laden, how soft her seat? she is always the same thoughtless creature, and unless she possesses acquired knowledge and much learning, she is fierce and passionate in her desires. Some are annoyed at being jostled by a heater of curling-tongs, and call the reluctance of a great man's porter to open the door, the pride of his nomenclator, or the disdainfulness of his chamberlain, insults. O! what laughter is to be got out of such things, with what amusement the mind may be filled when it contrasts the frantic follies of others with its own peace! "How then? will the wise man not approach doors which are kept by a surly porter?" Nay, if any need calls him thither, he will make trial of him, how- ever fierce he may be, will tame him as one tames a dog by offering it food, and will not be enraged at having to expend entrance-money, reflecting that on certain bridges also one has to pay toll; in like fashion he will pay his fee to whoever farms this revenue of letting in visitors, for he knows that men are wont to buy whatever is offered for sale. A man shows a poor spirit if he is pleased with himself for having answered the porter cavalierly, broken his staff, forced his way into his master's presence, and demanded a whipping for him. He who strives with a man makes himself that man's rival, and must be on equal terms with him before he can overcome him. But what will the wise man do when he receives a cuff? He will do as Cato did when he was struck in the face; he did not flare up and revenge the outrage, he did not even pardon it, but ignored it, showing more magnanimity in not acknowledging it than if he had forgiven it. We will not dwell long upon this point; for who is there who knows not that none of those things which are thought to be good or evil are looked upon by the wise man and by mankind in general in the same manner? He does not regard what all men think low or wretched; he does not follow the people's track, but as the stars move in a path opposite to that of the earth, so he proceeds contrary to the prejudices of all.

XV.

Cease then to say, "Will not the wise man, then, receive an injury if he be beaten, if his eye be knocked out? will he not receive an insult if he be hooted through the Forum by the foul voices of ruffians? if at a court banquet he be bidden to leave the table and eat with slaves appointed to degrading duties? if he be forced to endure anything else that can be thought of that would gall a high spirit?" However many or however severe these crosses may be, they will all be of the same kind; and if small ones do not affect him, neither will greater ones; if a few do not affect him, neither will more. It is from your own weakness that you form your idea of his colossal mind, and when you have thought how much you yourselves could endure to suffer, you place the limit of the wise man's endurance a little way beyond that. But his virtue has placed him in another region of the universe which has nothing in common with you. Seek out sufferings and all things hard to be borne, repulsive to be heard or seen; he will not be overwhelmed by their combination, and will bear all just as he bears each one of them. He who says that the wise man can bear this and cannot bear that, and restrains his magnanimity within certain limits, does wrong; for Fortune overcomes us unless she is entirely overcome. Think not that this is mere Stoic austerity. Epicurus, whom you adopt as the patron of your laziness, and who, you imagine, always taught what was soft and slothful and conducive to pleasure, said, "Fortune seldom stands in a wise man's way." How near he came to a manly sentiment! Do thou dare to speak more boldly, and clear her out of the way altogether! This is the house of the wise man — narrow, unadorned, without bustle and splendour, the threshold guarded by no porters who marshal the crowd of visitors with a haughtiness proportionate to their bribes — but Fortune cannot cross this open and unguarded threshold. She knows that there is no room for her where there is nothing of hers.

XVI.

Now if even Epicurus, who made more concessions to the body than any one, takes a spirited tone with regard to injuries, what can appear beyond belief or beyond the scope of human nature amongst us Stoics? He says that injuries may be endured by the wise man, we say that they do not exist for him. Nor is there any reason why you should declare this to be repugnant to nature. We do not deny that it is an unpleasant thing to be beaten or struck, or to lose one of our limbs, but we say that none of these things are injuries. We do not take away from them the feeling of pain, but the name of "injury," which cannot be received while our virtue is unimpaired. We shall see which of the two is nearest the truth; each of them agree in despising injury. You ask what difference there is between them? All that there is between two very brave gladiators, one of whom conceals his wound and holds his ground, while the other turns round to the shouting populace, gives them to understand that his wound is nothing, and does not permit them to interfere on his behalf. You need not think that it is any great thing about which we differ; the whole gist of the matter, that which alone concerns you, is what both schools of philosophy urge you to do, namely, to despise injuries and insults, which I may call the shadows and outlines of injuries, to despise which does not need a wise man, but merely a sensible one, who can say to himself, "Do these things befall me deservedly or undeservedly? If deservedly, it is not an insult, but a judicial sentence; if undeservedly, then he who does injustice ought to blush, not I. And what is this which is called an insult? Someone has made a joke about the baldness of my head, the weakness of my eyes, the thinness of my legs, the shortness of my stature; what insult is there in telling me that which everyone sees? We laugh when *tete-a-tete* at the same thing at which we are indignant when it is said before a crowd, and we do not allow others the privilege of saying what we ourselves are wont to say about ourselves; we are amused at decorous jests, but are angry if they are carried too far."

XVII.

Chrysippus says that a man was enraged because someone called him a sea-sheep; we have seen Fidus Cornelius, the son-in-law of Ovidius Naso, weeping in the Senate-house because Corbulo called him a plucked ostrich; his command of his countenance did not fail him at other abusive charges, which damaged his character and way of life; at this ridiculous saying he burst into tears. So deplorable is the weakness of men's minds when reason no longer guides them. What of our taking offence if any one imitates our talk, our walk, or apes any defect of our person or our pronunciation? as if they would become more notorious by another's imitation than by our doing them ourselves. Some are unwilling to hear about their age and grey hairs, and all the rest of what men pray to arrive at. The reproach of poverty agonizes some men, and whoever conceals it makes it a reproach to himself; and therefore if you of your own accord are the first to acknowledge it, you cut the ground from under the feet of those who would sneer and politely insult you; no one is laughed at who begins by laughing at himself. Tradition tells us that Vatinius, a man born both to be laughed at and hated, was a witty and clever jester. He made many jokes about his feet and his short neck, and thus escaped the sarcasms of Cicero above all, and of his other enemies, of whom he had more than he had diseases. If he, who through constant abuse had forgotten how to blush, could do this by sheer brazenness, why should not he who has made some progress in the education of a gentleman and the study of philosophy? Besides, it is a sort of revenge to spoil a man's enjoyment of the insult he has offered to us; such men say, "Dear me, I suppose he did not understand it." Thus the success of an insult lies in the sensitiveness and rage of the victim; hereafter the insulter will sometimes meet his match; someone will be found to revenge you also.

XVIII.

Gaius Caesar, among the other vices with which he overflowed, was possessed by a strange insolent passion for marking every one with some note of ridicule, he himself being the most tempting subject for derision; so ugly was the paleness which proved him mad, so savage the glare of the eyes which lurked under his old woman's brow, so hideous his misshapen head, bald and dotted about with a few cherished hairs; besides the neck set thick with bristles, his thin legs, his monstrous feet. It would be endless were I to mention all the insults which he heaped upon his parents and ancestors, and people of every class of life. I will mention those which brought him to ruin. An especial friend of his was Asiaticus Valerius, a proud-spirited man and one hardly likely to put up with another's insults quietly. At a drinking bout, that is, a public assembly, Gaius, at the top of his voice, reproached this man with the way his wife behaved in bed. Good gods! that a man should hear that the emperor knew this, and that he, the emperor, should describe his adultery and his disappointment to the lady's husband, I do not say to a man of consular rank and his own friend. Chaerea, on the other hand, the military tribune, had a voice not befitting his prowess, feeble in sound, and somewhat suspicious unless you knew his achievements. When he asked for the watchword Gaius at one time gave him "Venus," and at another "Priapus," and by various means reproached the man-at-arms with effeminate vice; while he himself was dressed in transparent clothes, wearing sandals and jewellery. Thus he forced him to use his sword, that he might not have to ask for the watchword oftener; it was Chaerea who first of all the conspirators raised his hand, who cut through the middle of Caligula's neck with one blow. After that, many swords, belonging to men who had public or private injuries to avenge, were thrust into his body, but he first showed himself a man who seemed least like one. The same Gaius construed everything as an insult (since those who are most eager to offer affronts are least able to endure them). He was angry with Herennius Macer for having greeted him as Gaius — nor did the chief centurion of triarii get off scot-free for having saluted him as

Caligula; having been born in the camp and brought up as the child of the legions, he had been wont to be called by this name, nor was there any by which he was better known to the troops, but by this time he held “Caligula” to be a reproach and a dishonour. Let wounded spirits, then, console themselves with this reflexion, that, even though our easy temper may have neglected to revenge itself, nevertheless that there will be someone who will punish the impertinent, proud, and insulting man, for these are vices which he never confines to one victim or one single offensive act. Let us look at the examples of those men whose endurance we admire, as, for instance, that of Socrates, who took in good part the published and acted jibes of the comedians upon himself, and laughed no less than he did when he was drenched with dirty water by his wife Xanthippe. Antisthenes was reproached with his mother being a barbarian and a Thracian; he answered that the mother of the gods, too, came from Mount Ida.

XIX.

We ought not to engage in quarrels and wrangling; we ought to betake ourselves far away and to disregard everything of this kind which thoughtless people do (indeed thoughtless people alone do it), and to set equal value upon the honours and the reproaches of the mob; we ought not to be hurt by the one or to be pleased by the other. Otherwise we shall neglect many essential points, shall desert our duty both to the state and in private life through excessive fear of insults or weariness of them, and sometimes we shall even miss what would do us good, while tortured by this womanish pain at hearing something not to our mind. Sometimes, too, when enraged with powerful men we shall expose this failing by our reckless freedom of speech; yet it is not freedom to suffer nothing — we are mistaken — freedom consists in raising one's mind superior to injuries and becoming a person whose pleasures come from himself alone, in separating oneself from external circumstances that one may not have to lead a disturbed life in fear of the laughter and tongues of all men; for if any man can offer an insult, who is there who cannot? The wise man and the would-be wise man will apply different remedies to this; for it is only those whose philosophical education is incomplete, and who still guide themselves by public opinion, who would suppose that they ought to spend their lives in the midst of insults and injuries; yet all things happen in a more endurable fashion to men who are prepared for them. The nobler a man is by birth, by reputation, or by inheritance, the more bravely he should bear himself, remembering that the tallest men stand in the front rank in battle. As for insults, offensive language, marks of disgrace, and such-like disfigurements, he ought to bear them as he would bear the shouts of the enemy, and darts or stones flung from a distance, which rattle upon his helmet without causing a wound; while he should look upon injuries as wounds, some received on his armour and others on his body, which he endures without falling or even leaving his place in the ranks. Even though you be hard pressed and violently attacked by the enemy, still it is base to give way; hold the post assigned to you by nature. You ask, what this post is? it is that of

being a man. The wise man has another help, of the opposite kind to this; you are hard at work, while he has already won the victory. Do not quarrel with your own good advantage, and, until you shall have made your way to the truth, keep alive this hope in your minds, be willing to receive the news of a better life, and encourage it by your admiration and your prayers; it is to the interest of the commonwealth of mankind that there should be someone who is unconquered, someone against whom fortune has no power.

ON CLEMENCY



Translated by Aubrey Stewart

Composed of two books in 55-56 AD, with the second being left incomplete, this hortatory essay is addressed to the Emperor Nero in the first five years of his reign. The *De Clementia* offers an instructional contrast between the good ruler and the tyrant, drawing an evaluation of the ideal relationship between ruler and subject. A survey of history is made in the first book, identifying different rulers as examples, including Dionysius of Syracuse and Sulla being used as cautionary tales and the Emperor Augustus as the superlative model ruler. An extended illustration of Augustus showing mercy to the rebellious Cinna, alongside an example from Nero's own life, is also employed to encourage the aspiring Nero to practise clemency.

In the text, Seneca does not discuss the constitutional legitimacy of the Principate, but instead deals with the problem of having a good sovereign. Seneca argues that the only real power was power guided by the Stoic conception of *logos* (universal reason). Thus, clemency, not pity or unmotivated generosity, is the reasonable approach that guarantees the consent and devotion of the Emperor's subjects and provides the state's security.

De Clementia faced negative criticism from some of Seneca's contemporaries. Gellius states that Seneca's essay was not worth reading due to being pedestrian. Quintilian found the essay admirable, but wasted with cheap effect and failing to demonstrate the possession of solid knowledge, and so in no way comparable to Cicero. In spite of this, the essay enjoyed popularity in Seneca's own times, as well as in the Renaissance.



Bust of Nero, Capitoline Museum, Rome

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Book I

I.

I HAVE determined to write a book upon clemency, Nero Caesar, in order that I may as it were serve as a mirror to you, and let you see yourself arriving at the greatest of all pleasures. For although the true enjoyment of good deeds consists in the performance of them, and virtues have no adequate reward beyond themselves, still it is worth your while to consider and investigate a good conscience from every point of view, and afterwards to cast your eyes upon this enormous mass of mankind — quarrelsome, factious, and passionate as they are; likely, if they could throw off the yoke of your government, to take pleasure alike in the ruin of themselves and of one another — and thus to commune with yourself:— “Have I of all mankind been chosen and thought fit to perform the office of a god upon earth? I am the arbiter of life and death to mankind: it rests with me to decide what lot and position in life each man possesses: fortune makes use of my mouth to announce what she bestows on each man: cities and nations are moved to joy by my words: no region anywhere can flourish without my favour and good will: all these thousands of swords now restrained by my authority, would be drawn at a sign from me: it rests with me to decide which tribes shall be utterly exterminated, which shall be moved into other lands, which shall receive and which shall be deprived of liberty, what kings shall be reduced to slavery and whose heads shall be crowned, what cities shall be destroyed and what new ones shall be founded. In this position of enormous power I am not tempted to punish men unjustly by anger, by youthful impulse, by the recklessness and insolence of men, which often overcomes the patience even of the best regulated minds, not even that terrible vanity, so common among great sovereigns, of displaying my power by inspiring terror. My sword is sheathed, nay, fixed in its sheath: I am sparing of the blood even of the lowest of my subjects: a man who has nothing else to recommend him, will nevertheless find favour in my eyes because he is a man. I keep harshness concealed, but I have clemency always at hand: I watch myself as carefully as though I had to give an account of my actions to those laws which I have brought out of darkness and

neglect into the light of day. I have been moved to compassion by the youth of one culprit, and the age of another: I have spared one man because of his great place, another on account of his insignificance: when I could find no reason for showing mercy, I have had mercy upon myself. I am prepared this day, should the gods demand it, to render to them an account of the human race.” You, Caesar, can boldly say that everything which has come into your charge has been kept safe, and that the state has neither openly nor secretly suffered any loss at your hands. You have coveted a glory which is most rare, and which has been obtained by no emperor before you, that of innocence. Your remarkable goodness is not thrown away, nor is it ungratefully or spitefully undervalued. Men feel gratitude towards you: no one person ever was so dear to another as you are to the people of Rome, whose great and enduring benefit you are. You have, however, taken upon yourself a mighty burden: no one any longer speaks of the good times of the late Emperor Augustus, or the first years of the reign of Tiberius, or proposes for your imitation any model outside yourself: yours is a pattern reign. This would have been difficult had your goodness of heart not been innate, but merely adopted for a time; for no one can wear a mask for long, and fictitious qualities soon give place to true ones. Those which are founded upon truth, and which, so to speak, grow out of a solid basis, only become greater and better as time goes on. The Roman people were in a state of great hazard as long as it was uncertain how your generous disposition would turn out; now, however, the prayers of the community are sure of an answer, for there is no fear that you should suddenly forget your own character. Indeed, excess of happiness makes men greedy, and our desires are never so moderate as to be bounded by what they have obtained: great successes become the stepping-stones to greater ones, and those who have obtained more than they hoped, entertain even more extravagant hopes than before; yet by all your countrymen we hear it admitted that they are now happy, and moreover, that nothing can be added to the blessings that they enjoy, except that they should be eternal. Many circumstances force this admission from them, although it is the one which men are least willing to make: we enjoy a profound and prosperous peace, the power of the law has been openly asserted

in the sight of all men, and raised beyond the reach of any violent interference: the form of our government is so happy, as to contain all the essentials of liberty except the power of destroying itself. It is nevertheless your clemency which is most especially admired by the high and low alike: every man enjoys or hopes to enjoy the other blessings of your rule according to the measure of his own personal good fortune, whereas from your clemency all hope alike: no one has so much confidence in his own innocence, as not to feel glad that in your presence stands a clemency which is ready to make allowance for human errors.

II.

I know, however, that there are some who imagine that clemency only saves the life of every villain, because clemency is useless except after conviction, and alone of all the virtues has no function among the innocent. But in the first place, although a physician is only useful to the sick, yet he is held in honour among the healthy also; and so clemency, though she be invoked by those who deserve punishment, is respected by innocent people as well. Next, she can exist also in the person of the innocent, because sometimes misfortune takes the place of crime; indeed, clemency not only succours the innocent, but often the virtuous, since in the course of time it happens that men are punished for actions which deserve praise. Besides this, there is a large part of mankind which might return to virtue if the hope of pardon were not denied them. Yet it is not right to pardon indiscriminately; for when no distinction is made between good and bad men, disorder follows, and all vices break forth; we must therefore take care to distinguish those characters which admit of reform from those which are hopelessly depraved. Neither ought we to show an indiscriminate and general, nor yet an exclusive clemency; for to pardon everyone is as great cruelty as to pardon none; we must take a middle course; but as it is difficult to find the true mean, let us be careful, if we depart from it, to do so upon the side of humanity.

III.

But these matters will be treated of better in their own place. I will now divide this whole subject into three parts. The first will be of gentleness of temper: the second will be that which explains the nature and disposition of clemency; for since there are certain vices which have the semblance of virtue, they cannot be separated unless you stamp upon them the marks which distinguish them from one another: in the third place we shall inquire how the mind may be led to practise this virtue, how it may strengthen it, and by habit make it its own.

That clemency, which is the most humane of virtues, is that which best befits a man, is necessarily an axiom, not only among our own sect, which regards man as a social animal, born for the good of the whole community, but even among those philosophers who give him up entirely to pleasure, and whose words and actions have no other aim than their own personal advantage. If man, as they argue, seeks for quiet and repose, what virtue is there which is more agreeable to his nature than clemency, which loves peace and restrains him from violence? Now clemency becomes no one more than a king or a prince; for great power is glorious and admirable only when it is beneficent; since to be powerful only for mischief is the power of a pestilence. That man's greatness alone rests upon a secure foundation, whom all men know to be as much on their side as he is above them, of whose watchful care for the safety of each and all of them they receive daily proofs, at whose approach they do not fly in terror, as though some evil and dangerous animal had sprung out from its den, but flock to him as they would to the bright and health-giving sunshine. They are perfectly ready to fling themselves upon the swords of conspirators in his defence, to offer their bodies if his only path to safety must be formed of corpses: they protect his sleep by nightly watches, they surround him and defend him on every side, and expose themselves to the dangers which menace him. It is not without good reason that nations and cities thus agree in sacrificing their lives and property for the defence and the love of their king whenever their leader's safety demands it; men do not hold

themselves cheap, nor are they insane when so many thousands are put to the sword for the sake of one man, and when by so many deaths they save the life of one man alone, who not unfrequently is old and feeble. Just as the entire body is commanded by the mind, and although the body be so much larger and more beautiful while the mind is impalpable and hidden, and we are not certain as to where it is concealed, yet the hands, feet, and eyes work for it, the skin protects it; at its bidding we either lie still or move restlessly about; when it gives the word, if it be an avaricious master, we scour the sea in search of gain, or if it be ambitious we straightway place our right hand in the flames like Mucius, or leap into the pit like Curtius, so likewise this enormous multitude which surrounds one man is directed by his will, is guided by his intellect, and would break and hurl itself into ruin by its own strength, if it were not upheld by his wisdom.

IV.

Men therefore love their own safety, when they draw up vast legions in battle on behalf of one man, when they rush to the front, and expose their breasts to wounds, for fear that their leader's standards should be driven back. He is the bond which fastens the commonwealth together, he is the breath of life to all those thousands, who by themselves would become merely an encumbrance and a source of plunder if that directing mind were withdrawn: —

Bees have but one mind, till their king doth die,

But when he dies, disorderly they fly.

Such a misfortune will be the end of the peace of Rome, it will wreck the prosperity of this great people; the nation will be free from this danger as long as it knows how to endure the reins: should it ever break them, or refuse to have them replaced if they were to fall off by accident, then this mighty whole, this complex fabric of government will fly asunder into many fragments, and the last day of Rome's empire will be that upon which it forgets how to obey. For this reason we need not wonder that princes, kings, and all other protectors of a state, whatever their titles may be, should be loved beyond the circle of their immediate relatives; for since right-thinking men prefer the interests of the state to their own, it follows that he who bears the burden of state affairs must be dearer to them than their own friends. Indeed, the emperor long ago identified himself so thoroughly with the state, that neither of them could be separated without injury to both, because the one requires power, while the other requires a head.

V.

My argument seems to have wandered somewhat far from the subject, but, by Hercules, it really is very much to the point. For if, as we may infer from what has been said, you are the soul of the state, and the state is your body, you will perceive, I imagine, how necessary clemency is; for when you appear to spare another, you are really sparing yourself. You ought therefore to spare even blameworthy citizens, just as you spare weakly limbs; and when blood-letting becomes necessary, you must hold your hand, lest you should cut deeper than you need. Clemency therefore, as I said before, naturally befits all mankind, but more especially rulers, because in their case there is more for it to save, and it is displayed upon a greater scale. Cruelty in a private man can do but very little harm; but the ferocity of princes is war. Although there is a harmony between all the virtues, and no one is better or more honourable than another, yet some virtues befit some persons better than others. Magnanimity befits all mortal men, even the humblest of all; for what can be greater or braver than to resist ill fortune? Yet this virtue of magnanimity occupies a wider room in prosperity, and shows to greater advantage on the judgment seat than on the floor of the court. On the other hand, clemency renders every house into which it is admitted happy and peaceful ; but though it is more rare, it is on that account even more admirable in a palace. What can be more remarkable than that he whose anger might be indulged without fear of the consequences, whose decision, even though a harsh one, would be approved even by those who were to suffer by it, whom no one can interrupt, and of whom indeed, should he become violently enraged, no one would dare to beg for mercy, should apply a check to himself and use his power in a better and calmer spirit, reflecting: “Anyone may break the law to kill a man, no one but I can break it to save him “? A great position requires a great mind, for unless the mind raises itself to and even above the level of its station, it will degrade its station and draw it down to the earth; now it is the property of a great mind to be calm and tranquil and to look down upon outrages and insults with contempt. It is a womanish thing to

rage with passion; it is the part of wild beasts, and that, too, not of the most noble ones, to bite and worry the fallen. Elephants and lions pass by those whom they have struck down; inveteracy is the quality of ignoble animals. Fierce and implacable rage does not befit a king, because he does not preserve his superiority over the man to whose level he descends by indulging in rage; but if he grants their lives and honours to those who are in jeopardy and who deserve to lose them, he does what can only be done by an absolute ruler; for life may be torn away even from those who are above us in station, but can never be granted save to those who are below us. To save men's lives is the privilege of the loftiest station, which never deserves admiration so much as when it is able to act like the gods, by whose kindness good and bad men alike are brought into the world. Thus a prince, imitating the mind of a god, ought to look with pleasure on some of his countrymen because they are useful and good men, while he ought to allow others to remain to fill up the roll; he ought to be pleased with the existence of the former, and to endure that of the latter.

VI.

Look at this city of Rome, in which the widest streets become choked whenever anything stops the crowds which unceasingly pour through them like raging torrents, in which the people streaming to three theatres demand the roads at the same time, in which the produce of the entire world is consumed, and reflect what a desolate waste it would become if only those were left in it whom a strict judge would acquit. How few magistrates are there who ought not to be condemned by the very same laws which they administer? How few prosecutors are themselves faultless? I imagine, also, that few men are less willing to grant pardon, than those who have often had to beg it for themselves. We have all of us sinned, some more deeply than others, some of set purpose, some either by chance impulse or led away by the wickedness of others; some of us have not stood bravely enough by our good resolutions, and have lost our innocence, although unwillingly and after a struggle; nor have we only sinned, but to the very end of our lives we shall continue to sin. Even if there be any one who has so thoroughly cleansed his mind that nothing can hereafter throw him into disorder or deceive him, yet even he has reached this state of innocence through sin.

VII.

Since I have made mention of the gods, I shall state the best model on which a prince may mould his life to be, that he deal with his countrymen as he would that the gods may deal with himself. Is it then desirable that the gods should show no mercy upon sins and mistakes, and that they should harshly pursue us to our ruin? In that case what king will be safe? Whose limbs will not be torn asunder and collected by the soothsayers? If, on the other hand, the gods are placable and kind, and do not at once avenge the crimes of the powerful with thunderbolts, is it not far more just that a man set in authority over other men should exercise his power in a spirit of clemency and should consider whether the condition of the -world is more beauteous and pleasant to the eyes on a fine calm day, or when everything is shaken with frequent thunder-claps and when lightning flashes on all sides! Yet the appearance of a peaceful and constitutional reign is the same as that of the calm and brilliant sky. A cruel reign is disordered and hidden in darkness, and while all shake with terror at the sudden explosions, not even he who caused all this disturbance escapes unharmed. It is easier to find excuses for private men who obstinately claim their rights; possibly they may have been injured, and their rage may spring from their wrongs; besides this, they fear to be despised, and not to return the injuries which they have received looks like weakness rather than clemency; but one who can easily avenge himself, if he neglects to do so, is certain to gain praise for goodness of heart. Those who are born in a humble station may with greater freedom exercise violence, go to law, engage in quarrels, and indulge their angry passions; even blows count for little between two equals; but in the case of a king, even loud clamour and unmeasured talk are unbecoming.

VIII.

You think it a serious matter to take away from kings the right of free speech which the humblest enjoy. "This," you say, "is to be a subject, not a king." What, do you not find that we have the command, you the subjection? Your position is quite different to that of those who lie hid in the crowd which they never leave, whose very virtues cannot be manifested without a long struggle, and whose vices are shrouded in obscurity; rumour catches up your acts and sayings, and therefore no persons ought to be more careful of their reputation than those who are certain to have a great one, whatsoever one they may have deserved. How many things there are that you may not do which, thanks to you, we may do! I am able to walk alone without fear in any part of Rome whatever, although no companion accompanies me, though there is no guard at my house no sword by my side. You must live armed in the peace which you maintain. You cannot stray away from your position; it besets you, and follows you with mighty pomp wherever you go. This slavery of not being able to sink one's rank belongs to the highest position of all; yet it is a burden which you share with the gods. They too are held fast in heaven, and it is no more possible for them to come down than it is safe for you; you are chained to your lofty pinnacle. Of our movements few persons are aware; we can go forth and return home and change our dress without its being publicly known; but you are no more able to hide yourself than the sun. A strong light is all around you, the eyes of all are turned towards it. Do you think you are leaving your house? nay, you are dawning upon the world. You cannot speak without all nations everywhere hearing your voice; you cannot be angry, without making everything tremble, because you can strike no one without shaking all around him. Just as thunderbolts when they fall endanger few men but terrify all, so the chastisement inflicted by great potentates terrify more widely than they injure, and that for good reasons; for in the case of one whose power is absolute, men do not think of what he has done, so much as of what he may do. Add to this that private men endure wrongs more tamely, because they have already endured others; the safety of kings

on the other hand is more surely founded on kindness, because frequent punishment may crush the hatred of a few, but excites that of all. A king ought to wish to pardon while he has still grounds for being severe; if he acts otherwise, just as lopped trees sprout forth again with numberless boughs, and many kinds of crops are cut down in order that they may grow more thickly, so a cruel king increases the number of his enemies by destroying them; for the parents and children of those who are put to death, and their relatives and friends, step into the place of each victim.

IX.

I wish to prove the truth of this by an example drawn from your own family. The late Emperor Augustus was a mild prince, if in estimating his character one reckons from the era of his reign; yet he appealed to arms while the state was shared among the triumvirate. When he was just of your age, at the end of his twenty-second year, he had already hidden daggers under the clothes of his friends, he had already conspired to assassinate Marcus Antonius, the consul, he had already taken part in the proscription. But when he had passed his sixtieth year, and was staying in Gaul, intelligence was brought to him that Lucius Cinna, a dull man, was plotting against him: the plot was betrayed by one of the conspirators, who told him where, when, and in what manner Cinna meant to attack him. Augustus determined to consult his own safety against this man, and ordered a council of his own friends to be summoned. He passed a disturbed night, reflecting that he would be obliged to condemn to death a youth of noble birth, who was guilty of no crime save this one, and who was the grandson of Gnaeus Pompeius. He, who had sat at dinner and heard M. Antonius read aloud his edict for the proscription, could not now bear to put one single man to death. With groans he kept at intervals making various inconsistent exclamations:— “What! shall I allow my assassin to walk about at his ease while I am racked by fears? Shall the man not be punished who has plotted not merely to slay but actually to sacrifice at the altar” (for the conspirators intended to attack him when he was sacrificing), “now when there is peace by land and sea, that life which so many civil wars have sought in vain, which has passed unharmed through so many battles of fleets and armies?”

Then, after an interval of silence, he would say to himself in a far louder, angrier tone than he had used to Cinna, “Why do you live, if it be to so many men’s advantage that you should die? Is there no end to these executions? to this bloodshed? I am a figure set up for nobly-born youths to sharpen their swords on. Is life worth having, if so many must perish to prevent my losing it?” At last his wife Livia interrupted him, saying: “Will you take a woman’s advice? Do as the

physicians do, who, when the usual remedies fail, try their opposites. Hitherto you have gained nothing by harsh measures: Salvidienus has been followed by Lepidus, Lepidus by Muraena, Muraena by Caepio, and Caepio by Egnatius, not to mention others of whom one feels ashamed of their having dared to attempt so great a deed. Now try what effect clemency will have: pardon Lucius Cinna. He has been detected, he cannot now do you any harm, and he can do your reputation much good.” Delighted at finding someone to support his own view of the case, he thanked his wife, straightway ordered his friends, whose counsel he had asked for, to be told that he did not require their advice, and summoned Cinna alone. After ordering a second seat to be placed for Cinna, he sent everyone else out of the room, and said:— “The first request which I have to make of you is, that you will not interrupt me while I am speaking to you: that you will not cry out in the middle of my address to you: you shall be allowed time to speak freely in answer to me. Cinna, when I found you in the enemy’s camp, you who had not become but were actually born my enemy, I saved your life, and restored to you the whole of your father’s estate. You are now so prosperous and so rich, that many of the victorious party envy you, the vanquished one: when you were a candidate for the priesthood I passed over many others whose parents had served with me in the wars, and gave it to you: and now, after I have deserved so well of you, you have made up your mind to kill me.” When at this word the man exclaimed that he was far from being so insane, Augustus replied, “You do not keep your promise, Cinna; it was agreed upon between us that you should not interrupt me. I repeat, you are preparing to kill me.” He then proceeded to tell him of the place, the names of his accomplices, the day, the way in which they had arranged to do the deed, and which of them was to give the fatal stab. When he saw Cinna’s eyes fixed upon the ground, and that he was silent, no longer because of the agreement, but from consciousness of his guilt, he said, “What is your intention in doing this? is it that you yourself may be emperor? The Roman people must indeed be in a bad way if nothing but my life prevents your ruling over them. You cannot even maintain the dignity of your own house: you have recently been defeated in a legal encounter by the superior influence of a freedman: and so you

can find no easier task than to call your friends to rally round you against Ceesar. Come, now, if you think that I alone stand in the way of your ambition; will Paulus and Fabius Maximus, will the Cossi and the Servilii and all that band of nobles, whose names are no empty pretence, but whose ancestry really renders them illustrious — will they endure that you should rule over them?” Not to fill up the greater part of this book by repeating the whole of his speech — for he is known to have spoken for more than two hours, lengthening out this punishment, which was the only one which he intended to inflict — he said at last: “Cinna, I grant you your life for the second time: when I gave it you before you were an open enemy, you are now a secret plotter and parricide.” From this day forth let us be friends: let us try which of us is the more sincere, I in giving you your life, or you in owing your life to me.” After this he of his own accord bestowed the consulship upon him, complaining of his not venturing to offer himself as a candidate for that office, and found him ever afterwards his most grateful and loyal adherent. Cinna made the emperor his sole heir, and no one ever again formed any plot against him.

X.

Your great-great-grandfather spared the vanquished: for whom could he have ruled over, had he not spared them? He recruited Sallustins, the Cocceii, the Deillii, and the whole inner circle of his court from the camp of his opponents. Soon afterwards his clemency gave him a Domitius, a Messala, an Asinius, a Cicero, and all the flower of the state. For what a long time he waited for Lepidus to die: for years he allowed him to retain all the insignia of royalty, and did not allow the office of pontifex maximus to be conferred upon himself until after Lepidus's death; for he wished it to be called a honourable office rather than a spoil stripped from a vanquished foe. It was this clemency which made him end his days in safety and security: this it was which rendered him popular and beloved, although he had laid his hands on the neck of the Romans when they were still unused to bearing the yoke: this gives him even at the present day a reputation such as hardly any prince has enjoyed during his own lifetime. "We believe him to be a god, and not merely because we are bidden to do so. We declare that Augustus was a good emperor, and that he was well worthy to bear his parent's name, for no other reason than because he did not even show cruelty in avenging personal insults, which most princes feel more keenly than actual injuries; because he smiled at scandalous jests against himself, because it was evident that he himself suffered when he punished others, because he was so far from putting to death even those whom he had convicted of intriguing with his daughter, that when they were banished he gave them passports to enable them to travel more safely. When you know that there will be many who will take your quarrel upon themselves, and will try to gain your favour by the murder of your enemies, you do indeed pardon them if you not only grant them their lives but ensure that they shall not lose them.

XI.

Such was Augustus when an old man, or when growing old: in his youth he was hasty and passionate, and did many things upon which he looked back with regret. No one will venture to compare the rule of the blessed Augustus to the mildness of your own, even if your youth be compared with his more than ripe old age: he was gentle and placable, but it was after he had dyed the sea at Actinm with Roman blood; after he had wrecked both the enemy's fleet and his own at Sicily; after the holocaust of Perusia and the proscriptions. But I do not call it clemency to be wearied of cruelty; true clemency, Caesar, is that which you display, which has not begun from remorse at its past ferocity, on which there is no stain, which has never shed the blood of your countrymen: this, when combined with unlimited power, shows the truest self-control and all-embracing love of the human race as of one's self, not corrupted by any low desires, any extravagant ideas, or any of the bad examples of former emperors into trying, by actual experiment, how great a tyranny you would be allowed to exercise over his countrymen, but inclining rather to blunting your sword of empire. You, Caesar, have granted us the boon of keeping our state free from bloodshed, and that of which you boast, that you have not caused one single drop of blood to flow in any part of the world, is all the more magnanimous and marvellous because no one ever had the power of the sword placed in his hands at an earlier age. Clemency, then, makes princes safer as well as more respected, and is a glory to empires besides being their most trustworthy means of preservation. Why have legitimate sovereigns grown old on the throne, and bequeathed their power to their children and grandchildren, while the sway of despotic usurpers is both hateful and shortlived? What is the difference between the tyrant and the king — for their outward symbols of authority and their powers are the same — except it be that tyrants take delight in cruelty, whereas kings are only cruel for good reasons and because they cannot help it.

XII.

“What, then,” say you, “do not kings also put men to death?” They do, but only when that measure is recommended by the public advantage: tyrants enjoy cruelty. A tyrant differs from a king in deeds, not in title: for the elder Dionysius deserves to be preferred before many kings, and what can prevent our styling Lucius Sulla a tyrant, since he only left off slaying because he had no more enemies to slay? Although he laid down his dictatorship and resumed the garb of a private citizen, yet what tyrant ever drank human blood as greedily as he, who ordered seven thousand Roman citizens to be butchered, and who, on hearing the shrieks of so many thousands being put to the sword as he sat in the temple of Bellona, said to the terror-stricken Senate, “Let us attend to our business, Conscript Fathers; it is only a few disturbers of the public peace who are being put to death by my orders.” In saying this he did not lie: they really seemed few to Sulla. But we shall speak of Sulla presently, when we consider how we ought to feel anger against our enemies, at any rate when our own countrymen, members of the same community as ourselves, have been torn away from it and assumed the name of enemies: in the meanwhile, as I was saying, clemency is what makes the great distinction between kings and tyrants. Though each of them may be equally fenced around by armed soldiers, nevertheless the one uses his troops to safeguard the peace of his kingdom, the other uses them to quell great hatred by great terror: and yet he does not look with any confidence upon those to whose hands he entrusts himself. He is driven in opposite directions by conflicting passions: for since he is hated because he is feared, he wishes to be feared because he is hated: and he acts up to the spirit of that odious verse, which has cast so many headlong from their thrones —

“Why, let them hate me, if they fear me too!” —

not knowing how frantic men become when their hatred becomes excessive: for a moderate amount of fear restrains men, but a constant and keen apprehension of the worst tortures rouses up even the most grovelling spirits to deeds of reckless courage, and causes them to hesitate at nothing. Just so a string stuck full of feathers will

prevent wild beasts escaping: but should a horseman begin to shoot at them from another quarter, they will attempt to escape over the very thing that scared them, and will trample the cause of their alarm underfoot. No courage is so great as that which is born of utter desperation. In order to keep people down by terror, you must grant them a certain amount of security, and let them see that they have far more to hope for than to fear: for otherwise, if a man is in equal peril whether he sits still or takes action, he will feel actual pleasure in risking his life, and will fling it away as lightly as though it were not his own.

XIII.

A calm and peaceful king trusts his guards, because he makes use of them to ensure the common safety of all his subjects, and his soldiers, who see that the security of the state depends upon their labours, cheerfully undergo the severest toil and glory in being the protectors of the father of their country: whereas your harsh and murderous tyrant must needs be disliked even by his own janissaries. No man can expect willing and loyal service from those whom he uses like the rack and the axe, as instruments of torture and death, to whom he casts men as he would cast them to wild beasts. No prisoner at the bar is so full of agony and anxiety as a tyrant; for while he dreads both gods and men because they have witnessed, and will avenge his crimes, he has at the same time so far committed himself to this course of action that he is not able to alter it. This is perhaps the very worst quality of cruelty: a man must go on exercising it, and it is impossible for him to retrace his steps and start in a better path; for crimes must be safeguarded by fresh crimes. Yet who can be more unhappy than he who is actually compelled to be a villain? How greatly he ought to be pitied: I mean, by himself, for it would be impious for others to pity a man who has made use of his power to murder and ravage, who has rendered himself mistrusted by everyone at home and abroad, who fears the very soldiers to whom he flees for safety, who dare not rely upon the loyalty of his friends or the affection of his children: who, whenever he considers what he has done, and what he is about to do, and calls to mind all the crimes and torturings with which his conscience is burdened, must often fear death, and yet must often wish for it, for he must be even more hateful to himself than he is to his subjects. On the other hand, he who takes an interest in the entire state, who watches over every department of it with more or less care, who attends to all the business of the state as well as if it were his own, who is naturally inclined to mild measures, and shows, even when it is to his advantage to punish, how unwilling he is to make use of harsh remedies; who has no angry or savage feelings, but wields his authority calmly and beneficially, being anxious that even his

subordinate officers shall be popular with his countrymen, who thinks his happiness complete if he can make the nation share his prosperity, who is courteous in language, whose presence is easy of access, who looks obligingly upon his subjects, who is disposed to grant all their reasonable wishes, and does not treat their unreasonable wishes with harshness — such a prince is loved, protected, and worshipped by his whole empire. Men talk of such a one in private in the same words which they use in public: they are eager to bring up families under his reign, and they put an end to the childlessness which public misery had previously rendered general: everyone feels that he will indeed deserve that his children should be grateful to him for having brought them into so happy an age. Such a prince is rendered safe by his own beneficence; he has no need of guards their arms serve him merely as decorations.

XIV.

What, then, is his duty? It is that of good parents, who sometimes scold their children good naturedly, sometimes threaten them, and sometimes even flog them. No man in his senses disinherits his son for his first offence he does not pass this extreme sentence upon him unless his patience has been worn out by many grievous wrongs, unless he fears that his son will do something worse than that which he punishes him for having done; before doing this he makes many attempts to lead his son's mind into the right way while it is still hesitating between good and evil and has only taken its first steps in depravity; it is only when its case is hopeless that he adopts this extreme measure. No one demands that people should be executed until after he has failed to reform them. This which is the duty of a parent, is also that of the prince whom with no unmeaning flattery we call "The Father of our Country." Other names are given as titles of honour: we have styled some men "The Great," "The Fortunate," or "The August" and have thus satisfied their passion for grandeur by bestowing upon them all the dignity that we could: but when we style a man "The Father of his Country " we give him to understand that we have entrusted him with a father's power over us, which is of the mildest character for a father takes thought for his children and subordinates his own interests to theirs. It is long before a father will cut off a member of his own body: even after he has cut it off he longs to replace it, and in cutting it off he laments and hesitates much and long: for he who condemns quickly is not far from being willing to condemn; and he who inflicts too great punishment comes very near to punishing unjustly.

XV.

Within my own recollection the people stabbed in the forum with their writing-styles a Roman knight named Tricho, because he had flogged his son to death: even the authority of Augustus Caesar could hardly save him from the angry clutches of both fathers and sons: but everyone admired Tarius, who, on discovering that his son meditated parricide, tried him, convicted him, and was then satisfied with punishing him by exile, and that, too, to that pleasant place of exile, Marseilles, where he made him the same yearly allowance which he had done while he was innocent: the result of this generosity was that even in a city where every villain finds someone to defend him, no one doubted that he was justly condemned, since even the father who was unable to hate him, nevertheless had condemned him. In this very same instance I will give you an example of a good prince, which you may compare with a good father. Tarius, when about to sit in judgement on his son, invited Augustus Caesar to assist in trying him: Augustus came into his private house, sat beside the father, took part in another man's family council, and did not say, "Nay, let him rather come to my house," because if he had done so, the trial would have been conducted by Caesar and not by the father. When the cause had been heard, after all that the young man pleaded in his own defence and all that was alleged against him had been thoroughly discussed, the emperor begged that each man would write his sentence (instead of pronouncing it aloud), in order that they might not all follow Caesar in giving sentence: then, before the tablets were opened, he declared that if Tarius, who was a rich man, made him his heir, he would not accept the bequest. One might say "It showed a paltry mind in him to fear that people would think that he condemned the son in order to enable himself to inherit the estate." I am of a contrary opinion — any one of us ought to have sufficient trust in the consciousness of his own integrity to defend him against calumny, but princes must take great pains to avoid even the appearance of evil. He swore that he would not accept the property. On that day Tarius lost two heirs to his estate, but Caesar gained the liberty of forming an unbiased judgement: and when he had proved that his

severity was disinterested, a point of which a prince should never lose sight, he gave sentence that the son should be banished to whatever place the father might choose. He did not sentence him to the sack and the snakes, or to prison, because he thought, not of who it was upon whom he was passing sentence, but of who it was with whom he was sitting in judgement: he said that a father ought to be satisfied with the mildest form of punishment for his stripling son, who had been seduced into a crime which he had attempted so faintheartedly as to be almost innocent of it, and that he ought to be removed from Rome and out of his father's sight.

XVI.

How worthy was he to be invited by fathers to join their family councils: how worthy to be made co-heir with innocent children! This is the sort of clemency which befits a prince; wherever he goes, let him make every one more charitable. In the king's sight, no one ought to be so despicable that he should not notice whether he lives or dies: be his character what it may, he is a part of the empire. Let us take examples for great kingdoms from smaller ones. There are many forms of royalty: a prince reigns over his subjects, a father over his children, a teacher over his scholars, a tribune or centurion over his soldiers. Would not he, who constantly punished his children by beating them for the most trifling faults, be thought the worst of fathers? Which is worthier to impart a liberal education: he who flays his scholars alive if their memory be weak, or if their eyes do not run quickly along the lines as they read, or he who prefers to improve and instruct them by kindly warnings and moral influence? If a tribune or a centurion is harsh, he will make men deserters, and one cannot blame them for desertion. It is never right to rule a human being more harshly and cruelly than we rule dumb animals; yet a skilled horse-breaker will not scare a horse by frequent blows, because he will become timid and vicious if you do not soothe him with pats and caresses. So also a huntsman, both when he is teaching puppies to follow the tracks of wild animals, and when he uses dogs already trained to drive them from their lairs and hunt them, does not often threaten to beat them, for, if he does, he will break their spirit, and make them stupid and currish with fear; though, on the other hand, he will not allow them to roam and range about unrestrained. The same is the case with those who drive the slower draught cattle, which, though brutal treatment and wretchedness is their lot from their birth, still, by excessive cruelty may be made to refuse to draw.

XVII.

No creature is more self-willed, requires more careful management, or ought to be treated with greater indulgence than man. What, indeed, can be more foolish than that we should blush to show anger against dogs or beasts of burden, and yet wish one man to be most abominably ill-treated by another? We are not angry with diseases, but apply remedies to them: but this also is a disease of the mind, and requires soothing medicine and a physician who is anything but angry with his patient. It is the part of a bad physician to despair of effecting a cure: he, to whom the care of all men's well-being is entrusted, ought to act like a good physician, and not be in a hurry to give up hope or to declare that the symptoms are mortal: he should wrestle with vices, withstand them, reproach some with their distemper, and deceive others by a soothing mode of treatment, because he will cure his patient more quickly and more thoroughly if the medicines which he administers escape his notice: a prince should take care not only of the recovery of his people, but also that their scars should be honourable. Cruel punishments do a king no honour: for who doubts that he is able to inflict them? but, on the other hand, it does him great honour to restrain his powers, to save many from the wrath of others, and sacrifice no one to his own.

XVIII.

It is creditable to a man to keep within reasonable bounds in his treatment of his slaves. Even in the case of a human chattel one ought to consider, not how much one can torture him with impunity, but how far such treatment is permitted by natural goodness and justice, which prompts us to act kindly towards even prisoners of war and slaves bought for a price (how much more towards free-born, respectable gentlemen?), and not to treat them with scornful brutality as human chattels, but as persons somewhat below ourselves in station, who have been placed under our protection rather than assigned to us as servants. Slaves are allowed to run and take sanctuary at the statue of a god, though the laws allows a slave to be ill-treated to any extent, there are nevertheless some things which the common laws of life forbid us to do to a human being. Who does not hate Veditius Pollio more even than his own slaves did, because he used to fatten his lampreys with human blood, and ordered those who had offended him in any way to be cast into his fish-pond, or rather snake-pond? That man deserved to die a thousand deaths, both for throwing his slaves to be devoured by the lampreys which he himself meant to eat, and for keeping lampreys that he might feed them in such a fashion. Cruel masters are pointed at with disgust in all parts of the city, and are hated and loathed; the wrong-doings of kings are enacted on a wider theatre: their shame and unpopularity endures for ages: yet how far better it would have been never to have been born than to be numbered among those who have been born to do their country harm!

XIX.

Nothing can be imagined which is more becoming to a sovereign than clemency, by whatever title and right he may be set over his fellow citizens. The greater his power, the more beautiful and admirable he will confess his clemency to be: for there is no reason why power should do any harm, if only it be wielded in accordance with the laws of nature. Nature herself has conceived the idea of a king, as you may learn from various animals, and especially from bees, among whom the king's cell is the roomiest, and is placed in the most central and safest part of the hive; moreover, he does no work, but employs himself in keeping the others up to their work. If the king be lost, the entire swarm disperses: they never endure to have more than one king at a time, and find out which is the better by making them fight with one another: moreover the king is distinguished by his statelier appearance, being both larger and more brilliantly coloured than the other bees. The most remarkable distinction, however, is the following: bees are very fierce, and for their size are the most pugnacious of creatures, and leave their stings in the wounds which they make, but the king himself has no sting: nature does not wish him to be savage or to seek revenge at so dear a rate, and so has deprived him of his weapon and disarmed his rage. She has offered him as a pattern to great sovereigns, for she is wont to practice herself in small matters, and to scatter abroad tiny models of the hugest structures. We ought to be ashamed of not learning a lesson in behaviour from these small creatures, for a man, who has so much more power of doing harm than they, ought to show a correspondingly greater amount of self-control. Would that human beings were subject to the same law, and that their anger destroyed itself together with its instrument, so that they could only inflict a wound once, and would not make use of the strength of others to carry out their hatreds: for their fury would soon grow faint if it carried its own punishment with it, and could only give rein to its violence at the risk of death. Even as it is, however, no one can exercise it with safety, for he must needs feel as much fear as he hopes to cause, he must watch every one's movements, and even

when his enemies are not laying violent hands upon him he must bear in mind that they are plotting to do so, and he cannot have a single moment free from alarm. Would any one endure to live such a life as this, when he might enjoy the privileges of his high station to the general joy of all men, without injuring any one, and for that very reason have no one to fear? for it is a mistake to suppose that the king can be safe in a state where nothing is safe from the king: he can only purchase a life without anxiety for himself by guaranteeing the same for his subjects. He need not pile up lofty citadels, escarp steep hills, cut away the sides of mountains, and fence himself about with many lines of walls and towers: clemency will render a king safe even upon an open plain. The one fortification which cannot be stormed is the love of his countrymen. What can be more glorious than a life which every one spontaneously and without official pressure hopes may last long? to excite men's fears, not their hopes, if one's health gives way a little? to know that no one holds anything so dear that he would not be glad to give it in exchange for the health of his sovereign? "O, may no evil befall him!" they would cry: "he must live for his own sake, not only for ours: his constant proofs of goodness have made him belong to the state instead of the state belonging to him." Who would dare to plot any danger to such a king? Who would not rather, if he could, keep misfortune far from one under whom justice, peace, decency, security and merit flourish, under whom the state grows rich with an abundance of all good things, and looks upon its ruler in the same spirit of adoration and respect with which we should look upon the immortal gods, if they allowed us to behold them as we behold him? Why! does not that man come very close to the gods who acts in a god-like manner, and who is beneficent, open-handed, and powerful for good? Your aim and your pride ought to lie in being thought the best, as well as the greatest of mankind.

XX.

A prince generally inflicts punishment for one of two reasons: he wishes either to assert his own rights or those of another. I will first discuss the case in which he is personally concerned, for it is more difficult for him to act with moderation when he acts under the impulse of actual pain than when he merely does so for the sake of the example. It is unnecessary in this place to remind him to be slow to believe what he hears, to ferret out the truth, to show favour to innocence, and to bear in mind that to prove it is as much the business of the judge as that of the prisoner; for these considerations are connected with justice, not with clemency: what we are now encouraging him to do is not to lose control over his feelings when he receives an unmistakeable injury, and to forego punishing it if he possibly can do so with safety, if not, to moderate the severity of the punishment, and to show himself far more unwilling to forgive wrongs done to others than those done to himself: for, just as the truly generous man is not he who gives away what belongs to others, but he who deprives himself of what he gives to another, so also I should not call a prince clement who looked good naturedly upon a wrong done to someone else, but one who is unmoved even by the sting of a personal injury, who understands how magnanimous it is for one whose power is unlimited to allow himself to be wronged, and that there is no more noble spectacle than that of a sovereign who has received an injury without avenging it.

XXI.

Vengeance effects two purposes: it either affords compensation to the person to whom the wrong was done, or it ensures him against molestation for the future. A prince is too rich to need compensation, and his power is too evident for him to require to gain a reputation for power by causing anyone to suffer. I mean, when he is attacked and injured by his inferiors, for if he sees those who once were his equals in a position of inferiority to himself he is sufficiently avenged. A king may be killed by a slave, or a serpent, or an arrow: but no one can be saved except by someone who is greater than him whom he saves. He, therefore, who has the power of giving and of taking away life ought to use such a great gift of heaven in a spirited manner. Above all, if he once obtains this power over those who he knows were once on a level with himself, he has completed his revenge, and done all that he need to towards the punishment of his adversary: for he who owes his life to another must have lost it, and he who has been cast down from on high and lies at his enemy's feet with his kingdom and his life depending upon the pleasure of another, adds to the glory of his preserver if he be allowed to live, and increases his reputation much more by remaining unhurt than if he were put out of the way. In the former case he remains as an everlasting testimony to the valour of his conqueror; whereas if led in the procession of a triumph he would have soon passed out of sight. If, however, his kingdom also may be safely left in his hands and he himself replaced upon the throne from which he has fallen, such a measure confers an immense increase of luster on him who scorned to take anything from a conquered king beyond the glory of having conquered him. To do this is to triumph even over one's own victory, and to declare that one has found nothing among the vanquished which it was worth the victor's while to take. As for his countrymen, strangers, and persons of mean condition, he ought to treat them with all the less severity because it costs so much less to overcome them. Some you would be glad to spare, against some you would disdain to assert your rights, and would forbear to touch them as you would to touch little insects which defile your hands when

you crush them: but in the case of men upon whom all eyes are fixed, whether they be spared or condemned, you should seize the opportunity of making your clemency widely known.

XXII.

Let us now pass on to the consideration of wrongs done to others, in avenging which the law has aimed at three ends, which the prince will do well to aim at also: they are, either that it may correct him whom it punishes, or that his punishment may render other men better, or that, by bad men being put out of the way, the rest may live without fear. You will more easily correct the men themselves by a slight punishment, for he who has some part of his fortune remaining untouched will behave less recklessly; on the other hand, no one cares about respectability after he has lost it: it is a species of impunity to have nothing left for punishment to take away. It is conducive, however, to good morals in a state, that punishment should seldom be inflicted: for where there is a multitude of sinners men become familiar with sin, shame is less felt when shared with a number of fellow-criminals, and severe sentences, if frequently pronounced, lose the influence which constitutes their chief power as remedial measures. A good king establishes a good standard of morals for his kingdom and drives away vices if he is long-suffering with them, not that he should seem to encourage them, but to be very unwilling and to suffer much when he is forced to chastise them. Clemency in a sovereign even makes men ashamed to do wrong: for punishment seems far more grievous when inflicted by a merciful man.

XXIII.

Besides this, you will find that sins which are frequently punished are frequently committed. Your father sewed up more parricides in sacks during five years, than we hear of in all previous centuries. As long as the greatest of crimes remained without any special law, children were much more timid about committing it. Our wise ancestors, deeply skilled in human nature, preferred to pass over this as being a wickedness too great for belief, and beyond the audacity of the worst criminal, rather than teach men that it might be done by appointing a penalty for doing it: parricides, consequently, were unknown until a law was made against them, and the penalty showed them the way to the crime. Filial affection soon perished, for since that time we have seen more men punished by the sack than by the cross. Where men are seldom punished innocence becomes the rule, and is encouraged as a public benefit. If a state thinks itself innocent, it will be innocent: it will be all the more angry with those who corrupt the general simplicity of manners if it sees that they are few in number. Believe me, it is a dangerous thing to show a state how great a majority of bad men it contains.

XXIV.

A proposal was once made in the Senate to distinguish slaves from free men by their dress: it was then discovered how dangerous it would be for our slaves to be able to count our numbers. Be assured that the same thing would be the case if no one's offence is pardoned: it will quickly be discovered how far the number of bad men exceeds that of the good. Many executions are as disgraceful to a sovereign as many funerals are to a physician: one who governs less strictly is better obeyed. The human mind is naturally self-willed, kicks against the goad, and sets its face against authority; it will follow more readily than it can be led. As well-bred and high-spirited horses are best managed with a loose rein, so mercy gives men's minds a spontaneous bias towards innocence, and the public think that it is worth observing. Mercy, therefore, does more good than severity.

XXV.

Cruelty is far from being a human vice, and is unworthy of man's gentle mind: it is mere bestial madness to take pleasure in blood and wounds, to cast off humanity and transform oneself into a wild beast of the forest. Pray, Alexander, what is the difference between your throwing Lysimachus into a lion's den and tearing his flesh with your own teeth? it is you that have the lion's maw, and the lion's fierceness. How pleased you would be if you had claws instead of nails, and jaws that were capable of devouring men! We do not expect of you that your hand, the sure murderer of your best friends, should restore health to any one; or that your proud spirit, that inexhaustible source of evil to all nations, should be satisfied with anything short of blood and slaughter: we rather call it mercy that your friend should have a human being chosen to be his butcher. The reason why cruelty is the most hateful of all vices is that it goes first beyond the ordinary limits, and then beyond those of humanity; that it devises new kinds of punishments, calls ingenuity to aid it in inventing devices for varying and lengthening men's torture, and takes delight in their sufferings: this accursed disease of the mind reaches its highest pitch of madness when cruelty itself turns into pleasure, and the act of killing a man becomes enjoyment. Such a ruler is soon cast down from his throne; his life is attempted by poison one day and by the sword the next; he is exposed to as many dangers as there are men to whom he is dangerous, and he is sometimes destroyed by the plots of individuals, and at others by a general insurrection. Whole communities are not roused to action by unimportant outrages on private persons; but cruelty which takes a wider range, and from which no one is safe, becomes a mark for all men's weapons. Very small snakes escape our notice, and the whole country does not combine to destroy them; but when one of them exceeds the usual size and grows into a monster, when it poisons fountains with its spittle, scorches herbage with its breath, and spreads ruin wherever it crawls, we shoot at it with military engines. Trifling evils may cheat us and elude our observation, but we gird up our loins to attack great ones. One sick person does not so much as

disquiet the house in which he lies; but when frequent deaths show that a plague is raging, there is a general outcry, men take to flight and shake their fists angrily at the very gods themselves. If a fire breaks out under one single roof, the family and the neighbours pour water upon it; but a wide conflagration which has consumed many houses must be smothered under the ruins of a whole quarter of a city.

XXVI.

The cruelty even of private men has sometimes been revenged by their slaves in spite of the certainty that they will be crucified: whole kingdoms and nations when oppressed by tyrants or threatened by them, have attempted their destruction. Sometimes their own guards have risen in revolt, and have used against their master all the deceit, disloyalty, and ferocity which they have learned from him. What, indeed, can he expect from those whom he has taught to be wicked? A bad man will not long be obedient, and will not do only as much evil as he is ordered. But even if the tyrant may be cruel with safety, how miserable his kingdom must be: it must look like a city taken by storm, like some frightful scene of general panic. Everywhere sorrow, anxiety, disorder; men dread even their own pleasures; they cannot even dine with one another in safety when they have to keep watch over their tongues even when in their cups, nor can they safely attend the public shows when informers are ready to find grounds for their impeachment in their behaviour there. Although the spectacles be provided at an enormous expense, with royal magnificence and with world-famous artists, yet who cares for amusement when he is in prison? Ye gods! what a miserable life it is to slaughter and to rage, to delight in the clanking of chains, and to cut off one's countrymen's heads, to cause blood to flow freely wherever one goes, to terrify people, and make them flee away out of one's sight! It is what would happen if bears or lions were our masters, if serpents and all the most venomous creatures were given power over us. Even these animals, devoid of reason as they are, and accused by us of cruel ferocity, spare their own kind, and wild beasts themselves respect their own likeness: but the fury of tyrants does not even stop short at their own relations, and they treat friends and strangers alike, only becoming more violent the more they indulge their passions. By insensible degrees he proceeds from the slaughter of individuals to the ruin of nations, and thinks it a sign of power to set roofs on fire and to plough up the sites of ancient cities: he considers it unworthy of an emperor to order only one or two people to be put to death, and thinks that his cruelty is unduly restrained if whole troops of

wretches are not sent to execution together. True happiness, on the other hand, consists in saving many men's lives, in calling them back from the very gates of death, and in being so merciful as to deserve a civic crown. No decoration is more worthy or more becoming to a prince's rank than that crown "for saving the lives of fellow-citizens: not trophies torn from a vanquished enemy, not chariots wet with their savage owner's blood, not spoils captured in war. This power which saves men's lives by crowds and by nations, is godlike: the power of extensive and indiscriminate massacre is the power of downfall and conflagration.

Book II

I.

I HAVE been especially led to write about clemency, Nero Caesar, by a saying of yours, which I remember having heard with admiration and which I afterwards told to others: a noble saying, showing a great mind and great gentleness, which suddenly burst from you without premeditation, and was not meant to reach any ears but your own, and which displayed the conflict which was raging between your natural goodness and your imperial duties. Your prefect Burrus, an excellent man who was born to be the servant of such an emperor as you are, was about to order two brigands to be executed, and was pressing you to write their names and the grounds on which they were to be put to death: this had often been put off, and he was insisting that it should then be done. When he reluctantly produced the document and put it into your equally reluctant hands, you exclaimed: "Would that I had never learned my letters!" O what a speech, how worthy to be heard by all nations, both those who dwell within the Roman Empire, those who enjoy a debatable independence upon its borders, and those who either in will or in deed fight against it! It is a speech which ought to be spoken before a meeting of all mankind, whose words all kings and princes ought to swear to obey: a speech worthy of the days of human innocence, and worthy to bring back that golden age. Now in truth we ought all to agree to love righteousness and goodness; covetousness, which is the root of all evil, ought to be driven away, piety and virtue, good faith and modesty ought to resume their interrupted reign, and the vices which have so long and so shamefully ruled us ought at last to give way to an age of happiness and purity.

II.

To a great extent, Caesar, we may hope and expect that this will come to pass. Let your own goodness of heart be gradually spread and diffused throughout the whole body of the empire, and all parts of it will mould themselves into your likeness. Good health proceeds from the head into all the members of the body: they are all either brisk and erect, or languid and drooping, according as their guiding spirit blooms or withers. Both Romans and allies will prove worthy of this goodness of yours, and good morals will return to all the world: your hands will everywhere find less to do. Allow me to dwell somewhat upon this saying of yours, not because it is a pleasant subject for your ears (indeed, this is not my way; I would rather offend by telling the truth than curry favour by flattery). What, then, is my reason? Besides wishing that you should be as familiar as possible with your own good deeds and good words, in order that what is now untutored impulse may grow into matured decision, I remember that many great but odious sayings have become part of human life and are familiar in men's mouths, such as that celebrated, "Let them hate me, provided that they fear me," which is like that Greek verse, ἐμοῦ θανοντος γὰρ μίχθητω πυρὶ, in which a man bids the earth perish in flame after he is dead, and others of the like sort. I know not how it is, but certainly human ingenuity seems to have found it easier to find emphatic and ardent expression for monstrous and cynical sentiments: I have never hitherto heard any spirited saying from a good and gentle person. What, then, is the upshot of all this? It is that, albeit seldom and against your will, and after much hesitation, you sometimes nevertheless must write that which made you hate your letters, but that you ought to do so with great hesitation and after many postponements, even as you now do.

III.

But lest the plausible word “mercy” should sometimes deceive us and lead us into the opposite extreme, let us consider what mercy is, what its qualities are, and within what limits it is confined. Mercy is “a restraining of the mind from vengeance when it is in its power to avenge itself,” or it is “gentleness shown by a powerful man in fixing the punishment of a weaker one.” It is safer to have more than one definition, since one may not include the whole subject, and may, so to speak, lose its cause: mercy, therefore, may likewise be termed a tendency towards mildness in inflicting punishment. It is possible to discover certain inconsistencies in the definition which comes nearer the truth than all the rest, which is to call mercy “self-restraint, which remits some part of a fine which it deserves to receive and which is due to it.” To this it will be objected that no virtue ever gives any man less than his due. However, all men understand mercy to consist in coming short of the penalty which might with justice be inflicted.

IV.

The unlearned think that its opposite is strictness: but no virtue is the opposite of another virtue. What, then, is the opposite of mercy? Cruelty: which is nothing more than obstinacy in exacting punishments. "But," say you, "some men do not exact punishments, and nevertheless are cruel, such as those who kill the strangers whom they meet, not in order to rob them, but for killing's sake, and men who are not satisfied with killing, but kill with savage tortures, like the famous Busing, and Procrustes, and pirates who flog their captives and burn them alive." This appears to be cruelty: but as it is not the result of vengeance (for it has received no wrong), and is not excited by any offence (for no crime has preceded it), it does not come within our definition, which was limited to "extravagance in exacting the penalties of wrongdoing." We may say that this is not cruelty, but ferocity, which finds pleasure in savagery: or we may call it madness; for madness is of various kinds, and there is no truer madness than that which takes to slaughtering and mutilating human beings. I shall, therefore, call those persons cruel who have a reason for punishing but who punish without moderation, like Phalaris, who is not said to have tortured innocent men, but to have tortured criminals with inhuman and incredible barbarity. We may avoid hairsplitting by defining cruelty to be "a tendency of the mind towards harsh measures." Mercy repels cruelty and bids it be far from her: with strictness she is on terms of amity.

At this point it is useful to inquire into what pity is; for many praise it as a virtue, and say that a good man is full of pity. This also is a disease of the mind. Both of these stand close to mercy and to strictness, and both ought to be avoided, lest under the name of strictness we be led into cruelty, and under the name of mercy into pity. It is less dangerous to make the latter mistake, but both lead us equally far away from the truth.

V.

Just as the gods are worshipped by religion, but are dishonoured by superstition, so all good men will show mercy and mildness, but will avoid pity, which is a vice incident to weak minds which cannot endure the sight of another's sufferings. It is, therefore, most commonly found in the worst people; there are old women and girls who are affected by the tears of the greatest criminals, and who, if they could, would let them out of prison. Pity considers a man's misfortunes and does not consider to what they are due: mercy is combined with reason. I know that the doctrine of the Stoics is unpopular among the ignorant as being excessively severe and not at all likely to give kings and princes good advice; it is blamed because it declares that the wise man knows not how to feel pity or to grant pardon. These doctrines, if taken separately, are indeed odious, for they appear to give men no hope of repairing their mistakes but exact a penalty for every slip. If this were true, how can it be true wisdom to bid us put off human feeling, and to exclude us from mutual help, that surest haven of refuge against the attacks of Fortune? But no school of philosophy is more gentle and benignant, none is more full of love towards man or more anxious to promote the happiness of all, seeing that its maxims are, to be of service and assistance to others, and to consult the interests of each and all, not of itself alone. Pity is a disorder of the mind caused by the sight of other men's miseries, or it is a sadness caused by the evils with which it believes others to be undeservedly afflicted: but the wise man cannot be affected by any disorder: his mind is calm, and nothing can possibly happen to ruffle it. Moreover, nothing becomes a man more than magnanimity: but magnanimity cannot coexist with sorrow. Sorrow overwhelms men's minds, casts them down, contracts them: now this cannot happen to the wise man even in his greatest misfortunes, but he will beat back the rage of Fortune and triumph over it: he will always retain the same calm, undisturbed expression of countenance, which he never could do were he accessible to sorrow.

VI.

Add to this, that the wise man provides for the future and always has a distinct plan of action ready: yet nothing clear and true can flow from a disturbed source. Sorrow is awkward at reviewing the position of affairs, at devising useful expedients, avoiding dangerous courses, and weighing the merits of fair and just ones: therefore the wise man will not feel pity, because this cannot happen to a man unless his mind is disturbed. He will do willingly and highmindedly all that those who feel pity are wont to do; he will dry the tears of others, but will not mingle his own with them; he will stretch out his hand to the shipwrecked mariner, will offer hospitality to the exile, and alms to the needy — not in the offensive way in which most of those who wish to be thought tender-hearted fling their bounty to those whom they assist and shrink from their touch, but as one man would give another something out of the common stock — he will restore children to their weeping mothers, will loose the chains of the captive, release the gladiator from his bondage, and even bury the carcass of the criminal, but he will perform all this with a calm mind and unaltered expression of countenance. Thus the wise man will not pity men, but will help them and be of service to them, seeing that he is born to be a help to all men and a public benefit, of which he will bestow a share upon every one. He will even grant a proportional part of his bounty to those sufferers who deserve blame and correction; but he will much more willingly help those whose troubles and adversities are caused by misfortune. Whenever he is able he will interpose between Fortune and her victims: for what better employment can he find for his wealth or his strength than in setting up again what chance has overthrown? He will not show or feel any disgust at a man's having withered legs, or a flabby wrinkled skin, or supporting his aged body upon a staff; but he will do good to those who deserve it, and will, like a god, look benignantly upon all who are in trouble. Pity borders upon misery: it is partly composed of it and partly derived from it. You know that eyes must be weak, if they fill with rheum at the sight of another's blearedness, just as it is not real merriment but hysteria which makes people laugh because

others laugh, and yawn whenever others open their jaws: pity is a defect in the mind of people who are extraordinarily affected by suffering, and he who requires a wise man to exhibit it is not far from requiring him to lament and groan when strangers are buried.

VII.

But why should he not pardon ? Let us decide by exact definition this other slippery matter, the true nature of pardon, and we shall then perceive that the wise man ought not to grant it. Pardon is the remitting of a deserved punishment. The reasons why the wise man ought not to grant this remission are given at length by those of whom this question is specially asked: I will briefly say, as though it were no concern of mine to decide this point, “A man grants pardon to one whom he ought to punish: now the wise man does nothing which he ought not to do, and omits to do nothing which he ought to do: he does not, therefore, remit any punishment which he ought to exact. But the wise man will bestow upon you in a more honourable way that which you wish to obtain by pardon, for he will make allowances for you, will consult your interests, and will correct your bad habits: he will act just as though he were pardoning you, but nevertheless he will not pardon you, because he who pardons admits that in so doing he has neglected a part of his duty. He will only punish some people by reprimanding them, and will inflict no further penalty if he considers that they are of an age which admits of reformation: some people who are undeniably implicated in an odious charge he will acquit, because they were deceived into committing, or were not sober when they committed the offence with which they are charged: he will let his enemies depart unharmed, sometimes even with words of commendation, if they have taken up arms to defend their honour, their covenants with others, their freedom, or on any other honourable ground. All these doings come under the head of mercy, not of pardon. Mercy is free to come to what decision it pleases: she gives her decision, not under any statute, but according to equity and goodness: she may acquit the defendant, or impose what damages she pleases. She does not do any of these things as though she were doing less than justice requires, but as though the justest possible course were that which she adopts. On the other hand, to pardon is not to punish a man whom you have decided ought to be punished; pardon is the remission of a punishment which ought to be inflicted. The first advantage which

mercy has over it is that she does not tell those whom she lets off that they ought to have suffered : she is more complete, more honourable than pardon.”

In my opinion, this is a mere dispute about words, and we are agreed about the thing itself. The wise man will remit many penalties, and will save many who are wicked, but whose wickedness is not incurable. He will act like good husbandmen, who do not cultivate only straight and tall trees, but also apply props to straighten those which have been rendered crooked by various causes; they trim some, lest the luxuriance of their boughs should hinder their upward growth, they nurse those which have been weakened by being planted in an unsuitable position, and they give air to those which are overshadowed by the foliage of others. The wise man will see the several treatments suitable to several dispositions, and how what is crooked may be straightened. . . .

ON THE HAPPY LIFE



Translated by Aubrey Stewart

The dialogue *De Vita Beata* was composed circa 58 AD and intended for Seneca's older brother Gallio. It is divided into 28 chapters, presenting Seneca's most mature moral thoughts, as he argues that the pursuit of happiness is the pursuit of reason – reason meant not only using logic, but also understanding the processes of nature.

As in many of his other works, Seneca is in agreement with Stoic doctrine, stating that Nature is Reason (logos) and that people must use their powers of reason to live in harmony with nature and so achieve happiness. In his words: "I follow nature; it is common sense not to stray from it but to be moulded according to its law and example." Seneca proposes to follow a logical sequence in this approach, starting with the definition of the objectives that the person wants to obtain. In decision-making he rejects the ways of the masses ("the most beaten and frequented paths are the most deceptive") since people are "more willing to trust another than to judge for themselves" and "a mistake that has been passed on from hand to hand finally involves us and works our destruction."

Seneca presents a morality based on contempt for the pleasures "pleasure is something lowly, servile, weak and perishable". But he admits that there are acceptable pleasures: "calm, moderate, almost listless and subdued, and scarcely noticeable" linked to the conduct of the wise person. The attainment of happiness, therefore, is only really possible by following Virtue, who "like a good soldier will submit to wounds, count her scars, and, pierced by darts as she dies, will yet adore the general for whom she falls", because "no one can live cheerfully without living honourably." In this manner, Seneca distinguishes between virtues hard or difficult and virtues soft or easier to practise, because "there is no virtue without effort". Among the difficult are patience, fortitude and perseverance, and among the

easy are liberality, temperance and meekness.



The “Pseudo-Seneca” — a Roman bust found at Herculaneum

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Preface

I can say little by way of preface to Seneca's "Minor Dialogs" which I have not already expressed in my preface to *De Beneficiis*, except that the "Minor Dialogs" seem to me to be composed in a gloomier key than either *De Beneficiis* or *De Clementia* and probably were written at a time when the author had already begun to experience the ingratitude of his imperial pupil. Some of the dialogs are dated from Corsica, Seneca's place of exile, which he seems to have found peculiarly uncomfortable, although he remarks that there are people who live there from choice. Nevertheless, mournful as they are in tone, these Dialogs have a certain value, because they teach us what was meant by Stoic philosophy in the time of the Twelve Caesars.

I have only to add that the value of my work has been materially enhanced by the kindness of the Rev. Professor J.E.B. Mayor, who has been good enough to read and correct almost all the proof sheets of this volume.

Aubrey Stewart
London, 1889

I

All men, brother Gallio, wish to live happily, but are dull at perceiving exactly what it is that makes life happy: and so far is it from being easy to attain to happiness that the more eagerly a man struggles to reach it the further he departs from it, if he takes the wrong road; for, since this leads in the opposite direction, his very swiftness carries him all the further away. We must therefore first define clearly what it is at which we aim: next we must consider by what path we may most speedily reach it, for on our journey itself, provided it be made in the right direction, we shall learn how much progress we have made each day, and how much nearer we are to the goal towards which our natural desires urge us. But as long as we wander at random, not following any guide except the shouts and discordant clamours of those who invite us to proceed in different directions, our short life will be wasted in useless roamings, even if we labour both day and night to get a good understanding. Let us not therefore decide whither we must tend, and by what path, without the advice of some experienced person who has explored the region which we are about to enter, because this journey is not subject to the same conditions as others; for in them some distinctly understood track and inquiries made of the natives make it impossible for us to go wrong, but here the most beaten and frequented tracks are those which lead us most astray. Nothing, therefore, is more important than that we should not, like sheep, follow the flock that has gone before us, and thus proceed not whither we ought, but whither the rest are going. Now nothing gets us into greater troubles than our subservience to common rumour, and our habit of thinking that those things are best which are most generally received as such, of taking many counterfeits for truly good things, and of living not by reason but by imitation of others. This is the cause of those great heaps into which men rush till they are piled one upon another. In a great crush of people, when the crowd presses upon itself, no one can fall without drawing some one else down upon him, and those who go before cause the destruction of those who follow them. You may observe the same thing in human life: no one can merely go wrong

by himself, but he must become both the cause and adviser of another's wrong doing. It is harmful to follow the march of those who go before us, and since every one had rather believe another than form his own opinion, we never pass a deliberate judgment upon life, but some traditional error always entangles us and brings us to ruin, and we perish because we follow other men's examples: we should be cured of this if we were to disengage ourselves from the herd; but as it is, the mob is ready to fight against reason in defence of its own mistake. Consequently the same thing happens as at elections, where, when the fickle breeze of popular favour has veered round, those who have been chosen consuls and praetors are viewed with admiration by the very men who made them so. That we should all approve and disapprove of the same things is the end of every decision which is given according to the voice of the majority.

II

When we are considering a happy life, you cannot answer me as though after a division of the House, "This view has most supporters;" because for that very reason it is the worse of the two: matters do not stand so well with mankind that the majority should prefer the better course: the more people do a thing the worse it is likely to be. Let us therefore inquire, not what is most commonly done, but what is best for us to do, and what will establish us in the possession of undying happiness, not what is approved of by the vulgar, the worst possible exponents of truth. By "the vulgar" I mean both those who wear woollen cloaks and those who wear crowns; for I do not regard the colour of the clothes with which they are covered: I do not trust my eyes to tell me what a man is: I have a better and more trustworthy light by which I can distinguish what is true from what is false: let the mind find out what is good for the mind. If a man ever allows his mind some breathing space and has leisure for communing with himself, what truths he will confess to himself, after having been put to the torture by his own self! He will say, "Whatever I have hitherto done I wish were undone: when I think over what I have said, I envy dumb people: whatever I have longed for seems to have been what my enemies would pray might befall me: good heaven, how far more endurable what I have feared seems to be than what I have lusted after. I have been at enmity with many men, and have changed my dislike of them into friendship, if friendship can exist between bad men: yet I have not yet become reconciled to myself," I have striven with all my strength to raise myself above the common herd, and to make myself remarkable for some talent: what have I effected save to make myself a mark for the arrows of my enemies, and show those who hate me where to wound me? Do you see those who praise your eloquence, who covet your wealth, who court your favour, or who vaunt your power? All these either are, or, which comes to the same thing, may be your enemies: the number of those who envy you is as great as that of those who admire you; why do I not rather seek for some good thing which I can use and feel, not one which I can show? these good things which

men gaze at in wonder, which they crowd to see, which one points out to another with speechless admiration, are outwardly brilliant, but within are miseries to those who possess them.”

III

Let us seek for some blessing, which does not merely look fine, but is sound and good throughout alike, and most beautiful in the parts which are least seen: let us unearth this. It is not far distant from us; it can be discovered: all that is necessary is to know whither to stretch out your hand: but, as it is, we behave as though we were in the dark, and reach out beyond what is nearest to us, striking as we do so against the very things that we want. However, that I may not draw you into digressions, I will pass over the opinions of other philosophers, because it would take a long time to state and confute them all: take ours. When, however, I say “ours,” I do not bind myself to any one of the chiefs of the Stoic school, for I too have a right to form my own opinion. I shall, therefore, follow the authority of some of them, but shall ask some others to discriminate their meaning: perhaps, when after having reported all their opinions, I am asked for my own, I shall impugn none of my predecessors’ decisions, and shall say, “I will also add somewhat to them.” Meanwhile I follow nature, which is a point upon which every one of the Stoic philosophers are agreed: true wisdom consists in not departing from nature and in moulding our conduct according to her laws and model. A happy life, therefore, is one which is in accordance with its own nature, and cannot be brought about unless in the first place the mind be sound and remain so without interruption, and next, be bold and vigorous, enduring all things with most admirable courage, suited to the times in which it lives, careful of the body and its appurtenances, yet not troublesomely careful. It must also set due value upon all the things which adorn our lives, without over-estimating any one of them, and must be able to enjoy the bounty of Fortune without becoming her slave. You understand without my mentioning it that an unbroken calm and freedom ensue, when we have driven away all those things which either excite us or alarm us: for in the place of sensual pleasures and and [sic] those slight perishable matters which are connected with the basest crimes, we thus gain an immense, unchangeable, equable joy, together with peace, calmness and greatness of mind, and kindliness: for all

savageness is a sign of weakness.

The Latin words are literally “to divide” their vote, that is, “to separate things of different kinds comprised in a single vote so that they might be voted for separately.” — Andrews.

Seneca fait allusion ici a une coutume pratiquée dans les assembles du Senat; et il nous explique lui-meme ailleurs d’un maniere tres claire: “Si quelqu’un dans le Senat,” dit il, “ouvre un avis, dont une partie me convienne, je le somme de la detacher du reste, et j’y adhere.” - *E* - La Grange. [Google Translate: Seneca refers to a custom practiced by the assembled Senate, and he explains himself very clearly: “If anyone in the Senate,” he said, “opens a view, part of me agree, I detach the sum of the rest, and I acceded.”]

IV

Our highest good may also be defined otherwise that is to say, the same idea may be expressed in different language. Just as the same army may at one time be extended more widely, at another contracted into a smaller compass, and may either be curved towards the wings by a depression in the line of the centre, or drawn up in a straight line, while, in whatever figure it be arrayed, its strength and loyalty remain unchanged; so also our definition of the highest good may in some cases be expressed diffusely and at great length, while in others it is put into a short and concise form. Thus, it will come to the same thing, if I say "The highest good is a mind which despises the accidents of fortune, and takes pleasure in virtue": or, "It is an unconquerable strength of mind, knowing the world well, gentle in its dealings, showing great courtesy and consideration for those with whom it is brought into contact." Or we may choose to define it by calling that man happy who knows good and bad only in the form of good or bad minds: who worships honour, and is satisfied with his own virtue, who is neither puffed up by good fortune nor cast down by evil fortune, who knows no other good than that which he is able to bestow upon himself, whose real[?] pleasure lies in despising pleasures. If you choose to pursue this digression further, you can put this same idea into many other forms, without impairing or weakening its meaning: for what prevents our saying that a happy life consists in a mind which is free, upright, undaunted, and steadfast, beyond the influence of fear or desire, which thinks nothing good except honour, and nothing bad except blame[?], and regards everything else as a mass of mean details which can neither add anything to nor take anything away from the happiness of life, but which come and go without either increasing or diminishing the highest good? A man of these principles, whether he will or no, must be accompanied by a continual cheerfulness, a high happiness, which comes indeed from on high because he delights in what he has, and desires no greater pleasures than those which his home affords. Is he not right in allowing these to turn the scale against petty, ridiculous and shortlived movements of his wretched body? on the day on

which he becomes proof against pleasure he also becomes proof against pain. See, on the other hand, how evil and guilty a slavery the man is forced to serve who is dominated in turn by pleasures and pains, those most untrustworthy and passionate of masters. We must, therefore, escape from them into freedom. This nothing will bestow upon us save contempt of Fortune: but if we attain to this, then there will dawn upon us those invaluable blessings, the repose of a mind that is at rest in a safe haven, its lofty imaginings, its great and steady delight at casting out errors and learning to know the truth, its courtesy, and its cheerfulness, in all of which we shall take delight, not regarding them as good things, but as proceeding from the proper good of man.

V

Since I have begun to make my definitions without a too strict adherence to the letter, a man may be called “happy” who, thanks to reason, has ceased either to hope or to fear: but rocks also feel neither fear nor sadness, nor do cattle, yet no one would call those things happy which cannot comprehend what happiness is. With them you may class men whose dull nature and want of self-knowledge reduces them to the level of cattle, mere animals: there is no difference between the one and the other, because the latter have no reason, while the former have only a corrupted form of it, crooked and cunning to their own hurt. For no one can be styled happy who is beyond the influence of truth: and consequently a happy life is unchangeable, and is founded upon a true and trustworthy discernment; for the mind is uncontaminated and freed from all evils only when it is able to escape not merely from wounds but also from scratches, when it will always be able to maintain the position which it has taken up, and defend it even against the angry assaults of Fortune: for with regard to sensual pleasures, though they were to surround one on every side, and use every means of assault, trying to win over the mind by caresses and making trial of every conceivable stratagem to attract either our entire selves or our separate parts, yet what mortal that retains any traces of human origin would wish to be tickled day and night, and, neglecting his mind, to devote himself to bodily enjoyments?

VI

“But,” says our adversary, “the mind also will have pleasures of its own.” Let it have them, then, and let it sit in judgment over luxury and pleasures; let it indulge itself to the full in all those matters which give sensual delights: then let it look back upon what it enjoyed before, and with all those faded sensualities fresh in its memory let it rejoice and look eagerly forward to those other pleasures which it experienced long ago, and intends to experience again, and while the body lies in helpless repletion in the present, let it send its thoughts onward towards the future, and take stock of its hopes: all this will make it appear, in my opinion, yet more wretched, because it is insanity to choose evil instead of good: now no insane person can be happy, and no one can be sane if he regards what is injurious as the highest good and strives to obtain it. The happy man, therefore, is he who can make a right judgment in all things: he is happy who in his present circumstances, whatever they may be, is satisfied and on friendly terms with the conditions of his life. That man is happy, whose reason recommends to him the whole posture of his affairs.

VII

Even those very people who declare the highest good to be in the belly, see what a dishonourable position they have assigned to it: and therefore they say that pleasure cannot be parted from virtue, and that no one can either live honourably without living cheerfully, nor yet live cheerfully without living honourably. I do not see how these very different matters can have any connexion with one another. What is there, I pray you, to prevent virtue existing apart from pleasure? of course the reason is that all good things derive their origin from virtue, and therefore even those things which you cherish and seek for come originally from its roots. Yet, if they were entirely inseparable, we should not see some things to be pleasant, but not honourable, and others most honourable indeed, but hard and only to be attained by suffering. Add to this, that pleasure visits the basest lives, but virtue cannot co-exist with an evil life; yet some unhappy people are not without pleasure, nay, it is owing to pleasure itself that they are unhappy; and this could not take place if pleasure had any connexion with virtue, whereas virtue is often without pleasure, and never stands in need of it. Why do you put together two things which are unlike and even incompatible one with another? virtue is a lofty quality, sublime, royal, unconquerable, untiring: pleasure is low, slavish, weakly, perishable; its haunts and homes are the brothel and the tavern. You will meet virtue in the temple, the market-place, the senate house, manning the walls, covered with dust, sunburnt, horny-handed: you will find pleasure skulking out of sight, seeking for shady nooks at the public baths, hot chambers, and places which dread the visits of the aedile, soft, effeminate, reeking of wine and perfumes, pale or perhaps painted and made up with cosmetics. The highest good is immortal: it knows no ending, and does not admit of either satiety or regret: for a right-thinking mind never alters or becomes hateful to itself, nor do the best things ever undergo any change: but pleasure dies at the very moment when it charms us most: it has no great scope, and therefore it soon cloyes and wearies us, and fades away as soon as its first impulse is over: indeed, we cannot depend upon anything whose nature is to change.

Consequently it is not even possible that there should be any solid substance in that which comes and goes so swiftly, and which perishes by the very exercise of its own functions, for it arrives at a point at which it ceases to be, and even while it is beginning always keeps its end in view.

VIII

What answer are we to make to the reflexion that pleasure belongs to good and bad men alike, and that bad men take as much delight in their shame as good men in noble things? This was why the ancients bade us lead the highest, not the most pleasant life, in order that pleasure might not be the guide but the companion of a right-thinking and honourable mind; for it is Nature whom we ought to make our guide: let our reason watch her, and be advised by her. To live happily, then, is the same thing as to live according to Nature: what this may be, I will explain. If we guard the endowments of the body and the advantages of nature with care and fearlessness, as things soon to depart and given to us only for a day; if we do not fall under their dominion, nor allow ourselves to become the slaves of what is no part of our own being; if we assign to all bodily pleasures and external delights the same position which is held by auxiliaries and light-armed troops in a camp; if we make them our servants, not our masters — then and then only are they of value to our minds. A man should be unbiased and not to be conquered by external things: he ought to admire himself alone, to feel confidence in his own spirit, and so to order his life as to be ready alike for good or for bad fortune. Let not his confidence be without knowledge, nor his knowledge without steadfastness: let him always abide by what he has once determined, and let there be no erasure in his doctrines. It will be understood, even though I append it not, that such a man will be tranquil and composed in his demeanour, high-minded and courteous in his actions. Let reason be encouraged by the senses to seek for the truth, and draw its first principles from thence: indeed it has no other base of operations or place from which to start in pursuit of truth: it must fall back upon itself. Even the all-embracing universe and God who is its guide extends himself forth into outward things, and yet altogether returns from all sides back to himself. Let our mind do the same thing: when, following its bodily senses it has by means of them sent itself forth into the things of the outward world, let it remain still their master and its own. By this means we shall obtain a strength and an ability which are united and allied

together, and shall derive from it that reason which never halts between two opinions, nor is dull in forming its perceptions, beliefs, or convictions. Such a mind, when it has ranged itself in order, made its various parts agree together, and, if I may so express myself, harmonized them, has attained to the highest good: for it has nothing evil or hazardous remaining, nothing to shake it or make it stumble: it will do everything under the guidance of its own will, and nothing unexpected will befall it, but whatever may be done by it will turn out well, and that, too, readily and easily, without the doer having recourse to any underhand devices: for slow and hesitating action are the signs of discord and want of settled purpose. You may, then, boldly declare that the highest good is singleness of mind: for where agreement and unity are, there must the virtues be: it is the vices that are at war one with another.

IX

“But,” says our adversary, “you yourself only practise virtue because you hope to obtain some pleasure from it.” In the first place, even though virtue may afford us pleasure, still we do not seek after her on that account: for she does not bestow this, but bestows this to boot, nor is this the end for which she labours, but her labour wins this also, although it be directed to another end. As in a tilled-field, when ploughed for corn, some flowers are found amongst it, and yet, though these posies may charm the eye, all this labour was not spent in order to produce them — the man who sowed the field had another object in view, he gained this over and above it — so pleasure is not the reward or the cause of virtue, but comes in addition to it; nor do we choose virtue because she gives us pleasure, but she gives us pleasure also if we choose her. The highest good lies in the act of choosing her, and in the attitude of the noblest minds, which when once it has fulfilled its function and established itself within its own limits has attained to the highest good, and needs nothing more: for there is nothing outside of the whole, any more than there is anything beyond the end. You are mistaken, therefore, when you ask me what it is on account of which I seek after virtue: for you are seeking for something above the highest. Do you ask what I seek from virtue? I answer, Herself: for she has nothing better; she is her own reward. Does this not appear great enough, when I tell you that the highest good is an unyielding strength of mind, wisdom, magnanimity, sound judgment, freedom, harmony, beauty? Do you still ask me for something greater, of which these may be regarded as the attributes? Why do you talk of pleasures to me? I am seeking to find what is good for man, not for his belly; why, cattle and whales have larger ones than he.

X

“You purposely misunderstand what I say,” says he, “for I too say that no one can live pleasantly unless he lives honorably also, and this cannot be the case with dumb animals who measure the extent of their happiness by that of their food. I loudly and publicly proclaim that what I call a pleasant life cannot exist without the addition of virtue.” Yet who does not know that the greatest fools drink the deepest of those pleasures of yours? or that vice is full of enjoyments, and that the mind itself suggests to itself many perverted, vicious forms of pleasure ? — in the first place arrogance, excessive self-esteem, swaggering precedence over other men, a shortsighted, nay, a blind devotion to his own interests, dissolute luxury, excessive delight springing from the most trifling and childish causes, and also talkativeness, pride that takes a pleasure in insulting others, sloth, and the decay of a dull mind which goes to sleep over itself. All these are dissipated by virtue, which plucks a man by the ear, and measures the value of pleasures before she permits them to be used; nor does she set much store by those which she allows to pass current, for she merely allows their use, and her cheerfulness is not due to her use of them, but to her moderation in using them. “Yet when moderation lessens pleasure, it impairs the highest good.” You devote yourself to pleasures, I check them; you indulge in pleasure, I use it; you think that it is the highest good, I do not even think it to be good: for the sake of pleasure I do nothing, you do everything.

XI

When I say that I do nothing for the sake of pleasure, I allude to that wise man, whom alone you admit to be capable of pleasure: now I do not call a man wise who is overcome by anything, let alone by pleasure: yet, if engrossed by pleasure, how will he resist toil, danger, want, and all the ills which surround and threaten the life of man? How will he bear the sight of death or of pain? How will he endure the tumult of the world, and make head against so many most active foes, if he be conquered by so effeminate an antagonist? He will do whatever pleasure advises him: well, do you not see how many things it will advise him to do? "It will not," says our adversary, "be able to give him any bad advice, because it is combined with virtue?" Again, do you not see what a poor kind of highest good that must be which requires a guardian to ensure its being good at all? and how is virtue to rule pleasure if she follows it, seeing that to follow is the duty of a subordinate, to rule that of a commander? do you put that which commands in the background? According to your school, virtue has the dignified office of preliminary tester of pleasures. We shall, however, see whether virtue still remains virtue among those who treat her with such contempt, for if she leaves her proper station she can no longer keep her proper name: in the meanwhile, to keep to the point, I will show you many men beset by pleasures, men upon whom Fortune has showered all her gifts, whom you must needs admit to be bad men. Look at Nomentanus and Apicius, who digest all the good things, as they call them, of the sea and land, and review upon their tables the whole animal kingdom. Look at them as they lie on beds of roses gloating over their banquet, delighting their ears with music, their eyes with exhibitions, their palates with flavours: their whole bodies are titillated with soft and soothing applications, and lest even their nostrils should be idle, the very place in which they solemnized the rites of luxury is scented with various perfumes. You will say that these men live in the midst of pleasures. Yet they are ill at ease, because they take pleasure in what is not good.

XII

“They are ill at ease,” replies he, “ because many things arise which distract their thoughts, and their minds are disquieted by conflicting opinions.” I admit that this is true: still these very men, foolish, inconsistent, and certain to feel remorse as they are, do nevertheless receive great pleasure, and we must allow that in so doing they are as far from feeling any trouble as they are from forming a right judgment, and that, as is the case with many people, they are possessed by a merry madness, and laugh while they rave. The pleasures of wise men, on the other hand, are mild, decorous, verging on dullness, kept under restraint and scarcely noticeable, and are neither invited to come nor received with honour when they come of their own accord, nor are they welcomed with any delight by those whom they visit, who mix them up with their lives and fill up empty spaces with them, like an amusing farce in the intervals of serious business. Let them no longer, then, join incongruous matters together, or connect pleasure with virtue, a mistake whereby they court the worst of men. The reckless profligate, always in liquor and belching out the fumes of wine, believes that he lives with virtue, because he knows that he lives with pleasure, for he hears it said that pleasure cannot exist apart from virtue; consequently he dubs his vices with the title of wisdom and parades all that he ought to conceal. So, men are not encouraged by Epicurus to run riot, but the vicious hide their excesses in the lap of philosophy, and flock to the schools in which they hear the praises of pleasure. They do not consider how sober and temperate — for so, by Hercules, I believe it to be — that “ pleasure “ of Epicurus is, but they rush at his mere name, seeking to obtain some protection and cloak for their vices. They lose, therefore, the one virtue which their evil life possessed, that of being ashamed of doing wrong: for they praise what they used to blush at, and boast of their vices. Thus modesty can never reassert itself, when shameful idleness is dignified with an honourable name. The reason why that praise which your school lavishes upon pleasure is so hurtful, is because the honourable part of its teaching passes unnoticed, but the degrading part is seen by all.

XIII

I myself believe, though my Stoic comrades would be unwilling to hear me say so, that the teaching of Epicurus was upright and holy, and even, if you examine it narrowly, stern: for this much talked of pleasure is reduced to a very narrow compass, and he bids pleasure submit to the same law which we bid virtue do — I mean, to obey nature. Luxury, however, is not satisfied with what is enough for nature. What is the consequence? Whoever thinks that happiness consists in lazy sloth, and alternations of gluttony and profligacy, requires a good patron for a bad action, and when he has become an Epicurean, having been led to do so by the attractive name of that school, he follows, not the pleasure which he there hears spoken of, but that which he brought thither with him, and, having learned to think that his vices coincide with the maxims of that philosophy, he indulges in them no longer timidly and in dark corners, but boldly in the face of day. I will not, therefore, like most of our school, say that the sect of Epicurus is the teacher of crime, but what I say is: it is ill spoken of, it has a bad reputation, and yet it does not deserve it. “Who can know this without having been admitted to its inner mysteries?” Its very outside gives opportunity for scandal, and encourages men’s baser desires: it is like a brave man dressed in a woman’s gown: your chastity is assured, your manhood is safe, your body is submitted to nothing disgraceful, but your hand holds a drum (like a priest of Cybele). Choose, then, some honourable superscription for your school, some writing which shall in itself arouse the mind: that which at present stands over your door has been invented by the vices. He who ranges himself on the side of virtue gives thereby a proof of a noble disposition: he who follows pleasure appears to be weakly, worn out, degrading his manhood, likely to fall into infamous vices unless someone discriminates his pleasures for him, so that he may know which remain within the bounds of natural desire, which are frantic and boundless, and become all the more insatiable the more they are satisfied. But come! let virtue lead the way: then every step will be safe. Too much pleasure is hurtful: but with virtue we need fear no excess of any

kind, because moderation is contained in virtue herself. That which is injured by its own extent cannot be a good thing: besides, what better guide can there be than reason for beings endowed with a reasoning nature? so if this combination pleases you, if you are willing to proceed to a happy life thus accompanied, let virtue lead the way, let pleasure follow and hang about the body like a shadow: it is the part of a mind incapable of great things to hand over virtue, the highest of all qualities, as a handmaid to pleasure.

XIV

Let virtue lead the way and bear the standard: we shall have pleasure for all that, but we shall be her masters and controllers; she may win some concessions from us, but will not force us to do anything. On the contrary, those who have permitted pleasure to lead the van, have neither one nor the other: for they lose virtue altogether, and yet they do not possess pleasure, but are possessed by it, and are either tortured by its absence or choked by its excess, being wretched if deserted by it, and yet more wretched if overwhelmed by it, like those who are caught in the shoals of the Syrtes and at one time are left on dry ground and at another tossed on the flowing waves. This arises from an exaggerated want of self-control, and a hidden love of evil: for it is dangerous for one who seeks after evil instead of good to attain his object. As we hunt wild beasts with toil and peril, and even when they are caught find them an anxious possession, for they often tear their keepers to pieces, even so are great pleasures: they turn out to be great evils and take their owners prisoner. The more numerous and the greater they are, the more inferior and the slave of more masters does that man become whom the vulgar call a happy man. I may even press this analogy further: as the man who tracks wild animals to their lairs, and who sets great store on— “Seeking with snares the wandering brutes to noose,” and “Making their hounds the spacious glade surround,” that he may follow their tracks, neglects far more desirable things, and leaves many duties unfulfilled, so he who pursues pleasure postpones everything to it, disregards that first essential, liberty, and sacrifices it to his belly; nor does he buy pleasure for himself, but sells himself to pleasure.

XV

“But what,” asks our adversary, “is there to hinder virtue and pleasure being combined together, and a highest good being thus formed, so that honour and pleasure may be the same thing?” Because nothing except what is honourable can form a part of honour, and the highest good would lose its purity if it were to see within itself anything unlike its own better part. Even the joy which arises from virtue, although it be a good thing, yet is not a part of absolute good, any more than cheerfulness or peace of mind, which are indeed good things, but which merely follow the highest good, and do not contribute to its perfection, although they are generated by the noblest causes. Whoever on the other hand forms an alliance, and that, too, a one-sided one, between virtue and pleasure, clogs whatever strength the one may possess by the weakness of the other, and sends liberty under the yoke, for liberty can only remain unconquered as long as she knows nothing more valuable than herself: for he begins to need the help of Fortune, which is the most utter slavery: his life becomes anxious, full of suspicion, timorous, fearful of accidents, waiting in agony for critical moments of time. You do not afford virtue a solid immoveable base if you bid it stand on what is unsteady: and what can be so unsteady as dependence on mere chance, and the vicissitudes of the body and of those things which act on the body? How can such a man obey God and receive everything which comes to pass in a cheerful spirit, never complaining of fate, and putting a good construction upon everything that befalls him, if he be agitated by the petty pin-pricks of pleasures and pains? A man cannot be a good protector of his country, a good avenger of her wrongs, or a good defender of his friends, if he be inclined to pleasures. Let the highest good, then, rise to that height from whence no force can dislodge it, whither neither pain can ascend, nor hope, nor fear, nor anything else that can impair the authority of the “highest good.” Thither virtue alone can make her way: by her aid that hill must be climbed: she will bravely stand her ground and endure whatever may befall her not only resignedly, but even willingly: she will know that all hard times come in obedience

to natural laws, and like a good soldier she will bear wounds, count scars, and when transfixed and dying will yet adore the general for whom she falls: she will bear in mind the old maxim “Follow God.” On the other hand, he who grumbles and complains and bemoans himself is nevertheless forcibly obliged to obey orders, and is dragged away, however much against his will, to carry them out: yet what madness is it to be dragged rather than to follow? as great, by Hercules, as it is folly and ignorance of one’s true position to grieve because one has not got something or because something has caused us rough treatment, or to be surprised or indignant at those ills which befall good men as well as bad ones, I mean diseases, deaths, illnesses, and the other cross accidents of human life. Let us bear with magnanimity whatever the system of the universe makes it needful for us to bear: we are all bound by this oath: “To bear the ills of mortal life, and to submit with a good grace to what we cannot avoid.” We have been born into a monarchy: our liberty is to obey God.

XVI

True happiness, therefore, consists in virtue: and what will this virtue bid you do? Not to think anything bad or good which is connected neither with virtue nor with wickedness: and in the next place, both to endure unmoved the assaults of evil, and, as far as is right, to form a god out of what is good. What reward does she promise you for this campaign? an enormous one, and one that raises you to the level of the gods: you shall be subject to no restraint and to no want; you shall be free, safe, unhurt; you shall fail in nothing that you attempt; you shall be debarred from nothing; everything shall turn out according to your wish; no misfortune shall befall you; nothing shall happen to you except what you expect and hope for. "What! does virtue alone suffice to make you happy?" why, of course, consummate and god-like virtue such as this not only suffices, but more than suffices: for when a man is placed beyond the reach of any desire, what can he possibly lack? if all that he needs is concentrated in himself, how can he require anything from without? He, however, who is only on the road to virtue, although he may have made great progress along it, nevertheless needs some favour from fortune while he is still struggling among mere human interests, while he is untying that knot, and all the bonds which bind him to mortality. What, then, is the difference between them? it is that some are tied more or less tightly by these bonds, and some have even tied themselves with them as well; whereas he who has made progress towards the upper regions and raised himself upwards drags a looser chain, and though not yet free, is yet as good as free.

XVII

If, therefore, any one of those dogs who yelp at philosophy were to say, as they are wont to do, "Why, then, do you talk so much more bravely than you live? why do you check your words in the presence of your superiors, and consider money to be a necessary implement? why are you disturbed when you sustain losses, and weep on hearing of the death of your wife or your friend? Why do you pay regard to common rumour, and feel annoyed by calumnious gossip? why is your estate more elaborately kept than its natural use requires? why do you not dine according to your own maxims? why is your furniture smarter than it need be? why do you drink wine that is older than yourself? why are your grounds laid out? Why do you plant trees which afford nothing except shade? why does your wife wear in her ears the price of a rich man's house? why are your children at school dressed in costly clothes? why is it a science to wait upon you at table? why is your silver plate not set down anyhow or at random, but skillfully disposed in regular order, with a superintendent to preside over the carving of the viands?" Add to this, if you like, the questions "Why do you own property beyond the seas? why do you own more than you know of? it is a shame to you not to know your slaves by sight: for you must be very neglectful of them if you only own a few, or very extravagant if you have too many for your memory to retain." I will add some reproaches afterwards, and will bring more accusations against myself than you think of: for the present I will make you the following answer. "I am not a wise man, and I will not be one in order to feed your spite: so do not require me to be on a level with the best of men, but merely to be better than the worst: I am satisfied, if every day I take away something from my vices and correct my faults. I have not arrived at perfect soundness of mind, indeed, I never shall arrive at it: I compound palliatives rather than remedies for my gout, and am satisfied if it comes at rarer interval - and does not shoot so painfully. Compared with your feet, which are lame, I am a racer." I make this speech, not on my own behalf, for I am steeped in vices of every kind, but on behalf of one who has made some progress in virtue.

XVIII

“You talk one way,” objects our adversary, “and live another.” You most spiteful of creatures, you who always show the bitterest hatred to the best of men, this reproach was flung at Plato, at Epicurus, at Zeno: for all these declared how they ought to live, not how they did live. I speak of virtue, not of myself, and when I blame vices, I blame my own first of all: when I have the power, I shall live as I ought to do: spite, however deeply steeped in venom, shall not keep me back from what is best: that poison itself with which you bespatter others, with which you choke yourselves, shall not hinder me from continuing to praise that life which I do not, indeed, lead, but which I know I ought to lead, from loving virtue and from following after her, albeit a long way behind her and with halting gait. Am I to expect that evil speaking will respect anything, seeing that it respected neither Rutilius nor Cato? Will anyone care about being thought too rich by men for whom Diogenes the Cynic was not poor enough? That most energetic philosopher fought against all the desires of the body, and was poorer even than the other Cynics, in that besides having given up possessing anything he had also given up asking for anything: yet they reproached him for not being sufficiently in want: as though forsooth it were poverty, not virtue, of which he professed knowledge.

XIX

They say that Diodorus, the Epicurean philosopher, who within these last few days put an end to his life with his own hand, did not act according to the precepts of Epicurus, in cutting his throat: some choose to regard this act as the result of madness, others of recklessness; he, meanwhile, happy and filled with the consciousness of his own goodness, has borne testimony to himself by his manner of departing from life, has commended the repose of a life spent at anchor in a safe harbour, and has said what you do not like to hear, because you too ought to do it.

“I’ve lived, I’ve run the race which Fortune set me.”

You argue about the life and death of another, and yelp at the name of men whom some peculiarly noble quality has rendered great, just as tiny curs do at the approach of strangers: for it is to your interest that no one should appear to be good, as if virtue in another were a reproach to all your crimes. You enviously compare the glories of others with your own dirty actions, and do not understand how greatly to your disadvantage it is to venture to do so: for if they who follow after virtue be greedy, lustful, and fond of power, what must youn be, who hate the very name of virtue? You say that no one acts up to his professions, or lives according to the standard which he sets up in his discourses: what wonder, seeing that the words which they speak are brave, gigantic, and able to weather all the storms which wreck mankind, whereas they themselves are struggling to tear themselves away from crosses into which each one of you is driving his own nail. Yet men who are crucified hang from one single pole, but these who punish themselves are divided between as many crosses as they have lusts, but yet are given to evil speaking, and are so magnificent in their contempt of the vices of others that I should suppose that they had none of their own, were it not that some criminals when on the gibbet spit upon the spectators.

XX

“Philosophers do not carry into effect all that they teach.” No; but they effect much good by their teaching, by the noble thoughts which they conceive in their minds: would, indeed, that they could act up to their talk: what could be happier than they would be? but in the meanwhile you have no right to despise good sayings and hearts full of good thoughts. Men deserve praise for engaging in profitable studies, even though they stop short of producing any results. Why need we wonder if those who begin to climb a steep path do not succeed in ascending it very high? yet, if you be a man, look with respect on those who attempt great things, even though they fall. It is the act of a generous spirit to proportion its efforts not to its own strength but to that of human nature, to entertain lofty aims, and to conceive plans which are too vast to be carried into execution even by those who are endowed with gigantic intellects, who appoint for themselves the following rules: “I will look upon death or upon a comedy with the same expression of countenance : I will submit to labours, however great they may be, supporting the strength of my body by that of my mind: I will despise riches when I have them as much as when I have them not; if they be elsewhere I will not be more gloomy, if they sparkle around me I will not be more lively than I should otherwise be: whether Fortune comes or goes I will take no notice of her: I will view all lands as though they belong to me, and my own as though they belonged to all mankind: I will so live as to remember that I was born for others, and will thank Nature on this account: for in what fashion could she have done better for me? she has given me alone to all, and all to me alone. Whatever I may possess, I will neither hoard it greedily nor squander it recklessly. I will think that I have no possessions so real as those which I have given away to deserving people: I will not reckon benefits by their magnitude or number, or by anything except the value set upon them by the receiver: I never will consider a gift to be a large one if it be bestowed upon a worthy object. I will do nothing because of public opinion, but everything because of conscience: whenever I do anything alone by myself I will believe that the eyes

of the Roman people are upon me while I do it. In eating and drinking my object shall be to quench the desires of Nature, not to fill and empty my belly. I will be agreeable with my friends, gentle and mild to my foes: I will grant pardon before I am asked for it, and will meet the wishes of honourable men half way: I will bear in mind that the world is my native city, that its governors are the gods, and that they stand above and around me, criticizing whatever I do or say. Whenever either Nature demands my breath again, or reason bids me dismiss it, I will quit this life, calling all to witness that I have loved a good conscience, and good pursuits; that no one's freedom, my own least of all, has been impaired through me." He who sets up these as the rules of his life will soar aloft and strive to make his way to the gods: of a truth, even though he fails, yet he

"Fails in a high emprise."

But you, who hate both virtue and those who practise it, do nothing at which we need be surprised, for sickly lights cannot bear the sun, nocturnal creatures avoid the brightness of day, and at its first dawning become bewildered and all betake themselves to their dens together: creatures that fear the light hide themselves in crevices. So croak away, and exercise your miserable tongues in reproaching good men : open wide your jaws, bite hard: you will break many teeth before you make any impression.

XXI

“But how is it that this man studies philosophy and nevertheless lives the life of a rich man? Why does he say that wealth ought to be despised and yet possess it? that life should be despised, and yet live? that health should be despised, and yet guard it with the utmost care, and wish it to be as good as possible? Does he consider banishment to be an empty name, and say, “What evil is there in changing one country for another?” and yet, if permitted, does he not grow old in his native land? does he declare that there is no difference between a longer and a shorter time, and yet, if he be not prevented, lengthen out his life and flourish in a green old age?” His answer is, that these things ought to be despised, not that he should not possess them, but that he should not possess them with fear and trembling: he does not drive them away from him, but when they leave him he follows after them unconcernedly. Where, indeed, can fortune invest riches more securely than in a place from whence they can always be recovered without any squabble with their trustee? Marcus Cato, when he was praising Curius and Coruncanius and that century in which the possession of a few small silver coins were an offence which was punished by the Censor, himself owned four million sesterces; a less fortune, no doubt, than that of Crassus, but larger than of Cato the Censor. If the amounts be compared, he had outstripped his great-grandfather further than he himself was outdone by Crassus, and if still greater riches had fallen to his lot, he would not have spurned them: for the wise man does not think himself unworthy of any chance presents: he does not love riches, but he prefers to have them; he does not receive them into his spirit, but only into his house: nor does he cast away from him what he already possesses, but keeps them, and is willing that his virtue should receive a larger subject-matter for its exercise.

XXII

Who can doubt, however, that the wise man, if he is rich, has a wider field for the development of his powers than if he is poor, seeing that in the latter case the only virtue which he can display is that of neither being perverted nor crushed by his poverty, whereas if he has riches, he will have a wide field for the exhibition of temperance, generosity, laboriousness, methodical arrangement, and grandeur. The wise man will not despise himself, however short of stature he may be, but nevertheless he will wish to be tall: even though he be feeble and one-eyed he may be in good health, yet he would prefer to have bodily strength, and that too, while he knows all the while that he has something which is even more powerful: he will endure illness, and will hope for good health: for some things, though they may be trifles compared with the sum total, and though they may be taken away without destroying the chief good, yet add somewhat to that constant cheerfulness which arises from virtue. Riches encourage and brighten up such a man just as a sailor is delighted at a favourable wind that bears him on his way, or as people feel pleasure at a fine day or at a sunny spot in the cold weather. What wise man, I mean of our school, whose only good is virtue, can deny that even these matters which we call neither good nor bad have in themselves a certain value, and that some of them are preferable to others? to some of them we show a certain amount of respect, and to some a great deal. Do not, then, make any mistake: riches belong to the class of desirable things. "Why then," say you, "do you laugh at me, since you place them in the same position that I do?" Do you wish to know how different the position is in which we place them? If my riches leave me, they will carry away with them nothing except themselves: you will be bewildered and will seem to be left without yourself if they should pass away from you: with me riches occupy a certain place, but with you they occupy the highest place of all. In fine, my riches belong to me, you belong to your riches.

XXIII

Cease, then, forbidding philosophers to possess money: no one has condemned wisdom to poverty. The philosopher may own ample wealth, but will not own wealth that which has been torn from another, or which is stained with another's blood: his must be obtained without wronging any man, and without its being won by base means; it must be alike honourably come by and honourably spent, and must be such as spite alone could shake its head at. Raise it to whatever figure you please, it will still be an honourable possession, if, while it includes much which every man would like to call his own, there be nothing which any one can say is his own. Such a man will not forfeit his right to the favour of Fortune, and will neither boast of his inheritance nor blush for it if it was honourably acquired: yet he will have something to boast of, if he throw his house open, let all his countrymen come among his property, and say, "If any one recognizes here anything belonging to him, let him take it." What a great man, how excellently rich will he be, if after this speech he possesses as much as he had before! I say, then, that if he can safely and confidently submit his accounts to the scrutiny of the people, and no one can find in them any item upon which he can lay hands, such a man may boldly and unconcealedly enjoy his riches. The wise man will not allow a single ill-won penny to cross his threshold: yet he will not refuse or close his door against great riches, if they are the gift of fortune and the product of virtue: what reason has he for grudging them good quarters: let them come and be his guests: he will neither brag of them nor hide them away: the one is the part of a silly, the other of a cowardly and paltry spirit, which, as it were, muffles up a good thing in its lap. Neither will he, as I said before, turn them out of his house: for what will he say? will he say, "You are useless," or "I do not know how to use riches?" As he is capable of performing, a journey upon his own feet, but yet would prefer to mount a carriage, just so he will be capable of being poor, yet will wish to be rich; he will own wealth, but will view it as an uncertain possession which will someday fly away from him. He will not allow it to be a burden either to himself or to any one else:

he will give it — why do you prick up your ears? why do you open your pockets? — he will give it either to good men or to those whom it may make into good men. He will give it after having taken the utmost pains to choose those who are fittest to receive it, as becomes one who bears in mind that he ought to give an account of what he spends as well as of what he receives. He will give for good and commendable reasons, for a gift ill bestowed counts as a shameful loss: he will have an easily opened pocket, but not one with a hole in it, so that much may be taken out of it, yet nothing may fall out of it.

XXIV

He who believes giving to be an easy matter, is mistaken: it offers very great difficulties, if we bestow our bounty rationally, and do not scatter it impulsively and at random. I do this man a service, I requite a good turn done me by that one: I help this other, because I pity him: this man, again, I teach to be no fit object for poverty to hold down or degrade. I shall not give some men anything, although they are in want, because, even if I do give to them they will still be in want: I shall proffer my bounty to some, and shall forcibly thrust it upon others: I cannot be neglecting my own interests while I am doing this: at no time do I make more people in my debt than when I am giving things away. “What ?” say you, “ do you give that you may receive again?” At any rate I do not give that I may throw my bounty away: what I give should be so placed that although I cannot ask for its return, yet it may be given back to me. A benefit should be invested in the same manner as a treasure buried deep in the earth, which you would not dig up unless actually obliged. Why, what opportunities of conferring benefits the mere house of a rich man affords? for who considers generous behaviour due only to those who wear the toga? Nature bids me do good to mankind — what difference does it make whether they be slaves or freemen, free-born or emancipated, whether their freedom be legally acquired or bestowed by arrangement among friends? Wherever there is a human being, there is an opportunity for a benefit: consequently, money may be distributed even within one’s own threshold, and a field may be found there for the practice of freehandedness, which is not so called because it is our duty towards free men, but because it takes its rise in a free-born mind. In the case of the wise man, this never falls upon base and unworthy recipients, and never becomes so exhausted as not, whenever it finds a worthy object, to flow as if its store was undiminished. You have, therefore, no grounds for misunderstanding the honourable, brave, and spirited language which you hear from those who are studying wisdom : and first of all observe this, that a student of wisdom is not the same thing as a man who has made himself perfect in wisdom. The former will say to you, “In my talk I

express the most admirable sentiments, yet I am still weltering amid countless ills. You must not force me to act up to my rules: at the present time I am forming myself, moulding my character, and striving to rise myself to the height of a great example. If I should ever succeed in carrying out all that I have set myself to accomplish, you may then demand that my words and deeds should correspond.” But he who has reached the summit of human perfection will deal otherwise with you, and will say, “ In the first place, you have no business to allow yourself to sit in judgment upon your betters:” I have already obtained one proof of my righteousness in having become an object of dislike to bad men: however, to make you a rational answer, which I grudge to no man, listen to what I declare, and at what price I value all things. Riches, I say, are not a good thing; for if they were, they would make men good: now since that which is found even among bad men cannot be termed good, I do not allow them to be called so: nevertheless I admit that they are desirable and useful and contribute great comforts to our lives.

XXV

Learn, then, since we both agree that they are desirable, what my reason is amongst counting them among good things, and in what respects I should behave differently to you if I possessed them. Place me as master in the house of a very rich man: place me where gold and silver plate is used for the commonest purposes; I shall not think more of myself because of things which even though they are in my house are yet no part of me. Take me away to the wooden bridge and put me down there among the beggars: I shall not despise myself because I am sitting among those who hold out their hands for alms: for what can the lack of a piece of bread matter to one who does not lack the power of dying? Well, then? I prefer the magnificent house to the beggar's bridge. Place me among magnificent furniture and all the appliances of luxury: I shall not think myself any happier because my cloak is soft, because my guests rest upon purple. Change the scene: I shall be no more miserable if my weary head rests upon a bundle of hay, if I lie upon a cushion from the circus, with all the stuffing on the point of coming out through its patches of threadbare cloth. Well, then? I prefer, as far as my feelings go, to show myself in public dressed in woollen and in robes of office, rather than with naked or half-covered shoulders: I should like every day's business to turn out just as I wish it to do, and new congratulations to be constantly following upon the former ones: yet I will not pride myself upon this: change all this good fortune for its opposite, let my spirit be distracted by losses, grief, various kinds of attacks: let no hour pass without some dispute: I shall not on this account, though beset by the greatest miseries, call myself the most miserable of beings, nor shall I curse any particular day, for I have taken care to have no unlucky days. What, then, is the upshot of all this? it is that I prefer to have to regulate joys than to stifle sorrows. The great Socrates would say the same thing to you. "Make me," he would say, "the conqueror of all nations: let the voluptuous car of Bacchus bear me in triumph to Thebes from the rising of the sun: let the kings of the Persians receive laws from me: yet I shall feel myself to be a man at the very moment when all around salute me as a God. Straightway

connect this lofty height with a headlong fall into misfortune: let me be placed upon a foreign chariot that I may grace the triumph of a proud and savage conqueror: I will follow another's car with no more humility than I showed when I stood in my own. What then? In spite of all this, I had rather be a conqueror than a captive. I despise the whole dominion of Fortune, but still, if I were given my choice, I would choose its better parts. I shall make whatever befalls me become a good thing, but I prefer that what befalls me should be comfortable and pleasant and unlikely to cause me annoyance: for you need not suppose that any virtue exists without labour, but some virtues need spurs, while others need the curb. As we have to check our body on a downward path, and to urge it to climb a steep one; so also the path of some virtues leads downhill, that of others uphill. Can we doubt that patience, courage, constancy, and all the other virtues which have to meet strong opposition, and to trample Fortune under their feet, are climbing, struggling, winning their way up a steep ascent? Why! is it not equally evident that generosity, moderation, and gentleness glide easily downhill? With the latter we must hold in our spirit, lest it run away with us: with the former we must urge and spur it on. We ought, therefore to apply these energetic, combative virtues to poverty, and to riches those other more thrifty ones which trip lightly along, and merely support their own weight. This being the distinction between them, I would rather have to deal with those which I could practise in comparative quiet, than those of which one can only make trial through blood and sweat. "Wherefore," says the sage, "I do not talk one way and live another: but you do not rightly understand what I say: the sound of my words alone reaches your ears, you do not try to find out their meaning."

XXVI

“What difference, then, is there between me, who am a fool, and you, who are a wise man?” “All the difference in the world: for riches are slaves in the house of a wise man, but masters in that of a fool. You accustom yourself to them and cling to them as if somebody had promised that they should be yours forever, but a wise man never thinks so much about poverty as when he is surrounded by riches. No general ever trusts so implicitly in the maintenance of peace as not to make himself ready for a war, which, though it may not actually be waged, has nevertheless been declared; you are rendered over-proud by a fine house, as though it could never be burned or fall down, and your heads are turned by riches as though they were beyond the reach of all dangers and were so great that Fortune has not sufficient strength to swallow them up. You sit idly playing with your wealth and do not foresee the perils in store for it, as savages generally do when besieged, for, not understanding the use of siege artillery, they look on idly at the labours of the besiegers and do not understand the object of the machines which they are putting together at a distance: and this is exactly what happens to you: you go to sleep over your property, and never reflect how many misfortunes loom menacingly around you on all sides, and soon will plunder you of costly spoils, but if one takes away riches from the wise man, one leaves him still in possession of all that is his: for he lives happy in the present, and without fear for the future. The great Socrates, or anyone else who had the same superiority to and power to withstand the things of this life, would say, ‘I have no more fixed principle than that of not altering the course of my life to suit your prejudices: you may pour your accustomed talk upon me from all sides: I shall not think that you are abusing me, but that you are merely wailing like poor little babies.’” This is what the man will say who possesses wisdom, whose mind, being free from vices, bids him reproach others, not because he hates them, but in order to improve them: and to this he will add, “Your opinion of me affects me with pain, not for my own sake but for yours, because to hate perfection and to assail virtue is in itself a resignation of all hope of doing well. You do me no harm;

neither do men harm the gods when they overthrow their altars: but it is clear that your intention is an evil one and that you will wish to do -harm even where you are not able. I bear with your prating in the same spirit in which Jupiter, best and greatest, bears with the idle tales of the poets, one of whom represents him with wings, another with horns, another as an adulterer staying out all night, another is dealing harshly with the gods, another as unjust to men, another as the seducer of noble youths whom he carries off by force, and those, too, his own relatives, another as a parricide and the conqueror of another's kingdom, and that his father's. The only result of such tales is that men feel less shame at committing sin if they believe the gods to be guilty of such actions. But although this conduct of yours does not hurt me, yet, for your own sakes, I advise you, respect virtue: believe those who having long followed her cry aloud that what they follow is a thing of might, and daily appears mightier. Reverence her as you would the gods, and reverence her followers as you would the priests of the gods: and whenever any mention of sacred writings is made, favete liyiguis, favour us with silence: this word is not derived, as most people imagine, from favour, but commands silence, that divine service may be performed without being interrupted by any words of evil omen. It is much more necessary that you should be ordered to do this, in order that whenever utterance is made by that oracle, you may listen to it with attention and in silence. Whenever anyone beats a sistrum, pretending to do so by divine command, any proficient in grazing his own skin covers his arms and shoulders with blood from light cuts, any one crawls on his knees howling along the street, or any old man clad in linen comes forth in daylight with a lamp and laurel branch and cries out that one of the gods is angry, you crowd round him and listen to his words, and each increases the other's wonderment by declaring him to be divinely inspired.

XXVII

Behold! from that prison of his, which by entering he cleansed from shame and rendered more honourable than any senate house, Socrates addresses you, saying: "What is this madness of yours? what is this disposition, at war alike with gods and men, which leads you to calumniate virtue and to outrage holiness with malicious accusations? Praise good men, if you are able: if not, pass them by in silence: if indeed you take pleasure in this offensive abusiveness, fall foul of one another: for when you rave against Heaven, I do not say that you commit sacrilege, but you waste your time. I once afforded Aristophanes with the subject of a jest: since then all the crew of comic poets have made me a mark for their envenomed wit: my virtue has been made to shine more brightly by the very blows which have been aimed at it, for it is to its advantage to be brought before the public and exposed to temptation, nor do any people understand its greatness more than those who by their assaults have made trial of its strength. The hardness of flint is known to none so well as to those who strike it. I offer myself to all attacks, like some lonely rock in a shallow sea, which the waves never cease to beat upon from whatever quarter they may come, but which they cannot thereby move from its place nor yet wear away, for however many years they may unceasingly dash against it. Bound upon me, rush upon me, I will overcome you by enduring your onset: whatever strikes against that which is firm and unconquerable merely injures itself by its own violence. Wherefore, seek some soft and yielding object to pierce with your darts. But have you leisure to peer into other men's evil deeds and to sit in judgment upon anybody? to ask how it is that this philosopher has so roomy a house, or that one so good a dinner? Do you look at other people's pimples while yon yourselves are covered with countless ulcers? This is as though one who was eaten up by the mange were to point with scorn at the moles and warts on the bodies of the handsomest men. Reproach Plato with having sought for money, reproach Aristotle with having obtained it, Democritus with having disregarded it, Epicurus with having spent it: cast Phaedrus and Alcibiades in my own teeth, you who reach the height of

enjoyment whenever you get an opportunity of imitating our vices! Why do you not rather cast your eyes around yourselves at the ills which tear you to pieces on every side, some attacking you from without, some burning in your own bosoms? However little you know your own place, mankind has not yet come to such a pass that you can have leisure to wag your tongues to the reproach of your betters.

XXVIII

This you do not understand, and you bear a countenance which does not befit your condition, like many men who sit in the circus or the theatre without having learned that their home is already in mourning: but I, looking forward from a lofty standpoint, can see what storms are either threatening you, and will burst in torrents upon you somewhat later, or are close upon you and on the point of sweeping away all that you possess. Why, though you are hardly aware of it, is there not a whirling hurricane at this moment spinning round and confusing your minds, making them seek and avoid the very same things, now raising them aloft and now dashing them below?"

ON LEISURE



Translated by Aubrey Stewart

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I.

.... why do they with great unanimity recommend vices to us? even though we attempt nothing else that would do us good, yet retirement in itself will be beneficial to us: we shall be better men when taken singly — and if so, what an advantage it will be to retire into the society of the best of men, and to choose some example by which we may guide our lives! This cannot be done without leisure: with leisure we can carry out that which we have once for all decided to be best, when there is no one to interfere with us and with the help of the mob pervert our as yet feeble judgment: with leisure only can life, which we distract by aiming at the most incompatible objects, flow on in a single gentle stream. Indeed, the worst of our various ills is that we change our very vices, and so we have not even the advantage of dealing with a well-known form of evil: we take pleasure first in one and then in another, and are, besides, troubled by the fact that our opinions are not only wrong, but lightly formed; we toss as it were on waves, and clutch at one thing after another: we let go what we just now sought for, and strive to recover what we have let go. We oscillate between desire and remorse, for we depend entirely upon the opinions of others, and it is that which many people praise and seek after, not that which deserves to be praised and sought after, which we consider to be best. Nor do we take any heed of whether our road be good or bad in itself, but we value it by the number of footprints upon it, among which there are none of any who have returned. You will say to me, “Seneca, what are you doing? do you desert your party? I am sure that our Stoic philosophers say we must be in motion up to the very end of our life, we will never cease to labour for the general good, to help individual people, and when stricken in years to afford assistance even to our enemies. We are the sect that gives no discharge for any number of years’ service, and in the words of the most eloquent of poets: —

‘We wear the helmet when our locks are grey.’

We are they who are so far from indulging in any leisure until we die, that if circumstances permit it, we do not allow ourselves to be at leisure even when we are dying. Why do you preach the maxims of

Epicurus in the very headquarters of Zeno? nay, if you are ashamed of your party, why do you not go openly altogether over to the enemy rather than betray your own side?" I will answer this question straightway: What more can you wish than that I should imitate my leaders? What then follows? I shall go whither they lead me, not whither they send me.

II.

Now I will prove to you that I am not deserting the tenets of the Stoics: for they themselves have not deserted them: and yet I should be able to plead a very good excuse even if I did follow, not their precepts, but their examples. I shall divide what I am about to say into two parts: first, that a man may from the very beginning of his life give himself up entirely to the contemplation of truth; secondly, that a man when he has already completed his term of service, has the best of rights, that of his shattered health, to do this, and that he may then apply his mind to other studies after the manner of the Vestal virgins, who allot different duties to different years, first learn how to perform the sacred rites, and when they have learned them teach others.

III.

I will show that this is approved of by the Stoics also, not that I have laid any commandment upon myself to do nothing contrary to the teaching of Zeno and Chrysippus, but because the matter itself allows me to follow the precepts of those men; for if one always follows the precepts of one man, one ceases to be a debater and becomes a partisan. Would that all things were already known, that truth were unveiled and recognized, and that none of our doctrines required modification! but as it is we have to seek for truth in the company of the very men who teach it. The two sects of Epicureans and Stoics differ widely in most respects, and on this point among the rest, nevertheless, each of them consigns us to leisure, although by a different road. Epicurus says, "The wise man will not take part in politics, except upon some special occasion ;" Zeno says, "The wise man will take part in politics, unless prevented by some special circumstance." The one makes it his aim in life to seek for leisure, the other seeks it only when he has reasons for so doing: but this word "reasons" has a wide signification. If the state is so rotten as to be past helping, if evil has entire dominion over it, the wise man will not labour in vain or waste his strength in unprofitable efforts. Should he be deficient in influence or bodily strength, if the state refuse to submit to his guidance, if his health stand in the way, then he will not attempt a journey for which he is unfit, just as he would not put to sea in a worn-out ship, or enlist in the army if he were an invalid. Consequently, one who has not yet suffered either in health or fortune has the right, before encountering any storms, to establish himself in safety, and thenceforth to devote himself to honourable industry and inviolate leisure, and the service of those virtues which can be practiced even by those who pass the quietest of lives. The duty of a man is to be useful to his fellow-men; if possible, to be useful to many of them; failing this, to be useful to a few; failing this, to be useful to his neighbours, and, failing them, to himself: for when he helps others, he advances the general interests of mankind. Just as he who makes himself a worse man does harm not only to himself but to all those to whom he might have done good if he had made

himself a better one, so he who deserves well of himself does good to others by the very fact that he is preparing what will be of service to them.

IV.

Let us grasp the fact that there are two republics, one vast and truly "public," which contains alike gods and men, in which we do not take account of this or that nook of land, but make the boundaries of our state reach as far as the rays of the sun: and another to which we have been assigned by the accident of birth. This may be that of the Athenians or Carthaginians, or of any other city which does not belong to all men but to some especial ones. Some men serve both of these states, the greater and the lesser, at the same time; some serve only the lesser, some only the greater. We can serve the greater commonwealth even when we are at leisure; indeed I am not sure that we cannot serve it better when we are at leisure to inquire into what virtue is, and whether it be one or many: whether it be nature or art that makes men good: whether that which contains the earth and sea and all that in them is be one, or whether God has placed therein many bodies of the same species: whether that out of which all things are made be continuous and solid, or containing interstices and alternate empty and full spaces: whether God idly looks on at His handiwork, or directs its course: whether He is without and around the world, or whether He pervades its entire surface: whether the world be immortal, or doomed to decay and belonging to the class of things which are born only for a time? What service does he who meditates upon these questions render to God? He prevents these His great works having no one to witness them.

V.

We have a habit of saying that the highest good is to live according to nature: now nature has produced us for both purposes, for contemplation and for action. Let us now prove what we said before: nay, who will not think this proved if he bethinks himself how great a passion he has for discovering the unknown? how vehemently his curiosity is roused by every kind of romantic tale. Some men make long voyages and undergo the toils of journeying to distant lands for no reward except that of discovering something hidden and remote. This is what draws people to public shows, and causes them to pry into everything that is closed, to puzzle out everything that is secret, to clear up points of antiquity, and to listen to tales of the customs of savage nations. Nature has bestowed upon us an inquiring disposition, and being well aware of her own skill and beauty, has produced us to be spectators of her vast works, because she would lose all the fruits of her labour if she were to exhibit such vast and noble works of such complex construction, so bright and beautiful in so many ways, to solitude alone. That you may be sure that she wishes to be gazed upon, not merely looked at, see what a place she has assigned to us: she has placed us in the middle of herself and given us a prospect all around. She has not only set man erect upon his feet, but also with a view to making it easy for him to watch the heavens, she has raised his head on high and connected it with a pliant neck, in order that he might follow the course of the stars from their rising to their setting, and move his face round with the whole heaven. Moreover, by carrying six constellations across the sky by day, and six by night, she displays every part of herself in such a manner that by what she brings before man's eyes she renders him eager to see the rest also. For we have not beheld all things, nor yet the true extent of them, but our eyesight does but open to itself the right path for research, and lay the foundation, from which our speculations may pass from what is obvious to what is less known, and find out something more ancient than the world itself, from whence those stars came forth: inquire what was the condition of the universe before each of its elements were separated from the general

mass: on what principle its confused and blended parts were divided: who assigned their places to things, whether it was by their own nature that what was heavy sunk downwards, and what was light flew upwards, or whether besides the stress and weight of bodies some higher power gave laws to each of them: whether that greatest proof that the spirit of man is divine be true, the theory, namely, that some parts and as it were sparks of the stars have fallen down upon earth and stuck there in a foreign substance. Our thought bursts through the battlements of heaven, and is not satisfied with knowing only what is shown to us: "I investigate," it says, "that which lies without the world, whether it be a bottomless abyss, or whether it also is confined within boundaries of its own: what the appearance of the things outside may be, whether they be shapeless and vague, extending equally in every direction, or whether they also are arranged in a certain kind of order: whether they are connected with this world of ours, or are widely separated from it and welter about in empty space: whether they consist of distinct atoms, of which everything that is and that is to be, is made, or whether their substance is uninterrupted and all of it capable of change: whether the elements are naturally opposed to one another, or whether they are not at variance, but work towards the same end by different means." Since man was born for such speculations as these, consider how short a time he has been given for them, even supposing that he makes good his claims to the whole of it, allows no part of it to be wrested from him through good nature, or to slip away from him through carelessness; though he watches over all his hours with most miserly care, though he live to the extreme confines of human existence, and though misfortune take nothing away from what Nature bestowed upon him, even then man is too mortal for the comprehension of immortality. I live according to Nature, therefore, if I give myself entirely up to her, and if I admire and reverence her. Nature, however, intended me to do both, to practise both contemplation and action: and I do both, because even contemplation is not devoid of action.

VI.

“But,” say you, “it makes a difference whether you adopt the contemplative life for the sake of your own pleasure, demanding nothing from it save unbroken contemplation without any result: for such a life is a sweet one and has attractions of its own.” To this I answer you: It makes just as much difference in what spirit you lead the life of a public man, whether you are never at rest, and never set apart any time during which you may turn your eyes away from the things of earth to those of Heaven. It is by no means desirable that one should merely strive to accumulate property without any love of virtue, or do nothing but hard work without any cultivation of the intellect, for these things ought to be combined and blended together; and, similarly, virtue placed in leisure without action is but an incomplete and feeble good thing, because she never displays what she has learned. Who can deny that she ought to test her progress in actual work, and not merely think what ought to be done, but also sometimes use her hands as well as her head, and bring her conceptions into actual being? But if the wise man be quite willing to act thus, if it be the things to be done, not the man to do them that are wanting, will you not then allow him to live to himself? What is the wise man’s purpose in devoting himself to leisure? He knows that in leisure as well as in action he will accomplish something by which he will be of service to posterity. Our school at any rate declares that Zeno and Chrysippus have done greater things than they would have done had they been in command of armies, or filled high offices, or passed laws: which latter indeed they did pass, though not for one single state, but for the whole human race. How then can it be unbecoming to a good man to enjoy a leisure such as this, by whose means he gives laws to ages to come, and addresses himself not to a few persons but to all men of all nations, both now and hereafter? To sum up the matter, I ask you whether Cleanthes, Chrysippus, and Zeno lived in accordance with their doctrine? I am sure that you will answer that they lived in the manner in which they taught that men ought to live: yet no one of them governed a state. “They had not,” you reply, “the amount of property or social position which as a rule

enables people to take part in public affairs.” Yet for all that they did not live an idle life: they found the means of making their retirement more useful to mankind than the perspirings and runnings to and fro of other men: wherefore these persons are thought to have done great things, in spite of their having done nothing of a public character.

VII.

Moreover, there are three kinds of life, and it is a stock question which of the three is the best: the first is devoted to pleasure, the second to contemplation, the third to action. First, let us lay aside all disputatiousness and bitterness of feeling, which, as we have stated, causes those whose paths in life are different to hate one another beyond all hope of reconciliation, and let us see whether all these three do not come to the same thing, although under different names: for neither he who decides for pleasure is without contemplation, nor is he who gives himself up to contemplation without pleasure: nor yet is he, whose life is devoted to action, without contemplation. "It makes," you say, "all the difference in the world, whether a thing is one's main object in life, or whether it be merely an appendage to some other object." I admit that the difference is considerable, nevertheless the one does not exist apart from the other: the one man cannot live in contemplation without action, nor can the other act without contemplation: and even the third, of whom we all agree in having a bad opinion, does not approve of passive pleasure, but of that which he establishes for himself by means of reason: even this pleasure-seeking sect itself, therefore, practises action also. Of course it does, since Epicurus himself says that at times he would abandon pleasure and actually seek for pain, if he became likely to be surfeited with pleasure, or if he thought that by enduring a slight pain he might avoid a greater one. With what purpose do I state this? To prove that all men are fond of contemplation. Some make it the object of their lives: to us it is an anchorage, but not a harbour.

VIII.

Add to this that, according to the doctrine of Chrysippus, a man may live at leisure: I do not say that he ought to endure leisure, but that he ought to choose it. Our Stoics say that the wise man would not take part in the government of any state. What difference does it make by what path the wise man arrives at leisure, whether it be because the state is wanting to him, or he is wanting to the state? If the state is to be wanting to all wise men (and it always will be found wanting by refined thinkers), I ask you, to what state should the wise man betake himself; to that of the Athenians, in which Socrates is condemned to death, and from which Aristotle goes into exile lest he should be condemned to death? where virtues are borne down by jealousy? You will tell me that no wise man would join such a state. Shall then the wise man go to the commonwealth of the Carthaginians, where faction never ceases to rage, and liberty is the foe of all the best men, where justice and goodness are held of no account, where enemies are treated with inhuman cruelty and natives are treated like enemies: he will flee from this state also. If I were to discuss each one separately, I should not be able to find one which the wise man could endure, or which could endure the wise man. Now if such a state as we have dreamed of cannot be found on earth, it follows that leisure is necessary for everyone, because the one thing which might be preferred to leisure is nowhere to be found. If anyone says that to sail is the best of things, and then says that we ought not to sail in a sea in which shipwrecks were common occurrences, and where sudden storms often arise which drive the pilot back from his course, I should imagine that this man, while speaking in praise of sailing, was really forbidding me to unmoor my ship.

NATURAL QUESTIONS



Translated by Aubrey Stewart

Composed in seven books in 65 AD, Seneca's *Naturales quaestiones* is an encyclopaedia of the natural world, which is addressed to Lucilius Junior. It is one of the few surviving Roman works that deals with scientific matters. *Naturales quaestiones* is not a systematic work, but a collection of facts of nature, compiled from various Greek and Roman writers. The first book concerns meteors, halos, rainbows and mock suns, whilst the second book discusses thunder and lightning; the third book looks at water and includes a famous description of the deluge. The fourth book deals with hail, snow and ice, whilst the fifth, sixth and seventh books concern winds, earthquakes and comets respectively. Moral remarks are scattered throughout the books, providing a foundation for ethics in the knowledge of nature.

Though of no great originality, *Naturales quaestiones* offers an invaluable insight into ancient theories of cosmology, meteorology and many other subjects, whilst also preserving the fragments of many lost works of the ancient world.



A 1638 engraving of Seneca

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**THE NATURAL QUESTIONS OF L. ANNAEUS
SENECA ADDRESSED TO LUCILIUS**

**BOOK I. METEORS, HALO, RAINBOW,
MOCK SUN, Etc.]**

PREFACE

Lucilius, my much esteemed friend — While a great gulf separates philosophy from the other learned arts, there is to my mind an equally wide gulf in philosophy itself between the portion which relates to human conduct and that which deals with the nature and power of heaven. The latter is more exalted and more speculative, it allows itself wide liberty. It is not satisfied with mere observation, it surmises that there is a greater and fairer realm placed by nature beyond human sight. Between these two divisions of philosophy, in short, there is as wide a gulf as between their subjects, God and man.

The one teaches us what should be done on earth; the other, what is done in heaven. The one dispels our errors and flashes a light by which to thread the mazes of life; the other far transcends this gloom in which we grope, rescues us from the darkness, and leads us to the very source of light itself. For myself, I am grateful to nature, not so much when I see her on the side that is open to the world, as when I am permitted to enter her shrine. Then one may seek to know of what stuff the universe is made, who is its author or guardian, what is the nature of God. Is

He wholly absorbed in Himself, or does He sometimes regard us? does He do something daily, or has He done once for all? is He a portion of the world, or the whole world? may He issue new decrees even to-day and thus modify the laws of fate, or is it an infringement of His majesty and an acknowledgment of error to alter what has once been made? for surely the same must always please Him who can be pleased only with what is best. Nor yet withal is His freedom or power diminished, for He is a law unto Himself.

Life would have been a useless gift, were I not admitted to the study of such themes. What cause for joy would it be to be set merely in the number of those who live? In order to digest food and drink? To repair a diseased, enfeebled body, that would perish unless it were continually refilled, and thus lead the life of a sick man's attendant? To fear death, to which our very birth destines us? Away with the priceless boon! Life is not worth the heat and the sweat. How despicable a creature is man, unless he rise above the earth!

What great thing can we do as long as we have to wrestle with our passions? Even if we prevail, we but conquer monsters. What cause have we to esteem ourselves because we are not quite so bad as the very worst? I can see no great reason for self-satisfaction because one's strength is rather above the average of those in the same hospital. You are still far from good health and vigour. Or, again, you have escaped vices of soul, the hypocrite's brow, the flatterer's speech fashioned to serve another's will, the dissembler's heart, the miser's spirit, which robs all, but yet mortifies itself. You are a prey neither to luxury, which loses basely and repairs its losses still more basely; nor to ambition, which leads to place of worth only by [5] unworthy means. But yet you have accomplished nothing. You have escaped many perils, but not yet [that of] self! The virtue we aim at raises to a splendid eminence; not so much because escape from vice is in itself a blessed thing, but rather because the soul is emancipated, prepared for the knowledge of heavenly things, and rendered worthy of entering into communion with God.

The full consummation of human felicity is attained when, all vice trampled under foot, the soul seeks the heights and reaches the inner recesses of nature. What joy then to roam through the very stars, to look down with derision on the gilded; saloons of the rich and the whole earth with its store of gold! Gold, did I say? Yes, all the gold the earth ever produced and sent into currency, and all that she keeps hidden in secret to glut the avarice of posterity. Only when one has surveyed the whole [6] universe can one truly despise grand colonnades, ceilings glittering with ivory, trim groves and cooling streams transported into wealthy mansions. From above, one can now look down upon this narrow world, covered for the most part by sea, and, even where it rises above the sea, an ugly waste either parched or frozen. The philosopher says to himself:

Is this the plot that so many tribes portion out by fire and sword? How ludicrous are their frontiers! The Dacian must not pass the lower Danube; [7] the Strymon must shut off the Thracians; the Euphrates must be the barrier of the Parthians; the Danube must form the boundary between Sarmatian and Roman; the Rhine must set a limit to Germany; the Pyrenees must raise their chain between Gallic and Spanish provinces; between Egypt and Ethiopia a desert of

barren sands must stretch! Why, if ants are ever endowed with human intelligence, will not they in like manner portion out a threshing-floor into many provinces? —

[8] But when you rise to what is truly great, then, as often as you see armies marching forth with floating banners, and the cavalry now scouting in front, now massed on the flanks, as if some great design were toward, you will pleasantly remark:

The black swarm is hurrying through the plains.

That host is a throng of ants, its evolutions are in a back garden.⁷ In what do we excel the ants, save in the measure of the puny little body? That is a mere point in which you sail, and war, and dispose your kingdoms. Your kingdoms are lilliputian even when they stretch from Ocean to Ocean.

[9] Only on high are the domains spacious; to their possession the mind is admitted, provided always that it bring with it no taint of the body, but wipe off all stain and pass forth like an armed man, lightly equipped, nimble, modest in his wants. When the soul reaches those regions, it receives nourishment and growth; as if freed from the shackles of earth, it returns to the true source of its ^[10] being. A proof of its divine origin is furnished by the pleasure it derives from what is divine; here it feels itself at home, not in a strange land. Without alarm it views the setting of the stars and their rising, and the mazy orbits of the heavenly bodies that yet move all in unison. It notes when each star first shows its light on earth, when it attains its meridian height, observes its orbit and the limits descent. An interested spectator, it examines and investigates every detail. And why should it not? It feels that they are akin to itself. Then contempt for the narrow limits of its former ^[1] dwelling succeeds. For what after all is the space that lies from India to the farthest shores of Spain?

A few days' journey if a prosperous wind waft the vessel. But that heavenly region affords a route during full thirty years to the swiftest of the planets, rushing with untiring velocity, never once halting.

Here at last the soul comes to learn what it has long sought, it begins to know God. But what is God? The universal intelligence.

What is God, did I say? All that you see and all that you cannot see. His greatness exceeds the bounds of thought. Render Him His-true greatness and He is all-in-all. He is at once within and without His works. What, then, is the difference between the divine nature and the human? In us the better part is spirit, in Him there is nothing except spirit. He is wholly reason: though mortal eyes are so; sealed by error that men believe this frame of things to be but a fortuitous concourse of atoms, the sport of chance. And yet than this universe could aught be fairer, more carefully adjusted, more consistent in plan? But men will have it that it is tossed about at random in the confusion of thunder, cloud, and storm, and the other forces by which the earth and its purlieus are haunted.

Nor is this merely the madness of vulgar error; even the philosophers are tainted by it Men ^[14] there are who think that they themselves have a mind, one, too, that foresees and orders events I in detail whether relating to themselves or to others. But this frame of things, in which we men along with the rest of creation are set, they deem void of counsel, hurried hither and thither at random; or at best, nature, they suppose, does not I know what her own aim is. How profitable then, think you, will it be to ascertain the truth on such questions and exactly to define each position! For example, what is the extent of the power of God? Does He create matter or does He employ matter already given? Does the pre-existing archetype give shape to matter, or does the matter determine the shape? Can God perform anything He wishes, or does material fail Him in many ^[15] cases, just as a great artist often produces inferior work, not through any defect in his art, but because the material on which it is exercised is refractory? To search into such things, to learn them, to meditate upon them — why, is it not in effect to transcend the limits of mortality and to be enrolled a citizen of a higher state? What good will it do you, you ask. Well, if nothing else, I shall, at any rate, know that measured by divine standard all earthly things are mean. But of this more anon.

I

[1] To come now to my purpose — listen to the explanation offered by Natural Philosophy concerning *the Fires* which the atmosphere drives athwart. Their oblique course and amazing velocity furnish proof that they are thrust out with great violence. Evidently they do not come forth of themselves, they are shot out. There are many different forms of them. A certain kind of them Aristotle calls a She-Goat. If you ask me why, I must retort by asking you first to explain why they are also called Kids.

It will, perhaps, be more to the purpose not to cross-examine one another with questions such as: What does such and such an author say? Answer me. Better examine the cause of the phenomenon itself than form surmises as to why Aristotle has applied the name She-Goat to a ball of fire. This was the shape of the one as big as the moon that appeared when Paulus was engaged in the war against Perseus. In our own days we have more than once seen a huge ball-shaped flame which broke up in the very middle of its course. We saw a similar portent about the time of the death of the late Emperor Augustus. We again saw one when Sejanus was executed. A warning of the same kind preceded the death of Germanicus.

You may, perhaps, exclaim: Are you then so benighted as to suppose that the gods send out previous intimation of the death of great men? Do you imagine that anything on earth is so great that the Universe should perceive its loss? That question must be reserved for another season. We shall then see whether a fixed succession is observed in all events, and whether one event is so bound up with another that what precedes is either cause or at least token of what follows. We shall then see, too, whether the gods trouble themselves about human concerns, and whether the mere series of events reveals by unmistakable signs what its effects must be. Meantime, I venture the opinion that fires of the class referred to are produced by violent friction of the atmosphere. The pressure inclines toward one or other side, and as there is no yielding there, an internal struggle ensues. From violent action of this kind arise the different varieties of fires — beams, balls, torches, and gleams. When the shock is less severe,

and the atmosphere is merely grazed, as it were, smaller lights are emitted,

And the flying stars drag their hairy tail.

[5] Then their thin fires mark a slender path, which they prolong across the sky. For that reason no night is without sights of the kind; no great movement of the atmosphere is required to produce them. In fact, to put it shortly, they are due to the very same cause as thunderbolts, only they require less force.

Clouds that encounter each other with little force cause flashes of lightning; if impelled by greater [6] violence, thunderbolts. Aristotle offers the following explanation: The earth gives forth many different exhalations, some moist, some dry, some cold, some containing the seeds of fire. And little wonder if the earth's evaporation is of all varied kinds. Why, even in the heavens the colour of objects does not — show uniform; the red of the Dog-star is brighter, [7] that of Mars duller; Jupiter has no red, his sheen is prolonged into pure light. Well, in the great abundance of minute bodies emitted by the earth and driven up to the higher regions, of necessity some of the elements that reach the clouds furnish material for fires. They do not require any collision in order to burn, the breath of the sun's rays is sufficient to kindle them. So with us, shavings [8] sprinkled with sulphur catch fire at some distance. Probably, therefore, tinder of this kind gathering within the clouds is easily kindled; greater or less fires are produced just as there has been more or less substance in the elements.

On the other hand, to suppose either that actual stars fall or leap across the sky, or that some portion of them is taken away or pared off, is sheer folly. If this had been so, they would ere this have disappeared. For there is not a single night on which there is not a very large number of stars that seem to break up as they pass across the sky. Yet they are all found again in their wonted places: each one maintains its size unimpaired. It follows, therefore, that the fires referred to have their origin below the stars, and that, being without solid foundation on fixed abode, they quickly perish. Why, then, you ask, do they not cross the sky by day as well as by night? The next thing you will say will be that there are no stars by day because they

are not visible! The stars are, of course, there, but obscured by the sun's brightness. Similarly, meteor fires like torches cross the sky by day too, but they are hidden by the brightness of the daylight. If, as sometimes happens, a burst of light shoots out strong enough to assert its brilliance even in the face of day, then they do become visible. In fact, our own age has more than once seen torches by day, some rushing from east to west, others from west to east.

Sailors consider it a sign of storm when there are many shooting stars. If their appearance really is a sign of wind, they must occur in the quarter where wind is found, in other words, in the atmosphere which lies between the earth and the moon. In violent storms at sea there sometimes appear, as it were, stars settling on the sails. The sailors who are in jeopardy then suppose that they are being aided by the power of Castor and Pollux. They have really ground for better hope in this appearance, because it makes plain that the storm is breaking, and the wind falling. Otherwise the fires would flit about without settling. When Gylippus was on the voyage to Syracuse, a star appeared, resting on the very tip of his lance. In the camp of the Romans at times pikes appeared to be on fire, no doubt because fires of this kind glided down on to them: these fires are ^[13] often wont to strike animals and trees, just like thunderbolts. If, however, they are discharged with less force, they merely glide down and settle, and do not inflict stroke or wound. Again, some are forced out from among clouds, others come from a clear sky, if the atmosphere has got into a condition to emit fire. In like manner, it occasionally thunders with a clear sky, and from the same cause as with a cloudy one, the atmosphere undergoing internal collision. Even when the air is comparatively clear and dry, it may become condensed, and form bodies similar to clouds, the clashing of which ^[14] causes the sound of the thunder. From time to time, therefore, arise meteors like beams and like shields, and the semblance of vast fires over the sky, if a force similar in kind but greater in degree encounter suitable material.

II

[1] LET us now see how the brightness is produced that sometimes envelops the heavenly bodies. History has put on record that, on the day of the late Emperor Augustus' entrance into Rome on his return from Apollonia, a parti-coloured circle, such as is wont to be seen in a rainbow, appeared round the sun. The Greeks call this a *Halo*; our most appropriate name for it is a Crown.

Let me explain how it is formed. When a stone - is thrown into a pond, the water is observed to part in numerous circles, which, very narrow at first, gradually widen out more and more until the impulse disappears, lost in the surface of the smooth water beyond. Let us suppose something of the same kind to occur in the atmosphere. When condensed it is capable of receiving an impact: the light of sun, moon, or any heavenly body encountering it forces it to recede in the form of circles. Moisture, be it observed, and air, and everything else that takes shape from a blow, is driven into the same form as that possessed by the object that strikes it. Now every kind of light is [3] round. Therefore, the air when struck by light will assume this form. Accordingly the Greeks gave the name Threshing-floor (*i.e.* Halo) to a brightness of this kind, because spaces set apart for threshing corn were, as a rule, round.

Be the better name threshing-floors, or be it crowns, there is no reason to suppose that they are formed in the neighbourhood of the heavenly bodies. They are a very long distance from them, though as seen from the earth they seem to touch and encircle them. In reality such an [4] image is formed not very far from the earth, but the wonted frailty of human vision is deceptive, and we imagine the ring is formed close round the heavenly body itself. But no such thing could possibly occur in the neighbourhood of the sun and stars, as there is nothing but thin ether there. It is only when bodies have become rough and dense that shape can be impressed upon them. In subtle bodies there is no point on which form can lay hold or to which it can adhere. A phenomenon of the same nature as the halo may often be witnessed in baths, because the atmosphere is thick and dark: it is most frequent when the wind is in the south, when the air

is heaviest and most dense.

Halos sometimes are dissolved gradually and fade away, sometimes they are broken up on one side. In the latter case seafaring men look for wind in the direction in which the circle of the crown has been broken. If the parting is on the north, there will be a north wind, if on the west, zephyrs will follow. This is a proof that these crowns are formed in the region of the sky in which the winds are usually formed. The upper regions of air have no crowns because they have no winds either. An additional proof of the connection of winds and halos is afforded by the fact that the halo is never formed unless the atmosphere is at rest, and the wind, as it were, inactive. Under other circumstances it is not usually observed.

The atmosphere when it is at rest may be fashioned to any pattern by being driven or drawn in any direction. But when it is in motion, light cannot even strike it. It takes no shape and offers no resistance, because the part first affected is always dissipated by the motion. Therefore it is that no heavenly body can ever be surrounded by a figure of the kind referred to unless when the atmosphere is dense and motionless, and so preserves the ray of round light that strikes upon it. Nor is it without good reason. Recollect the analogy mentioned a little ago. A pebble thrown into a pond or lake or any other circumscribed piece of water produces innumerable circles; but it has not the same effect if thrown into a river. And why so? Because in the latter case the water as it hurries on prevents the formation of any definite figure. So in the atmosphere the same thing happens; when it is stationary, it may receive a pattern; when it rushes in rapid motion, it evades all control, warding off every blow and every form as it approaches. When these crowns, of which I have spoken, have disappeared uniformly on all sides, and vanished in their own tracks, it is an indication of equilibrium in the atmosphere: there is perfect quietness and you may then look out for rain. When they break up at one side, it means wind in that quarter. If they burst at several points, a storm is brewing. The reason of this may be gathered from the explanations I have now given. If the ring fade all round, it is evident that the atmosphere is equable, and therefore calm. But if it is broken through on one side, evidently there must be an inclination of the air in that direction: hence that quarter will produce wind. But when the

halo is rent and torn on all sides, plainly an attack is being made on it from several quarters at once, and a disquieted atmosphere is assailing it on this side and on that. So this disturbance of the heavens, the repeated effort and striving in all directions, betokens evidently that a storm is coming up with sudden shiftings of the wind.

These crowns may be observed generally by night round the moon and other stars, but very seldom by day; in fact, so rarely in the latter case, that certain of the Greeks have denied that they appear at all by day. But history proves that they do. The cause of the infrequency of their appearance by day is that the sun's light is stronger then, and the atmosphere itself when stirred and warmed by it is less dense. The moon's power, on the other hand, is feebler, and is therefore more [11] easily resisted by the surrounding air. The rest of the heavenly bodies are equally weak, and unable by their own force to burst through the atmosphere. So their shape is impressed and retained in the more solid and less yielding medium. For, in order to produce the phenomenon, the atmosphere must neither be so thick as to exclude or dissipate the light that streams in on it, nor yet so thin and rare as to furnish no hold to the rays that fall upon it. This particular consistency is obtained at night: the sluggish air is at that time struck with the faint light from moon or stars without violence or rudeness, and, being thicker than it is wont to be by day, is tinged thereby.

III

[1] ON the contrary, *the Rainbow* does not occur by night, except on very rare occasions, inasmuch as the moon has not sufficient strength to pierce the clouds and suffuse them with hues such as they receive from the brilliant light of the sun. The shape and varied colours of the rainbow are due to the peculiarities of different kinds of clouds. Some parts of the clouds are swollen, others hollow; some are too dense to transmit sunlight, [2] others too rare to exclude it. This difference in consistency causes alternations of light and shade, and produces that marvellous variety presented by the rainbow. Another explanation is offered in instances like the following: When a pipe bursts anywhere, the water is observed to be forced by pressure through the small opening; the drops seen against a slanting sun reproduce the appearance of the rainbow. Again, if you will at any time watch a fuller at work, you will observe the same appearance: when he has filled his mouth with water and spirts it lightly on the clothes stretched on pegs, the air thus besprinkled exhibits plainly the various colours that shine in the bow. One cannot doubt that the reason of this lies in the moisture. For a rainbow never occurs except when there are clouds about.

Let us inquire how it is produced. Some authorities say that there are certain drops of water that transmit light, while some are too compact to be translucent. Thus the brightness is the effect of the former; the shadow, of the latter; by the intermingling of the two is formed the rainbow, part of which is bright, to wit, that which admits sunlight, part darker, namely, that which has shut out the light and cast a shadow from itself over the objects nearest it Others again deny that this is so. Shade and light, they say, might be the cause if the rainbow had only two colours, and thus was made up of light and shade.

But now, though there gleam a thousand diverse hues,
Their changes withal elude the eyes that behold.

The hues that touch seem actually one, yet the edges are quite different

In its sight detects something that is red, something that is orange, something that is blue; and there are other colours too, laid on in finest lines just like a skilful painting, so that, as the poet remarks above, it is impossible to discover whether the colours differ from one another until the last of them is compared with the first. The junction of colour with colour deceives the sight: with such marvellous skill does nature starting from what is like end in what is totally unlike. What good, then, do the two alleged colours, light and shade, do in a case of this kind, when the presence of an endless variety must be accounted for? —

Again, certain authorities are of opinion that the following is the method of formation of the rainbow: In the quarter of the sky where rain is falling, they say, the drops of falling rain are so many mirrors; from each mirror, therefore, is reflected an image of the sun. By and by, many, in fact, countless, images, descending and crossing abruptly, are all blended together. Therefore the rainbow is just a blending of a great number of images of the sun. They appeal to the following argument in proof of this: On a clear day, say they, set out a thousand basins, and they will all contain images of the sun. Or arrange single drops of water on single leaves; they will each have an image of the sun. On the other hand, an immense pond will have no more than one image. Why so? Just because every smooth surface that is fenced off, and surrounded by its own boundaries, is a mirror. Again, divide a pond of very large size into several small ponds by inserting partition walls; it will show as many images of the sun as it has divisions. Leave it as it was, spreading out to its full extent, and it will show but one reflection of him. The small extent of the liquid or pond makes no manner of difference. If the surface is circumscribed, it forms a mirror. Well then, those countless drops, which are carried down by a falling shower, are so many mirrors, and contain so many reflections of the sun. To an observer right in front of them they present the appearance of being mixed up: the intervals which part them from each other are not distinguished, their mere distance from the observer prevents discrimination of them. By and by instead of individual drops there is seen a single blurred mass that contains them all.

Aristotle agrees with this opinion. His words are: Beams of light are reflected by sight from every smooth surface. Now, nothing is [8] smoother than water and air. Therefore, our sight is reflected back on us from thick air. Indeed, where the vision is dull and feeble, the slightest stroke of air checks it. Some people suffer from an affection which causes them to think that they are meeting their own image, and they see everywhere the reflection of themselves. And why? Because the power of their eyes is so weak that it cannot overcome the resistance of even the nearest layer of the atmosphere. What dense air effects in ordinary cases, any kind of air is sufficient to effect in the cases referred to by Aristotle. For whatever the nature of the air, it is strong enough to defeat weak sight. Now, much more is our vision reflected upon us by water because it is denser and cannot be pierced; it absolutely stops the rays from our eyes, and turns them back to the source whence they proceeded. — Well then, [9] when there are numerous raindrops, they are just so many mirrors. But on account of their smallness they express the sun's colour without distinct shape. By and by when the same colour is reflected in the countless drops that fall without intermission, it begins to take on the appearance not of numerous images with intervals between, but of a single, long, uninterrupted image.

But how, you may object, can you tell me that there are many thousands of images there, where I can see none at all? Besides, as there is but one colour in the sun, why are there different colours in the reflections of him? These objections which you have put forward, as well as others that no less call for refutation, I will endeavour to refute. And let me say, first of all, that nothing is more deceptive than our eyesight, not merely in objects whose careful examination is prevented by distance in position, but even in objects seen close at hand. An oar, though quite whole, presents the appearance of being broken when seen in clear shallow water. Apples seen through glass appear much larger than they really are. In long colonnades, pillars set at intervals present an apparently unbroken continuity of line. Or go back to the case of the sun himself; his orb, which reason proves to be larger than the whole earth, is so contracted by human sight that some of the philosophers have maintained that it is only a foot in diameter. He is, we know, the swiftest of all luminaries, yet none of

us can see him move; nor should we believe that he does advance, were it not evident from time to time that he has advanced. The world itself glides on with headlong speed; within an instant of time it unfolds its risings and its settings, yet none of us is aware of its movement. What cause, then, is there for wonder if our eyesight cannot separate the drops of the rain showers, and loses the distinction of the images on account of the vast distance at which they are beheld? At any rate no one can doubt this, that the rainbow is a reflection of the sun, formed in a hollow cloud full of moisture. This is made plain from the simple fact that the image is never seen except opposite the sun, high up or low down, in inverse relation, just as he sinks or elevates his course. When he descends, it is higher; when he is high in the heavens, it is more sunken. A cloud of the required kind is ^[13] often at the side of the sun without producing a rainbow, because it does not catch his image straight in front.

As to the variegation in colour, it is due simply to its double source, derived partly from the sun, partly from the moist cloud. The moisture produces lines now blue, now green, now purple-like, and orange or red — the two shades, dull and bright, combining to produce this diversity. So also, a purple garment does not always come ^[14] out in exactly the same tint from the same dye. Differences depend upon the length of time it has been steeped, the consistency and the amount of moisture in the dye it has imbibed: it may be dipped and boiled more than once, or it may have received only one immersion. In like manner then, when there are the two elements, sun and cloud, in other words, object and mirror, it is little wonder that as many varieties of colour are generated as can be produced from them in higher or lower tone in countless different categories. For example, there ^[15] is one colour that proceeds from the light of fire, another from a light that is duller and less violent than fire. In other details concerning the rainbow the method of inquiry is full of uncertainty; there is nothing concrete to lay hold upon, and conjecture must be ventured in every direction. But in this question of its origin doubt is precluded; for it is evident that the causes of the rainbow are two in number, sun and cloud. The bow never appears when the sky is clear, and never when it is so cloudy as to hide the sun. It must, therefore, unquestionably arise from these, failing either

of which it cannot come into being.

IV

A FURTHER consideration must be mentioned, which is just as manifest as the preceding, to prove that the reflection is given back after the fashion of a mirror; it is never given back save from straight opposite to the sun, that is, unless on one side stands the object to be reflected, and on the other the mirror that reveals it. Proofs are adduced by the mathematicians that are not merely convincing but that compel belief of this. Nor can doubt be left in any mind that the rainbow is an image of the sun, imperfectly reflected owing to the defective shape of the mirror. —

But meantime let us recall other proofs that may, so to speak, be picked up in the street without any reference to mathematics. Among the proofs of this origin of the bow I place the extreme rapidity of its emergence. In a single moment the huge form with its thousand lines is inwoven in the texture of the heavens, and just as rapidly does it fade. Now, nothing is returned so quickly as an image from a mirror. The mirror does not create anything, it merely reveals it. Artemidorus of Parium tells us further even the kind of cloud required to reflect such an image of the sun. If you make a concave mirror, he says, that is, one resembling half of a ball cut through the middle, and take your stand outside the centre, then those who stand beside you will appear in the reflection inverted and nearer to you than to the mirror. The very same thing, according to him, takes place when we look at a round hollow cloud from the side: the image of the sun detaches itself from the cloud, and is nearer us and more turned in our direction. Therefore the red colour is from the sun, the dark blue is from the cloud: the other hues are produced by a blending of these two.

V

BUT there are arguments on the other side. About mirrors there are two opinions; some people think that only phantoms are seen in them; in other words, the shape of our bodies, an emanation separated from our bodies. Others, however, affirm that images do not exist in the mirror, but that it is the very bodies that are seen, the eyesight being bent back and reflected on itself again. Now, the point is not how do we see whatever it is we see: the question is, how the image should resemble the original in the cloud as in a mirror. Could anything be more unlike than the sun and a rainbow in which neither the colour nor the shape nor the size of the sun is to be seen? A bow is far larger and, in the bright part, far redder than the sun: in the other colours, too, it is different from him. Besides, when you insist on comparing a mirror to the atmosphere (*i.e.* as embodied in a cloud), you must show me in the latter the same smoothness of texture, the same levelness of surface, the same brightness as in the former. But surely no clouds resemble mirrors to this extent. We often pass through the middle of clouds without seeing ourselves in them. People who climb to the tops of [3] mountains look down on cloud, but cannot make out their reflection in it. — True enough, but it is separate drops that are separate mirrors, says my opponent. Admitted. Still, I deny that a cloud consists of fully formed drops. It no doubt contains the elements from which the drops are formed, but not as drops. Clouds do not contain even water, but only the material to form water. Granting, for the sake of argument, that there *are* countless drops in the clouds and that they can reflect an object, yet they do not all produce one and the same reflection, but each [4] its own. Further, you may join mirrors to one another, but they will not unite to form a single reflection: each portion will enclose a likeness of the object. Some mirrors are composed of a large number of very small parts. Set before them one man and a whole people is reflected, each portion producing an image of its own. The portions of the mirror thus united and placed side by side none the less keep their images separate, and out of one man make [5] a crowd. But they do not blend in one that troop; they separate and distinguish the

individual faces. Now, a rainbow is bounded by a single outline, the whole presents but one representation.

Well, but, says our opponent, is not the water that is scattered from a burst pipe, or that is tossed up by the oar, wont to exhibit something similar to these colours that are seen in the bow? True, but not for the reason which you wish to bring out, to wit, that each single droplet receives an image of the sun. As a matter of fact, the [6] drops fall too quickly to be able to form such an image. The medium must be stationary in order to receive the impression of what is to be reproduced.

How, then, it may be asked, does it come about? The drops, I reply, receive the colour, but not the image of the sun. Besides, as Nero Caesar says very elegantly:

The neck of Venus' dove glitters as the bird tosses its head, and so the neck of the peacock shines with varied colours as often as it is turned hither and thither. Are we, therefore, to say that feathers of this kind, [7] whose every turn passes into new colours, are mirrors? Well, clouds differ in character from mirrors no less than the birds mentioned, and as chameleons and the other animals whose colour changes. In the latter case the cause is sometimes subjective: the creatures when inflamed with anger or passion vary their hue through the suffusion of moisture: at other times the position of the light, direct or slanting, gives the colour its particular hue. What resemblance, I say, is there between mirrors and clouds? Whereas those are not translucent, these transmit light. Those are dense and compact, these are rare. Mirrors are of uniform material throughout, clouds are made up of various elements brought together at random, and therefore are full of internal strife, and cannot long hold together. Consider further; at sunrise one sees a certain portion of the sky ruddy; at other times one sees clouds of fiery red. This particular colour is received by the clouds from encountering the sun: what, then, is there to prevent the many colours of the bow being derived by them in the same way from him, even though they do not possess the [9] power of mirrors? — A little ago, my opponent retorts, you advanced the argument that the rainbow is always produced opposite the sun, because an image could not be reflected from a mirror unless

the object were in front of it. We agree in this point, he adds. Yes, for just as the object whose image is to be transferred to the mirror must be set opposite the mirror, in like manner, in order that the clouds may be tinged by the sun's rays, the sun must occupy a suitable position. He does not produce the same effect if his light streams in on all sides; there must be a proper incidence of the rays to produce the effect. — Such are the reasons alleged by those who will have it that the rainbow is a coloured cloud.

Posidonius and those who are of opinion that the phenomenon is produced by reflection as from ^[10] a mirror, answer their arguments thus: If there were any real colour in a bow, it would persist, and be seen more distinctly, the nearer it is. As it is, the image of the bow is clear only in the distance; it is lost as it begins to approach.

I do not agree with this argument in refutation, though I approve the main sentiment which it supports. And I will tell you why. The cloud *is* coloured, but in such a way that the colour cannot be seen from every point. And no more can the cloud itself: for no one who is in it can see it. What wonder, then, if its colour cannot be seen by one to whom itself is not visible? And yet, although the cloud is not seen, it is there: and so is the colour. It is, therefore, no proof of the deceptiveness of the colour that it ceases to be manifest when one approaches it. For, I repeat, the same happens to the clouds themselves: they are not all a sham merely because under certain conditions they cease to be visible. — Besides, when you are told that the cloud is dyed by the sun, it does not mean that that colour of his is mingled, as it were, with a hard, firm, durable body, but with a liquid unstable body that is incapable of more than a very brief impress. Let me add that there ^[12] are certain artificial colours which display their virtue at a distance. The better and richer the Tyrian purple is, the higher up you must hold it to display its full blaze. It does not cease to possess its colour simply because it does not reveal its best shade in any and every position in which it is exhibited. — I am of the same opinion as Posidonius in holding that the bow is formed in a cloud shaped like a hollow round mirror, whose form is that of a section through a ball. This cannot be ^[13] proved without the aid of geometry: the mathematical proofs leave no doubt that the bow is an image of the sun, but one that does not resemble it. Nor,

indeed, are all objects faithfully represented in mirrors. There are some mirrors one is terrified to let one's eyes rest upon, such is the misshapen and distorted image they reproduce of those who gaze upon them. They deform the likeness they preserve withal. Some, again, there are, a glance at [14] which causes great self-satisfaction in one's strength: the arms are enormously increased, and the appearance of the whole body is enlarged to superhuman proportions. There are mirrors that turn faces to the right, and mirrors that turn them to the left, others twist and even invert them. What wonder, then, that a mirror of this kind should be formed in a cloud by which a defective appearance of the sun should be presented?

VI

[1] AMONG the other arguments it must be mentioned that a rainbow never is seen greater than a semicircle: the higher the sun is, too, the smaller is the bow. As our countryman Virgil says:

And deep drinks

The mighty bow, when rain is brewing. But the threat the bow conveys is not the same whatever the quarter it has [2] shown itself in. If it rises toward the south, it will bring a heavy fall. The rain in that quarter, such is its force, cannot be mastered by the strongest midday sun. If it shine toward the west, there will be only a dew or a light rain. If it rise in the east or thereabouts, it prognosticates fine weather. — If, however, the bow is the sun's reflection, why does it appear of far larger size than the sun himself? Just because there is a kind of mirror that exhibits objects on a far larger scale than that on which they are presented to it, increasing their form to a portentous magnitude: and in turn there is another kind that reduces the size. And tell me this again, why does an image assume the form of a circle if [3] it does not answer to a circle? You may, perhaps, tell me why the colour of the bow is varied: why its shape is what it is, you will not be able to tell me except by citing some model after which it is formed. Now, other model there is none save that of the sun; when you admit that the rainbow receives its colour from him, it follows that it receives its shape also from him. In short, you and I — are agreed that those colours by which its quarter of the heaven is adorned proceed from the sun. But on one point we are not agreed: you say that the colour is real; I maintain that it is only apparent. Whichever it is, real or apparent, it comes from the sun. On your assumption its sudden cessation cannot be explained, seeing that all other bright lights in the sky are dispelled gradually. Its sudden appearance and, at the same [4] time, its sudden extinction make for my contention. For it is a peculiarity of a mirror that the reflection in it is not built up piecemeal, but all at once comes fully into being. Every image in it is destroyed, too, with as great rapidity as it was formed. For to the construction or removal of the images nothing is

required but the presentation and withdrawal of the objects.

In the rainbow-cloud whose nature is in question, there is no proper substance or material: there is only a sham and a likeness without reality. Will you be convinced that this is so? The proof is, the rainbow will cease if you conceal the sun. Place another cloud, I repeat, in front of the sun, and all the bright hues of the bow are gone. — But what is to be said, you may ask, in explanation of the size of the bow which is considerably greater than that of the sun? I have already said that there are certain mirrors that multiply every object they reflect. I may now add that every object much exceeds its natural size when seen through water. Letters, however small and dim, are comparatively large and distinct when seen through a glass globe filled with water. Apples floating in a glass vessel seem more [6] beautiful than they are in reality. The stars appear bigger if seen through a cloud, because our vision is blurred in the moisture, and cannot accurately grasp its object. This will become plain to demonstration if you fill a cup with water and throw a ring into it. While the ring lies right at the bottom its appearance is visible on the surface of the [7] water. Anything, in fact, that is seen through moisture appears far larger than in reality it is. What wonder that the image of the sun, being seen in a moist cloud, should be reproduced on a scale larger than the original, and that for the two reasons indicated? The cloud contains the two elements, one like glass, which can transmit light, and one also of the character of water; at any rate, if it does not just yet contain the actual water, it is now forming it, its nature is already such as can easily be changed into water.

VII

[1] As you have mentioned glass, some one interposes, I can draw from this same material an argument to confute you. Glass sticks are manufactured, either fluted or bulging, with many corners like a club. If one of these sticks is placed obliquely in the path of the sun's rays, it sends back the colour which is wont to be seen in the rainbow. This proves that there is not here an image of the sun, but an imitation of his colour [2] from reflection. Now, in this argument there are many points that make for my view. First of all, it is plain that there must be some smooth surface like a mirror to reflect the sun. Secondly, it is plain that no colour is formed in the rod, but only a false appearance of colour, such as I mentioned above, which the neck of a pigeon, as it is bent hither and thither, alternately puts on and off. This, I say, is seen likewise in the case of a mirror, which assumes no real colour, but only a certain imitation of the colour of a foreign body.

Still, this one point requires explanation; it is [3] not the sun's image that is beheld in that glass stick, because it is not capable of expressing it accurately. True enough it tries to reproduce the image, because the material is smooth and suitable for this purpose. But it fails because its shape is unsymmetrical. If it had been suitably constructed, it would reflect as many images of the sun as it had faces. But since the sides are not distinctly separated from each other, and not bright enough to serve as mirrors, the images are only incipient, not fully expressed; they get confused through being crowded together, and are reduced to the appearance of a single band of colour.

VIII

BUT to return — why does the bow not complete the full circle in its form, but appear as only a semicircle when stretched to the full extent of its greatest span? Some are of opinion that the reason is that the sun, being much higher than the clouds, strikes them only on the upper side. Hence their lower parts are not touched by his light. Receiving the sun only on one side, the clouds reproduce only one portion of him, and this is never more than a half. There is very little force [2] in this contention. My reason for saying so? The sun, even though he is on the upper side, yet strikes, and therefore colours, the whole cloud. How could it be otherwise? His rays are wont to be transmitted through the clouds and to penetrate any density in them. Further, the proof they advance is flatly in opposition to their main proposition. For if the sun is higher than the clouds, and his beams, therefore, shed only on their upper side, the bow would never come down as far [3] as the earth. Yet it does descend to the very ground. Besides, the bow is never seen except opposite to, not below, the sun. The fact is, the sun's highness or lowness does not affect the matter: the side of the cloud that faces him is struck by him throughout its whole extent.

Furthermore, sometimes even the setting sun produces a rainbow; surely at that time, being near the earth, he strikes the clouds on their lower side. And yet then, too, the bow is only a semicircle, though the clouds receive the sunlight on their lower and [4] darker portions. The Stoics, who hold that the light is reflected in the cloud as in a mirror, make the cloud hollow like the section of a ball. Such a mirror, being but part of a circle, cannot, they think, reproduce a whole circle. I give my adherence to the proposition, but I cannot agree to the argument in its support. For, if the whole figure of a circle placed opposite a concave mirror is reproduced in it, then there can surely be nothing to prevent the whole of a ball being seen in a semi5 circular mirror. Besides, we have already shown that complete rings resembling a rainbow surround the sun and the moon at times. Why should the circle be complete in the halo, but never in the rainbow? And then again, why should the clouds that receive the

sunlight be always hollow ones, and not sometimes flat or bulging?

Aristotle says that rainbows are formed, after the autumnal equinox, at any hour of the day, but in summer only either in the early part of the day, or when the sun has begun to sink. The cause of this is obvious. In the first place, about midday the great heat of the sun dispels the clouds: he cannot be reflected in the clouds which he breaks up. But in the early morning and as he sinks toward the west, his rays have less power, and can thus be resisted and reflected by the clouds. In the second place, the sun is not wont to form a bow except when he faces the clouds in which it is formed. When the days are shortening in autumn, his rays are always slanting. Therefore, he has some clouds facing him that he can strike, at any part of the day, even at the hour at which he attains his meridian height. But in the summer season he sails right overhead. Therefore, in the great altitude of his midday course, he looks down on the earth too directly to encounter any clouds. He has them at that period all beneath him.

IX

I MUST now go on to speak of *Streaks* (watergalls, sun-dogs), which are as bright and varied as the rainbow, and commonly received by us as equally indicative of rain. No great labour need be spent in explaining them, for they are just incomplete rainbows. They have the variegated appearance of the bow, but none of its curve. They lie in a straight line. They are formed near the sun, as a rule, in a moist cloud that has begun to break up. Thus, they have the same colour as is found in the rainbow, but there is a difference in the shape, due to the corresponding difference in the clouds over which they stretch.

X

THERE is a similar variety of colours in *Halos*. But there is this difference in the various phenomena: Halos are formed at any point in the sky, wherever there is a heavenly body; rainbows are not found except opposite the sun; streaks, only in the neighbourhood of the sun. I may express their difference in another way: Bisect a halo and you have a rainbow; make it a straight line and you have a streak. In all three there is the same multiplicity of colours, the scale running from dark blue to orange. Streaks, then, are found only close to the sun. Rainbows are all either solar or lunar. Halos are seen with all the heavenly bodies.

XI

ANOTHER kind of streak is visible when thin rays of bright light equidistant from one another are shot out through narrow apertures in the clouds. These, too, are a prognostication of rain. How am I to express myself here? What shall I call them? Images of the sun? The chroniclers call them merely suns, and have put on record that they have been seen in twos and threes. The Greeks call them *Mock Suns* (parelia = beside the sun), because they are generally seen in proximity to the sun, and somewhat resemble the sun. They do not give a complete reproduction of the sun, but exhibit only his size and shape. They are dull, however, and languid without any of his heat. What name are we to apply to them? Shall I do as Virgil did — hesitating about the name, employ the very name which causes the hesitation?

And by what name shall I call you,

Rhaetian wine? But yet you must not seek to compete with the Falernian bins.

There is no objection to my calling these, mock suns. They are, in fact, images of the sun formed in a thick cloud close to him after the fashion of a mirror. Some writers define a mock sun as a cloud, round, bright, and resembling the sun. The mock sun follows the sun, and is never left farther behind him in his orbit than it was at its first appearance. None of us, I suppose, is surprised at seeing a reflection of the sun in some fountain or quiet lake. Well, his disc may be reflected in the heavens just as readily as on earth, if only the material is suitable to produce the reflection.

XII

WHENEVER we wish to observe an eclipse of the sun, we place on the ground basins filled with oil or pitch. The thick liquid is not easily disturbed, and therefore retains the images it receives. Images, I may observe, cannot be seen except in a liquid at rest. Then we are in the habit of noting how the moon obstructs the sun, and by the interposition of her body hides his, which is so much larger, sometimes partially, if it so fall out that she only encounter a portion of his orb, sometimes completely. The latter is called a total eclipse: it quite shuts out the light and shows us the stars; it occurs when the centre of the two bodies lies in the same straight line. Now, just as the image of both sun and moon can be seen on earth, so it is in the case of mock suns in the atmosphere. The still air is so compact and yet clear that it can receive the sun's likeness. Other clouds receive it, but let it go if they are either in motion, or thin, or black. The moving clouds disperse it, the rare let it slip, the black and impure do not take the impress of it, just as on earth soiled objects do not reflect an image.

XIII

MOCK suns are wont to be formed in pairs and on the same principle. There is nothing, in fact, to prevent the formation of as many as there are clouds suitable for exhibiting an image of the sun. Some writers are inclined to hold that when two such phantoms are visible, one arises directly from the sun, the other from his image. For, to use an illustration from common experience, when several mirrors are so arranged that one is in sight of the other, all reflect the same image; but only one is directly from the original, the rest are reflections of images. The nature of the object presented to the mirror makes no difference in the effect. Whatever it sees it reproduces. So, up on high there, if some chance has so disposed the clouds that they face one another, one of them reflects the image of the sun, the other the image of his image. The clouds that produce this effect must be dense, smooth, bright and flat, analogous in character to the sun. All phantoms of this kind are white and resemble so many discs, of the moon, for the reason that the sun's light that they receive and reflect back is always oblique. If the cloud, on the contrary, is beneath the sun and too near him, his rays dispel it: or again, if situated too far away, it does not reflect them nor produce any image. In ordinary experience in the same way mirrors withdrawn to a distance from us do not reproduce our features because our sight cannot carry back to us from them.

These suns, too — to employ the name given by the chroniclers, — are an indication of rain, especially if they have their position in a southern quarter, from which the most heavily-charged clouds chiefly come up. When such an image surrounds the sun on both sides, then, if we are to believe Aratus, a storm is brewing.

XIV

It is now high time that I ran over the other varieties of celestial fires, whose forms are diverse one from the other. Sometimes there is a shooting star, sometimes there are glowing lights, which are occasionally stationary, sticking to one spot, and at times able to rush through the air. Several species of these may be observed. There are, for example, *Bothynae* (cave - like meteors) when within an outer circle there is a blazing gulf in the sky like a circular grotto excavated in it. Then there are *Pithitae* (barrel-shaped meteors) when a vast circular mass of fire like a cask either rushes through the [2] sky, or blazes away in one spot. There are *Chasmata* (chasms), too, when there is a subsidence of some portion of the heavens, which sends out hissing flame, as it were, from its hidden recesses. There are also a great number of colours in all these. Some are of brightest red, some of light insubstantial flame, some of white light, some glittering, some with a uniform glow of orange without sparks or rays. We see, therefore,

The stars' long tracks that gleam white behind.

[3] These stars, for so they appear to be, dart forth and flit across the sky, and by reason of their extraordinary rapidity seem to leave a long trail of fire. Our sight cannot follow their course, and wherever their career leads we imagine the heaven is all on fire. Such is the swiftness of their flight that its separate portions are not distinguished and it can be grasped only as a whole. We are aware rather of the quarter in which the star [4] appears than of its route. It, therefore, seems to mark its entire course with a line of continuous fire, because the slowness of our vision fails to keep pace with the stages of its career and sees at the same moment the start and the finish; as happens in a flash of lightning, the fire seems a long train because the meteor traverses its path rapidly and the space through which it falls presents itself to our eyes as a whole. But, as a matter of fact, the fire does not extend itself all through the space [5] crossed by the meteor. Nor have such long thin bodies strength enough for the effort. How,

then, it may be asked, do they issue forth? The answer is, the fire is kindled by the friction of the atmosphere and is urged headlong by the wind. Still, it does not always arise from wind or friction. Sometimes its origin is due to certain peculiar conditions in the atmosphere; for on high there are many elements, dry and hot and earthy, among which fire is generated. It then streams down in pursuit of fuel to sustain it, and therefore is hurried rapidly along. The reason for the differences of colour it [6] presents lies in the nature of the material set on fire and in the degree of violence of the conflagration. A falling body of this kind betokens wind, which may be looked for in the quarter in which the meteor has burst out.

XV

How, some one further inquires, are those bright [1] gleams of light which the Greeks call *Sela* (luminosities) produced? In many ways, people say. They may arise from the violence of the winds, or from the fervent heat of the upper heavens. Fire is a very widely diffused element there, and sometimes catches the lower regions if they are combustible. The mere motion of the stars in their courses may kindle fire, and convey it to all that lies beneath them. Nay, is it not quite possible that the atmosphere should drive up even to the ether the germs of fire, from which may arise a glow or burning or darting resembling a star? Some of these gleams rush headlong like [2] shooting stars, some remain fixed in their place, emitting light sufficient to dispel darkness and re-

instate daylight, until their fuel is used up, and they gradually grow dimmer, and by and by, just like a flame which is dying out, are by gradual subsidence reduced to nothingness. Some of these appear in the clouds, some above them: in such cases the thick air nearer the earth feeds them for a long time, but eventually forces them right up to the stars. Certain of these last no considerable time: they straightway dart across the sky, or are extinguished just at their point of origin. These are called gleams because their appearance is fitful and shortlived, though their fall is not always unattended by injury: they have often caused as much damage as lightning. One has seen houses struck by them, what the Greeks call *astrapoplecta* (= star-struck). Those that have a longer career and a stronger fire which follows the motion of the heavens, or those that pursue an orbit of their own, are regarded by the Stoic philosophers as Comets: of which more anon? Different kinds of these are *pogoniae* (bearded), *lampades* (torches), and *cyparissiae* (like cypress trees), and all the rest of them: they have a thin tail of fire. It is doubtful whether beams (*trabes*) and the rare barrel-meteors (*pithitae*) should be placed in this category or not. Such meteors require a great mass of fire, since their immense orb sometimes surpasses in size that of the morning sun.

Among these should certainly be placed a phenomenon of which

we often read in the chronicles — the heavens appeared to be on fire. The blaze of it is occasionally so high as to mount to the very stars; occasionally it is so low as to present the appearance of a distant fire. In the reign of Tiberius Caesar the fire brigade hurried off to the relief of the colony at Ostia, supposing it to be in flames; during the greater part of the night there had been a dull glow in the sky, which appeared to proceed from a thick smoky fire. No one has any doubt that these burnings in the heavens contain flame as really as they display it: they have a certain substance in them. — As to those formerly [7] discussed, I mean rainbows and halos, it is a question whether they deceive the sight and consist of an illusion; or really contain what appears in them. I and those who think with me cannot convince ourselves that the rainbow and halo have a basis of any definite material in them. For we judge that in a mirror there is nothing but a deception: the mirror only pretends to show a foreign body. What is revealed does not exist *in* the mirror, s Otherwise it would not come out of it, nor would it be forthwith obscured by another image: nor would innumerable forms now fade from it, now be received by it. What follows, then? That these are mere phantoms and the insubstantial imitation of real bodies. Indeed, in certain instances, people have so arranged mirrors that the objects have been distorted and degraded in the reflection. For, as I have already said, there are some mirrors that twist the faces of those who look into them, some that enormously increase them until they exceed all size and proportions of these bodies of ours.

XVI

AT this point I wish to tell you a little story [1] to show you how unscrupulous lust is in seizing every instrument that will rouse passion: so resourceful is it in goading to madness its own morbid fury. There was one Hostius Quadra whose obscenity formed a model for everything that was lewd on the stage. He was rich and avaricious, a very slave to his millions. He was eventually murdered by his own slaves, but the late Emperor Augustus considered his murder undeserving of punishment, and as good as declared that he had been justly slain. This man's lust knew no distinction of sex. Among other things, he had mirrors constructed of the kind just mentioned, that reflected images of abnormal size, causing, for example, a finger to exceed the size of an arm in length and thickness. He so arranged his mirrors that he could see all his accomplices' movements, and could gloat over the imagined proportions of his own body. He raised a levy of scamps like himself in all the public baths, where he chose men of the regulation height; this but whetted his appetite to have his scenes of riot reproduced in false unnatural proportions. Go to, you that say the mirror was invented for purposes of adornment!

I could not soil my pen by recording the foul words and deeds of that monster: he deserved to be torn by his own jaws. To aggravate his guilt, mirrors faced him on every side that he might be a witness of his own infamy. Deeds of darkness, which lie heavy on the conscience, the imputation of which ordinary men will indignantly spurn, weighed so lightly with him that he thrust them before his face, and into his very eyes. Crimes, in faith, usually dread the sight of themselves. Even in those lost to shame, and exposed to every insult, the eye is still delicately susceptible. But that beast thought his unparalleled wickedness but a trifle; he summoned his eyes to witness it. Aye, not content with seeing his sin, he surrounded himself with mirrors to multiply and group his scenes of vice. Even when he could not see directly, he employed the reflecting power of the mirrors to reveal scenes of revolting and abominable iniquity. The filthy blackguard left nothing that could be called a deed of

darkness. He had no dread of the daylight, but complacently applauded himself in all his bestial vice. Now, don't you think he would have liked to have his portrait painted in that attitude? The ministers of public vice draw the veil of modesty over them in part: in fact, a house of ill-fame is in some degree shamefaced. But that brute had made an exhibition of his obscenity, and presented to his own sight what the darkest night is not deep enough to hide. I will be out and out bad, was the monster's resolve; my eyes must share my lust, they must witness and superintend! By my art I will defeat nature's shyness: nobody must imagine that I do not know what I am about! Nature is niggardly to man, she is more generous to the cattle. I will find means to thwart her, and to indulge my little weakness. My lust shall go one better than nature. I will construct a mirrored chamber that will reflect shapes of enormous size. I only wish I could make the size real; but I must be content with the belief of it. My vice must see more than it can compass, and must rest content with wonder at its own restraint.

Away with such a fellow! Perchance he met a speedy death even before he could gloat over the sight. He richly deserved to be offered up as a victim before his own mirror-idol.

XVII

Go now and laugh at the philosophers for discussing the nature of the mirror and inquiring why our face is reflected in it, and is turned toward us too. What did nature mean by giving us real bodies and then ordaining that phantoms of them also should be visible? What was her purpose in providing material of the sort capable of receiving and returning images? Not, I trow, that we men might use a looking-glass to pluck out the straggling hairs of our beard and polish up our face. Nature has never at any point merely provided resources for luxury. First of all, her motive was to show us the sun with his glare dulled, since our eyes are too weak to gaze at him direct, and without something to reflect him we should be wholly ignorant of his shape. No doubt one may study him as he rises and as he sets. But we should know nothing of his true figure as he shines in fierce noonday brightness, without his softening ruddy glow, unless an image of him could be mirrored in some liquid where he shines less directly and is more easy to observe. [4] In the second place, we should be unable to see or investigate the conjunction of two heavenly bodies, by which the daylight is wont to be interrupted, unless we could examine the reflections of sun and moon in basins on the ground with comparative freedom. In the third place, mirrors were discovered in order that man might come to know himself.

Many benefits have ensued; first, the knowledge of self, after that, devices to secure specific results. The comely man was taught to shun conduct that would degrade him. The uncomely learned that bodily defects must be compensated by virtue of character. The young man was reminded by his vigour that youth was the time for learning and for performing daring deeds of chivalry. The grey-beard was warned to have respect for his hoary hair and turn his thoughts sometimes to death. It was for this that even objects in nature have afforded us the opportunity of seeing ourselves. A clear fountain or a smooth stone gives each back his image. In the poet's words:

Lately I saw myself on the shore,

When the sea stood calm without a breath of wind.

What, think you, was the style of life of the people who dressed at a mirror of this kind? The age was unsophisticated, satisfied with what supplies chance presented. It did not as yet degrade a boon into a vice, or turn nature's invention to purposes of lust and luxury. At first, chance revealed to each his form. In due time the inherent self-love of mankind endeared the sight of their own figure, and they came to look more frequently into the mirror held up by nature in which they had first beheld their image. Later on, when a worse race of men ransacked the very bowels of the earth for treasure better hid more deeply, iron first came into use; its production might have caused no damage had the world produced only that one metal. But then in good earnest were brought to light the other precious banes of earth. Their smooth surface presented the image of their possessors, who had in view some quite different purpose. One saw his reflection in a cup, another in a brass vessel procured for some ordinary use. Presently a round mirror was constructed specially to render this service: it was not as yet of polished silver, but of a common brittle ware.

The men of ancient days lived a homely life; they thought themselves smart enough if they washed off in the stream of the river the dirt contracted in their work. But even then they bestowed pains on dressing their hair and combing out their flowing beards, s In this part of the toilet each attended to himself and at the same time helped his neighbour. The thick streaming hair of the men, which it was of old the fashion to wear, was, of course, combed out by the wives. But sometimes they thought themselves handsome enough without any such artistic hand, and they just shook it out for themselves as spirited animals do their mane. Afterwards, when luxury had now gained sway, embossed mirrors of gold and silver of full-length size were made, and at last they were actually adorned with precious stones. One of these has ere now cost a woman more than the amount of a dowry given in the old days at the public expense to the penniless daughters of famous [9] generals. Do you suppose Scipio's daughters bought mirrors chased with gold from the iron money that their dowry was paid in? Happy the poverty that gave occasion to

earn such a title to glory! The Senate would not have dowered them if they had been able to afford mirrors. Whoever the man was to whom the Senate acted the part of father-in-law, he knew that he had got a wife that was above suspicion. Nowadays the whole of the dowry that the Roman people gave Scipio would not be enough to buy a single looking-glass for some of the loose, silly daughters of our freedmen! ^[10] Luxury has been gradually developed merely by the possession of wealth, and has now gone to oppressive lengths; therewith vices have received an immense accession of strength. In short, everything has got so mixed up through our perverted refinements that all that used to be regarded as the decoration of women has become part and parcel of the outfit of man; I am understating, it is now an essential portion of a soldier's kit. The mirror was introduced for the sake of the toilet; nowadays there is no vice to which it is not an indispensable adjunct.

BOOK II. [THE NATURE OF AIR THUNDER AND LIGHTNING]

I

Every inquiry into the nature and constitution of [1] the universe falls into three divisions — astronomy, meteorology, and geography. The first investigates the nature of the heavenly bodies, the size and shape of the fires that ring-in the world. It inquires whether the heavens are solid, composed of strong rigid material, or woven of a fine thin stuff; whether they receive or impart motion; whether the heavenly bodies are beneath them or fixed in their texture; in what manner the sun maintains the succession of the seasons; whether he returns upon his track or not, and all the other questions of a similar character. The second division deals with what lies [2] between heaven and earth, to wit, clouds, rain, snow, and

Thunder that frights the heart of man:

in short, all that the atmosphere does or suffers. This subject is called meteorology (*sublimia* = raised on high), because it deals with phenomena exalted, above the low earth. The third part inquires about waters, lands, trees, crops, or to use a legal phrase, everything that is contained in the soil.

How comes it, you ask me, that you have put the [3] question of earthquakes in the division under which you are going to treat of thunder and lightning? For that is my plan. Well, the earthquake is due to air, and air is the atmosphere in violent motion. Now, though the air may enter the earth in order to produce earthquakes, the treatment of earthquakes does not fall under geography, but more properly belongs to meteorology, which deals with the sphere to which nature has assigned the atmosphere. I can tell you something that will sound stranger still: I must speak of the earth when dealing with [4] the heavenly bodies. Why? you ask. For this reason: we discuss in their own proper place, as part of geography, the properties of the earth, for example, whether it is broad, projecting unequally in a huge bulge to one side, or whether it all assumes the shape of a ball, gathering up its parts into a globe; whether it binds its waters or is itself bound by them; whether it is an animal or a lifeless mass without feeling, full of air no doubt, but not its own s breath. These, and all other questions of the kind, as often as they crop up, will be

relegated to geography, and be placed in the lowest category. But when the question comes to be the situation of the earth, the part of the universe in which it has settled, its position with respect to the heavens and heavenly bodies, then the inquiry will take its place in the higher category, and obtain higher rank so to speak.

II

HAVING described the three divisions into which all the material of nature falls, I must add a few general remarks on the subject. And this must be premised, that the atmosphere belongs to the class of bodies that possess unity. What exactly this means, and why it must be laid down as an axiom, will appear if I go back a little, and entering more fully into the subject, tell you that certain bodies are continuous, and certain formed by a union of different elements. Continuity may be defined as unbroken union of parts one with another. Unity is continuity without a break; it is the contact of two bodies joined to one another. There can be no shadow of doubt that of the bodies around us which we see and handle, and which are either perceived or perceive, certain are composite. They are so either through nexus or through mere accumulation; take as illustrations a rope, corn, a ship. Again, there are bodies that are not composite, as a tree, a stone. You must, therefore, grant that likewise among the objects that elude sense, and are grasped only by thought, some are possessed of unity [while some arise from junction of parts]. See how careful I am of your susceptibilities. If I had chosen to employ the jargon of philosophy, I might have got out of the difficulty by merely saying “united bodies.” You must, in turn, be duly grateful for this concession to your weakness! What am I driving at? This: if at any time I speak of “unity” in this connection, bear in mind that it is not used of number, but has reference to the composition of a body that coheres through no external aid, but by its own unity. To this category the atmosphere belongs.

III

THE universe embraces all the objects that fall, or that can fall, under our cognisance. Of these some are its parts, the remaining ones must form its material. Nature, just like every manual art everywhere, requires material. Let me make this a little plainer. In ourselves the parts are hand, bones, sinews, eyes; the material is the sap of the digested food, which will be distributed for the nourishment of the parts. Again, blood is in a certain sense a part of us, but still it is material as well. For it goes to form other parts, and, none the less, it is among the parts that go to make up the whole body.

IV

So the atmosphere is a part, a most necessary one, of the world. This it is that joins heaven and earth, separating highest and lowest in such a way as yet to unite them. It separates by coming in between, it unites by rendering possible communication between the two. It transmits to the higher regions what it receives from the earth; and again, it transfuses terrestrial objects with the influences of the heavenly bodies. I call it a part of the world in the same sense as animals and trees are parts. — The whole class of animals and trees forms part of the universe, since it has to be taken in to make up the whole, and without it the universe is not complete. A single animal or tree is a quasipart: though it is lost, that from which it is lost is still entire. — Now the atmosphere, as I have been saying, adheres both to sky and earth. In both it is inborn. Whatever is an inborn part of anything else possesses unity, for without unity nothing can be born.

V

The earth is at once part and material of the world. You are not, I think, more likely to ask why it is a part than why the sky is a part. The one is just as essential as the other to the existence of the whole, which they go to make up, and from which [from the one no less than from the other] sustenance is provided for all animals and crops and stars. From the earth all the strength of every man, all the energy of the world with its ceaseless demands, are supplied. Hence proceeds the force that, by day and by night, sustains, in their labours so many stars, so active and so eager, and that provides their food. The universal nature derives from this source what suffices for its nourishment. The world has appropriated all that it requires throughout eternity. To adopt a tiny illustration of a great subject: eggs enclose within them as much moisture as they require for the completion of the creature that is to be hatched.

VI

THE atmosphere is in unbroken contact with the earth, in such close juxtaposition that it must always occupy the space that she has just quitted. It is a part, as I — have said, of the universe. At the same time it receives all that the earth sends forth for the nourishment of the heavenly bodies; so that, of course, it should be understood in this connection as material rather than part. It is these earthy elements that cause its fickleness and constant turmoil. Some authorities believe the atmosphere to be composed of separate bodies as dust is, but they are sadly in error. For there can never be internal effort in a body held together in any other way than by unity, since the elements must be in agreement in order to contribute their united strength toward the tension. Now, the atmosphere, if assumed to be cut up into atoms, must be dispersed. Scattered elements cannot hold together as one body. But, as a matter of fact, the tension of the atmosphere is proved by inflated objects that will not yield to a blow. It is proved, too, by weights carried up to a great height merely by the support of the wind. It is proved by the sound of voices sinking or swelling according to the stirring (= vibration) of the air. For what is voice save tension of the air moulded by a stroke of the tongue so as to become audible? What is all running and motion? Are they not the effects of tense air? This it is that imparts strength to the sinews, and endows the runner with his speed. When, being violently stirred, it has twisted itself into an eddy, it uproots trees and woods, carries aloft and shatters whole buildings. When the sea lies all peaceful, the air raises it in waves. Or, to descend to less violent manifestations, what song can be sung without tension of breath? Or, take horns and trumpets, or those organs that by means of hydraulic pressure can produce a greater volume of sound than the mouth is capable of doing: is it not through atmospheric tension that they display their functions? Or, let us note what an enormous force [5] is exerted in secret by quite tiny seeds, whose smallness has allowed them to find a lodgment in the clefts of stones. Their slender diminutive roots gather strength enough to dislodge huge boulders, split statues, and cleave crags and rocks. And to [6] what is this due but air tension,

without which there is no strength, over which no strength can prevail? The unity of the atmosphere may, in fact, be inferred from the mere coherence of our bodies. What else is it that holds them together save air? What else is it by which the soul is stirred (literally, moved)? What constitutes that motion if it be [7] not tension? What tension can there be except from unity? What unity could there be unless it were in the air? What else, too, brings forth from the earth its fruits and slender grain, and sets erect the verdant trees, and stretches out their branches, or sets them on high, but the tension and unity of air?

VII

SOME writers believe that the air is rent and [1] separated into small parts with void spaces, as they suppose, between. They consider the easy flight of birds through it a proof that it has not a compact body, but has large empty spaces: fowls, great and small, pass through it without difficulty. But this is a mistake. For water also affords the same easy [2] motion, and there is no doubt of its unity. When it receives bodies, it always retreats in the direction opposite to them. This the Stoics call displacement, in Greek it is peristasis, which takes place in air just as it does in water. For it literally stands round every body by which it is pressed. There is no need to assume an admixture of vacuum with the element. But more of this another time.

VIII

FROM what has been said it must be inferred that in nature there exists a principle of activity of enormous force. For there is nothing that does not become more active through tension; and it is no less true, nothing will be found capable of tension from another body unless it have in itself capacity of tension. In the same way we say that nothing could be moved by another body without possessing the quality of mobility in itself. But what element can be conceived more likely to possess tension in itself than air? Will any one deny that it can be subject to that force after seeing how it tosses about the earth with its mountains, houses, and walls and towers, and great cities with their inhabitants, seas, and whole coast-lines? The tension of air is proved, too, by its velocity and expansion. Illustrations of these properties are common: in an instant the eye extends its sight over many miles; a single voice resounds at the same moment through whole cities; light does not creep forth little by little, but is shed simultaneously over the whole world.

IX

AGAIN, how could water be subject to tension without the aid of air? You entertain no doubt, I suppose, that the jet of water in the amphitheatre, which is thrown from the centre of the arena to the highest pinnacle, is accompanied by tension of the water? And yet neither hand nor any other engine can send or force water more effectively than air. It lends itself readily to the influence of the air, by the compelling force of which within the pipe it is raised. Its nature is to flow down, but under pressure it mounts and accomplishes great results contrary to its nature. Yes, and do not heavily laden vessels also prove that it is the resistance of air, not of water, that prevents their sinking? The water of itself would give way, and would be unable to bear up the burthens, were it not itself upborne. So, too, a quoit thrown from a height into a pond does not fall straight in, but recoils, and that merely because the air bears it back. In what way, again, could the sound of a voice be transmitted through the thick barrier of a wall unless the solid masonry contained some air to receive and transmit the sound from without? The tension of the air, of course, affects not only what is exposed, but what is concealed and enclosed as well. This is easy for it to do, since it is never divided, but maintains an unbroken continuity even through the centre of objects by which it appears to be parted. The interposition of walls and high mountains renders it impassable by us, but is no obstacle to itself. The air is there all the same, but a portion is enclosed and we cannot follow it through; that's all.

X

THUS the air passes through the middle of an obstacle by which it is apparently divided. It not merely surrounds and encircles all objects, but permeates them likewise. It is shed abroad from the bright ether on high down to the very earth. It is nimbler and rarer and more exalted than the earth, and no less so than the waters of earth; but, on the contrary, it is thicker and heavier than the ether, and is naturally cold and dark, its light and heat coming from without. It is not of the same specific quality in every region, but borrows its qualities from its surroundings. The highest part of it is extremely dry and hot, and so, very rare also, from the proximity of the eternal fires, the endless motions of the stars, and the constant revolution of the heavens. But the lowest portion next the earth is dense and dark, because it forms a receptacle for the exhalations of the earth. The intermediate portion, in dryness and rarity, runs to neither extreme as compared with the highest and lowest strata, but is colder than either. The reason is this: The higher parts are affected by the heat of the heavenly bodies that are close by; and again the lower parts are warmed in the first place by the earth's breath which is charged with heat, while in addition the sun's rays are reflected from the ground, and as far as the reflection extends it renders the atmosphere kindlier and more genial. Besides, the temperature of the lower air is raised by the warm breath of all animals, trees, and crops, whose life is dependent on heat. Add to this also fires on the earth, not merely the artificial ones about which we know, but also those concealed beneath it, some of which have ere this broken out, and myriads of which are blazing away in the hidden depths incessantly. Add, too, that all the fertile parts of the earth have some degree of heat which is exhaled into the air: heat is a condition of generation, the frigid is sterile. So, then, the middle portion of the atmosphere being remote from all these influences abides in its native cold: for air is by nature chilly.

XI

SUCH being the divisions of the atmosphere, I may observe that in its lowest layer it is most variable, unstable, and changeful. It is near the earth that the air is, so to speak, most enterprising and most long-suffering, as it tosses or is tossed. But withal, it is not all affected in the same way, but at different times at different points its different parts are in unrest and turmoil. The reasons of the changefulness and inconstancy are in part derived from the earth: her position turning hither and thither is a potent factor in determining the quality of the atmosphere. Other reasons are due to the heavenly bodies, chiefly the sun, whose course directs the year, whose solstices determine winter [2] and summer. Next in importance is the moon's influence. But even the other stars produce an effect alike on the earth and on the air that rests upon the face of the earth. Their rising or their corresponding setting and their disturbances cause now cold, now rain, now other damage such as earth is subject to.

It was necessary for me to make these preliminary remarks before going on to speak of thunder and thunderbolts and lightnings. For as these phenomena occur in the atmosphere, I had to explain the nature of the latter, that it might more readily appear what active or passive capacities it possessed.

XII

[1] There are, I have just said, three phenomena — lightnings, thunderbolts, thunderings: the last is simultaneous in occurrence with the others, but its sound reaches us subsequently. Lightning (*i.e.* sheet) merely reveals fire, the thunderbolt (forked lightning) actually despatches it on its mission. The former is, so to speak, a threatening and feint without a blow, the latter a stroke and a blow. There are some of the facts connected with the phenomena of thunder and lightning on which there is general agreement, others on which there [2] is much diversity of opinion. For example, there is agreement that they occur in the clouds and issue from the clouds; further, it is agreed that lightning of both kinds is either composed of fire or at any rate presents the appearance of fire. But to pass on to the points which are disputed — some authorities believe that the fire is actually resident in the clouds, some that it is merely produced for the occasion, and that it does not exist until it issues out. But yet there is no agreement as to what brings out the fire. One explains it [3] as due to light. Again, a certain author says that the sun's rays accumulate through recurrent intersection, and kindle the fire. Anaxagoras asserts that it is distilled from the ether, that from such heat in the sky many sparks fall which the clouds enclose and retain for a long time.

Aristotle supposes that the fire does not gather in the clouds any long time previously, but rather that it bursts out at the same instant as it is formed. His opinion runs thus: Two elements of the world, [4] land and water, lie in its lower part; each exhales its peculiar emanation. The vapour of earth is dry, resembling smoke, and produces wind, thunder, and lightning; the breath of water, on the other hand, is moist, and produces rain and snow. But that dry vapour from the earth, to which [as mentioned] winds owe their origin, on account of its accumulation in large masses, is subject to violent lateral pressure when it is condensed for the formation of clouds. Thereupon it strikes the [5] adjacent clouds over a larger surface, and the blow reverberates loudly [in thunder]. The effect is analogous to that produced by the crackling of flame from the

moisture contained in green unseasoned firewood. In this case the air enclosed in the wood has some moisture in it, and when it accumulates it bursts out in the flame. So likewise the air which, as I said a little ago, is driven out through a collision of two clouds, cannot burst or leap out without noise. The sound varies [6] according to the variety of impact in the clouds; the larger cavity in some clouds, the smaller in others account for the variety. That air violently driven out is fire, which is called sheet lightning when it forms a fitful flame of no great violence. We see the flash before we can hear the sound: eyesight is swifter than hearing, and far outstrips it.

XIII

[1] The mistakenness of the opinion that the fire is stored up in the clouds may be inferred from many considerations. For example, if the fire merely falls from the sky, why does it not do so every day from the glowing mass that is constantly up there? Then, again, the theory gives no explanation of the downward course of the fire, an element which naturally rises. Fires on earth from which embers fall belong to a different category; the embers possess a certain amount of weight, which carries them down. Fire cannot descend in the same way, [2] but must be forced or conducted down. Nothing analogous to a terrestrial fire can take place in that pure ethereal fire which contains nothing that can carry it down to earth. Otherwise, if any portion of it fall down, the whole is endangered; for anything susceptible of gradual diminution piecemeal may evidently also fall in a mass. Besides, if an element whose lightness habitually prevents its fall contain any weight in its hidden depths, how could it maintain itself in the place whence it fell? But, it is urged, are not certain forms of fire wont to descend into the lower parts of air very much like these bolts of lightning that we are investigating? Admitted. Only they are conveyed, they do not proceed of themselves. Some force not resident in the ether carries them down. For in the ether no violent compulsion, no breach, no interruption of the wonted continuity, can occur. It preserves a fixed succession; its fire cleansed of impurity claims the upper regions as its own, and performs its functions in preservation of the universe with beautiful precision. It cannot leave its place, no, nor even be thrust from it by external force, because no disturbing body can find lodgment in ether. Its fixed and ordered composition renders conflict impossible.

XIV

Some of your friends the philosophers, a critic may say to me, in giving an explanation of shooting stars have told us that some parts of the atmosphere contract fire which is drawn from these same higher regions, and that the fires are kindled by the glow of the ether. Yes, but I reply that it makes all the difference whether the fire is alleged to fall from the ether, which is incompatible with its nature; or whether it is asserted that from its fierce glow the heat leaps the boundary between it and the lower regions, firing them by its power. For on the latter assumption, the fire does not fall from the upper region, which is impossible, but is kindled in the lower. Surely, too, when a widely spread conflagration occurs in one of our cities, we see detached blocks which have for long been heated by the fire from a distance at last catch fire of themselves. So in the upper atmosphere, which is endowed with the power of drawing fire, in all probability there are cases of ignition from the heat of the superposed ether. In nature there is never a sudden transition from one element to a totally different one. Hence there must be some congruity between lowest ether and highest atmosphere; conversely highest atmosphere cannot be wholly dissimilar to lowest ether. On the confines the two elements pass so imperceptibly into one another that at a particular point there might well be doubt whether one is in atmosphere or in ether.

XV

Some of the Stoics believe that air, being interchangeable with other elements such as fire and water, does not derive from without a fresh cause of fire; it kindles itself by its internal motion. Then in dissipating masses of thick, compact clouds it necessarily emits a loud noise from the bursting of such large bodies. Besides, the very conflict of the resisting clouds contributes to the energy of the fire. In the same way the hand contributes to the cutting power of an instrument, but the actual cutting is done by the steel.

XVI

Let me now explain the difference between the flash and the bolt of lightning which you naturally wish to know. The flash is the fire widely spread out, the bolt is the condensed fire hurled with violence. Let me use a homely illustration. We sometimes join our two hands in order to take up water in them; then we squeeze our palms together and squirt out the water like a syringe. Imagine something like this to take place in the clouds. When they are compressed the restricted space drives out the air between them, setting it on fire at the same time, and hurling it forth like a cannon ball. The missiles from our balistae and scorpions give forth a loud noise as they are hurled.

XVII

A certain number of writers are of opinion that the air of itself emits a report as it traverses the cold and moist regions. Iron, they point out, when heated cannot be dipped in moisture without noise. A mass of heated metal when plunged in water causes a loud sputtering as it is cooled; so, according to Anaximenes, air meeting cloud produces peals of thunder; then as it rushes struggling through the obstructions that bar its way it kindles the flame of lightning merely by its escape.

XVIII

Anaximander refers all the phenomena of thunder to air. Peals of thunder are, he says, the sounds of blows on a cloud. He explains the inequality of the peals by the inequality of the blows. To the question, why it thunders in a clear sky also, he answers that even in absence of cloud the atmosphere is shaken and rent by the bursting forth of air. But why is there thunder sometimes and yet no lightning? The rarity and feebleness of the air render it incapable of producing flame, while yet sufficient to produce sound. Lightning, according to him, then, is really a disturbance where the atmosphere is merely parted and rushes hither and thither, displaying a faint fire that will not issue from its place. As for the thunderbolt, it is the career of the more active and denser air.

XIX

[1] Anaxagoras says all the phenomena correspond to the descent of some force from the ether to the [2] lower regions. So when the fire encounters cold clouds it emits a sound; when it cleaves them there is a flash; less violence in the fires produces lightning, greater, thunderbolts.

XX

[1] Diogenes of Apollonia asserts that thunder arises in some cases from fire, in some from air. Fire precedes those it produces, to herald them. Those that are attended with rattling noise, but without flash, are produced by air. Either sound or flash, I — grant, can and sometimes does occur without the other. Still, their powers are not distinct, each may be produced by each. For will any one say that air borne with great violence, when it can [2] produce sound, will not also produce fire? Will not every one grant, too, that fire as well as air may sometimes burst the clouds without darting from them, for example, if it has burst through a few of the clouds, but is buried beneath an accumulation of them? So fire will pass into air, and lose its shining appearance in cutting through some cloudy obstacles and kindling what is within. Add now another inevitable result — the rush of the thunderbolt sends out blasts of air and drives them before it, and raises a wind behind it through the great extent of its impact on the atmosphere. Thus, through the vibration caused by the wind which the fire drives in front of it, all objects quiver before they are actually struck by the bolt of lightning.

XXI

We must now dismiss our tutors and try to walk alone as we pass on from what is admitted to what is debatable in this subject. What is to be classed as admitted? It is admitted that the thunderbolt is fire of some kind; similarly with the lightning flash, which is simply flame ready to become a bolt if it had more strength. The difference between the two is not in character but in force. The fiery nature of the bolt is proved by its heat. Apart from that, its effects prove it, for it has often been the cause of great conflagrations. Forests and portions of cities have been burnt to ashes by it. Even objects that are not struck are yet seen to be scorched, some are discoloured as if by smoky grime. Then, again, everything that lightning strikes has the smell of sulphur. And so it is beyond dispute that both phenomena are a form of fire, and that they differ merely in their method of movement. A flash is a bolt that has not strength to carry it down to the earth. And conversely you may say that the bolt is a flash that has been conveyed right down to the ground. It is not for the purpose of refinement of terms that I deal at some length with them, but in order to prove the phenomena related and of the same category and character. A bolt is something more than a flash. Inverting the statement, a flash is all but a bolt.

XXII

Now that it is agreed that the two things are both fire, let us see how fire arises on earth, for no doubt the same method prevails aloft. There are two common methods of producing fire — one by striking it out, as, for example, from a stone; the other by the more tedious method of friction, as when two pieces of wood are rubbed together for some time. It is, of course, not every kind of substance that gives the desired result; you must choose one suitable for giving out fire, for example, laurel, ivy, and other trees familiar to shepherds for this purpose. Probably, therefore, clouds may in the same way emit fire either from a blow or from friction. Consider for a moment the force with which squalls rush forth, the impetuous eddying revolution of the whirlwind. Anything that encounters a missile from an engine of war is scattered and removed and driven far from its position. What wonder, then, that such violence in the wind extracts fire either from some external object or merely from itself? You can readily see what a glow all neighbouring bodies grazed by its passage must receive. But the force of storms cannot for a moment be compared with the energy of the heavenly bodies, whose immense power is beyond question.

XXIII

Perchance, too, when the wind only blows softly and exerts no great force, the clouds, wafted against each other, will emit fire strong enough to show a gleam, though not to issue from them. Less force is required for lightning than for the thunderbolt. We found above what a glow the friction of certain woods caused. Now when the air, which is interchangeable with fire, [has been changed in full force into fire and] undergoes friction, it is credible and even probable that fire is struck out, but of an evanescent and transitory character, as it arises from no solid material and has no fuel in which it can lodge. It therefore quickly passes; its duration is no longer than its route and course; it has nothing to support it when hurled forth into space.

XXIV

But how, you ask me, when you philosophers say that it is the nature of fire to rise, does the bolt seek the earth? Perhaps what you said about fire is not true? It seems to take its course down as well as up.

Both my statements, I reply, may be true. Fire naturally does rise and mounts if nothing prevents it, just as water naturally gravitates downwards. But water if affected by a force which drives it uphill is pressed up in the direction from which it was precipitated in rain. In like manner the same force as launched the bolt from the cloud causes it [2] to fall to the ground. Something of the same kind happens to these celestial fires as to trees when bent. The topmost branches if slender may be dragged down so as to touch the ground; but when you let them go, they rebound to their original position. You must not regard the condition which an object involuntarily assumes as characteristic of it. If you allow fire to go where it will, it will return to the sky, the abode of all the lightest bodies. But when there is anything to carry it down and divert it from its natural course, that is not a mark of its disposition but a token of its subjection.

XXV

You and your friends say, an objector interposes, that clouds emit fire through mutual friction when they are moist, indeed wet. How can such clouds produce fire, which is no more likely to be generated by a cloud than by pure water?

XXVI

[1] Well, first of all, the fire which is thus produced is, as it is found in the clouds, not water, but thick air, adapted for the generating of water; it is not yet changed into it, but is already inclined toward, and ready for, the change. There is no ground for supposing that water is first gathered in the clouds and afterwards shed from them. It falls simultaneously with its formation. But in the second place, though I grant that the cloud is moist and charged with fully formed water, still there is nothing to prevent fire being drawn from what is moist, yes — and what will surprise you more to learn — out of pure moisture. Some authorities have actually affirmed that nothing can be converted into fire without a prior change into water. A cloud, then, without prejudice to the water it may contain, may emit fire at some part of it, just as often one end of a log is blazing while the other exudes moisture. I do not deny that fire and water are opposing elements and that the one destroys the other. But where the fire is stronger than the water it wins the day. On the other hand, where there is a superabundant supply of moisture, then fire is powerless. That is why green wood won't burn. The result depends, therefore, on the quantity of water present. If it is small, no effectual resistance is offered, the fire is not prevented. Why, according to Posidonius' account, when an island rose in the Aegean Sea long ago in our forefathers' days, the sea was lashed into foam for a long time previously and sent up smoke from its depths. At last fire was emitted, not continuously, but in flames shooting out at intervals, after the fashion of thunderbolts, just as often as the fervent heat of what lay below had overcome the weight of water above it. By and by boulders were thrown up and rocks, part of them still unimpaired, which the air had thrust out before their calcination, part of them corroded by the fire and changed to light pumice; at last the cone of a blasted mountain issued from the waves. Subsequently, there was an addition to its height, and the rock grew in extent into an island. The same thing happened within our own recollection during the second consulship of Valerius Asiaticus.

[5] Why have I narrated these incidents? My purpose was to make

it evident that neither is fire necessarily extinguished by having the whole sea poured over it, nor its violence prevented from bursting out by the weight of huge waves. Asclepiodotus, a pupil of Posidonius, has left it on record that the height to which the fire mounted, after overcoming the resistance of the waves, was a hundred fathoms. Now, if such a huge mass of water was unable to overcome the force of the flames that rose from its depths, how much less can the thin, dewy moisture in the clouds [6] extinguish fire in the atmosphere? In short, the moisture of the clouds is so far from presenting any obstacle to the formation of fire that lightning is never seen to flash except when the sky threatens rain. A clear sky has no bolts to hurl. No terror of that sort proceeds from a bright day, nor for the matter of that from a night that is not enveloped in cloud. But what! I hear some one say. Does it not sometimes lighten in a calm night when the [7] stars are visible? It does, but you must remember that there are clouds all the same in that quarter whence issues the flash; only, the earth's hump does not allow them to be seen by us. Add, too, what is quite possible, that low clouds near the earth may produce fire through friction. This fire when forced up to the upper regions becomes visible in the clear bright part of the sky, but none the less its place of origin was in the dark vicinity of earth.

XXVII

Some writers have distinguished different kinds of thunder, saying there was one kind with a deep growl like that which precedes an earthquake, when the wind moans and tries to burst its prison walls. Let me tell you how they suppose this kind of thunder to arise. When the clouds have enclosed air, it rolls through their cavernous depths and emits a hoarse, regular, continuous sound like bellowing. So also when that quarter of the heavens is charged with moisture, its exit is prevented until the thunder begins. Therefore, thunder of this kind is a sure sign that rain is to follow. There is another kind, which is sharp, and it might be described more accurately as a crackling than as a regular sound; it resembles the report one hears when a bladder is burst over some one's head. Such thunder is the result of the breaking up of a densely massed cloud and the release of the air by which it was inflated. This is appropriately named a peal, sudden and violent. When it occurs, people collapse and are sometimes literally frightened to death by it; others retain life, but are dazed and completely lose their wits: we call them thunder-struck, for that sound in the heavens has quite unhinged their minds. This sound may also be produced by the atmosphere shut up in a hollow cloud being rarefied, merely through motion, and expanded. By and by in seeking more room for itself it resounds against the walls that envelop it. In fact, is it not just similar to the applause given out by the clapping of the hands? only, when the clouds collide, the sounds may be expected to correspond in volume to the greatness of the encountering bodies.

XXVIII

[1] But clouds, says some one, are seen striking upon mountains without causing any sound. How is that consistent with your theory? Well, in the first place, a sound is not caused by any and every method of cloud collision, but only when there is an arrangement of their position suitable for producing a sound. Striking the backs of the hands does not produce clapping, but the contact of palm with palm does. It makes a great difference, too, whether the clouds that strike are hollow, or flat and extended. In the second place, the clouds must not merely drift, as against a mountain, but [2] be driven with great tempestuous violence. Besides, a mountain does not cut through a cloud, it merely disperses it by displacing the successive front layers of it. Even a bladder does not give a report irrespectively of the method in which it emits the air in it; it depends on the way in which the air escapes. If the bladder is cut with a knife, the air is emitted without the ear perceiving it. It must be burst, not cut, in order to give a report. The same, I assert, holds in regard to the clouds: they emit no peal unless broken up with great violence.

[3] Besides, clouds driven against a mountain are not broken up, but merely pour round certain parts of the mountain, tree branches, shrubs, and rough projecting boulders. They are rent thereby, and emit by numerous exits whatever air they may contain; but there is no rattle unless the air all burst out at once. In proof of this, bear in mind [4] that the wind blowing through a tree, which cuts it, hisses but does not roar. A broad blow, so to speak, that dissipates the whole mass at once, is required in order to the emission of a sound such as is heard when there is thunder.

XXIX

Moreover, the atmosphere is by constitution adapted to the transmission of sound. Of necessity this is so, since sound is nothing but an impact of the atmosphere. The clouds that [as indicated] are completely rent must therefore be hollow and taut. One sees how much more resonant empty vessels are than full, and distended ones than slack. So this accounts for the sound of tambourines and cymbals; the former resound because the blow upon the air is resisted at the farther side; the latter are beaten against the air directly, but unless there were a cavity in the instrument it would not tinkle.

XXX

Some authors, including Asclepiodotus, are convinced [1] that thunder and lightning may also be produced by the collision of certain solid bodies. Once Etna was in violent eruption and cast up a huge quantity of burning sand. The daylight was veiled with the cloud of dust, and sudden night terrified the world. On that occasion, they allege, there was much thunder and lightning, produced, they maintain, by the concourse of dry bodies, not of clouds: with such a glow in the firmament there probably were [2] no clouds at all. Cambyses once sent an army to the temple of Jupiter Ammon in the desert. The sand raised by the south wind fell on it like snowflakes, first covering and finally overwhelming it. Probably on that occasion also there was thunder and lightning, caused by the mutual friction of the particles of sand. Such a view is not in-

[3] consistent with my contention above. I have said that the earth's exhalations contain bodies of two kinds, dry and moist, portions of which roam through the whole expanse of the atmosphere. So if any heavy element be introduced, it makes a cloud thicker and more solid than if its texture were of pure air exclusively. Such a [solid] cloud [4] may burst with a loud report The elements I have mentioned, whether they have charged the atmosphere with moist fires or with earth-sweeping winds, must produce a cloud before they produce a report. Dry elements no less than moist may make up a cloud. For cloud, as we have already said, is just a condensation of thick air.

XXXI

But further, if you will but open your eyes to them, there are marvellous effects in lightning that leave no doubt that a subtle divine power is inherent in it. For example, coins are fused while the purse containing them is uninjured and intact. A sword is melted while the sheath remains. The iron point is fused in a javelin, but the wooden shaft suffers no damage. The jar is smashed and the wine frozen, but the stiffness does not last for more than three days. There are other no less [2] notable effects of lightning. The head of man or other animal struck by it always points in the direction whence the lightning issued: the twigs of all trees that are struck rise straight up in the direction of the lightning. Let me add, too, when venomous serpents or other animals whose bite is fatal are struck with lightning, all the poison disappears. How, you say, can I tell that? In the dead bodies of poisonous animals worms are not produced. But when struck with lightning they breed worms within a few days.

XXXII

Lightning portends the future, too. Nor do the ^[1] signs it gives refer to only one or two events. Often a complete series of fate's succeeding decrees is intimated, with proof, too, plain to demonstration, far more distinct than if it were recorded in writing. There are differences of interpretation, however, between our countrymen and the Tuscans, the latter of whom possess consummate skill in the explanation of the meaning of lightning. We ^[2] think that because clouds collide, therefore lightning is emitted; they hold that clouds collide in order that lightning may be emitted. They refer everything to the will of God: therefore they are strong in their conviction that lightning does not give an indication of the future because it has occurred, but occurs because it is meant to give this indication. Whether the indication is its purpose or its consequence makes no difference in the method of its occurrence. How, then, do they ^[3] give indication unless they are sent by God? Just in the same way as birds give favourable or unfavourable omens, though they are not moved on their flight for the express purpose of meeting us. God moves them too, it is urged. You imagine He has so little to do that He can attend to trifles of this sort, if you will have Him arrange visions for one, entrails of victims for another.

^[4] Nevertheless, all those things are managed by Divine agency, not, however, in the sense that the wings of birds are immediately directed by God, or the bowels of cattle arranged by Him in certain forms under the priest's axe. It is in far other way that the roll of fate is unfolded; it sends ahead in all directions intimations of what is to follow, which are in part familiar, in part unknown to us. Everything that happens is a sign of something that is going to happen: mere chance occurrences uncontrolled by any rational principle do not admit of the application of divination. An event that belongs to a series thereby becomes capable of being predicted. But why, then, is the honour conferred upon the eagle of giving omens concerning great events? or a similar function assigned to the raven and a very few other birds, while all the rest give no presage by their notes? The reason simply is that some departments have not yet been brought

within the sphere of the art of augury, while some are incapable of ever being brought within it, because our acquaintance with them is too slight.

[6] As a matter of fact, there is no living creature whose movement or meeting with us does not foretell something. Of course, only some, not all, can be observed. The omen lies in the observation. So it concerns the person who directs his attention to it. But other things as well concern him, though they pass unheeded. For instance, the Chaldaeans confined their observation to the five great planets. But do you suppose that the influence of so many thousands of other bright stars is naught? The [7] essential error of those who pretend to skill in casting the horoscope lies in limiting our destinies to the influence of a few of the stars, while all that float above us in the heavens claim some share in us. Perchance the lower stars exert their force on us more directly; and the same may be true of the stars that by reason of their more frequent movements turn their view upon man in a different way from that in which it is turned upon other living creatures. But even those stars that are either stationary or, from their velocity being the same as that of the world as a whole, seem to be so, are not without sway and dominion over us. Add [8] one other consideration and you have the subject set out with due arrangement of its parts: it is not more easy to ascertain what the power of the stars is than justifiable to doubt that they possess such power.

XXXIII

To return now to lightning: the art relating to it falls into three divisions — its observation, its interpretation, its deprecation. The first has regard to the category in which it should be placed, the second to divination, the third to the propitiation of the gods, whose blessings we ought to ask and whose threats we must avert by prayer. We must ask them to fulfil their promises, pray them to remit their threats.

XXXIV

[1] People are convinced that lightning possesses sovereign power, because its occurrence destroys the force of other portents. On the other hand, whatever it portends is regarded as unalterable, and the appearance of no other omen lessens its import. Anything threatened by unfavourable entrails or inauspicious birds will be cancelled by favourable lightning. But any warning given by lightning cannot be defeated by opposing entrail or [2] omen. Now this belief seems to me mistaken. My reason? Simply that nothing can be truer than the truth. If birds have truly foretold the future, the omen cannot be nullified by lightning: if it can, then it was not a true prophecy the birds uttered. It is not bird and lightning whose force I am here comparing, but two revelations of truth, which must be equal in authority if they are equally intimations of truth. Therefore, if the occurrence of lightning destroys the indications given by priests or augurs, there must have been a flaw in the inspection of the [3] entrails or the observation of the auguries. It is not a question of which of the two kinds of omen possesses the more exalted or powerful character: if both have furnished indications of truth, they are so far equal. You would be quite justified in asserting that the power of flame was greater than that of smoke; but flame has just the same power as smoke, and no more, in giving indication of the existence of fire. So if the statement is confined to the assertion of the greater authority of lightning on occasions when the entrails give one indication and lightning a different one, I shall perhaps agree. But if the statement go on to affirm that although [4] other signs have foretold the truth, yet the lightning stroke has destroyed all that went before and claims credit only for itself, then the statement is untrue. And for this reason: the mere number of the auspices makes no difference. Fate is but one. If it was rightly understood through the first auspice, it is not destroyed through the second; it remains just the same. And so I say again it does not matter whether the means of our inquiry (= auspice) is the same or different, since the object of the inquiry remains the same.

XXXV

Fate cannot be changed by lightning. And why? ^[1] Lightning is itself a part of fate. Well, then, it may be asked, what is the good of expiation and atonement if the fates are immutable? Let me uphold the rigid sect that takes exception to such rites and regards vows as but comfort to a breast ill at ease. The fates perform their function in a far different way from that supposed; they are not moved by any prayer nor changed by pity nor by favour. The course they hold is irrevocable; once ^[2] they have entered upon it they flow on by unalterable decree. As the water of rushing cataracts returns not upon itself, nor yet lingers, since each succeeding wave drives headlong that which went before; so the order of events is rolled on by the eternal succession of fate, whose first law it is to abide by its decrees.

XXXVI

[1] For what is one to understand as meant by fate? I suppose it is the binding necessity of all events and actions, a necessity that no force can break. If you believe that such a power can be prevailed upon to change through sacrifice or the head of a snow-white lamb, you know little about the Divine dispensation. You say that even a wise man does not change his mind: how much less is God a man that he should change? Even the wise man knows what is best under present conditions; to the Divine wisdom everything is present. Still, I wish, for the moment, to advocate the views of those who hold that atonement should be made for lightning, and who have no doubt that expiation is of avail, now to remove dangers, now to mitigate them, now to delay them.

XXXVII

[1] In a little I will follow up what I have said and show the consequences involved. Meantime we have so much in common with the persons last mentioned in holding that vows are of service, but without prejudice to the power and sway of fate. Some things are, in fact, left by the immortal gods in such a state of suspense as to turn to the advantage of worshippers if they employ prayer to heaven and take vows upon them. This, then, is so far from being opposed to fate that it is actually a part of fate. But my opponent argues thus: an event is either going or is not going to take place. If it is going to, then it will take place, even though you take no vows upon you. If it is not going to, then it won't, even though you take the vows. The dilemma, I reply, is no valid one: you overlook an alternative that lies between those horns of yours. This, say I, will take place, but not unless vows have been taken upon those concerned. This, too, one may say, must be included in the order of fate, either that you undertake the vows or that you do not.

XXXVIII

Suppose that I surrender at discretion and admit that it is likewise included in fate that vows be assuredly performed. Then for that reason they will be performed. It is fated that a man be eloquent, but only if he use due means and apply himself to study. The same destiny enjoins that he should study; therefore he will study. Another will be rich, but he must first go to sea. But in the order of fate in which he is promised a great fortune, it is also decreed that he go to sea; therefore he will go to sea. In regard to expiation, I apply just the same principle. A man is fated to escape danger if he expiate the threats foretold by heaven. But it is likewise contained in fate that he offer expiation; therefore he will offer it.

An objection is usually urged against this view which seeks to prove that no freedom of will is on this assumption left to us, all sway is handed over to fate. When I come to treat of that subject, I will explain how, without infringing the power of fate, [2] something may still be left to human choice. For the nonce, I have explained the point at issue, viz how, consistently with an order fixed by fate, perils from prodigies may be averted through expiation and sacrifice, inasmuch as they do not conflict with fate, but, on the contrary, are assumed by the very law of fate. What benefit, then, you say, can I derive from a soothsayer? In any case I must of necessity offer expiation, even though he be not by to advise it. He so far does good in that he is the instrument of fate. In like manner, when recovery from illness seems the work of fate, it is due at the same time to the doctor, because the boon of fate passes through his hands in order to reach us.

XXXIX

[1] There are, Caecina says, three kinds of lightning — the counselling, the authoritative, and what is called the ordinary. The counselling occurs before an event, but after the design is formed. When something is simmering in one's mind, the lightning stroke either urges it or deters from it. The authoritative one succeeds an event, indicating its [2] outcome as good or ill fortune. In the ordinary case, people are busied neither with action nor design when the lightning suddenly occurs. The flash conveys either threat, promise, or warning. The last form is indeed called admonitory: I am disposed to think it is identical with the counselling mentioned above. One who warns at the same time counsels.

Yet there is a distinction between them. Therefore they are put in different classes. The one applies suasion or dissuasion, the other is restricted to warning how to avoid an impending danger; as, for example, fire, or deception from neighbours, or a plot by slaves. Besides, I can perceive another difference between the two kinds: if one has a design, then the lightning that occurs counsels; but if one has no such design, it warns. Each situation has its own peculiar features. In deliberation advice is appropriate, but a warning comes unsought.

XL

ON the face of it, one's comment on this view would be that these are so many kinds of prognostications and not of lightning. Of the latter the kinds are the boring, the splitting, and the scorching. The first has a subtle flame, which from its unalloyed purity can win escape through the tiniest aperture. The second, which scatters to the winds what it strikes, is massed fire with an admixture of condensed tempestuous wind. So the first kind escapes again by the opening by which it entered. The second spreads wide the effects of its violence, it bursts what it strikes, and does not perforate it. The third kind mentioned, the scorching, has much earthiness in its composition, and contains fire rather than flame. It therefore leaves deep scars of fire, which will be branded in what it has struck. No lightning, it is true, that comes to earth is fireless, but this kind is distinctively called fiery, because it imprints the marks of fire so manifestly, by either scorching or staining. It scorches in three different ways, that is, it either breathes on its object, so to speak, inflicting slight injury, or burns it right up, or sets it on fire. All those are methods of what I have called scorching, differing, however, in character and degree. Whatever is, for example, ^[3] burnt up is necessarily scorched as well. But [the converse is not equally true], everything that is scorched is not necessarily burnt up. And so with what is set on fire; it is not necessarily consumed, the fire may merely have scorched it in passing. Everybody knows that things may be scorched without breaking out into fire, but that nothing can break out into fire without being scorched. I have only one further remark on the point: an object may be consumed without being set on fire; it may also be set on fire without being consumed.

XLI

[1] I pass on now to the kind of lightning that stains objects struck by it. The staining is either discolouring or colouring, between which I draw a distinction. When the colour is spoiled, without being changed, there is discolouring. On the contrary, there is colouring when the aspect of an object becomes different in kind from what it was, for example, when it turns dark blue or black or pale. So far the Etruscans and the philosophers are in agreement. But disagreement begins when the former go on to assert that lightning is sent by Jupiter, to [2] whom they assign three species of bolt. The first, according to their statement, gives a peaceful warning, being sent by Jove's own counsel. The second is, it is true, sent also by him, but by advice of his council, to which he summons the twelve gods as assessors. This bolt is no doubt beneficial, but not without doing damage to some extent. The third kind of bolt is still of Jove's sending, but he summons into council the so-called supreme veiled gods. This bolt causes destruction of what it encounters, and in particular it changes the existing condition of private and public affairs that it finds. For fire allows nothing to remain as it is.

XLII

Taking a superficial view one would pronounce these old beliefs all wrong. What could be more absurd than to believe that Jupiter hurls bolts from the clouds, aiming at pillars, trees, aye, and statues of himself sometimes, or that, passing by the sacrilegious unbelievers, he strikes sheep, sets fire to altars, and smites innocent flocks? or can one imagine that great Jove should call the gods into council, as if he were himself lacking in counsel? Or that those bolts bring promise of peace and joy that he hurls unaided, and those cause destruction in whose despatch a greater crowd of deities was concerned? If you ask my opinion on the point, however, I may tell you that I — do not for a moment suppose those people of old were so obtuse as to believe that Jupiter was evilly disposed or, to say the least of it, insufficiently prepared with his missiles. When he issued fiery bolts to pass over the heads of the wicked and strike the innocent, as is alleged, did he, do you suppose, refuse to send them with truer aim, or did he miss his shot? If that cannot be the explanation, what was the idea of those ancients in speaking as [3] they did? Being men of profound wisdom they were, in my opinion, of the settled conviction that fear was essential to restrain the passions of the ignorant; we must reverence something higher than ourselves. In a time of such audacious crime it was expedient that there be a belief in something which no criminal could seem powerful enough to resist. And so it was to terrify those wretches, against whose passions innocence is no protection unless backed up by fear, that they placed over us in the heavens the image of an avenger, and him well armed.

XLIII

Why, therefore, on this assumption, is the bolt that Jupiter sends alone, peaceful, while the other is destructive on which he has sought counsel, and which he has sent down with the approval of other gods besides? The reason is that Jupiter, that is, an absolute monarch, when acting alone ought to be always a power for good; he should not inflict injury unless when a numerous council has ratified the decision. From this let all those who have inherited great earthly power learn that not even the bolt of heaven is sent without counsel taken. Let them call to them their advisers, let them ponder the opinions of a multitude of counsellors, let them temper the rigour of their decrees; and when some blow must fall, let them not forget that even Jupiter needs more than his own wisdom to guide him.

XLIV

Nor, again, were the ancient sages so stupid as to suppose that Jupiter changed his missiles. It is only the licence of poetry that can with decency say:

There is another and lighter bolt to which the Cyclopes' hands
Have added less of harshness and of flame, less, too, of wrath. The
dwellers above call them missiles of peace.

Those men of exalted wisdom were undoubtedly not possessed with the delusion that Jupiter sometimes employs lighter bolts, weapons of the practising school, so to speak. Their object was to warn those who have to direct their bolts against the sins of men, that all offences are not to be visited after the same fashion: some offenders must be crushed, some censured and lightly punished, some dismissed with an admonition.

XLV

Nor yet did these ancient sages believe that the Jupiter we worship in the Capitol and the rest of the temples ever really hurled thunderbolts from his hand. They recognised the same Jupiter as we do, the guardian and ruler of the universe, its soul and breath, the maker and lord of this earthly frame of things, to whom every name of power is appropriate. If you prefer to call him fate, you will not be wrong. He it is on whom depend all things, from whom proceed all causes of causes. If you prefer to call him providence, you will still be right; [2] for he it is by whose counsel provision is made for the world that it may pursue its orderly course and unfold the drama of its being. If you prefer to call him nature, you will make no mistake; for it is he from whom all things derive being, and by whose breath we live. If you prefer to call him the world, you will not be in error; for he is everything that you can see, he is wholly infused in all his parts, self-sustained through inherent power. The Etruscans thought so too. They said bolts were sent by Jove, just because nothing is performed except by his power.

XLVI

But, you ask, why does Jupiter pass over the guilty and strike the innocent? That is too big a question to enter on here; it shall have its own place and time. Meantime I insist on this, that bolts are not sent directly by Jupiter, but that all things are so arranged that even what is not done by him is yet not done without some plan, which plan is his. The force of the bolts is a consequence of his permission. For even though Jupiter does not make them, he caused them to be made. He does not superintend every detail; but to all he gives the signal, force, and cause.

XLVII

There is another division of them made to which I cannot agree. They are, according to the assertion of some, either constant or limited or deferred. The constant are those whose prognostication extends all over life, not merely intimating a single occurrence, but embracing the series of coming events through the whole subsequent life. This is the kind of bolt that occurs first after entrance on an inheritance, or when an individual or a city has entered on a new phase of existence. Limited ones answer exactly to a definite date. Deferred are those whose threats may be delayed, though they cannot be averted and completely avoided.

XLVIII

I will now state my reasons for disagreeing with this division. One is that even the bolt which is called constant lasts for a limited period. Such bolts correspond no less than others to a definite date. Nor do they cease to be limited because the period they signify is a long one. So, too, what is thought to be deferred is limited. For by the admission of the advocates of this division the period for which delay can be procured is a definite one. Bolts that relate to private matters cannot, according to them, be delayed longer than ten years, those relating to public affairs not more than thirty. So this class, as well as the first, is limited, as it includes the date beyond which the prognostication cannot be deferred. There is thus a fixed period for bolts and results of every kind. For of what is uncertain there could be no distinct knowledge. Then, too, these people talk in too vague and general terms about the points to be noted in lightning. They ought rather to divide them according to the scheme of the philosopher Attalus, who had specialised in this department. The inspection should determine where the lightning occurred, when, to whom, in what connection, of what kind, of what amount. If I were to attempt to arrange and classify all these, I should just be committing myself to an endless task.

XLIX

[1] Let me now glance at the names of the lightning adopted by Caecina, and explain my own opinion of them. He calls one kind imperative, as it demands the re-establishment of sacrifices neglected or informally offered. Admonitory is the second kind, giving information of what must be guarded against. Pestilential is a kind that portends death or exile. Deceptive is that which, under guise of some [2] benefit, inflicts injury; for example, it gives the consulship to some one whose ruin the office will prove, or bestows an estate the profit of which must be compensated by some great loss. The avertible, again, bring an appearance of danger without real danger. The destructive remove the threats of previous lightning. The attested signify an agreement with former lightning. The earth-borne occur in a covered place. The overwhelming strike what was previously struck without due [3] atonement having been made. The royal smite either the election ground or the government quarter of a free city; their prognostication threatens a free state with an absolute monarchy. Infernal are when fire issues from the ground. Hospitable summon or, to use a more polite word, invite Jupiter to share a sacrificial feast with us. If he happen to be angry with his host when he is invited, then his coming, Caecina says, is fraught with danger to his entertainers. Auxiliary come by summons too, but bring good to the summoner.

L

But how much simpler is the division employed by our distinguished Stoic, Attalus, who combined skill in the Etruscan lore with all the subtlety of Greek thought! Of the different kinds of lightning, he says, one gives intimation of something that concerns us, another kind intimates either a thing of no importance or something whose meaning does not reach us. Of the significant lightning there are several varieties — one is favourable, one unfavourable, a third neither one nor other. Of the unfavourable there are all these forms — the evils portended may be either unavoidable or avoidable, or such as may be mitigated, or such as may be delayed. Again, the benefits foretold by the favourable may be either abiding or transient. The mixture of favourable and unfavourable may either consist of half and half, good and ill; or ill may be turned by them into good, or good into ill. The lightning that is neither unfavourable nor favourable gives us intimation of some action by which we need neither be terrified nor elated, for example, a journey abroad from which there is nothing either to fear or hope.

LI

LET me revert for a moment to the lightning that portends something, but a something that does not concern us; for instance, whether the same kind of lightning as has occurred will again occur in the same year. Sometimes lightning contains no indication at all, or one whose grasp eludes us; as, for example, those manifestations of it that are scattered through the spaces of the sea or in lonely deserts. Their indication, if any, is lost.

LII

[1] I have still a few remarks to add in order to show more fully the force of lightning in various ways, for its power is not always displayed in just the same way in every kind of material. For instance, the stronger bodies are shattered with greater violence on account of their resistance; it sometimes passes through the yielding ones without doing any damage. With stone and iron and all the hard substances it enters into conflict, because in its impetuous course it must find a way through them; so it makes a way by which to escape. The more flexible and thinner substances, though they seem very suitable material for flames, it spares, mitigating its fury when it encounters no obstacle to its passage. And so, as I said at a previous point, coin is found fused, while the purse that contained it is untouched; the extremely thin fire runs through the invisible interstices of the latter. But whatever solidity it meets in a beam it subdues [2] as being refractory. For, as I have just said, its fury does not always take the same form; the nature of the force in each case is revealed merely by the kind of the damage, and you can tell the species of the lightning by its effect. Again, the force of the same flash produces many varieties of damage in the same material. For example, in a tree it scorches any portion that is very dry; what is firm and hard it bores through and smashes; the outer bark it scatters, the inner layers nearer the centre it bursts and cuts up, the leaves it lashes and strips off. Wine is frozen, iron and copper fused.

LIII

It is a strange fact that when wine that has been [1] thus frozen is used after it returns to its liquid state, it either kills or drives mad those who have drunk of it. When one inquires why this effect should be produced, the suggestion presents itself that the lightning contains a pestilential force, some taint of which probably is left in the liquid it has condensed and frozen. Indeed, the substance could never have been solidified had not some bond of cohesion been introduced. Moreover, in oil and every kind of unguent there is a foul smell after lightning has touched them. Whence it is manifest [2] that this subtle fire, driven in a direction contrary to its nature, contains a pestilential power, for not only its blow but even its mere breath is overwhelming. Moreover, wherever lightning has struck there is sure always to be a smell of sulphur, a substance which, being naturally poisonous, causes delirium if breathed too freely. But we shall return to this point when we are more at leisure. For I should like some day to prove the extent to which the world is indebted to philosophy, the parent of the arts, for knowledge of all such matters. She it was that first both investigated the causes of things and noted their effects. She performed a service far more valuable than the inspection of lightning in thus comparing results with the principles from which they are derived.

LIV

[1] I will at this point revert to Posidonius' opinion of the cause of thunder. From the earth and its confines are exhaled certain elements, partly moist, partly dry and smoke-like. The latter element remains in the sky as material for lightning, while the former falls in rain. The dry smoky particles that reach the atmosphere will not allow themselves to be enclosed in clouds, but burst their envelope. Thence comes the report which we name thunder. Besides this, anything in the atmosphere itself that is rarefied is at the same time dried and heated up.

[2] This also, if it is enclosed, seeks an exit with equal eagerness, and causes a report as it escapes. On one occasion it makes a complete burst, and the thunder is consequently the more violent; on another it escapes by degrees in small portions. Air of this kind, then, by either bursting or flying through the clouds, produces peals of thunder. The rolling of the air enclosed in a cloud is the most potent cause of setting fire to what is struck.

LV

[1] Thunder is, in short, simply the report of explosions of dry air, which cannot occur unless there is either friction or a rent in a cloud. Posidonius adds that if the clouds merely collide with each other, the kind of blow needed to produce an explosion is given, but not completely; clouds do not meet through their whole extent, but only part with part. And again, soft substances do not resound unless knocked against hard ones; a wave is not heard unless when it beats on the hard shore. But fire, which is soft, says an opponent, when let into water, also a soft substance, produces sound in being extinguished. Well, suppose it is so, it makes for the opposite view which I urge. For it is not really the fire that makes the sound, but the air escaping through the water that is quenching it. Granted that fire is both produced and extinguished in the cloud, it arises from air and friction. Well then, it is urged, may not some of the shooting stars plunge into a cloud and be extinguished? Even supposing that such a thing can and sometimes does occur, it does not remove the difficulty. It is not the occasional chance cause but the natural normal one that we are in search of. Suppose I admit the truth of your contention that occasionally after thunder fires gleam in the heavens much like shooting and falling stars. Yet this does not prove that the thunder was caused by them; it merely shows that the thunder occurred simultaneously with this other phenomenon. Clidemus asserts that a lightning flash is an empty reflection, and not real fire; for in the same way after nightfall a gleam appears from the motion of oars in water. His illustration is not on all fours with the phenomenon. In the latter case the gleam is seen actually within the water; in the former, in the atmosphere, it bursts and leaps out of its element.

LVI

Heraclitus is of opinion that the flash of lightning is the first attempt of a fire to kindle; just as on earth when the flame is at first unsteady, now dying down and now darting up again. The ancients used to call this summer lightning. We now say in the plural thunder peals (*tonitrua*); the ancients said either thunder (*tonitruum*, sing.) or merely peal (noise, *tonus*). The foregoing remark I find in Caecina, an eloquent man, who would have had a considerable reputation as such had he not been overshadowed by Cicero's towering form. Besides, the ancients had other variants of a similar kind. They employed with the penult short the word that we use with it long; we say *fulgëre* (to lighten) just as we do *splendêre* (to gleam). But in order to denote this sudden burst of light from the clouds their usage was to shorten the middle syllable so as to make it *fulgère*.

LVII

What do I think myself about the matter, you ask. For up to this point I have been reproducing the opinions of others. Well, I 'will tell you. There is lightning when light bursts out suddenly and widely. This occurs when the atmosphere has been changed, by the rarefaction of the clouds, into fire, which has not gathered strength to issue to any considerable distance. There is, I presume, no cause for surprise either that movement rarefies air or that rarefaction kindles fire. In the same way a leaden bullet is liquefied when discharged from a sling, and falls in drops by reason of atmospheric friction just as it would do through fire. Bolts of lightning are more numerous in summer, for the reason that there is most heat at that season. Fire naturally starts more readily when the friction is in warmer air. A flash of lightning which merely gleams and a bolt which is discharged are produced in exactly the same way. But there is less force in the former case and less fuel. To put my opinion on the point shortly: a bolt is just lightning in its most intense form. So then, when a body of the nature of heat or smoke is exhaled from the earth and, meeting with clouds, is for a long time rolled about in their hollows, at last it bursts out. Since it possesses no strength, it is merely a flash. But when lightnings have more material and burn with fiercer glow, they not merely become visible, but also fall to the earth.

LVIII

Some writers are firmly convinced that the lightning bolt always returns to the clouds. Others hold that the bolt settles in the ground, at least when its fuel is heavy, and when it has comparatively little force in its stroke as it glides down. But why, it may be asked, does the bolt make its appearance suddenly, and is there not a continuous trail of fire? It is on account of the extreme rapidity of its motion; it fires the air at the same moment as it bursts through the cloud. By and by when the motion ceases, the flame subsides. For the course of the air that forms the bolt is intermittent, which prevents continuity in the fire. As often as the air by its more violent agitation sets itself on fire it conceives an impulse toward flight. When the internal conflict has been ended by its escape, it is afterwards for the same reason sometimes carried down as far as the earth, and sometimes, if urged down with less force, it is dissipated in air. Why, again, is the course of the lightning oblique? The reason is that the air current of which it is composed ^[3] is oblique and tortuous. Nature summons fire upward, violence presses it downward, and so it begins to be zigzag. Sometimes, when neither force gives way to the other, the fire is at the same moment urged toward the upper and depressed toward the nether regions. Why are the peaks of mountains frequently struck by it? Because they are exposed to the clouds, and objects falling from heaven to earth must pass by way of them.

LIX

[1] I know quite well what you have long been anxious to say and what you demand. I had rather, you say, get rid of fear of thunderbolts than learn all about them. So you may reserve for others your instruction regarding their origin. Let me be delivered from fear of them rather than be informed of their nature. Well, I will follow your invitation, for I quite allow that some moral should be attached [2] to all studies and all discourse. As we dive into j the secrets of nature and treat of things in the heavens, the soul must be delivered from its errors and from time to time reassured. Even the learned who devote themselves exclusively to this pursuit require such reassurance; not in order to escape the arrows of fortune, for her missiles are hurled on us from every side, but in order to bear them with resolution and constancy. Unvanquished we may be, unassailed we cannot be, though meantime the hope sometimes insinuates itself that even this is possible. How? you exclaim. Despise death and then everything that leads to death is despised, be it war or shipwreck, or the jaws of wild beasts, or the weight of roofs rushing down with sudden fall. What more can they do than part the body from the soul? And this parting no care can shun, no good fortune can remove, no power can prevent. Other features in human lot are variously assigned; to death's call all are alike subject. Whether heaven is propitious or wrathful, die we must.

Let courage be derived from our very despair. The most cowardly of animals which nature has created for flight, if they find no way of escape open to them, show fight with their unwarlike body. In fact, no foe is more deadly than one into whom a tight corner has put courage. Far more violent resistance is offered to death through necessity than through valour. A desperate soul shows as much daring as a courageous, probably more. Let us assume that, so far as concerns death, we are given over to it; and so we are. The fact is so, Lucilius; we are all destined to death. All this nation that you see, all the people you can anywhere suppose to exist, will some day soon be recalled by nature to the grave. There is no question of the fact, only of the day. Sooner or later we must all go to the one place. Well,

then, does not he seem to you the most fearful and silliest of men who by great entreaty seeks to delay death?

Would you not despise a man who was set in a company of those appointed to death if he asked by way of favour to be allowed to be the last to lay his head upon the block? We do the same in setting such store upon a little delay in the time of death. Capital punishment is the sentence on [7] all mankind, and the sentence is most just. We possess what is wont to be regarded as the greatest consolation that those sentenced to the extreme penalty could enjoy; the circumstances of all being the same, our fate is the same. If handed over by a judge or magistrate to execution, we should follow and render obedience to our executioner; what difference does it make whether it is by order of another or of our own accord that we go to death?

How foolish you must be, how forgetful of your feebleness if you are afraid of death every time it thunders! Does your abiding safety really depend [8] on this? Will life be secure if you escape the lightning? You will be a victim of the sword, of a stone, of a fever. The lightning is not the most serious of dangers, it is only the most conspicuous. Your fate, I should think, would not be a bad one if the inconceivable rapidity of your death prevented any sense of it, if your death was the occasion of sacrificial ceremonies, if even when you breathe your last, you are not quite a superfluity, [9] but remain as a sign of some great event. Your fate is surely not bad if you are buried along with the bolt of lightning. And yet you are in panic at a crash in the sky, you tremble at the sound of a hollow cloud; as often as there is a flash you are ready to give up the ghost. Well then, is it in your judgment more creditable to die of sheer chicken-heartedness than to be killed by lightning? Rather, say I, confront all the more resolutely the threats of the heavens, and when the universal world is in flames around you, consider that in such a mighty mass you have nothing to lose. But if you can bring yourself to believe that [10] that wreck of heaven, that conflict of the stormy winds, is aimed at you, if it is on your account that the clouds are piled up and collide and roar, if it is for your destruction that such a mass of fire is scattered abroad, then you may surely regard it as some consolation that your death has cost so dear! But there will then be no room for such a

reflection. The fate of one struck by lightning removes all fear. Among other advantages it includes this, that it anticipates your expectation; no man ever was afraid of lightning except one who had escaped it.

BOOK III. WHICH TREATS OF THE DIFFERENT FORMS OF WATER

PREFACE

I am not unaware, my dear friend Lucilius, of the ^[1] greatness of the edifice whose foundations I am laying in my old age, when I resolve to survey the universe, to unearth its motives and secrets, and to reveal them to the knowledge of others. When shall I ever manage to cover such a field, gather together such widely-spread material, behold with clear vision such profound secrets? Old age presses hard on the rear, upbraiding me with the years bestowed on vain pursuits. We must ply our task all the more vigorously, and toil must now make good the loss of a lifetime withdrawn from its true purpose. Night must be added to day, engagements cut ^[2] short, care abandoned of property that lies far away from its owner. The mind must be wholly set free from other thoughts, and at least at the moment of its flight from earth must bestow itself in self-contemplation. It shall do so, and shall urge itself on, and each day it shall measure the brief span of time left. What has been lost shall be repaired by diligent use of the remainder of life. The surest pledge of virtue is repentance and amendment. I may ^[5] exclaim in the words of an illustrious poet:

High is the courage that inspires me, great the work, but short The time in which to plan.

I should say the same were I planning it in boyhood or in youth. No period could be anything but narrow in face of such an undertaking. As it is, when the midday of life is past, I have entered upon ^[4] a task that is serious, difficult, limitless. Let me act as people generally do in a journey — those that are late in starting make up for the delay by their speed. I must hurry on, and without further excuse on the score of age proceed to tackle my problem — undoubtedly a vast, possibly an insuperable, one. My mind swells with pride when I survey the magnitude of my undertaking and reflect how much is unaccomplished of my plan, though not of my life.

^[5] Some writers have wasted their efforts in narrating the doings

of foreign kings, and in telling, as the case may be, the sufferings or the cruelties of nations. Surely it is wiser to try to end one's own ills than to record for a coming generation the ills of others. How much better to make one's theme the works of the gods than the robberies of Philip, or Alexander, or the other conquerors who earned their fame by the destruction of mankind! Such men were as truly scourges of humanity as a flood by which a whole plain has been inundated, or a conflagration by which the greater part of its [6] living creatures has been burnt up. The historians tell us how Hannibal crossed the Alps, how he suddenly transferred into Italy a war rendered more formidable by Roman disasters in Spain; how, when his fortunes were shattered, more determined still, even though the fate of Carthage was sealed, he wandered through all kingdoms, offering to be leader against Rome, and begging for an army; how he never ceased even in his old age to seek to rouse up war in every corner of the world.

He could, it was plain, endure to be without a country, but not without a foe.

How much better is it to inquire what ought to [7] be done than what has been done, and to teach those who have entrusted their state to fortune that nothing she gives is stable, but that all her gifts are more fickle than the very air! For she cannot rest, her delight is to match sadness with joy, and to mingle smiles with tears. Therefore in the day of prosperity let no man exult, in the day of adversity let no man faint: the successions of fortune alternate. Why should you boast yourself? The wave [8] meantime bears you aloft on its crest; but where it may strand you, you cannot tell. Its end will be of its own choice, not of yours. Or why, again, do you despond? You have been carried down to the nadir; now is the chance of rising again. Adversity alters for the better, success for the worse. Changes of the kind must be anticipated, not merely in private families, which are affected by a slight cause, but also in sovereign houses. Dynasties rising from the gutter have ere now established themselves above the ruling powers, while ancient [9] empires have fallen when in the very heyday of their power. The number cannot be reckoned of the kingdoms that have been overthrown by other kingdoms. God now makes it His special aim to exalt some and to overthrow others; nor

does He let them gently down, but dashes them from their pinnacle, so that no remnant of them is left. A great sight it is; we think it so only because we are ourselves small. There are many departments [10] in which the standard is not derived from the actual size of the objects, but from our own littleness.

What, I ask, then, is the principal thing in human life? Not to have filled the seas with fleets, nor to have planted the standard of the nation on the shores of the Red Sea, nor, when land has been exhausted, to have wandered for the injury of others over the Ocean in quest of the unknown. Rather it is to have grasped in mind the whole universe, and to have gained what is the greatest of all victories, the mastery over besetting sins. There are hosts of conquerors who have had cities and nations under their power, but a very few who have subdued self. What is the principal thing? I say again. To raise the soul above the threats and promises of fortune; to consider nothing as worth hoping for. For what does fortune possess worth setting your heart upon? Why, as often as you lapse from converse with what is divine back to what is human, your eyes will be blinded just like the eyes of those who have returned from bright sunlight into gross darkness. What is the principal thing? To be able to endure adversity with joyful heart; to bear whatever betide just as if it were the very thing you desired to happen. For you would have felt it your duty to desire it, had you known that all things happen by God's decree.

[12] Tears, complaints, lamentation, are rebellion. What is the principal thing? A heart in face of calamity resolute and invincible; an adversary, yea, a sworn foe, to luxury; neither anxious to meet nor anxious to shun peril; a heart that knows how to fashion fortune to its will without waiting for her; which can go forth to face ill or good dauntless and unembarrassed, paralysed neither by the tumult of the [13] one nor the glamour of the other. What is the principal thing? Not to admit evil counsel into the heart, and to lift up clean hands to heaven; to seek for no advantage which some one must give and some one lose in order that it may reach you; to pray — a prayer that no one will envy — for purity of heart; as for other blessings which are highly esteemed by the world, even should some chance bring them to your home, to regard them as sure to depart by the same door

by which they entered. What is the principal thing? To lift one's courage ^[14] high above all that depends upon chance; to remember what man is, so that whether you be fortunate, you may know that this will not be for long; or whether you be unfortunate, you may be sure you are not so if you do not think yourself so.

The principal thing is to have life on the very lips, ready to issue when summoned. This makes a man free, not by right of Roman citizenship, but by right of nature. He is the true freeman who has escaped from bondage to self. That slavery is constant, from it there is no deliverance; it presses us day and night alike, without pause, without respite. To be a slave to self is the most grievous ^[15] kind of slavery; yet its fetters may easily be struck off, if you will but cease to make large demands upon yourself, if you will cease to seek a personal reward for your services, and if you will set clearly before you your nature and your time of life, even though it be the bloom of youth; if you will say to yourself, Why do I rave, and pant, and sweat? Why do I ply the earth? why do I haunt the forum? Man needs but little, nor needs that little long.

To this end it will be profitable for us to examine the nature of the universe. In the first place we shall rise above what is base; in the second, we shall set the spirit free from the body, imparting to it that courage and elevation of which it stands in need.

^[16] Besides, subtlety of thought practised on the hidden mysteries of nature will prove no less efficacious in problems that lie more on the surface. And nothing is more on the surface than these salutary lessons we are taught as safeguards against the prevailing vice and madness — faults we all condemn, but do not abandon.

I

[1] Let us enter then on an investigation of forms of water, and let us trace the causes that produce them; whether, as Ovid says:

There was a fountain silvery clear with gleaming wavelets; or, as Virgil says:

Whence through nine mouths with mighty roar of the mountain
The sea issues in broken waves, overspreading the fields with its
resounding flood; or, as I find it in your own poem, my dear Lucilius:

The stream of Elis wells up from Sicilian fountains.

Let us inquire by what method the waters are [2] supplied; how it is that day and night unceasingly so many huge rivers roll down their course; why some are swollen by the rain of winter, some increase in summer when all the other streams fail. Meantime let us separate the Nile from the common crowd; it is a river of peculiar and unique character. We shall give it its turn by and by. At present we will confine our treatment to the common waters, cold as well as hot. In regard to the latter we must inquire whether the heat is due to natural or artificial causes. We shall discuss other waters too which are rendered remarkable by taste or some special virtue. Some, for example, I may explain, [3] alleviate affections of the eyes, some, those of the sinews, some effect complete cure of chronic maladies given up by doctors as hopeless. Some again heal sores, some by being drunk ease internal pain and relieve complaints of the lungs and bowels. Some staunch the flow of blood; in fact their individual uses are as varied as their taste.

II

All waters are classed as either standing or running; they are either gathered in one or occupy different channels underground. Some of them are sweet, others have pungent flavours of different kinds, among them salt, bitter, medicinal. Belonging to the last class one may name sulphur, iron, alum waters. The taste shows the quality. Waters of different kinds have many other differences. First there is touch, hot and cold; then weight, light and heavy; then colour, pure, muddy, dark blue, yellowish; then wholesomeness, wholesome and useful, or deadly or capable of petrification. Some waters are thin, some thick; some give nourishment, others pass through the system without benefiting it at all; the use of some removes barrenness.

III

The lie of the ground makes water either stand or run; on a slope it flows down, a plain keeps it in, causing it to stagnate. Sometimes under pressure of air it is forced uphill; it is then driven, it does not flow. Surface water comes from rain; spring water from a natural fountain. There is, however, nothing to prevent surface and spring water in the same spot. This we see in Lake Fucinus, into which the streams drain all the rainfall of the surrounding mountains, while there are also large springs concealed under the surface of the lake itself. So, even when the torrents discharge into it in winter, it preserves its appearance unaltered.

IV

Let us inquire therefore, in the first place, how the earth can contain sufficient water to maintain the unbroken flow of the rivers, and where such a vast quantity of water comes from. We are surprised that the ocean is not sensible of the additional water derived from rivers. It is no less surprising that the earth is not sensible of the loss of all the water that issues from it. What is it that has so filled it up that it can from its hidden recesses furnish such quantities and continually make good the loss as it does? Whatever explanation we give regarding a river must apply also to streams and springs.

V

Some are of opinion that the earth receives back all the water it has lost. The sea, therefore, does not get larger, because it does not assimilate the water that runs into it, but forthwith restores it to the earth. For the sea water returns by a secret path, and is filtered in its passage back. Being dashed about as it passes through the endless, winding channels in the ground, it loses its salinity, and, purged of its bitterness in such a variety of ground as it passes through, it eventually changes into pure, fresh water.

VI

Some suppose that all the water that the earth drinks in from rain is sent out again into the rivers. They set down by way of proof the fact that there are fewest rivers in the localities where there is least frequent rain. On that account, they say, the deserts of Ethiopia are destitute of streams, and few springs are found in the interior of Africa, because there is always a blazing sky and almost perpetual summer. Therefore there are ugly stretches of sandy waste, without tree and without inhabitant, sprinkled at rare intervals by showers that they immediately swallow up. On the other hand, it is well known that there are abundant streams and rivers in Germany and Gaul and next to them in Italy, because they enjoy a moist climate, and even the summer is not without rainfall.

VII

A GREAT deal can obviously be urged in reply to^[1] this. First of all, as a diligent digger among my vines, I can affirm from observation that no rain is ever so heavy as to wet the ground to a depth of more than ^[10] feet. All the moisture is absorbed in the upper layer of earth without getting down to the lower ones. How, then, can rain, which merely damps the surface, store up a supply sufficient for rivers? The greater part of it is carried off at once into the sea by river-channels. But a small portion is absorbed by the ground, and even that is not retained. For the ground is either dry and so uses up at once the water poured into it; or else it is saturated and throws off what of the rainfall it does not require. This is the reason why rivers do not rise with the first rainfall; the thirsty ground absorbs it all.

And then, again, how are we to explain the fact that some rivers burst out from rocks and mountains? What contribution can be made to them by rains that are carried down over the bare crags and have no earth into which to sink? Besides, wells sunk in the very driest localities to a depth of ^[200] or ^[300] feet reveal rich springs of water at a depth to which rain water does not penetrate. One may be sure there is no rain water there nor any gathering of moisture, but living (= spring) water as it is usually called. The opinion in question is disproved by this other argument, too; some springs well up in the very summit of a mountain. It is plain, therefore, that the water in them is forced up or forms on the spot, since all the rain water runs off.

VIII

SOME writers think there is an exact parallelism between the external and the internal distribution of water in the earth. On the outer surface are huge marshes, great navigable lakes, and seas covering immense tracts of earth and pouring over its hollows. So in the interior of the earth there is abundant store of fresh water, which overflows great spaces no less than the Ocean and its gulfs above ground; in fact, still more extensively, as the depth of the earth extends farther down than that of the sea. From that supply in the deeps, therefore, those rivers of which we have spoken issue. And why should one be surprised that the earth is not sensible of their withdrawal since the sea is not sensible of their addition?

IX

Some approve the following explanation: The earth contains, they assert, many hollow recesses and a great quantity of air. This air, under pressure of the gross darkness, of necessity freezes. Then remaining sluggish and unmoved it ceases to circulate and turns into water. Just as on earth a change in the density of the atmosphere produces rain, so beneath the earth the change of density starts a river or a stream. In the former case the air above our heads cannot long remain sluggish and heavy; for sometimes it is rarefied by the sun's heat, sometimes expanded by the wind's force. There are, therefore, long intervals between falls of rain. But underground the forces, whatever they are, that turn air into water, are constant — perpetual darkness, everlasting cold, inert density; they can, therefore, supply without a break the sources of fountain or flood. We Stoics are satisfied that the earth is interchangeable in its elements. So all this air that she has exhaled in her interior, since it is not taken up by the free atmosphere, condenses and is forthwith converted into moisture.

X

[1] There you have the first cause of the origin of underground water. You may add the more general principle that all elements arise from all: air comes from water, water from air; fire from air, air from fire. So why should not earth be formed from water, and conversely water from earth? If the earth is capable of transmutation into other elements, water must be one of them, in fact, the most suitable of them. The two things are cognate; both are heavy, condensed, both driven by nature down to the very confines of the universe. Earth is formed from water; why not water from earth in like manner?

But, you say, the rivers are too large to be accounted for in this way. Well, after you have considered the size of the rivers, just look at the size of the reservoir whence they issue. Are you surprised that a fresh supply of water is always forthcoming for them, since they flow on for ever, some even rushing down their channel with impetuous haste? Surely you might as well be surprised, when the winds drive hither and thither the whole atmosphere, that the supply of air does not fail, but flows on day and night unceasingly. And the wind, remember, is not confined to a definite channel, as rivers are, but goes with wide sweep over the broad expanse of heaven. You might well, too, be surprised that after so many breakers have spent their force, any succeeding wave is left. The truth is, nothing is ever exhausted that returns upon itself (*i.e.* is self-supported). All the four elements return alternately upon one another; what is lost in one is conserved by passing into another. Nature, too, weighs her parts as if with nice adjustment in the balance, lest their just proportion should be disturbed and the world topple over into ruin (= lose its equilibrium). All elements are in all. Air not only passes into fire, but it is never without fire. Deprive it of its heat and it will grow stiff, stagnant, hard. Air passes into moisture, but nevertheless contains moisture. Earth yields both air and water, and is never at any time devoid of water any more than it is of air. The mutual transition is the easier, because there is already an admixture of the element to which the transition is to be made. So (1), then, the earth contains moisture, which it forces out. (2) It contains air, which the darkness

of its wintry cold condenses so as to form moisture. (3) By nature, too, it has itself the power of changing into moisture: this power it habitually exerts.

XI

You have still a difficulty, you say. If the causes giving rise to rivers and fountains are constant, why are their waters sometimes dried up? and why do they sometimes appear in places where they did not exist before? Their routes, I should reply, are often disturbed by earthquakes; the channel is cut off by a fall of rock or earth, and the water being held back seeks a fresh exit, which it forces with a certain measure of violence; or merely by the earth's vibration the course is shifted from one place to another. On the surface of the earth one may observe that rivers that have lost their channels are first of all dammed back, but afterwards, in lieu of the course they have lost, force a new one. Theophrastus affirms that an incident of the kind took place in the Corycian Mount, where, after a slight shock of earthquake, a fountain burst out from a fresh source.

But some writers are of opinion that other causes too are at work to call up water in other ways, or to drive or turn it from its course. Mount Haemus was once destitute of water; but after a tribe of the Gauls, being hard pressed by Cassander, took refuge there, and felled the woods, an immense supply of water appeared. No doubt the woods had attracted it for their nourishment previously. When they were uprooted, the moisture, ceasing to be used up by their roots, overflowed. Theophrastus affirms that the same thing happened near Magnesia.

But with all respect to Theophrastus, this is not a very likely story. Everything that is most shady tends most to gather water. But that would not be the case if trees drained off water. Roots draw their nourishment from their immediate vicinity; but the volume of river water flows from recesses far down, and is derived from a source deeper than roots can penetrate. Besides, when trees are cut down, more moisture than before is required; the stumps suck up a supply, not merely for life, but for new growth. Theophrastus tells us, too, that round Arcadia, which was a city in the island of Crete, the wells and lakes disappeared, because the land ceased to be tilled after the destruction of the city; but after it had got back its tillers, it recovered its waters also. He sets down as the cause of the dryness, that the

earth had got hidebound and quite hard, and not being stirred could not transmit to the underground reservoirs the rain that fell. But if this is true, how comes it that we see springs in great plenty in the most desert ground? In fact, one finds a great deal more ground that began to be tilled on account of the abundance of water than that began to have an abundant supply of water because it was tilled. You may be quite sure that it is not mere rain water that is carried down in our greatest rivers, navigable by large vessels from their very source, as is proved by the fact that the flow from the fountain-head is uniform winter and summer. Rainfall may cause a torrent, but it cannot maintain the steady, constant flow of a full river. Rains cannot produce, they can only enlarge and quicken, a river.

XII

LET US, if you please, go into the matter a little more deeply, and you will soon see that you have no cause to put further questions, once you reach the true origin of rivers. A river is, of course, formed by a supply of water that is always constant. If you ask me, therefore, how water is produced, I will ask in my turn how air or earth is produced. If there are four elements in nature, you are not entitled to ask where water, one of them, comes from; it *is* the fourth part of nature. Why, therefore, are you surprised that so great a portion of nature can furnish a perpetual supply of liquid from itself? Just as the atmosphere, which is likewise a fourth part of the universe, is the source of winds and breezes, so is water, of streams and rivers. If wind is atmosphere in motion, so is a river water in motion. I have given it strength enough in saying that it is one of the four elements. You must be aware that what has an element as its source can never run short.

XIII

WATER is, according to Thales, the most powerful of the elements. He thinks it was the first of them, and that all the others sprang from it. We Stoics, too, are also of the same opinion; or perhaps I should rather say that we think it is the last. For we say that it is fire that lays hold upon the world and changes all things into its own nature. We suppose that fire eventually fades and sinks, and that, when the fire is quenched, nothing is left in nature save moisture, in which lies the hope of the world that is to come. So fire is the end, moisture the beginning, of the world. Can you wonder that rivers may always issue from this, which was before all things, and from which all things have been formed? In the separation of the elements [at the beginning] the moisture was reduced to a fourth part, and was placed in such a situation that it could furnish a sufficient supply for rivers, streams, and fountains. The next opinion expressed by Thales is a silly one. The whole earth, he says, is upborne by water, and floats just like a boat; when it is spoken of as trembling, it is rolling by the movement of the water. It is no wonder, then, that there should be abundance of water to pour forth in rivers, since the world is itself wholly set in water. You should put out of court such an antiquated, unscientific idea. There is no ground for believing that the water comes in through the chinks in the earth's sides, and forms bilge-water in her centre.

XIV

THE Egyptians have recognised four elements also; and they then form each into two, male and female. The atmosphere they consider male where it is windy, female where it is cloudy and sluggish. They call the sea manly water, every other kind of water they call womanly. Fire they call masculine where a flame is burning, and feminine where there is a glow that is harmless to touch. The firmer kinds of earth, such as boulders and crags, they call male, reserving the term female for the parts that are amenable to cultivation.

XV

THERE is but one sea, which has so existed no doubt from the beginning of things. It has sources of its own, from which its impulses and tides are derived. As with the raging sea, so with this gentler kind of water, there is a vast supply in secret, which no river course can drain dry. The exact explanation of its reserve strength has not yet been discovered. It is only the superfluous portion of it that is [2] released. Now, there are some of these beliefs to which we may safely subscribe; but I hold this further opinion. My firm conviction is that the earth is organised by nature much after the plan of our bodies, in which there are both veins and arteries, [3] the former blood-vessels, the latter air-vessels. In the earth likewise there are some routes by which water passes, and some by which air. So exactly alike is the resemblance to our bodies in nature's formation of the earth, that our ancestors have spoken of veins (= springs) of water. Again, in our bodies there is not merely blood, but many other kinds of moisture, some essential to life, others tainted and somewhat thick — brain in the head, marrow in the bones, mucus, saliva, tears, and a kind of lubricating substance that suffuses the joints, and enables them to turn more quickly (= synovial fluid).

So, too, in the earth there are several different [4] kinds of moisture. There are some kinds that grow hard when fully formed. Hence arises all the metalliferous soil, from which our avarice seeks gold and silver. Then there is the kind which turns from liquid into stone. In some localities the earth and its moisture combine to form a liquid like bitumen and other substances of the same kind. There, then, we find the cause of waters produced according to the law and will [5] of nature. But as in our bodies, so in the earth, humours often contract taints of various kinds. A blow, or some shock, or exhaustion of the ground, or cold or heat injures the natural vigour. A vein of sulphur, too, may solidify the moisture, lasting for a longer or shorter time. Therefore, as in our bodies, when a vein is cut, the flow of blood lasts till the blood is exhausted or the incision in the vein has closed up and stopped it, or until some other cause has staunched the blood; in like manner in the ground, when the seams have been

loosened and laid bare, a stream or river rushes forth. The way in which the water is used up depends on the extent of the opening in the seam. At one point its flow is checked by some obstacle; at another it heals up, so to speak, into a scar and chokes the path it had made; at another the power of transmutation, which we have said the earth possesses, reaches its limit and cannot longer supply material that may be liquefied: sometimes the exhausted source is replenished, now by energy self-recruited, now by a supply drawn from external sources. For I ought to say that often dry objects placed opposite to wet attract the moisture to them. Earth itself, which easily assumes another form, often wastes away, and is dissolved in moisture. The same phenomenon occurs under the earth as above it in the clouds; becoming too dense and heavy to retain longer its own character, solid begets liquid. There is often a gathering of thin, scattered moisture like dew, which from many points flows into one spot. The dowers call it sweat, because a kind of drop is either squeezed out by the pressure of the ground or raised by the heat. This slender trickle scarce suffices to form a spring. But if the sources are great and the gatherings great, rivers issue. Sometimes they flow gently if the water merely descends by its own weight, sometimes with violence and loud roar if air be intermingled and eject the water.

XVI

[1] ANOTHER peculiarity requires explanation: some wells are full for six hours and dry for six alternately: why is this so? It is hardly necessary to name the rivers individually which are at certain months broad, at certain narrow, and to give separate causes of this, seeing I can give a common explanation that applies to all. An ague returns at the same hour, gout always keeps its appointment, the custom of women, unless interrupted, observes its stated period, birth is ready at the proper month. In like manner waters have their intervals of recurrence, at which to withdraw and at which to return.

[2] Now, some intervals are shorter, and the more striking on that account; some are longer, but no less certain. And what is strange in that, when you see that the succession of events, and all nature, by decree preserve their appointed order? Winter has never mistaken its time. Summer has always blazed forth in its season. The changes of spring and autumn have occurred according to their wont. Solstice and equinox alike have kept their appointed days.

Beneath the earth likewise there are laws of nature, less familiar to us, but no less fixed. Be assured that there exists below everything that you see above. There, too, there are antres vast, immense recesses, and vacant spaces, with mountains [3] overhanging on either hand. There are yawning gulfs stretching down into the abyss, which have often swallowed up cities that have fallen into them, and have buried in their depths their mighty ruins. These retreats are filled with air, for nowhere is there a vacuum in nature; through their ample spaces stretch marshes over which darkness ever broods. Animals also are produced in them, but they are slow-paced and shapeless; the air that conceived them is dark and clammy, the waters are torpid through inaction. Most of these creatures are blind, such as moles and underground rats, which have no sense of sight, since it is unnecessary for them. From these depths fish are, according to Theophrastus, dug up in certain localities.

XVII

AT this point many pleasantries will occur to you ^[1] to apply to my incredible narrative, which you will politely call a good story. A man will no longer go to fish with net and hook, but with his mattock! The next thing will be for some one to go out hunting at sea Now what reason is there, I ask, why fish should not cross the land if we can cross the sea and change our abodes? You are surprised at this happening. How much more incredible are the achievements of luxury as often as it either counterfeits or vanquishes nature? Fish are to be found swimming in the dining couch; one is caught right under the table, to be transferred immediately to the table. A mullet is not thought ^[2] fresh enough unless it expires in the hand of the banqueter. These fish are handed round enclosed in glass jars, and their colours are observed while they expire; death paints many hues on them as they draw their last struggling breath. Others are pickled alive and killed in the sauce. These are the people who think one is romancing who asserts that a fish can live underground and instead of being caught can be dug up! How inconceivable it would sound to them to hear that a fish swam in sauce and was killed during dinner, but not to be served at dinner; that first it was long admired, and that the eyes were feasted on it before the gullet was!

XVIII

[1] SUFFER me here to lay aside my subject, and to apply the scourge to luxury! Commend me for a beautiful sight, says one, to an expiring mullet. In the death-struggle, as its life ebbs away, first a ruddy glow, then a pallor suffuses it. How symmetrical are the variations as it changes from tint to tint between life and death! Our somnolent, jaded luxury gets a long respite by means of this. It was late in waking up to find how cruelly it had been circumscribed in being cheated of such a pleasure!

[2] Hitherto only fishermen have been able to enjoy this grand and beauteous sight. But why should we at the banquet be satisfied with a cooked, a lifeless fish? Let him expire on the very tray. We used to be surprised at the fastidiousness of our epicures in refusing to touch fish unless it had been caught on the same day, when, as the saying goes, it smacked of the briny. It used for that reason to be delivered post haste — way had to be made for the breathless [3] porters as they hurried along shouting. To what lengths have refinements now been pushed? A fish killed to-day has come to be considered as already stinking. “He was taken out of the water this day, I assure you.”

“I cannot trust you in a matter of such moment. I must have the evidence of my own senses; let the creature be brought here and breathe out his life before my eyes.” Such a pitch of fastidiousness has the gourmands’ palate reached that they will not taste a fish unless they have seen it swimming and throbbing in the very banqueting room.

The more skill our jaded luxury has had placed [4] at its disposal, the more refined and elegant the devices that in its frenzy it day by day invents; it spurns everything that is common. We used to hear the remark, “Nothing can surpass a mullet caught on the rocks”; but now it runs, “Nothing equals the beauty of an expiring mullet. Let me hold in my own hands the glass vase, to see him jump and quiver.” After long and fulsome praise [5] has been lavished on him, he is taken out of his transparent pond. Then each guest shows off his experience of such scenes by pointing out the hues to his fellows. “Look how the red bursts forth, deeper than any carmine; look at the

veins he has along his sides: see, you would think his belly was covered with blood; what a gleam of dark blue shot forth just under the brow! Now he is stretching himself out, and sinking to a uniform pallid hue!” Not one of these selfish fellows would sit by a dying friend’s bedside, none of them can endure the sight of a father’s death — a sight they have dearly longed for. How few will attend the funeral of a relative! [6] The last hour of brothers and friends is shunned by them; they are all in a hurry to be in at the death of a mullet! For he has a delicate beauty, don’t you know, that nothing can surpass. My impatience makes me sometimes exceed the bounds of decency and use words at random. These drivellers are not satisfied to bring teeth, and palate, and stomach to the revel; they make their very eyes partners in the gluttony.

XIX

BUT to return to my subject. Here is a proof I have to give you that in the underground recesses are concealed great quantities of water which abound in filthy fish. Any time that the water bursts out, it brings in its train a huge crowd of creatures foul to sight, disgusting and noxious to taste. At any rate, once, near the city of Hydissus in Caria, a flood of underground water threw up to the light of day a number of strange fishes, and all who ate them died. And no wonder. Their bodies were full of oil from their long inactivity; they had been fattened in the darkness without exercise, and deprived of that light whence health is derived. A further proof that fish may be produced in those depths of earth is afforded by the breeding of eels in shady places; they also are a heavy diet through their want of exercise, especially if a considerable depth of mud has hidden them quite out of sight. So then the earth contains not only veins of water by the union of which rivers may be formed, but also streams of very great size. In some cases their channel is concealed throughout, until they are swallowed up in some cavern; others of them well up in the bottom of some lake. Everybody knows that some marshes have no bottom. What is the point of my argument? It shows plainly that mighty rivers have here unending supplies whose limits are incalculable, just as is the duration of rivers and fountains themselves.

XX

FOR the variety of taste in water there are four causes. The first is the kind of soil through which it flows. The second also depends on the soil when the water arises from transmutation of it. The third is from air which has been transformed into water. The fourth comes from some taint which water often contracts when injuriously affected by foreign bodies. These causes impart to water, first, variety of taste, then medicinal power, its heavy pestilential smell, its lightness and heaviness, its heat and its excessive astringency. It is affected by its passage through ground full of sulphur, or nitre (= saltpetre), or bitumen. If the water is tainted in this way, the drinking of it endangers life. This is the explanation of a passage in Ovid:

The Ciconians have a river a draught of whose waters turns into stone The bowels; which mantles in marble all that it touches.

The river in question has medicinal properties, its mud being of the kind that glues together and hardens the bodies it encounters. Just as the dust at Puteoli becomes stone if it touches water, so, contrariwise, if the water of this river touches a solid body, it adheres and gets firmly affixed to it. This is the reason why objects thrown into the same lake are constantly found to be turned to stone when they are taken out. This occurs at several places in Italy; you may put into the water a twig or bough and a few days after you can [4] take out a stone. The mud surrounds the object and gradually coats it over. This will seem the less surprising if you have remarked that the Albula, and, generally speaking, all water charged with sulphur, deposit a coating of it on the banks of their channels and streams. Some one or other of the foregoing causes accounts for the peculiarities of those lakes, whereof who tastes with the lips, in the words of the same poet,

Goes raving mad or endures a sleep of wondrous depth.

[5] The effect is like that of strong drink, only more violent. Drunkenness is madness until its effects pass off; with a weight like lead it bears down its victim into sleep. In the like manner the strong infusion of sulphur in this water contains a sort of poison that is more

potent owing to the noxious atmosphere, and either goads the mind to madness or weighs it down in deep sleep. The river in Lyncestis likewise possesses this baleful power:

For whoso with intemperate lips has drained a draught,
Staggers as if having drunk deep of wine undiluted.

XXI

THERE are certain caves a glance down into which has cost people their life. So swift is their destructive power that it kills in flight the birds that cross them. That is the kind of air and the kind of place from which waters of death escape. If the infection of the air and place is less severe, the damage is less fatal too, merely affecting the sinews like men overpowered by intoxication. I am not at all surprised that place and air infect water and render it similar in character to the tract through which and from which it proceeds. Similarly, milk shows the taste of the cow's fodder, the quality of the wine comes out even in the vinegar it yields. There is, in fact, nothing that does not bear marks of its origin in the same way.

XXII

THERE is another species of water which we Stoics are satisfied must be coeval with the world. If the latter has existed from all eternity, so must it too. If the world has had some beginning, then the water was assigned its place at the creation. You want to know what kind of water I mean? I mean the Ocean and all its seas that wash the continents of the earth. Some philosophers are convinced that the rivers likewise whose nature is inexplicable, date from the creation of the world; such are the mighty rivers Danube and Nile, too remarkable to be supposed by any possibility to have the same origin as other rivers.

XXIII

SUCH is the division of various kinds of water, as it presents itself to some minds. After that come waters of the sky, which the clouds pour down from the upper regions. Of terrestrial waters, they say, there are some that overflow, so to speak, and creep along the surface; others are concealed underground. I have already explained all these.

XXIV

SEVERAL explanations are given of the temperature of water. Sometimes it is hot, sometimes it boils so fiercely that it cannot be used until it has given off its steam in the open, or is tempered by mixing cold water with it. Empedocles is of opinion that as there are fires concealed in many places beneath the earth, water is heated when they happen to lie beneath the ground through which it has to flow. Let me use an illustration. We are in the habit of constructing serpentes, and cylinders, and vessels of several other designs in which thin copper pipes are laid in descending spiral coils. The object is to make the water meet the same fire over and over again, and flow through a space sufficient for heating it up; so, entering as cold it comes out hot. Empedocles supposes something of the same kind to take place underground. People who have their baths heated without fire may well believe that he is right. In this case air from the heated furnace is introduced. The air glides along the passages, warming up the walls and vessels of the bathroom just as if fire had been directly applied. In short, all the cold water in these instances is changed into hot by merely passing through a heated medium; and inasmuch as it is conveyed in an enclosure there is no evaporation to impart a flavour to it. Others, again, suppose that the water contracts heat by issuing from or passing through ground charged with sulphur; the heat is imparted by the properties of the material, to which also smell and taste bear witness. All substances, I may say in general terms, tend to reproduce the qualities of the medium by which they have been warmed. If you are surprised at sulphur warming water, you have only to pour water over quicklime; it will at once evolve heat.

XXV

SOME waters are fatal, although they give no indication of this either by smell or taste. In Arcadia, near Nonacris, the river called by the people there the Styx lures strangers to ruin, as its appearance and smell rouse no suspicion. This is like the drugs of accomplished poisoners, which cannot be detected save by their fatal effects. The water I mentioned a little above brings destruction with amazing swiftness, and allows no opportunity of applying a remedy. It hardens immediately it is drunk, and, much like chalk under the influence of water, it sets and binds fast the bowels. There is a poisonous water in Thessaly, near Tempe, shunned by all cattle and wild beasts. It comes out through seams of iron and copper, and contains the power of softening the very hardest material. It does not nourish any trees either, and it kills grass. Certain rivers possess a peculiar and strange power. Some there are whose draught dyes whole flocks of sheep. Within a short time those that were black have white fleeces; in other cases those that came white go away black. This is what two rivers in Boeotia do, one of which from its effect is called Melas (Blackwater). Both the rivers issue from the same lake, to go on their opposite [3] missions. So, too, in Macedonia, Theophrastus asserts there is a river to which shepherds who desire to turn their sheep white bring them. If the sheep drink it for any length of time, their colour changes as if they had been dyed. But if those people want a dark wool, they have a dyer ready at hand who charges nothing; they have merely to drive the same flock to the river Peneus. I have recent authorities for the statement that there is a river in Galatia that has the same power of changing the colour in all animals, while in Cappadocia there is one which if drunk changes the colour of horses but not of any other animal; their skin is dappled with white spots.

[4] It is well known that there are lakes whose waters bear up those who cannot swim. There used to be a pool in Sicily, there still is one in Syria, in which brickbats float, and no objects thrown in, however heavy, will sink. The cause of it is obvious. Weigh any object and compare it with water while they are equal bulk for bulk. If the water

is the heavier, it will bear the object that is lighter than itself, and will raise it above its surface to a height proportionate to its lightness; objects heavier than the water will sink [5] in it. But if the weight of water and of the object compared with it in respect of weight be equal, the object will neither go to the bottom nor yet will it stick up; it will just be in equipoise with the water. It will float, it is true, but almost submerged and without any part projecting. The differences in weight give the reason why some logs float almost entirely above water, while some sink to their centre, and some go down until they are in equipoise with the water. For it always holds good that, when the weights of the two are equal, neither yields to the other; but objects heavier than water sink, those lighter are upborne.

Now heavy and light do not refer to our judgment of weight, but are relative to the medium by which an object is to be supported. So when water is heavier than the human body or than a stone, it does not allow the inferior weight to sink. So it comes to pass that in some lakes even stones will not go to the bottom; I mean hard solid stones. There are many light pumice stones, of which in Lydia whole islands that float are composed. Theophrastus is my authority for the statement I have myself seen a floating island in the lake near Cutiliae. Another is carried about in the Vadimonian Lake, another in the lake by Stâtonia. The island at Cutiliae contains trees and grows grass, and yet it is borne up by the water, and is wafted now in this direction, now in that, not merely by wind, but even by a mere air. So light the breath that moves it that night and day it never remains stationary in one spot. There are two reasons for it: first, there is the weight of the water, which is medicated and therefore heavy; and then there is the portable material of the island itself, which contains no solid body, although it supports trees. Perhaps in the first instance the thick liquid laid hold upon and made fast light trunks and boughs scattered over the surface of the lake. So also whatever rocks are in the island, you will find porous and hollow. They resemble those formed of moisture that has hardened especially near the banks of medicinal springs; in such cases the scourings of the spring coalesce and the foam is solidified. It is necessarily light, being formed by concretions of windy, empty material.

There are other peculiarities attaching to waters of different kinds,

of which no explanation can be offered. For example, why should Nile water make women more fruitful? So effective is it in this respect that in some instances wombs shut up in prolonged barrenness have relaxed so as to render conception possible. Or why should certain waters in Lycia prevent miscarriage, being sought after by ladies who are subject to this frailty? For my own part I set these down among vulgar errors. It is firmly believed by people that certain waters, whether applied outwardly or taken inwardly, affect the body with scab, certain with leprosy and foul blotches over the skin. Water gathered from dew, they say, has this fault. Wouldn't any one suppose that water that turns into ice is the heaviest of all? The truth is just the opposite of this. The change takes place in the thinnest water, which for that very reason is most easily congealed by the cold. The origin of the stone that resembles ice is plain from the very name used for it by the Greeks. They apply the term crystal (*κρύσταλλος*) equally to the transparent stone and to the ice from which the stone is supposed to be formed. Rain water, which contains very little solid matter, once it is frozen becomes more and more condensed through the persistence of the longer cold until all the air is expelled, and it is compressed to the last degree; then what was once moisture is changed into stone.

XXVI

SOME rivers rise in summer like the Nile, of which I will give an account later on. Theophrastus makes himself responsible for the statement that in Pontus likewise certain rivers rise in the summer season. Four different causes are assigned for this. First, the earth is at that period most readily changed into moisture. Second, there are in the remote districts heavier rains, the water from which, finding its way by secret channels, comes unnoticed to swell the volume of the rivers. A third explanation is that the estuary is exposed to more frequent winds, and is lashed by the sea waves; the river is checked and seems to increase because it cannot discharge freely. The fourth reason connects itself with the heavenly bodies. These bodies by their more severe pressure during certain months drain the rivers; when they retire to a greater distance, the waste and drain are less. What was previously lost now accrues by way of increase. Certain rivers fall visibly into some grotto or other, and thus are withdrawn from sight; some are gradually wasted and disappear. They return, however, at some distance off and recover their name and course. The reason is plain enough. There is vacant space underground. All liquid naturally is carried to the lower level and to the unoccupied space. The rivers received into these recesses have run their course there in secret. But as soon as any solid obstacle blocks the way, they burst through the part that offers the slightest obstruction to their escape and regain their channel above ground.

So when Lycus has been swallowed up by the yawning earth,
He comes forth far thence, and is born from another source.
So is now drunk up, now gliding with silent stream,
Is restored to its Argolic waves the mighty Erasinus.

[1] In the East as well as the West this happens. The Tigris is absorbed by the earth and after long absence reappears at a point far removed, but undoubtedly the same river. Some fountains cast out their scourgings at a fixed period; the fountain Arethuse does so every fifth summer during the Olympic festival. Thence comes the belief

that the Alpheus makes its way right from Achaia to Sicily, stealing under sea by secret sluice, and reappearing only when it reaches the coast at Syracuse. On that account, during the days on which the Olympic festival is taking place, the dung of the victims offered in sacrifice being thrown into the stream of the river (Alpheus) turns up in a quantity away in Sicily. You have yourself told the story, my dear Lucilius, in your own poem, and so has Virgil, who says in his address to Arethuse:

So when thou glid'st beneath Sicilian seas,
Never may sea nymph mingle bitter salt waves with thine.

In the Carian Chersonese there is a fountain of the Rhodians which at long intervals sends up from its depths certain foul excretions of mud, until [5] it is set free of them by being cleaned out. At certain places wells throw up not merely mud but also leaves, and bits of crockery and any other filthy things that have accumulated in them. The sea does the same everywhere, its nature being to drive ashore all filthy impurities. In the neighbourhood of Messina and Mylae as it boils and tosses in storms it throws up on the beach something actually like ordure, which has a vile smell too. Whence comes the fable that the oxen of the sun are stalled in that neighbourhood. In certain cases of this kind it is difficult to reach the true explanation, especially when the time of the occurrence in question has not actually been observed and is therefore doubtful. But though the immediate and special cause cannot be discovered, there is a general one worth mentioning; all waters when standing and enclosed tend to throw off impurities. In water that has a current the impurities cannot settle, as they are carried down and expelled by the mere force of the stream. The waters which do not throw off foreign bodies that settle in them always boil more or less. As for the sea, it drags from its lowest depths dead bodies, refuse of vegetation, and all kinds of wreckage, and purges itself of them, not merely when its billows rage in a storm but likewise in its calm and peaceful moments.

XXVII

THE occasion reminds me of a wider question. When the fated day of deluge comes, after what fashion will the earth for the most part be overwhelmed by the waves? Will it be by the strength of Ocean and the rise of the outer sea against us? Or will the rain descend uninterruptedly, and will summer be cut out of the year while persistent winter bursts its clouds and pours down endless masses of water? Or will earth herself open new reservoirs and shed forth rivers more abundantly? Or will a single cause be insufficient to produce such a catastrophe, and all the methods conspire together, the rains descending and the river floods rising, and the seas hurrying in hot haste from their place — all agencies in concert bent upon the one aim, the destruction of the human race? The last is the truth. Nature finds no difficulties in compassing her ends, especially when she hastens to make an end of herself. At the creation of things she economises her efforts, putting forth her energy in small imperceptible increase: for destruction she ^[3] comes with sudden and irresistible might. How long a time is needed to bring the embryo child to the birth! How great the toil called for in rearing the tender infant! How careful the nurture through which the frail body is at length brought to manhood! But how insignificant the effort needed to undo it all! Cities take centuries to establish: an hour brings their ruin. Ages rear the forest: a moment turns it to ashes. To its stability and vigour this universe of things calls for great and constant protection; quickly and ^[4] suddenly dissolution comes. Deviation by nature from her established order in the world suffices for the destruction of the race.

So when that day of fate comes, many causes will be at work in fulfilling its decrees; and as some, including Fabianus, think, such a change will not come without a shock to the whole universe. In the first instance there will be excessive rainfall, a dull leaden sky with never a glimpse of the sun. The clouds will be unbroken, the gathering moisture will cause thick darkness, and there will be no winds to lick ^[5] it up. Hence the crops will be diseased, the grain ere it be grown will wither without fruit. All tillage of man's hand will

be ruined; marsh grass will spring up over all the plains. Presently the stronger plants feel the strain; their roots are loosened, and the pollard elms fall forward, carrying their vines with them. All shrubs lose their hold on the soil, which has become soft and flabby. Soon the ground is so saturated that it can support neither grain nor fruitful pasture. The stress of famine is felt, and recourse is had to the ancient sustenance of berries. The fruit is shaken from ilex and oak, and any other tree that has been able to keep its ground by the support of the clefts of the rocks in the mountains. Roofs are sodden and rickety; the rain has penetrated to the depths, and the foundations sink. The ground is all a marsh. It is vain to seek supports to the tottering houses; every foundation is set on slippery ground, and in the muddy soil nothing is firm. After the storm-clouds have more and more densely massed, and the accumulated snows of centuries have melted, a cataract sweeps down from the lofty mountains carrying before it the woods now insecure in their place, tearing off boulders from their fastenings, and whirling them down in fierce career. It washes off the country houses, and takes down with it flocks of sheep among the *débris*. The smaller hamlets it carries off as it passes, but at length it leaves its course and rushes in fury upon the larger homesteads. It draws in its career whole cities, inhabitants, and buildings all mixed together: people know not whether to complain of a catastrophe or a shipwreck. So utterly crushed are they and at the same time submerged by its coming.

By and by, as it advances, the cataract is swollen by the absorption of other torrents, and in devastating course roams through the whole plain. Finally, it holds universal sway; it has earned a title by the widespread destruction of the world [8] which it carries as its burthen. The rivers, too, originally large, have been so hurried down by the storms that they have left their channels. The Rhone, the Rhine, the Danube, even when confined within their banks, have an impetuous torrent. What, suppose you, are they now that they have overflowed and made themselves new banks, and, cutting through the soil have all wandered from their wonted course? With what headlong rush they roll down! The Rhine overspreads the plains, but the wideness of the space causes no slackening of its energy; it pours its waters in full force over the whole extent as if it were rushing

through a [9] gorge. The Danube no longer washes the base, or even the middle, of the mountains; it lashes the very summits, bearing down with it the mountain sides it has flooded, the crags it has overturned, the beetling promontories through whole provinces; it undermines their foundations, and carries them far off from the mainland. And, after all, the river finds no exit — for it had closed up every passage against itself — but returns in a circuit, and envelops in one vast whirlpool the huge expanse of lands and cities.

Meantime the rains continue, the sky becomes still more threatening, and thus, for long, disaster is heaped upon disaster. What was once cloud [10] is now profound night, and that, too, dread and terrible, with gleams of lurid light between. For frequent flashes show, and squalls disturb the sea. Then for the first time, feeling the increase from the rivers, and too narrow to contain itself, the main advances its shores. Its own bounds cannot contain it, and yet the torrents from land prevent its escape, and drive back its waves. Still, the greater part of the torrents detained by their narrow mouth recoil in pools, reducing the fields to the aspect of a continuous lake. Now everything, far as the eye can reach, is a waste of waters. Every hill is hidden in the abyss, everywhere is [11] fathomless depth of water. Only in the highest mountain tops are there shallows. To these heights men have fled with wives and children, and have driven up their cattle. All intercourse and communication have been cut off among the wretched survivors; for all the lower ground has been filled by the waves. The remnants of the human race cling to every lofty peak. Brought to the last shift, they have this one solace, that apprehension has passed into stupor. Astonishment so fills them that there is no room for fear. Even [12] grief finds no place; for it loses its force in one whose wretchedness has passed beyond perception of suffering. So there are only mountain tops that appear like islands above the water, and increase the number of the scattered Cyclades, as that accomplished poet finely says; with an exaltation of language too in keeping with his theme, he exclaims:

All was sea; to the sea there was no shore.

It is a pity he reduced that burst of genius and his splendid subject

to childish twaddle by adding:

The wolf has to swim among the sheep, the wave carries tawny lions.

There is too little seriousness in making sport in [13] this way when the earth has been swallowed up. He expressed a fine thought and caught a vivid picture of the utter confusion when he said:

Through the open plains the rivers wander at their will,
... The towers totter and sink beneath the flood.

That was splendid, if he had not minded what the wolf and the sheep were doing. Could anything, in fact, swim amid such deluge and destruction? Was not every hoof drowned in the same torrent as carried it off? You conceived a worthy image, Ovid, when all the world was overwhelmed, and the sky itself descended upon earth. Keep it up. You will know what it ought to be if you reflect that the whole world was afloat. Now we must return to our discussion.

XXVIII

THERE is a section of philosophers who hold that while the earth may be greatly harassed by excessive rains, it cannot be overwhelmed by them. By a mighty blow this mighty earth must be smitten. Rain will spoil the crops, hail will knock off the fruit; but the rivers will only be swollen above their banks, and will subside again. Some, again, are satisfied that the cause of the widespread destruction will be derived from the movements of the sea. The great shipwreck of the world cannot, they think, arise from injury by cataract, river, or rain.

I am willing to grant that when that day of destruction is at hand, and Heaven is resolved to create a new race of men, the rain will pour down incessantly, and there will be no limit to the floods, the north and other dry winds will cease to blow; the south will bring up in plenty clouds and rain and stream.

But hitherto only damage has been inflicted.

The crops are laid low, and to the grief of the farmer,

All hope of increase is abandoned; the toil of the long year is wasted and vain.

But for our purpose the earth must be more than damaged, it must be submerged. In fact, the disasters described are merely the prelude to destruction. After that, the seas swell far beyond their wonted bounds, sending out their waves far above the farthest high-water mark of the most violent tempest. The winds will urge them on from the rear, rolling up huge billows that will break far inland out of sight of the highest shore. In course of time the shore will thus be shifted forward, the deep will be established in a realm that is not its own; the mischief will come nearer, and from its new base the tide will issue still from the deepest recesses of the main. For just like atmosphere and ether, this element, sea, has a large reserve, and in its depth is far more copious than appears to the eye. This reserve, moved by fate, not merely by tides — for tides are but the agency of fate — raises and drives before it a gulf of vast extent. Then in wondrous wise it rears its crest, and overtops all man's refuges of

safety. Nor do the waters find this a hard task, since, if the heights were calculated, it would be found that the sea mounts from an elevation equal to that of earth. The surface of the sea is of uniform level; for the earth itself as a whole is uniformly level. Hollows and plains are everywhere below the general level.

But the whole globe is as a matter of fact formed into a regular sphere, while in part of it is the sea, which unites to form the unity of a single ball. But just as when one looks out across a plain, the ground that sinks gradually deceives the eye, so we are not aware of the sea's curvatures, and all that is visible is a plain. But being on a level with the earth, the sea does not require to raise itself to any great height in order to overflow. In order to overtop what is on a level with it, it need make only a slight rise. Besides, the flow of it does not proceed from the shore where it is lower, but from mid ocean where the heap in question stands. Therefore, [6] as the tide at the equinox soon after the conjunction of moon and sun rises to a height greater than at any other time of year; in like manner this one that is sent out to seize upon the earth must exceed in violence the highest of ordinary tides, and bear a far greater volume of water; nor does it begin to ebb until it has swollen above the peaks of the mountains that are its objective. Some localities have at present a tide that runs up inland for a hundred miles in ordinary course harmlessly. It flows up to its normal limit and then ebbs again.

[7] But when the time of deluge comes, the tide, freed from all restraint, will set no limit to its advance. In what way? you say. Just in the same way as the great conflagration is destined to take place. Both will take place when God has seen fit to end the old order, and bring in a better. Fire and water are lords of the earth. From these it took its rise, and in these it will find its grave. So when a new creation of the world has been resolved upon by Heaven, the sea will be let loose on us from above; or it may be the raging fire, if another variety of destruction is Heaven's will.

XXIX

[1] SOME suppose that in the final catastrophe the earth, too, will be shaken, and through clefts in the ground will uncover sources of fresh rivers which will flow forth from their full source in larger volume. Berosus, the translator of [the records of] Belus, affirms that the whole issue is brought about by the course of the planets. So positive is he on the point that he assigns a definite date both for the conflagration and the deluge. All that the earth inherits will, he assures us, be consigned to flame when the planets, which now move in different orbits, all assemble in Cancer, so arranged in one row that a straight line may pass through their spheres. When the same gathering takes place in Capricorn, then we are in danger of the deluge. Midsummer is at present brought round by the former, midwinter by the latter. They are zodiacal signs of great power [2] seeing that they are the determining influences in the two great changes of the year. I should myself quite admit causes of the kind. The destruction of the world will not be determined by a single reason.

But I should like to apply in this connection as well, a principle which we Stoics adopt in regard to a conflagration of the universe. Whether the world is a soul, or a body under the government of nature, like trees and crops, it embraces in its constitution 'all that it is destined to experience actively or passively from its beginning right on to its end; it resembles a human being, all whose capacities are wrapped up in the embryo before birth. Ere the [3] child has seen the light the principle of beard and grey hairs is innate. Albeit small and hidden, all the features of the whole body and of every succeeding period of life are there. In like manner the creation of the world embraces sun and moon, stars with their successive phases, and the birth of all sentient life; and no less the methods of change in all earthly things. Among the latter is flood, which comes by a law of nature just as winter and [4] summer do. So, that catastrophe will not be produced simply by rain, but rain will contribute: nor by inroads of the sea, but these inroads will contribute: nor by earthquake, but earthquake will contribute. All elements will aid nature, that nature's

decrees may be executed. The chief cause of its inundation will be furnished by the earth herself, which, as has been already said, is subject to transmutation, and may dissolve in moisture.⁵ Therefore, there will one day come an end to all human life and interests. The elements of the earth must all be dissolved or utterly destroyed in order that they all may be created anew in innocence, and that no remnant may be left to tutor men in vice. There will be more moisture then than there ever was before. At present the elements are all carefully adjusted to the parts they have to fulfil. To destroy the equipoise in which the balance stands, there must be some addition to one or other of them. The addition will be to moisture. It has, at present, power to surround, but not to overwhelm the earth. Any addition to it must of necessity overflow into ground that does not now belong to it. So the earth as the weaker is bound to yield to sea which has gathered unnatural strength. So it will begin to rot, then to be loosened and [6] converted into moisture, and to waste away by the continuous drain. Rivers will then issue forth beneath mountains, shaking them to the foundations by their fury; then they will flow on in silence without a breath of air. The soil will everywhere give forth water; the tops of mountains will pour it out, just as disease corrupts what is sound, and an ulcer taints its whole vicinity. The nearer the part is to the soil that is being liquefied, the more quickly will it be washed off, dissolved, and finally carried away. The rock will everywhere gape in fissures, and the fresh supplies of water will leap down into the gulfs, and unite in forming one great sea. There will be no Adriatic any longer, no strait in the Sicilian Sea, no Charybdis, no Scylla. All [7] the fabulous dangers will be swallowed up in the new sea; the existing Ocean which surrounds the fringes of the earth will come into the centre.

Nor will this be all. As if this were not enough, winter will seize upon months that are not his, summer will be stopped, the heat of every heavenly body that dries up earth's moisture will be quenched and cease. All these names will be obliterated — Caspian and Red Sea, Ambracian and Cretan Gulfs, the Pontus and the Propontis. All distinctions will disappear. All will be mixed up which nature [8] has now arranged in its several parts. Nor will walls and battlements afford protection to any. Temples will not save their worshippers, nor

citadels their refugees. The wave will anticipate the fugitives, and sweep them down from their very stronghold. Some enemies will hasten from the west, others from the east A single day will see the burial of all mankind. All that the long forbearance of fortune has produced, all that has been reared to eminence, all that is famous and all that is beautiful, great thrones, great nations — all will descend into the one abyss, will be overthrown in one hour.

XXX

[1] NATURE, as I have said, finds no task hard, and especially one resolved upon from the beginning, to which she does not come of a sudden, but of which long warning has been given. From the world's first morning, when out of shapeless uniformity it assumed this form it wears, nature's decree had fixed the day when all earthly things should be overflowed. Nay, from of old the seas have practised their strength for this purpose, lest at any time destruction as a strange work might be found difficult to compass. Do you not see how the breaker dashes against the beach as if it wished to leave its element? Do you not see how the tide sometimes crosses its bounds and instals the sea in possession [2] of the land? Do you not see how unceasing is the war it wages against its barriers? But what special apprehension need there be of the sea, the place where you see such turmoil, and of the rivers that burst forth in such fury? Where has nature not placed water? She can attack us on all sides the moment she chooses. I can give my own word of honour for it that water meets us as we turn up the soil; every time our avarice sends us down a mine, or any other motive induces us to sink a shaft deep in the earth, the end of the excavation is always a rush of water.

[3] Remember, too, that there are huge lakes hidden deep in the earth, great quantities of sea stored up, and many rivers that glide through the unseen depths. On all sides, therefore, will be causes of deluge; for some waters flow in beneath the earth and others flow round it. Though long restrained they will at last prevail, and will join stream to stream and pool to marsh. The sea will fill up the mouth of every fountain, and will open it out to wider extent. Just as the bowels drain the body in the draught, or as the strength goes off into perspiration, so the earth will dissolve, and though other causes are inactive, it will find within itself a flood in which to sink. All the great forces will thus, I should suppose, combine. Nor will destruction tarry. The harmony is assailed and broken when once the world has relaxed aught of its needed care. At once, from all sides, open and hidden, above and beneath, will rush the influx of waters. There is nothing like the letting loose of the sea's full force, for

violence and ungovernable fury; it rises in rebellion and spurns every restraint. It will make full use of its permitted liberty; as its nature prompts, what it rends and surrounds it will soon fill up. Just as fire that breaks out at different points will speedily unite the flames and make one grand blaze, so the overflowing seas will join forces in an instant. But the waves will not enjoy their unrestrained liberty for ever. When the destruction of the human race is consummated, and when wild beasts, whose nature men had come to share, have been consigned together to a like fate, the earth will once more drink up the waters. Nature will force the sea to stay its course, and to expend its rage within its wonted bounds. Ocean will be banished from our abodes into his own secret dwelling-place. The ancient order of things will be recalled. Every living creature will be created afresh. The earth will receive a new man ignorant of sin, born under happier stars. But they, too, will retain their innocence only while they are new. Vice quickly creeps in; virtue is difficult to find; she requires ruler and guide. But vice can be acquired even without a tutor.

**BOOK IV. CONTAINING A DISCUSSION OF
SNOW, HAIL, AND RAIN [THE NILE]**

PREFACE

You tell me you are delighted, Lucilius, my most ^[1] esteemed of friends, with your peaceful government of Sicily. You will continue to be delighted if you are willing to observe the bounds of moderation, and do not try to turn into an empire what is merely a province. Nor do I doubt that this will be your choice, knowing as I do that you are a stranger to ambition, and a friend to a peaceful life of letters. Let those who cannot bear their own company, long for a crowd of affairs and of people! You are on the best of terms with yourself. It is little wonder ^[2] that few attain such a happy lot. We are always laying commands upon ourselves to our own dispeace. We suffer at one moment from love of, at another from weariness of, ourselves. Our unhappy soul is now inflamed with pride, now inflated with passion. Sometimes we relax it through indulgence, sometimes we consume it with anxiety. The most pitiable thing of all is that we are never alone with ourselves. So, where such a crowd of vices ^[3] have to mess together, there must be continual wrangling among them. Behave, therefore, my dear Lucilius, as you are wont to behave. Separate yourself as far as possible from the common herd, and expose no side to the attack of flattery. Flatterers are adepts in spreading a net for their betters. However much you are on your guard, you will be no match for them. If you allow yourself to be caught, you will be delivering yourself up to ^[1] betrayal, take my word for it. Flattery has in it the inherent charm, that even when spurned, it is not displeasing: often shut out, it is at the last taken to the bosom. Flattery accepts its rejection as a mark of attention; even insults cannot subdue it.

What I am going to tell you may sound incredible, s yet it is the simple truth. Every man is most open to danger on the side on which he is attacked. Perhaps, indeed, that is the very reason why he is attacked on that side. You must, therefore, lay your account to recognise that, do what you will, you cannot manage to be impervious to adulation. When you have closed every loophole, it will still wound you through your harness. One assailant will employ his flattery secretly and sparingly; another, above board, openly, with

an affectation of honest sincerity, as if it were straightforward bluntness, not device. Plancus, the greatest adept in the art before Vitellius' time, used to say that secret, dissembled flattery was not to be employed. [6] Advances, quoth he, are lost if they are not recognised. The flatterer makes most headway when he is detected; still more, in fact, if an open rebuke brings the blush to his cheek. You must assume that a public character like you will encounter many Plancuses. It is no remedy against the inveterate plague to refuse to be praised. I never knew a man more shrewd in every practical matter than Crispus Passienus, and especially in diagnosing and treating faults of character. He often used to say that we only put-to the door against flattery, and do not shut it, much in the same way as in the face of a mistress. If she gives it a shove, we are pleased, still more so if she forces it open. I remember hearing [7] that distinguished man, Demetrius, remark to a certain powerful freedman that he, too, had an easy road to riches on the day that he made up his mind to renounce all virtuous resolutions. Nor will I grudge any of you, said he, the knowledge of the art, but I will teach those who regard gain as the one thing needful how they may attain their object. They need not follow the doubtful fortune of the sea, nor the competition of buying and selling: they need not place their faith in the fickle proceeds of the ground, nor the still more fickle fortunes of the exchange. I will teach them a means of making money not merely easy, but positively so merry that the victims whom they fleece will share the fun. Flattery shall be the means. If you have the [8] stature of the pigmy Thracian matched against Thracian in the arena, I will swear that you are taller than Fidus Annaeus or Apollonius Pycta, I will say that no fellow could be more liberal than you, nor shall I lie, since you may be considered to have bestowed upon all whatever you have not robbed them of.

The fact is, my dear Junior, the more open and shameless flattery is, and the more completely it has brazened its own features and raised the conscious blush in those of others, the more quickly it storms the citadel. We have now reached such a pitch of madness that he who uses flattery sparingly is considered niggardly. I used to tell [9] you that my brother Gallio — a man whom even his most ardent admirer cannot love according to the measure of his deserts —

was a stranger to other vices, but this he positively loathed. You might assail him on every side. One began by paying homage to his intellect, the greatest and worthiest of all, which one had rather see consecrated to the service of heaven than wasted in weak human effort; he ran away from one who talked thus. Or one began to praise his thrift — he was so indifferent to money that he seemed neither to possess it nor to condemn it — he cut short the very first words of the panegyric.

[10] Or, again, one would admire his *bonhomie* and unaffected grace of character, which charms even those it passes unnoticed — a service to every one he meets, which costs the author nothing. No one in the world, I may tell you, is such a favourite with his one chosen friend as he is with all. At the same time so great is his natural amiability that it is free from all savour of artifice or pretence. No one, you would think, can refuse credit for a goodness in which all share. At this point, too, he successfully resisted your blandishments, leading you to exclaim that you had found a man absolutely impregnable to assaults of the flattery which no one ever refuses [11] to take to his bosom. You were forced to admit that you respected his wisdom and determination in escaping from that unavoidable plague, all the more that you had hoped that your insinuating words would be received with open ears because they were true. Yet all the more he saw that he must resist your wiles. For when truth is attacked by falsehood, the attack always seeks the aid of some measure of truth. Still, I would not have the flatterer who tried his art upon my brother displeased with his success, as if he had acted his part ill while the other suspected some joke or [12] trick. You had not been detected, your advances had simply been rejected. Now do you, Lucilius, adapt yourself to this model. When any flatterer approaches you, say to him: Do you wish to convey a complimentary message such as passes between magistrates duly installed in office? Do you think that I am prepared to return the compliment, and willing, therefore, to listen to your long story? Neither do I wish to dupe, nor can I be duped. I should like well enough to have the praise of people like yourself if you did not praise the bad as well as the good.

And yet, Lucilius, why is it necessary for you to come down to

their level, and allow them to attack you at close quarters? Keep a long distance between you and them. When you desire to have genuine praise, why should you be indebted to another for it? Yourself commend your own efforts. Say thus: Though my poverty prompted another kind of career, and tempted me to devote my talents to a field which promised to application a quick return, yet I gave myself up to liberal pursuits. I turned aside to the unremunerative domains of poetry, and bestowed myself upon the wholesome study of philosophy. I have showed that seeds of virtue are planted in every breast. I have surmounted the difficulties of birth; measuring my powers, not by my lot, but by my capacity, I have reached a position on a level with the highest. My friendship with Gaetulicus did not sap my allegiance to the Emperor Caius Caligula. Messalina and Narcissus, long enemies of the State before they became enemies of one another, were unable to overturn my resolve to be true to others whom it was a crime to love. I risked my head for my loyalty.

No word was wrung from me that I could not utter with a clear conscience. All my fears were for my friends, none for myself, except the fear of not proving a true friend. No womanish tears escaped me, nor did I cling as suppliant to the hands of any ruler. I have done nothing unbecoming a man or a good man. Rising superior ^[15] to dangers, ready to face all they threatened, I thanked fortune for affording opportunity of showing what a price I put upon honour. Such an issue could not be lightly esteemed in my eyes. The suspense was not of long continuance. The weights in the scale were by no means equal — was it better for me to perish for honour's sake or for honour to perish for my sake? I did not rush headlong to self-destruction, the refuge of despair, to rescue myself from the mad rage of the rulers. In Caius' time I saw tortures and fires of persecution. Under his reign I recognised at one period that the lot of humanity ^[16] had sunk to such a depth of misery that the loss of one's life might be ranked among the deeds of mercy. Yet, I did not fall upon my sword, nor leap open-mouthed into the sea: I would not have it seem that death was the only service I could render for honour's sake. Add, now, that my soul has never stooped to bribes, amid the eager race for wealth my hand has never reached forth to receive unjust gain.

Add, too, the thriftiness of my mode of life, the restraint of my speech, my courtesy toward inferiors, my respect for superiors.

After these reflections, ask yourself, my friend, whether what you have related of yourself be true or false. If it is true, you have a most important witness to your character; if false, there will be no witness to the derision you have earned. I may [17] myself appear at present to be either seeking to throw my net over you or trying to make you rise to my fly. Take either supposition for true, and begin, from the example I offer, to fear all flatterers. Meditate on Virgil's words:

Nowhere is honour safe; or on Ovid's:

As far as earth extends, the savage Fury rules;

For crime, methinks, all have conspired; or on this sentiment of Menander's — for who has not put forth the full strength of his indignation [18] on this topic, in abhorrence of mankind's agreement in rushing toward vice? All are bad livers, says the poet, presenting himself on the stage in the rude character of a raw countryman. He excepts neither greybeard nor youth, neither man nor woman. He adds to the charge that it is not individuals or small numbers that sin, but that wickedness is now ingrained in society all through. One must flee from the world and return to oneself, nay, rather one must escape from oneself. Though you and I are separated by the sea, I will endeavour to render you some [19] service: placing my hand in yours I will guide your doubtful steps along the more excellent way. At this distance I will mingle my talk with yours, that you may not feel the loneliness. We shall be united in our noblest part — the spirit. We shall impart mutual counsel, and, as you hang upon the lips of your monitor, I will lead you far away from that province of yours. For I would not have you put too implicit trust in records of the past, or become self-satisfied as often as you reflect: I [20] have under my jurisdiction a province here which both maintained and crushed the armies of the mightiest states, when it was offered as a prize in that colossal war between Carthage and Rome. It saw the strength of four Roman generals, in other words, of the whole empire, massed in one spot; it raised high the fortunes of Pompey, brought Caesar's to their culmination; transferred the power of

Lepidus to his rivals, and contained the fate of all. Sicily was an eye-witness of that great spectacle [21] which showed plainly to the world how rapid the descent from highest to lowest could be, and in how many different ways great power might be overthrown by fortune. For at one and the same time it witnessed the downfall of Pompey and Lepidus from the pinnacle of power in opposite ways; Pompey had to run from his enemy's army, Lepidus from his own.

I

ALTHOUGH Sicily, then, has many wonderful sights in and around it, I will meantime withdraw your mind wholly from your own province, and, passing by all questions relating to it, will direct your thoughts to a far different scene. In your society I will resume the inquiry postponed in my last book, why the Nile overflows in the summer months. Now, let me remark that the philosophers have asserted the similarity of the Danube to the Nile, because its source is unknown and it is larger in summer than in winter. Both statements are clearly false. We know for a fact that the Danube rises in Germany. Again, though the rise of the Danube begins in summer, it is at a period when the Nile still remains within its ordinary limits: the heat is then only beginning, and the stronger sun toward the latter part of spring is softening the snows, but it has to melt them before the Nile begins to rise. During the remainder of the summer the Danube actually falls until it reaches its winter size, from which in due course it begins its rise again.

II

BUT the increase of the Nile begins in the middle of the hot season, before the rise of the dog-star, and continues till after the equinox. Nature has raised up this noble river before the eyes of the world, and has so ordered its inundation of the land of Egypt that it should occur at the very time at which the ground is most parched with heat. The earth thus drinks the more deeply, and imbibes sufficient to counteract the drought of the whole year. In the part of Egypt that stretches round Ethiopia, you must bear in mind, there is either no rain at all or it occurs only at long intervals, and is insufficient to give much relief to a land which ordinarily knows nothing of water from the clouds. It is in the Nile, as you are aware, that Egypt reposes all its hopes. According to the abundance or scantiness of its overflow is the leanness or the fatness of its season. *None of its farmers regards the sky*, are the words of your own poem. And why should I not crack a joke with my dear poet friend, and retort with a verse from his favourite Ovid? who says:

Nor do the herbs make supplication to the rain-god Jupiter.

[3] If one could only ascertain at what point in the course of the river the rise begins, the causes of the rise would also be discovered. As it is, the river wanders through great deserts, spreads out into marshes, among many scattered tribes, before it is for the first time after its wandering, mazy course gathered into one near Philae. Philae is a rugged island, precipitous on all sides; it is surrounded by the two branches of the river before they unite to form the one river which henceforth bears the designation Nile. The whole city of Philae is surrounded by the Nile, which after leaving Ethiopia is a large rather than rapid river. Next in its course are the sandy deserts through which [4] passes the trade route to the Red Sea. After that the Nile enters the Cataracts, a spot famous for a wonderful sight. The river rises over high crags that are at several points jagged. The opposing rocks break up its course and rouse its utmost force; as it struggles through the narrows, swirls show the points where it

conquers or is conquered. A smooth channel had hitherto conducted its waters without uproar. Here for the first time they are roused, and the turbulent cataract leaps down through the narrow passage quite unlike its [5] former self. Up to that point the stream was thick and muddy. But once it enters the craggy gorge it breaks into foam. Its colour is no longer the natural one, but derived from the ground through which it has to force its way. When at length it has struggled through the obstructions, suddenly deprived of support, it falls from a vast height with a roar that resounds through all the surrounding regions. The race planted in that savage place was indeed unable to endure the din; their ears were deafened by the constant crash, and they were therefore removed from the settlement.

Among the wonderful sights of the river I have been told of a feat of incredible daring performed by the inhabitants. Two of them embark in a small boat, one steering, the other baling out the water. Forthwith they are violently buffeted from side to side [6] by the furious waves of the rapid river, and at length reach the narrowest channels, through which they thread their way till they escape from the craggy gorge. Then they are carried down along with the whole volume of the stream, guiding all the time by hand the rushing craft. At one moment they seem to stand right on their head; the spectators are in great alarm; one gives them up for lost, and believes they must be sunk and overwhelmed by such a mass of water. But finally they are shot out like an arrow, and are discovered afloat at a point far below where they had entered the current. The waves in their fall do not swamp them, but pass them on to smooth water.

The first rise of the Nile is observed near the [7] island Philae which I have just mentioned. A short distance from it the river is divided by a rock in the centre, which the Greeks call the Inaccessible (*“Αβατος*). No foot approaches it save that of the priestly ministers. Those cliffs first feel the increase of the river. Then a long distance below that two crags project, called by the natives the veins of the Nile. A great quantity of water is shed out by them, but yet insufficient to flood the land of Egypt. When the date of the sacred festival comes round, the priests throw into these fountains a public offering, while the magistrates [3] offer gifts of gold. From this point the Nile, obviously displaying the fresh energy

it has gained, flows onward in a channel of profound depth, but is restrained by mountain barriers from spreading widely beyond its banks. Only when it reaches Memphis is it released; and separating into numerous channels, it roams over the champaign.

In order to regulate the supply, canals are constructed by hand, and thus the water is distributed over all Egypt. At first near its bank the stream is simply divided; by and by the waters extend till they assume the aspect of a wide, swollen sea at rest. The extent of the country flooded, which embraces the whole land of Egypt to right and left, deprives the ^[4] current of all its force. The height of the Nile's rise determines the expectation of growth for the year. The farmer is never out in his reckoning; the fertility of the land answers unflinching to the measure of the river's increase. It spreads a coating of soil as well as water over the thirsty, sandy ground. As it comes down swollen, it deposits all its sediment in the dry, gaping cracks, and spreads over the parched soil all the rich mud it has brought down. It thus renders a double service to the land — first, by overflowing it, and then by coating it with slime. And so any ^[5] portion that it does not reach lies waste and unsightly. If the inundation is unduly high, it does damage.

The river possesses this wonderful characteristic: while all other rivers wash away and exhaust land, the Nile, though so much larger than the rest, far from eating away or rubbing off soil, actually adds to its vigour; it contains very little that injuriously affects the soil, for by the mud it brings down, it soaks and binds the sands. Egypt, in fact, owes to the river not merely the fertility of the soil, but also the soil itself. It is a beautiful sight when the Nile has spread itself over all the fields. The plains are hidden, the valleys have disappeared; only the towns stand out like islands. In the interior of the country there is no communication except by boat. The people are overjoyed the more, the less they can see of their country. Even when the river has resumed its normal course, it discharges into the sea by seven mouths, any one of them itself a sea. Moreover, it sends out many less famous arms toward either bank.

And then when we look at the monsters it rears, they are equal to those of ocean in size, and no less formidable. One may judge indeed of the greatness of the river from the hugeness of the animals for

whose sustenance it provides food in abundance, and for whose free movements it affords room. Balbillus, a most excellent man who has distinguished himself in every walk of letters, has recorded that during his own government of Egypt he himself saw in the largest mouth of the Nile, the Heracleotic, the strange sight of what may be called a pitched battle between dolphins, coming up from the sea, and crocodiles meeting them in front from the river. The crocodiles were in the event vanquished by the inoffensive animals with harmless bite. It happened on this wise: The upper part of the crocodile's body is hard, and cannot be pierced by the teeth even of larger animals; but the lower part is soft and tender. The dolphins dived in the fight and wounded the belly of the crocodiles with the projecting spikes they carry on their back; then driving home the stroke, they fairly cut up the enemy.

[14] When a number of the crocodiles had been opened out in this fashion, the remainder, to adopt military language, wheeled their line and retreated. The battle was not to the strong, the fleeing creature successfully resisted the daring, the most daring fled before the timid! Nor is it by any peculiar virtue of stock or blood that the islanders from Tentyra beat the crocodiles, but merely through pluck and contempt of them. They take the offensive against them, and as the crocodiles try to escape they lasso them and drag them ashore. At the same time many of the hunters lose their lives through lack of nerve in the chase.

Theophrastus assures us that the Nile has at [15] times brought down sea water. It is a well-established fact that for two successive years, the tenth and eleventh of the reign of Cleopatra, there was no rise in the river. People say that this was an intimation of the impending fall of its two rulers. For as a matter of fact, the rule of Antony and Cleopatra did fall. At an earlier period the Nile did not rise for nine whole years, according to the statement of Callimachus.

[16] But I must now go on to inquire into the explanations of the occurrence of the rise of the Nile in summer; and I will begin with the most ancient of them. Anaxagoras asserts that the snow melting on the peaks of Ethiopia is constantly running down to the Nile. All antiquity shared the same view, which is recorded by Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. But many proofs make it plain that it is a

mistaken one. First of all, the blackened complexion of the people shows that Ethiopia is exceedingly hot. So do the habits of the Troglodytes (cave-dwellers), who for coolness have underground houses. The rocks glow with heat as if a fire had been applied, and that, not only at mid-day, but even toward nightfall. The dusty ground is so hot that no foot of man can endure it. Silver is unsoldered. The joints of statues are melted. No coating of plated metal will stick on. The south wind, too, coming from that tract of country, is the hottest of all winds. None of the animals that go to earth in winter ever hibernates there. Even in midwinter the serpent is seen above ground in the open. At Alexandria, too, which lies far north of this excessive heat, snow does not fall; but the upper regions have not even rain.

How then, I ask, could a district exposed to such broiling heat receive a snowfall sufficient to last through a whole summer? No doubt some of the mountains in Ethiopia, as well as elsewhere, intercept snow; but there can never be a greater fall than in the Alps, or the peaks of Thrace, or the Caucasus. It is in spring, however, or early summer, that the rivers that flow from the European mountains are swollen; subsequently during winter time they decrease. The reason, of course, is that the rains in spring wash off so much of the snow, and the first heat of summer soon scatters the remnants. Neither the Rhine, nor the Rhone, nor the Danube, nor yet the Caÿstrus is liable to the catastrophe of an overflow in winter; their increase is in summer, though in those northern peaks where they rise the snow lies very deep. The Phasis, too, and the Dnieper would swell during summer if snows had the power of raising the rivers high in spite of the heat of that season. Besides, if this were the cause of the flooding of the Nile, its stream would be fullest in early summer; for that is the period when the snow is deepest and least impaired, and when from its softness the thaw is quickest. The Nile, however, has a regular increase to its stream during four months.

If one may believe Thales, the Etesian winds hinder the descent of the Nile and check its course by driving the sea against its mouths. It is thus beaten back, and returns upon itself. Its rise is not the result of increase: it simply stops through being prevented from discharging, and presently, wherever it can, it bursts out into forbidden ground.

Euthymenes of Marseilles bears corroborative testimony: I have, he says, gone a voyage in the Atlantic Sea. It causes an increase in the Nile as long as the Etesian winds observe their season. For at that period the sea is cast up by pressure of the winds. When the winds have fallen, the sea is at rest, and supplies less energy to the Nile in its descent. Further, the taste of that sea is fresh, and its denizens resemble those of the Nile. Now, if the Etesian winds, as alleged, stir up the Nile, why, I should like to know, does its rise begin before them and last after them? Moreover, it does not rise higher in proportion to the violence of their blast Nor does it swell and fall according as they blow furiously or gently. All which would happen if it derived from them the strength of its increase. Then, again, the Etesian winds beat on the shore of Egypt, and the Nile comes down in their teeth: whereas, if its rise is to be traced to them, the river ought to come from the same quarter as they do. Furthermore, if it flowed out of the sea, its waters would be clear and dark blue, not muddy, as they are. Add to this that Euthymenes' evidence is refuted by a whole crowd of witnesses. At such a time when foreign parts were all unknown, there was opportunity for falsehood: people like Euthymenes had scope for giving currency to travellers' myths. But nowadays the whole coast of the sea beyond Gibraltar is visited by trading vessels: none of the traders tell us that the Nile rises there, or that the sea in the Atlantic tastes differently from what it does elsewhere. The very nature of the sea forbids belief in the story that it is fresh: the freshest water is always lightest, and as such attracted by the sun in evaporation: the residuum, sea, must be salt. Besides, why, on this theory, does the Nile not rise in winter? The sea may be raised at that season by storms too, which are considerably greater than the Etesians; the latter are comparatively moderate in their force. Besides if the source were derived from the Atlantic Ocean, Egypt would be flooded all at once; but, as a matter of fact, the increase is very gradual.

Oenopides of Chios has another explanation: he says that in winter heat is stored up under the ground; that is why caves are then warm, and the water in wells is less cold. The veins of water are dried up by this internal heat, he thinks. In other countries rivers swell through rain: but the Nile, being aided by no rainfall, dwindles

during the rainy season of winter, and by and by increases in summer, a season at which the interior of the earth is cold, and the frost returns to the springs. Now, if that were true, rivers in general would increase in summer, and all wells would then have greater abundance of water. Besides, it is not true that there is an increase in the heat underground in winter. Water and caves and wells are warm at that season because they do not admit the frosty air from without. Thus, they do not possess heat, they merely exclude cold. For the same reason they are chilly in summer, because the air heated by the sun is drawn off to a distance, and does not penetrate to them.

[27] The next account is that of Diogenes of Apollonia. It runs thus: The sun attracts moisture; the earth drained of it replenishes its supply in part from the sea, in part from other water. Now, it is impossible that one land should be dry and another overflowing with moisture. The whole earth is full of perforations, and there are paths of intercommunication from part to part. From time to time the dry parts draw upon the moist. Had not the earth some source of supply, it would ere this have been completely drained of its moisture. Well, then, the sun attracts the waves. The localities most affected [28] are the southern. When the earth is parched, it draws to it more moisture. Just as in a lamp the oil — flows to the point where it is consumed, so the water inclines toward the place to which the overpowering heat of the burning earth draws it. But where, it may be asked, is it drawn from? Of course, it must be from those northern regions of eternal winter, where there is a superabundance of [29] it. This is why a swift current sets from the Black Sea toward the Lower Sea, without interruption, and not, as in the case of other seas, with alternate flow and ebb of tide; there is always a descending flood in the one direction. Unless this took place, and these routes supplied the means whereby what is lacking may be bestowed on each land, and what is superfluous may be given off, the whole earth would ere now have been either drained or flooded. Now, one would like to ask Diogenes, seeing the [30] deep and all streams are in intercommunication, why the rivers are not everywhere larger in summer. Egypt, he will perhaps tell me, is more baked by the sun, and therefore the Nile rises higher from the extra supply it draws; but in the other countries, too, the rivers receive some addition. Another

question — seeing that every land attracts moisture from other regions, and a greater supply in proportion to its heat, why is any part of the world without moisture? Another — why is the Nile fresh if its water comes from the sea? No river has a fresher and sweeter taste.

III

I SHOULD be somewhat too bold if I were to assure [1] you as on oath that hail is formed in the sky much in the way ice is with us, only that in the former case a whole cloud is frozen. So I may regard myself as a witness only in the second degree — one of those who say not that they have actually seen but have been informed. Or, I may, for once, do as the chroniclers do. After lying at large to their heart's content, they fix on some one point for which they refuse to vouch, adding: Evidence of this will be found in the authorities. So, if you do [2] not believe me, Posidonius will vouchsafe to you his authority both for the statement I have made, and for one that I am going to make. He will assure you, as confidently as if he had witnessed the process of formation, that hail is formed from a cloud that is charged with rain, and has already turned into moisture. You can discover without a tutor why the hail is round if you observe that drops of [1] all kinds tend to become globular. This is seen, for example, in looking-glasses, which gather moisture from the breath, as well as in cups, and any other smooth surface bedewed with it. So, too, in the leaves of grass or trees, any drops that adhere take a circular form.

What is harder than rock, what softer than water?

Yet the hard rock is hollowed by drops of the soft water; or, as another poet tells us:

The drip by its fall hollows the stone:

[2] and this hollow is itself round. Whence it is evident that its shape resembles this drip which hollows it out, sculpturing the spot to its own form and character. Besides, the hail, even were it not of this shape, might be rounded in its fall, and worn equally on all sides into globular form as it is again and again whirled round in its descent through the space of thick air it traverses. Snow, on the contrary, cannot be affected thus, because it is not so solid, being indeed very much scattered, and falling from no great height. It has

its source in the neighbourhood of the earth, and its descent is of no great distance through the air, but starts from a point quite close [3] by. Why should I not allow myself the same licence as Anaxagoras in differing from my authorities? Nowhere can equality of rights be claimed with more propriety than among the philosophers. Hail is simply ice held suspended in mid-air; snow is a floating congealed mass of the nature of hoar-frost.

I have already said that the difference between water and dew is reproduced in the difference of hoar-frost and ice, and, in like manner, in that between snow and hail.

IV

I might take leave of the question here, holding that I had finished it. But I will give you good measure, and, having begun to trouble you with my speculations, I will discuss everything connected with the topic. One of the cognate questions is, why in winter there is snow but no hail, while in spring, after the worst of the cold is over, there are falls of hail. For let me be deceived for your benefit, though I may say I am fully persuaded of the truth of what I am about to affirm. I lend always a credulous ear to these trivial falsehoods; perhaps they deserve to be punished by having one's mouth stopped, but they hardly call for the putting out of one's eyes! In winter the atmosphere is stiff, and is therefore not as yet capable of being converted into water, but only into snow, to which the atmosphere is more akin. But when spring begins, a greater variation of the atmosphere ensues, and, the sky being warmer, the drops are larger. Therefore, as our poet Virgil says:

When rain-charged spring descends, there is a more violent change in the atmosphere, which everywhere opens up and relaxes through the action of the mere warmth. For this reason the clouds that are carried to earth are heavy and large: rather than lasting. Winter rain is thin and persistent. The fall often occurs in the form of small, fine rain, with an admixture of snow. We call it a snowy day when the cold is intense and the sky leaden. Besides, when the north wind doth blow, producing its characteristic sky, there may be fine rain. With south wind the rain is more persistent, and the drops heavier.

V

[1] One position held by the philosophers of my sect I neither venture to adopt on account of its seeming weakness, nor yet can I pass it by without mention. Where can be the harm of suggesting even an improbable explanation when one has such an indulgent judge? If we are to apply a test like the pyx to every argument, we shall soon cease to advance any hypothesis at all and be reduced to dumbness. There are very few statements that pass unchallenged. All the rest have to assert their rights before they can win their case. Well, the assertion of the Stoics is, that all the ice-bound region about Scythia and Pontus and the northern quarter is released from its chain in spring; then the frozen rivers resume their course, then the mountains melt the snows in which they have been buried. It is quite conceivable, therefore, that cool airs arise from this and mingle with the atmosphere of spring.

[2] They add a proof which I have never tested nor have any intention of testing. You, too, I fancy, however anxious you may be to ascertain the truth, will be cautious about making such a trial of snow. The feet are said to suffer less pain when one treads on hard, solid snow than if the snow were slushy and half melted. Well, then, if the Stoics do not lie, all the currents of air wafted from those northern parts, when the snow has now been dislodged and the ice is breaking up, condense and bind the atmosphere of the southern region which is already becoming warm and moist. So what was going to be rain becomes, through the violence done by the cold, hail instead.

VI

I CANNOT refrain from trotting out all the silly fancies of our Stoic friends. The assertion in question is that there are some people skilled in observing the clouds who foretell when a hail shower is coming on. They gather this just from experience by marking the colour of the clouds and noting which was on previous occasions followed by hail. It seems incredible that at Cleonae there were hail-guards (*χάλαζοφύλακες*) appointed by the state to look out for the approach of hail. When they had given the signal that the hail was close at hand, what do you think? that people ran off to get their overcoats or cloaks? Nay, they each offered sacrifice as fast as they could, one a lamb, another a chicken. Forthwith, those clouds after getting a little taste of blood drew off in another direction. You smile! There is something to make you smile more broadly. If one had not a lamb or kid by, one laid hands upon oneself to an extent that could be done without serious damage. You must not think the clouds greedy or cruel; one merely pricked one's finger with a well-sharpened style and made atonement with this blood. The hail as invariably turned away from his little plot as from the estate of the man who had prevailed upon it through the offering of greater victims.

VII

CERTAIN writers seek for a rational explanation of this practice. One school, adopting the only line that comports with philosophy, deny the possibility of making any bargain with hail and buying off storms by paltry presents, true, though it be, that gifts overcome even gods. Others affirm their suspicion that blood itself contains a virtue potent enough to avert and repel a cloud. But how, I ask, should a drop or two of blood possess a virtue to reach on high and influence the clouds? Is it not much easier to say, the whole thing is a parcel of lies? But Cleonae was strict in dealing with its warders who had received charge of looking out beforehand for the storm, if it happened that through their neglect the vineyards had been beaten down or the crops laid. And among ourselves, too, at Rome the laws of the Twelve Tables introduce safeguards against the blighting of a neighbour's crops by charms. Antiquity as yet untutored entertained the belief that rain could be attracted or repelled by incantations. The impossibility of such fancies is so evident that one need not enter a school of philosophy in order to be taught how to disprove them.

VIII

I SHALL add one more remark which you will be very glad, I am sure, to approve and applaud. It is asserted that snow is formed in the part of the atmosphere near the earth. This layer has more heat than any other, and that for three reasons. One is that all evaporation from the earth, containing as it does much dry, glowing matter, is always the hotter, the more recently it has left the ground. The second is that the sun's rays are reflected from the ground and return upon themselves. Their reflection heats up the parts next the ground, which thus have more warmth from getting the sun's heat twice. The third reason is that the upper regions are more subject to wind; but all places that are sunk are less wind-swept.

IX

To the foregoing Democritus' explanation falls to be added. Every body receives heat more quickly and retains it longer in proportion to its solidity. For example, if three vessels, of copper, glass, and silver respectively, are set in the sun, the heat will penetrate the copper one soonest and will remain in it longest. The reason why Democritus is of this opinion may also be added. In the bodies, he says, that are harder, more compact, and dense, the openings must of necessity be smaller than in others, and in each of the openings the film of air must be thinner. It follows that just as smaller baths and smaller cylinders are heated more rapidly than others, so these concealed apertures, so small as to elude the eye, both feel the heat more quickly, and by reason of this same smallness of calibre give back more slowly the heat they have received.

X

THIS long preamble leads up to the point we are now examining. All air is the denser the nearer it is to the earth. In water and other liquids the dregs are always at the bottom; in like manner in the atmosphere the thickest portions settle down to the lowest part nearest the earth. But it has already been proved that all things, in proportion as they are denser and more compact in their consistency, guard more faithfully the heat they have received. On the other hand, the more exalted the air is, and the farther it is withdrawn from the pollutions of earth, the less contaminated and the more pure it is; and so it does not retain the sun's rays, but transmits them as if through a vacuum; hence it is less warmed by them.

XI

[1] BUT contrariwise, certain persons assert that mountain peaks ought to be warmer in the degree in which they are nearer the sun. Such people seem to me, however, to be astray in supposing that the Apennines and the Alps and other mountains famed for their exceeding height are so greatly elevated that their size should enable them to feel in any special way the sun's proximity. No doubt those are lofty heights so long as the standard of comparison is ourselves. But when one regards the size of the universe, the lowness of them all becomes evident. Compared with one another, [2] mountains are surpassed or surpass in height. But nothing on earth is elevated so high that even the greatest of objects should be any appreciable portion in comparison with the whole universe. Were this not so, we should not be in the habit of saying that the whole earth is a ball. The distinctive mark of a ball is a certain uniform rotundity, much the same as the uniformity seen in a football or cricket ball. The seams and chinks constitute no great objection to the ball being described as symmetrical on all sides. As in a playing ball, those spaces do not in any way prevent the appearance of roundness, no more, in the earth at large regarded as a sphere, do lofty mountains, whose height is lost in a comparison with the whole world. A person who says that a higher mountain ought to be warmer from receiving the sun's rays at a shorter distance, may just as well say that a taller man should be heated sooner than a dwarf, and his head sooner than his feet! But any one who will take the trouble to judge the universe by its proper standard, and who will reflect that this earth occupies but a single point in space, will not fail to perceive that nothing on earth can be of such eminence as to be more sensible than others of the influence of the heavenly bodies, as if it had approached their neighbourhood. Those mountains at which we gaze up, their summits weighed down with eternal snows, are none the less but low and humble. While it is true that a mountain *is* nearer the sun than is plain or valley, yet it is in the same sense as javelin is spoken of as thicker than javelin, tree as larger than tree, mountain than mountain.

Accordingly to that mode of speech of yours, one tree must be

said to be nearer the sky than another; which is false, because among puny objects there cannot exist great differences except while they are compared with one another. When one comes to compare such objects with the mighty frame of things, it is immaterial how much the one is bigger than the other, because the very small things, however great the differences among them, are quite dwarfed by comparison with the universe.

XII

But to return to my main theme; for the reasons which I have detailed, most authorities are satisfied that snow is formed in the part of the atmosphere which is in the vicinity of the earth. It is less compacted than hail because congealed through less intense cold. For the air near us has at once too much cold to allow its passage into water and rain, and at the same time too little to get hardened into hail. Through this moderate but not too intense cold the water is massed and turns into snow.

XIII

Why, I fancy I hear you say, do you pursue so laboriously those frivolous explanations of yours, by which no one is made either more accomplished or more virtuous? You tell us all about the formation of snow; it would be far more to the point that we should be told why it is a wrong thing for snow to be bought. I see you wish to drag me into a dispute with luxury, a quarrel of daily occurrence that never leads to any tangible result. Let us withal brace -ourselves for the struggle; even if luxury win the day, it must find us fighting and resisting to the death.

Well then! do you suppose that the examination of nature, irrelevant as it may appear, makes no contribution to the object you have at heart? When we inquire how snow is formed, telling that its character resembles hoar-frost, containing more air than water, do you not think that it is a reproach upon the epicures? If it is a scandalous thing to buy water, they are still worse, for they do not get even water [but chiefly air] for their money. Let us, I say, inquire rather how snow is formed than how it is preserved. The means of preservation have already been discovered; not content with racking wines of vintage, arranging them by flavour and age, we have devised means of compressing snow to overcome the power of summer, and of protecting it by the coolness of the icehouses from the hotness of the season. And what have we accomplished by all our anxious efforts? The privilege of buying water that we might have got for nothing! We are vexed that we cannot buy air and sunlight, and that the atmosphere all around streams in easily and unbought upon the fastidious and the rich. How badly nature treats us in leaving anything that is common property! Upon this other element, water, which nature has allowed to flow for the free use of mankind, and which she has given the whole world to drink, this that she has shed forth with lavish prodigality for the service alike of man and of beasts and birds and the very laziest of the animal creation — upon this, luxury, with ill-conceived ingenuity, has managed to put a price. In fact, nothing can please luxury unless it is expensive. Water was the one thing that used to bring down the rich to the level of the

common herd, in which the wealthy could not surpass the very poorest. Those who found their riches a burden have devised a plan whereby water should become a luxury.

How it has come about that no running water should be thought cool enough, I will now explain. As long as the stomach is healthy and is able to relish wholesome food, with which it is satisfied and not overloaded, it is quite content with the natural stimulants. But when through daily indigestion it suffers from the heat not of the season but of its own indulgence, when habitual drunkenness has taken firm hold on the organs of life, and turns into bile which parches the intestines, then it becomes necessary to seek out some means of quenching the internal heat. Water merely inflames it, the disease is aggravated by the remedies. Therefore, for this purpose they use snow for drink, not only in summer, but even in the depths of winter. The cause can be no other than the internal complaint. Digestion is spoiled through indulgence; respite is never given it in which to rest. Breakfast is heaped upon a supper prolonged till daylight. While the revellers are literally bursting with the lavishness and variety of the courses, heavy drinking plunges them still deeper in the mire.

Then the continuous excess causes heartburn from the food previously consumed, and inflames the constant craving for some new stimulant. So, though they protect the banqueting hall with draperies and windows, and seek by roaring fires to banish winter's colds, none the less the languishing appetite, exhausted by its own heat, yearns for something new to revive it. Just as we sprinkle cold water on people who have lost consciousness through a fainting fit, in order to bring them back to their senses; so the internal organs, numbed through excess, are past feeling, unless they are smitten by the parching, as it were, of more violent cold. Hence it is, I say, that not content even with snow, they call for ice, as if the stimulant were the more certain from its solidity, and melt it with repeated douches of water. The ice, too, is not taken from the surface, but, that it may have greater virtue and more lasting cold, it is dug out of the depths of the pile. Thus it is not even of uniform price; but water actually has its hawkers and — alas the day! — a varying price. The Lacedaemonians once banished the perfumers from their city,

ordering them to quit the country with all speed, because they were wasting the oil supply. What would they have done, I wonder, if they had seen cold stores for preserving snow and such an army of beasts employed in carting water, whose colour and flavour are often all spoiled by the straw in which it is kept?

Good heavens! how easy a thing it is to quench the thirst of health! But what feeling can jaws retain that are deadened and numbed by scalding food? These epicures can have nothing cold enough, neither can they have anything hot enough. Mushrooms taken from the fire and hastily dipped in their special sauce are crammed down the throat almost boiling, and the heat has to be allayed by draughts chilled in snow. One may see, I — tell you, slender youths, rigged out in cloaks and mufflers, pale and sickly, not merely sipping the snow, but actually eating it, throwing little pieces of it into their glasses to prevent them from getting warm during the intervals of drinking. Do you

[10] call that honest thirst? It is fever, the more acute too as it cannot be detected by the pulse or the wonted heat that overspreads the skin. The very heart is dried up by that incurable malady, luxury, whose habitual weakness and unsteadiness are turned into endurance and obstinacy. Don't you know that habit dulls the force of everything? The snow in which you are now, so to speak, swimming has through custom and the daily slavery of the stomach come to occupy the place of water. You must now search for something colder still; for a stimulant that is habitual is no stimulant at all.

BOOK V. WHICH TREATS OF WINDS AND ATMOSPHERIC MOVEMENT IN GENERAL

I

Wind is the atmosphere in motion. Some have [1] put the definition thus: Wind is the atmosphere in motion in one direction. The latter seems the more accurate, because the atmosphere is never so still as not to be in agitation of some kind. In a similar way the sea is called calm when it is only slightly moved and does not set in a particular direction. Thus, if you read the verse:

When the winds slumbered and the sea was still,

you must bear in mind that the sea was not actually still, but heaved gently; and that it is called [2] calm in a comparative sort of way because it receives no distinct impulse to this side or to that. The same opinion is likewise to be adopted in regard to the atmosphere: it is never absolutely motionless, even though it be still. This you may gather from the following observation: When the sun pours into any circumscribed space, one sees minute particles carried through the air in different directions, some up, some down, meeting each other in a great variety of ways. Therefore, if one say: [3] a wave is an agitation of the sea, one will very imperfectly express what is meant, because even when at rest the sea is agitated. But one will more than sufficiently safeguard oneself if the definition be: a wave is an agitation of the sea in one direction. So in the subject which at the moment forms our special topic, the definition will not be unduly restricted if one is careful to say: wind is the atmosphere flowing in one direction; or, wind is atmosphere flowing through some impulse, or, is the force of the atmosphere going in one direction, or, is a rush of the atmosphere more forcible than usual in some one direction. I am aware of a criticism that may be made in regard to the first [4] definition. What need is there to add that it is in one direction that the atmosphere flows? For surely whatever flows, flows in one direction. No one says that water flows if there is simply an internal movement of it, but only if it is borne in a particular direction. So a substance may be in motion and yet not flow; but, on the other hand, it cannot flow except in one direction. Well, if, on the one hand, the shorter

definition is free from cavil, let us employ it; but if, on the other, any one is a stickler, let him not omit the phrase whose addition will serve to preclude all ambiguity. Now that we have sufficiently discussed our terms, let us come to grapple with our problem at closer quarters.

II

Democritus avers that when there are many particles, which he calls atoms, in a small empty space (*i e* vacuum), wind is the outcome. But, on the contrary, when the space is large and the particles few, there is a still peaceful condition of the atmosphere. To illustrate: in the market square or in a side street as long as there is a sprinkling of people there is no disturbance as one walks along it; but when a crowd meets in a narrow space, then they jostle against each other, and quarrelling arises. Similarly in this space which surrounds our earth; when many bodies have crowded a very small portion, it is unavoidable that they should jostle one another and be driven back and forward, and be intertwined and squeezed. Hence results wind; the particles that were struggling have had to give way, and after being tossed about and remaining in suspense for a long time they at length lean their weight toward one side. But when a few bodies occupy a large roomy place, they can neither ram each other nor be jostled by one another.

III

The falsity of this view may be inferred merely [1] from the fact that wind by no means invariably accompanies a cloud-laden atmosphere, and yet more particles have gathered at that than at any other time in a narrow space, where they produce condensation and heaviness in the clouds. Besides, in the neighbourhood of rivers and lakes cloud is frequent from the confinement and accumulation of particles, and yet there is no attendant wind. Indeed, sometimes such a darkness overspreads the place that the view of objects in the immediate vicinity is cut off; which would never happen unless numerous particles were massed in a small space. Yet no period is more free from [2] wind than a period of cloud. Add now a consideration of an opposite character: When the sun rarefies at his rising the thick dank morning air, then a breeze springs up; the particles have got more room now, and the thickly packed crowd of them is broken up.

IV

But how, you will say, are winds then formed, for you won't deny that they are formed? Not in any single way, I reply. Sometimes the earth herself emits a great quantity of air, which she breathes out of her hidden recesses. At other times a great and long-continued evaporation drives the emissions from the depths up on high, where the change which the mixed breath undergoes issues in wind. A suggestion has been made which I cannot make up my mind to believe, and yet I cannot pass over without mention. In our bodies food produces flatulence, the emission of which causes great offence to one's nasal susceptibilities; sometimes a report accompanies the relief of the stomach, sometimes there is a more polite smothering of it. In like manner it is supposed the great frame of things when assimilating its nourishment emits air. It is a lucky thing for us that nature's digestion is good, else we might apprehend some less agreeable consequences. Is it not, then, nearer the truth to say that numerous particles are constantly borne up from every part of the world; and when they are accumulated and subsequently begin to be rarefied by the sun, wind starts up? It is a general principle that anything contained in a narrow space when it expands tries to get more room.

V

Well, then, do I ask you to believe that evaporation from land and water is the sole cause of wind? Do I affirm that it produces a weight in the atmosphere, the breaking up of which causes a rush of air? that at that moment what was previously dense and stationary gets rarefied and strives, as its nature requires, to obtain a wider space? I do approve of this as sometimes the explanation. But there is a far truer and more potent one, to wit, that the atmosphere by its constitution possesses a native capacity of movement, this power not being derived from an external source, but being like others of its powers inherent. For can you suppose that we men have been endued with strength to move about, while the atmosphere has been left sluggish and immovable? Water, too, has its own motion, even though the winds are at rest; otherwise it could not produce animal life. We see also forms of vegetable life like moss produced by water, and certain kinds of herbage floating on its surface.

VI

Well, then, I take it, in water there resides some vital principle. In water, did I say? Why, fire, the universal destroyer, has a creative function; it may not seem a likely thing, but all the same it is but the truth that some animals are generated by fire. The atmosphere, then, possesses some power of this kind; and that is why it sometimes grows thick, sometimes expands and throws off impurities, sometimes contracts, at others opens up and disperses. There is thus the same difference between air and wind as between lake and river. There are occasions when the sun is the sole cause of wind, as he rarefies the stiff atmosphere and opens it out from its thick contracted state.

VII

Having spoken of the winds in general, let us now proceed to the discussion of individual winds. Perchance the discovery of the time and place of their origin will conduce to the discovery of their manner of formation. First, then, let us look at breezes before dawn, which are borne either from rivers or hollow valleys or from some bay. None of these winds lasts long, but falls when the sun has got stronger; nor is it carried up out of sight of the earth. This class of wind sets in in spring, and does not last beyond summer. It comes chiefly from a quarter where there are spaces of water and mountains. Plains, for instance, may have abundance of water, and yet they have no breeze; I mean a breeze strong enough to be called wind.

VIII

[1] How, then, is a blast of this kind, which is called by the Greeks a gulf breeze (εγκόλπια?), formed? This is the theory of them: All the exhalations of marshes and rivers — and they are abundant and constant — form by day the sun's nourishment. By night, however, there is no drain on them, and they are enclosed by the mountains and accumulate in one quarter. When they have filled up this quarter and can no longer find accommodation in it, but are squeezed out on one side and move in a particular direction, then you have the wind. It inclines, of course, toward the side to which it is invited by the freer exit, and by the openness of the place toward which the accumulated elements can rush. A proof of this is that a wind of this kind does not blow in the early part of the night. At that time the gathering only begins, but by daybreak it has reached the full, and seeks relief by flowing off. It chooses its exit by preference where there is the largest empty space and a great expanse of open. It is stimulated by the rays of the rising sun striking on the chilly air. Even before he makes his appearance his light of itself has an influence. The sun does not at that stage, it is true, drive away the atmosphere with his beams; still, he already attacks and harasses it by the shafts of light he sends before him. When he comes out himself in his power, part of the gathering is carried off to a greater altitude, part is dissipated by his heat. Wherefore power is not granted to these winds to continue longer than the morning. All their strength collapses at sight of the sun. Even if their blast is somewhat violent, yet they begin to subside as mid-day approaches; in fact, the breeze never lasts as long as noon. Any other variety of the breeze is weaker and shorter in duration; they vary according as the causes to which they owe their origin are more or less powerful.

IX

[1] BUT why, again, are winds of this nature stronger in spring and summer? For during the remainder of the year they are very light, never rising sufficiently to fill the sails of a boat. The reason is that spring is a wetter season. There is at that time more evaporation going on, both from the abundance of water lying about, and from the saturation of the ground to overflowing through the moist character of the sky. And the reason why this wind is equally prevalent in summer is that the heat of the day remaining after sundown and lasting during a great part of the night draws out exhalations, and attracts more forcibly any of them that are wont to be given off spontaneously by the ground. But subsequently the heat has not [2] sufficient strength to use up what it drew out. This is the reason, I say, why the soil and its moisture give off for a longer period [at certain seasons] the particles derived from the earth's wonted emanations and exhalations. The sunrise produces wind by its stroke as well as by its warmth. For, as I have already said, the light which precedes the sun does not as yet heat up the atmosphere, but merely smites upon it; being smitten the air retires to one side. And yet I cannot go so far as to admit that the light is quite devoid of heat, inasmuch as it is derived from heat. Probably it does not contain as great an amount as would appear from its effect. Still, it accomplishes its own task by separating and rarefying the dense [3] exhalations. Moreover, places which through some disservice of nature are so shut in that they cannot receive the direct rays of the sun, even they, I say, are heated somewhat by the dull cloudy light that can pierce to them and are less rigid during the day than by night. Furthermore, all heat naturally dispels cloud and drives it off from itself. Therefore the sun likewise has the same effect. For that reason some people suppose that the blast must come from the direction in which the sun lies. But this opinion is manifestly false, seeing that the breeze sets in any direction, and one can sometimes sail right toward the sunrise with all canvas set. That could not happen if the wind were always coming from the direction of the sun.

X

The Etesian winds, too, which some drag into the discussion, do not give much support to their contention. First, I will tell you what their opinion is, and, secondly, why it is not mine. The Etesians, say they, do not blow in winter, because at the season of the shortest days the effect of the sun ceases before the cold is overcome. So, snow accumulates then and freezes hard. In summer the Etesian winds begin to blow at the time when the day is lengthened out and the sun's rays come down straight upon us. Probably, therefore, the snows smitten by the greater heat exhale more moisture. The earth likewise breathes more freely when uncovered and relieved of the snow. So more particles issue from the northern portion of the heavens, and are wafted toward our quarter, which lies lower and is warmer. From this the Etesians derive their impulse; wherefore they begin at the summer solstice, and do not blow strongly after the rise of the Dog-star, because by that time a great part of the cold northern exhalations has been carried down to our regions. But when the sun has changed his course he still directs his beams straight down on our hemisphere; and one part of the air he attracts, but another he thrusts before him. Thus the blast of the Etesians breaks the force of the summer heat, protecting us from the full severity of the most broiling months.

XI

I must now, as I promised, tell you why the Etesian winds do not give any assistance to their advocates nor contribute aught to their argument. We have said that the breeze is stirred by the morning light, but it no less surely subsides when the full sun has touched it. And yet the Etesians are called by sailors sleepy-headed and dainty, for the very reason that, as my brother Gallio puts it, they cannot get up in the morning. They begin to show face at the time when even the most persistent morning breeze has fallen. This would not occur if the sun reduced the force of the Etesians as he does that of the morning breezes. Add also that, if the cause of their rise was the lengthened space of the day, they would blow even prior to the solstice when the days are at their longest, and when the thaw of the snow is at its height. By the month of July everything is clear of snow, or, at any rate, very few places are still covered with it.

XII

There are some species of winds which issue from clouds that are rent and pour down their contents. They are called by the Greeks cloud winds (*εκνεφίας*). Their method of formation, as I — suppose, is this: among the particles given off by the earth's vapour and carried aloft there is great inequality and dissimilarity, some being dry and others moist. When the particles have massed in one body there is great discord and internal strife, which probably leads to the forming of certain hollow clouds with narrow pipe-shaped spaces left between, much like a flute in shape. In these gaps there is shut up rarefied air, which, being buffeted about in the confined space and becoming heated, strives to get more room. It expands and rends its envelope, breaking forth in wind, which, as a rule, is squally, since it descends from above and falls on us with fierce vehemence. It is not diffused, nor does it come through a wide open space, but it struggles and opens up its way by main force. As a rule, it is a brief gust. As it bursts through the cloudy receptacle by which it was confined and overleaps the battlements, it comes in tumultuous energy, sometimes not unattended with fire and the sound of thunder in the heavens. Such winds are much more violent and of longer duration if they have taken up in their course other gusts proceeding from a like cause, and thus several have conspired to form one. It is just like the flow of torrents of moderate size, not serious as long as each has its separate course. But when a number of them have combined their streams, they surpass in size regular, constant rivers. The same thing may probably happen in squalls; they are short-lived whenever they are alone. But when they have joined forces, and the air expelled from several parts of the sky at once has all combined in one, both force and duration are added to them.

II —

XIII

So, then, wind results from the breaking up of a cloud, which breach is effected in several different ways. The accumulation of air is burst sometimes by the internal struggle, as it seeks to gain an exit; sometimes by the heat produced either simply by the sun or else by the mutual ramming and friction of the roaming bodies.

At this point, if you have no objection, one may raise the question why a whirlwind occurs. In rivers, when their course has been without any obstacle for a long distance, the channel is a straight, uniform one. But when they meet some boulder that juts from the bank, the stream is driven back and whirls the waters in a circle without a way of escape, so that in their revolution they are constantly sucked in toward the centre to form a whirlpool. In like manner the wind pours out in full force as long as no obstacle stands in the way. But when it is reflected from some jutting projection, or is massed in a quarter which combines to form a thin downward channel, then it revolves upon its own axis, and produces an eddy similar to that in which, as we have just said, the water revolves. This revolving wind, which always traverses the same spot and is roused to fury by the mere giddy whirling, is a whirlwind. If it is a very fierce one, and revolves longer than ordinary, it ignites and causes what the Greeks call a fire-wind (*πρηστήρ*), which is just a fiery whirlwind. The bursting of such winds from the clouds produces almost all the disasters by which herds are carried off and ships lifted, bodily, right out of the water. Further, some winds produce different ones by dispersing the air and driving it before them in other directions than that toward which they themselves have bent their course.

It occurs to me at the moment to mention a parallel to wind that may be drawn from drops of moisture. The single drops may begin to incline downwards and be on the verge of giving way, but yet do not manage to fall. When, however, several have united and the mass has imparted strength, then they are said to flow and to move. So, as long as there are slight movements of the atmosphere disturbed at several points, they do not produce wind. The latter begins only when all

those movements are united and concentrated in a single effort. Air differs from wind in degree alone. A more violent air is a wind; air in turn is gently flowing atmosphere.

XIV

Let me now recall a remark that I had made early in this book, namely, that wind issues from cave or inner recess of earth. The whole earth is not of solid compact constitution down to its lowest foundations, but at many points is hollow,... hung over dark retreats.

In some places it contains voids that have no moisture. Though there is no light there to show the distinctions in the air, yet I venture to assert that cloud and mist settle in that gloom. Above ground cloud and mist surely do not exist because they are seen; but, rather, they are seen because they exist. Well, there too rivers none the less exist that they are not seen. You must understand that down there rivers flow equal in size to our own. Some glide gently, others resound as they tumble down headlong over the broken ground. So must not you equally allow that there are some lakes underground and some water in pools without an exit? This being so, it is of necessity that the air be charged with moisture, and that, being charged, it lean in one direction, raising the wind by its propulsion. We must recognise, therefore, that from those subterranean clouds blasts of wind are raised in the dark, what time they have gathered strength sufficient to remove the obstacles presented by the earth, or can seize upon some open path for their exit, and from this cavernous retreat can escape toward the abodes of men. Now it is obvious that underground there are large quantities of sulphur and other substances no less inflammable. When the air in search of a path of escape works its tortuous way through ground of this nature, it necessarily kindles fire by the mere friction. By and by, as the flames spread more widely, any sluggish air there may be is also rarefied and set in motion; a way of escape is sought with great roaring and violence. This point I will elaborate in more detail when I go on to treat of earthquakes.

XV

You must now allow me to tell you a little story! [1] Asclepiodotus vouches for the tale. Once on a time a large party of miners was sent down by Philip into an old mine, long since abandoned, to ascertain its prospects and condition, and to see whether ancient avarice had left anything for posterity to glean. Down they went with plenty of light to last for days. In due time, when they were quite tired by the length of the road, they saw a sight to make their hair stand on end — huge rivers and vast reservoirs of sluggish waters, equal in size to any above ground, not pressed down either with a weight of earth above, but overarched with an open vault. I confess I felt lively satisfaction in reading the story. It showed me that the vices from which [2] our age suffers are not new; they have been handed down from ancient days. Nor is it in our age that avarice has for the first time ransacked the reefs of soil and stone, searching in the dark for treasure badly hidden. Those ancestors of ours, whom we are always vaunting, our declension from whose standard we constantly bemoan, were also lured by hope to cut down the mountains and stand beneath the ruins to gloat over their filthy lucre.

Before the time of Philip of Macedon there were [3] kings who pursued treasure down to its deepest lurking-places; leaving the free air and light of day behind, they lowered themselves into those caverns, which no distinction of night from day could reach. What expectation could lead them on? What necessity caused man, whose head points to the stars, to stoop below, burying him in mines and plunging him in the very bowels of innermost earth to root up gold? The quest for the precious bane is no less perilous than its possession. For this he drove shafts and crawled round his dirty, uncertain booty, forgetful of day, forgetful of his better nature, which he abjured. On no dead man does earth lie so heavily as it lies on those on whom insistent avarice has cast earth's weight, from whom it has withdrawn the light of day, whom it has buried in the depths where that noxious poison lurks. They had the hardihood to descend to a region where they found a new order of nature, forms of overhanging earth and winds raving through the blind void, where

are dread fountains of waters whose streams none drink, and night reigns deep and unbroken. And then, after all that has come and gone, they dread the gods of the nether world!

XVI

BUT to return to the matter in hand; there are four winds, divided, according to the cardinal points, into east, west, south, and north. The rest of the winds, which are called by different names, are attached to these:

Eurus has gone toward the dawn and the realms of Nebaioth And Persia and the peaks that lie beneath the rays of morn. Evening and the coasts that are warmed by the setting sun Are close to Zephyrus. Scythia and the Great Bear Are under the sway of dread Boreas. The land that faces these Is bathed in unbroken cloud and rainy Auster.

Or, if you prefer a briefer enumeration, you may gather them in one great storm — a physical impossibility, by the way:

Eurus and Notus (south) rush together, and with squall upon squall Africus (south-west).

And we may add Aquilo (north), which has no place in the famous battle of the winds to which Virgil refers. Some make the number of the winds twelve. They divide the four quarters of heaven into three parts each, adding two subsidiary winds to each of the principal ones. On this principle that diligent author, Varro, classifies them. And there is good ground for it; the other method, which refers them to seasonal changes, is very unsatisfactory. For instance, the sun does not always rise or set at the same point. He has one place of rising at the equinox — indeed, the equinox occurs twice a year — another at the summer, and still another at the winter, solstice. The wind which sets in from the direction of sunrise at the equinoxes is with us called Subsolanus (near the sun); the Greeks call it ἀφ'ἡλίου (from the sun). From sunrise in winter Eurus comes, named by our countrymen Vulturnus (*i e* from Mt. Vultur in the S.E.). Livy also calls it by this name, in connection with that famous battle of Cannae, which proved so disastrous to Rome. Hannibal on that occasion managed to get our army with its face to the rising sun and to the wind; by the aid of the wind and the glare that dazzled the eyes of the enemy he snatched the victory. Varro likewise uses the same

name. But Eurus is a name now naturalised, and has a place in our vocabulary that does not suggest any foreign origin. The wind that is raised by sunrise at the summer solstice was called by the Greeks *κακκία*; we have no name for it. Sunset at the equinox sends us Favonius, which even people who cannot speak Greek will tell you is called the Zephyr. Corus, which is by some called Argestes [from its clearness], comes from the sunset at the summer solstice.

I do not approve of the identification; Corus is a vehement wind, rushing in one uniform direction, while Argestes is, as a rule, a gentle wind, and blows impartially on travellers coming and going along the same road (*i e* is constantly [6] shifting). From sunset in midwinter comes the rushing furious Africus (African wind), named by the Greeks the Libyan (*λίπ*). In the northern quarter the highest (*i e* most easterly) is Aquilo, the central one is Septemtrio, the lowest Thracias, for which there is no corresponding word in Latin. In the southern region there is Euronotus, then Notus, or in Latin Auster, then Libonotus, which has no Latin name.

XVII

[1] We Stoics hold that there are twelve winds; not that there are everywhere so many (the slope of the earth [*i e* of the earth's axis] excludes some), but because there are nowhere more than twelve. We speak of six cases in the same way, not because every noun possesses six, but because none has more than six. Those who assert the number of the winds to be twelve adopt the principle that the number must be the same as the divisions of the heavens. Now the heavens are divided into five zones passing through the cardinal points [2] of the world. These are the northern, the solstitial, the equinoctial, the wintry, the one that faces the northern. A sixth is added in the zone which separates the upper part of the world from the lower. As you know, there is always one-half the world above our head, and one-half beneath our feet. This line which lies between the visible and the concealed parts of the sky is called by the Greeks the Horizon (*ὀριξων* = bounding line): our school call it the Bounder; others, the Bounding [line]. To this must be added the meridian circle, which cuts the horizon at right angles. Some of these zones run transversely; intersecting others. Now there must necessarily be as many divisions of the heavens as there are parts. So, then, the horizon or bounding circle cuts those five zones, of whose position I have just spoken, making ten parts, five to east and five to west. The meridian circle which meets the horizon gives two additional divisions. Thus the air receives its twelve divisions, and yields a like number of winds.

There are some of the winds that are peculiar to certain localities; they do not carry far, but reach only the immediate vicinity. They do not derive their impulse from a particular quarter of the world at large. For example, the wind Atabulus haunts Apulia; the Iapygian, Calabria; the Scironian, Athens; Cataegis, Pamphylia; Circius, Gaul. To the last mentioned, though it shakes their houses, the people are very grateful, believing they are indebted to it for the healthiness of their climate. At any rate, the late Emperor Augustus, when he was staying in Gaul, erected to it a temple he had vowed. My task would never be done if I were to attempt to enumerate the individual winds.

There is hardly any district that has not some particular wind that arises in it and falls not far from it.

XVIII

[1] Wherefore among the other works of Providence this one must be regarded as worthy of all admiration. Heaven had many purposes in view in devising the winds and distributing them through all the varied quarters of the earth. The first object was to prevent the atmosphere from becoming gross; by their constant tossing the winds were meant to render it beneficial, a source of life to those who were to breathe it. In the second place, they were to supply the earth with rain, and at the [2] same time to restrain excess of rain. This they accomplish by now gathering, now scattering the clouds, so that the rainfall should be fairly distributed over the whole world. The south wind drives it toward Italy, the north sends it back to Africa. The Etesian winds will not suffer the clouds to settle in our quarter; but yet the whole of India and Ethiopia are watered with constant rain during the period of their prevalence. Moreover, crops could not be gathered in unless the worthless elements were winnowed by the blast from the good grain with which it is mixed. The breeze is needed, too, to rouse the seed and bring to light the latent fruit, by causing it to burst through its covering, those wrappings which the farmers call follicles.

[3] Furthermore, the wind has established intercommunication among all the different nations, and has united tribes far removed from each other in place.

A great service is this that nature here renders, did not man's madness turn it to his own injury! As it is, the remark may be applied to the winds which was commonly made regarding Caesar the Elder (Julius), as recorded by Titus Livius (Livy); it was doubtful whether his birth was a blessing or a curse to the state. In like manner all the useful and necessary services performed by the winds cannot outweigh the devices which man's madness has through them framed for his own destruction. But they do not cease to be inherently good, even though, through fault of those who degrade their use, they are turned to instruments of harm. Surely Providence and God, the great Disposer of the world, had a beneficent aim in establishing the winds, and diffusing them on every side, to wit, that the atmosphere

might be kept in motion by them, that no part of the world should become unsightly through inactivity. His object was not that we might man our fleet with armed soldiers to seize every quarter of the main, and that we might go in search of foes either in or beyond the sea. What frenzy goads us on, and matches us in strife for our mutual destruction? We spread the sails to the winds to go in quest of war, and we run risks of sea for the sake of meeting risks of battle! We tempt the uncertainty of fortune, the force of tempests that no human effort can overcome, death without hope of burial. The prize would not be worth the toil if the voyage conducted us to peace. As it is, when we have passed so many hidden rocks and hidden shoals of a treacherous sea; when we have escaped the billows that rise like mountains above us, into which the raging wind forces all voyagers; when we have passed through days enveloped in mist, and nights rendered still more awful by cloud and thunder, and by whirlwinds that rend the frail bark in pieces; what reward shall we have for all the toil and anxiety? What harbour will give us hospitable shelter, worn out as we are with so many sufferings? War, I trow, will meet us, and an enemy ready prepared on shore and tribes destined to cruel slaughter, but not without much damage to the conqueror, and ancient cities in flames. Why do we press whole nations into arms? Why do we enrol armies to marshal their lines amid the billows? Why do we disquiet the seas? The land, I suppose, is not wide enough to compass our death. Fortune deals too tenderly with us: she has given us too hardy bodies, too sound health. No ravage of plague cuts us off: each one may comfortably fill up the measure of his years and reach the haven of old age. So let us launch upon the deep and call toward us the loitering fates. Poor wretches, what is it ye seek? Death, which is always too much with us? It will attack you, even in your couch; well, see that the victims it attacks are innocent of crime. It will seize you in your house; be sure it find you planning no mischief.

But what can one call it but plain insanity actually to carry destruction in your train, to rush in anger against men you never saw, to lay waste without provocation all that comes in your path, and, after the fashion of wild beasts, to kill a man you do not hate? We are worse than beasts, for they bite only in retaliation or from hunger,

but we, utterly lavish of our own and others' blood, harass the seas by the vessels we launch, entrust our safety to the waves, and pray for favouring winds, counting it our good fortune to be borne in safety to the wars! To what lengths have our crimes hurried us criminals? It is not enough to vent one's madness within one's own sphere. Your stupid King of Persia must cross into Greece, filling it with an army with which he has failed to conquer it. Your Alexander, leaving behind Bactra and India, must needs seek to learn what lies beyond the great sea, and will chafe that there is any point beyond which he cannot go. Crassus in like manner will fall a prey to the Parthians through his lust of gold. He will not dread the imprecations of the tribune who calls him back, nor the storms of the tedious sea, nor the lightning by Euphrates that foretold destruction, nor the resistance of heaven itself. Through the wrath of man and God alike gold shall be sought.

Not without good cause, therefore, it may be said that nature would have done better by us had she forbidden the winds to blow at all, had she checked their roaming abroad in their fury, and ordered each one to abide in his own land. If this had served no other end, at any rate the mischief of each human life would have been restricted to itself and its own nation. As it is, the ills of home are too little for us; we must toil to share those abroad as well. No land is so far removed from neighbours that it cannot send forth in some direction its evil propensities. How do I know but that some ruler of a great nation meantime concealed from view, swollen by fortune's kindness, may choose not to confine his arms within the boundaries of his own realm, but with secret design may even now be fitting out his fleet against us? How can I tell whether this wind or that shall convey war to me? It would go far to ensure the peace of the world if the seas could be shut up.

Still, as I said a little ago, we cannot put the blame on God, our Author, if we corrupt His ^[12] blessings and turn them into curses. He gave us the winds to maintain the equable temperature of earth and sky, to call forth or to repress the waters, to nourish the produce of field and tree; the crops are brought to maturity, among other causes, by their mere tossing in the wind, which attracts the nourishment to the top, and by movement prevents the stagnation of decay. He gave

the winds that we might gain acquaintance with foreign lands. Man would have been an untutored creature without much experience of the world if ^[13] circumscribed by the bounds of his native soil. He gave the winds that the blessings of each region might become common to all; not to convey across the sea regiments of horse and foot, nor arms for the destruction of mankind. If we simply estimate nature's boons by the degraded uses to which they have been put, there is nothing that we have not received for our own hurt. Who is aught the better of the gift of sight? or of speech? To whom is life itself not a torment? I defy you to find anything of such undoubted utility that it cannot by misuse be converted into a curse. So it is with the winds: nature had designed them for a boon; we ^[14] have ourselves made them the opposite. They all lead us to some disaster: one man has not the same motive as his neighbour for putting to sea, but none has a good one. Diverse temptations lead us to essay the way. Above all, we love to go to sea in order to damage some one. Plato, with whose testimony I may close, has observed, with great aptness, it is mere trifles that men purchase with their lives. Yes, my dear Lucilius, if you estimate aright man's madness, in other words, our own — for we all wallow in the same herd — you will be still more amused by the reflection that we amass for life what in the end wears life out.

BOOK VI. WHICH TREATS OF EARTHQUAKES

I

We have just had news, my esteemed Lucilius, ^[1] that Pompeii, the celebrated city in Campania, has been overwhelmed in an earthquake, which shook all the surrounding districts as well. The city, you know, lies on a beautiful bay, running far back from the open sea, and is surrounded by two converging shores, on the one side that of Surrentum and Stabiae, on the other that of Herculaneum. The disaster happened in winter, a period for which our forefathers used to claim immunity from such dangers. On the 5th of February, in the consulship ^[2] of Regulus and Virginius, this shock occurred, involving widespread destruction over the whole province of Campania; the district had never been without risk of such a calamity, but had been hitherto exempt from it, having escaped time after time from groundless alarm.

The extent of the disaster may be gathered from a few details. Part of the town of Herculaneum fell; the buildings left standing are very insecure. The colony of Nuceria had painful experience of the shock, but sustained no damage. Naples was just touched by what might have proved a great disaster to it; many private houses suffered, but no public building was destroyed. The villas ^[3] built on the cliffs everywhere shook, but without damage being done. In addition, they say, a flock of six hundred sheep was destroyed, and statues were split open; some people were driven out of their minds, and wandered about in helpless idiotcy. The plan of my present work demands a discussion of the causes of this, and the disaster itself fits in with our present inquiries (*i e* our discussion is opportune in view of the recent disaster). We must seek solace for the anxious and dispel overmastering fear. For what can any one believe quite safe if the world itself is shaken, and its most solid parts totter to ^[4] their fall? Where, indeed, can our fears have limit if the one thing immovably fixed, which upholds all other things in dependence on it,

begins to rock, and the earth lose its chief characteristic, stability? What refuge can our weak bodies find? whither shall anxious ones flee when fear springs from the ground and is drawn up from earth's foundations? If roofs at any time begin to crack and premonitions of fall are given, there is general panic: all hurry pell-mell out of doors, they abandon their household treasures, and trust for safety to the public street.

[5] But if the earth itself stir up destruction, what refuge or help can we look for? If this solid globe, which upholds and defends us, upon which our cities are built, which has been called by some the world's foundation, stagger and remove, whither are we to turn? What comfort, not to say help, can you gain when fear has destroyed all way of escape? Where, I say, is there any protection you can trust? what is there that will stand as sure defence either of oneself or of others? An enemy I — can drive off from my city wall. The mere difficulties of approach to turrets set on the dizzy heights will stop the march even of great armies.

From storm the harbour shelters us; our roofs are [6] able to withstand the whole force of clouds let loose, and the endless deluges of rain. Fire cannot pursue us if we run away from it. Against heaven's threats in thunder refuges underground and caverns dug out in the depths of the earth are of avail — the fire of heaven does not pierce the ground, but is beaten back by the tiniest portion of the soil. In time of plague we may change our place of abode. No species of disaster is without some means of escape. Lightning has never consumed whole nations. A plague-laden sky has drained cities, but has never blotted them out.

But this calamity of earthquake extends beyond [7] all bounds, inevitable, insatiable, the destruction of a whole State. Nor is it only families or households or single cities that it swallows; it overthrows whole nations and regions. At one time it hides them in their ruins, at another consigns them to the deep abyss; it leaves not a wrack behind to witness that what no longer is, once was. The bare soil stretches over the site of the most famous cities, and no trace is left of their former existence. Nor are there wanting those who dread most of all this kind of death, in which they go down alive into the pit, houses and all, and are carried off from the number of the living: as if every

form of death did not lead to the one goal. Among [8] nature's righteous decrees this is the chief, that when we reach the end of life we are all on a level.

It makes no difference, therefore, to me whether one stone wound me to death or I am crushed beneath a whole mountain; whether the weight of one house come down on me, and I expire beneath the dust of its humble mound, or whether the whole world descend upon my head; whether I yield up this breath in the open light of day or in the vast abyss of the yawning earth; whether I am borne down to those depths all alone or along with a great throng of perishing nations. To me it can make no difference how great is the turmoil that accompanies my death; the thing is everywhere just the same.

Wherefore, let us raise high our courage against that disaster, which can neither be shunned nor yet foreseen. Let us cease to listen to the people that have bid adieu to Campania since the time of this disaster, and have removed to other districts, vowing they will never set foot in that quarter again! Who can guarantee them more solid foundations in whatever soil they choose? All the world is subject to the same fate. If it has not yet suffered from earthquake, it may; perchance this spot on which you stand in full security will be rent this night, or even this day before night. How can one tell whether is better the state of the places on which fortune has already spent her force or of those which are upheld meantime, but only for some disaster to come? We do greatly err if we suppose any quarter of the world wholly exempt from this danger. All quarters are subject to the same law. Nature framed nothing to be immovable. Different things will fall at different times. Just as in large cities, now this house and now that leans over and has to be shored up, so in the world as a whole, now this part contains a flaw, now that. Tyre was once notorious for a disaster of the kind. The province of Asia lost at a single stroke twelve of its cities. Last year calamity overtook Achaia and Macedonia, now the injury has fallen upon Campania, whatever be the nature of that force which thus assails us. Fate makes a circuit, paying a second visit to places she has long passed over. On some places her attacks are more rare, more frequent on some. Nothing is suffered to be quite exempt from injury. Not merely we men, whose life is frail and fleeting, but cities too, and the earth's coasts and

shores, yea, the very sea falls under bondage to fate. And in face of this we promise ourselves permanence in the boons fortune bestows! we suppose there will be stability and endurance in happiness, whose fickleness is greatest of all things on earth! While men promise themselves all things in perpetuity, it never enters their thoughts that the very earth on which we stand is not permanent. The flaws of the ground are to be found everywhere; they are not peculiar to Campania or Tyre or Achaia. The earth coheres imperfectly, it suffers breach from many causes; permanent as a whole, it is subject to collapse in its parts.

II

What am I doing? I had promised to offer comfort in face of danger, and lo! I threaten its terrors on all sides. I tell you that there can be no assured peace in what can suffer or cause destruction. But that very fact I regard as a solace, and, indeed, the most powerful of all. Fear is but folly when there is no escape from it. Philosophy delivers the wise from fear; even the unlearned may derive great confidence from despair. You must, therefore, regard the words addressed to those amazed by sudden captivity amid fire and foe as addressed to the whole human race:

The one safety of the conquered is to hope for none.

[1] If you wish to fear nothing, think that everything is to be feared; consider by how slight causes our life is dissipated. Neither food nor drink, nor waking nor sleeping, is healthful, except in due measure. One may soon realise that we are but puny, insignificant bodies, weak and unstable, that small effort is needed to compass our destruction. The only sufficiency of danger, doubtless, would be the earth's trembling, its sudden dissipation, the rending of its surface into chasms!

[2] Surely he sets a high value on his life who dreads only lightning, and earthquakes with their yawning abysses; won't he allow himself to open his eyes to his frailty and be afraid of choking on his phlegm? Such, forsooth, is our constitution by birth, such the powerful frames we have obtained, such the size we have grown to, that we cannot perish unless the four quarters of the world are moved, the [3] heavens thunder, and the earth subside! Why, a pain in a tiny nail, not even the whole nail, but a little ragnail at the side, may finish us! And I must fear only the trembling of the world, when too thick a spittle will choke me! I am to await with dread the removal of the sea from its place, or the overflowing of an abnormal tide with its excess of water; why, some ere now have been strangled by a drink that took a wrong course down the throat! What folly to be afraid of the sea when you know [4] that a single drop may kill you!

There is no solace of death greater than the very liability to death, no solace of all the terrors from without equal to the thought that there are countless dangers within our own bosom. What greater madness than to collapse at the sound of thunder, and through fear of lightning to creep under the ground? What greater folly than to stand in fear of the earth's tottering and the sudden fall of mountains, or inroads of the sea cast up beyond the shore, when death is everywhere present and meets us on every side? Nothing is so small as not to be strong enough to compass the destruction of the human race. Great or unusual dangers ought not to unnerve us, as if they implied more mischief than a common death; nay, rather when one must quit the world and at last resign life, it should be a positive joy to perish by some grand cause. Die we must somewhere, sometime. The ground you tread may stand firm, it may confine itself within its own bounds and not be tossed about by any violence; yet some day I — shall be beneath it. Does it really matter, then, whether I place it on myself or itself do? It is rent by the irresistible force of some disaster; it bursts and draws me into its immense depths. What then? Is death easier on the earth's level surface? What reason for complaint have I if nature will not have me lie in a place unknown to fame? or if she lays on me a portion of herself? My friend, Vagellius, in that famous poem of his, says finely:

If fall I must, I should desire to fall from the height of heaven.

We may adopt the language. If fall I must, let the earth be shaken at my fall; not that one ought to pray for a public disaster, but it is a great solace of death to see that the earth is likewise subject to death.

III

[1] IT will be useful also to be assured that none of these things is the doing of the gods, and that the moving of heaven or earth is no work of angry deities. Those phenomena have causes of their own. It is not by special command that they put forth their rage, but, just as in our own bodies, the disturbance arises from certain inherent imperfections; at the moment when they seem to inflict injury, they sustain it. Through our ignorance of the truth all these things are terrible, the more as [2] their infrequency increases our alarm. Familiar occurrences seem less serious; the unusual causes greater terror. But why is anything unusual in our estimation? The reason is that we grasp the meaning of nature only superficially, and not rationally; we dwell too exclusively on what she has done, and do not consider what she can do. Accordingly, we pay the penalty of this neglect in our terror of things that we suppose unprecedented, when they are not really unprecedented, but merely unusual. For instance, are not superstitious fears inspired both privately and even for the safety of the State, if either the sun has been seen in eclipse or if the moon, whose obscuration is more frequent, [3] has partially or wholly been concealed? And is not this far more so in the case of such sights as we have spoken of: torches driven athwart the heavens, the sky on fire over the greater part of its extent, comets, mock suns, stars appearing in the daytime, the sudden passage of stars that mark their trail with a bright light? Our wonder at these is in no case free from fear. As the cause of the fear is ignorance, is it not worth while to gain the knowledge that will dispel it? How much better it would be to inquire into the causes of the alarming sights, to bend, in fact, our whole mind to the task? Nothing, surely, could be found more deserving than that, of having the mind's energies not only lent to it, but devoted to it.

IV

LET us ask ourselves, therefore, what it is that stirs the earth to its foundation, what moves a mass of such weight, what it is that is stronger than the earth, and that in its violence can shake such a load. Let us inquire why at one time the earth trembles, at another is loosened and sinks, and again is divided into parts and opens a chasm; or why on some occasions the intervals of destruction are prolonged, on others are suddenly cut short. What is the cause why it now consigns to its depths rivers of renowned greatness, and now causes, fresh rivers to issue? why does it sometimes open up springs of hot water, sometimes freeze them with cold? and why at times are fires caused to shoot out through some hitherto unknown opening in mountain or crag, while sometimes well-known fires, that have been famous for centuries, are suppressed? The earthquake produces a thousand strange sights, changing the aspect of the ground, levelling mountains, elevating plains, exalting valleys, raising new islands in the deep. What are the causes that bring these things to pass? That is a subject well worthy our discussion. What, you say, will be the reward of our labour? That reward, I say, which surpasses all others, the ^[1] knowledge of nature. Among the many serviceable lessons to be derived from such researches, no feature is more commendable than this, that man is thereby made to dwell upon the sight of his own grandeur; the study is pursued, not in hope of gain, but from the wonder it excites. Let us inquire, therefore, what it is that brings about all this. The inquiry is so fascinating to me that although long ago in my youth I published a volume on earthquakes, I am anxious to make another trial of my powers, and to see whether age has added anything to my knowledge, or, at any rate, to my industry.

V

[1] THE cause of earthquakes has been assigned variously by different authorities to water, fire, air, and to the earth itself; some assign it to a combination of several of the causes, others, to a union of them all. Certain writers have stated that it was plain to them that some one of these causes produced the earthquake, but it was not plain which. Let us look at the various opinions in detail. First of all, I feel bound to say in general terms that the old views are crude and inexact. As yet men were groping their way round truth. Everything was new to those who made the first attempt to grasp it; only later were the subjects accurately investigated. But all subsequent discoveries must nonetheless be set down to the credit of those early [2] thinkers. It was a task demanding great courage to remove the veil that hid nature, and, not satisfied with a superficial view, to look beneath the surface and dive into the secrets of the gods. A great contribution to discovery was made by the man who first conceived the hope of its possibility. We must, therefore, listen indulgently to the ancients. No subject is perfected while it is but beginning. The truth holds not merely of the subject we are dealing with, the greatest and most complicated of all, in which, however much may be accomplished, every succeeding age will still find something fresh to accomplish. It holds alike in every other concern; the first principles have always been a long way off from the completed science.

VI

WATER is the first cause alleged: more authors than one adopt this view, but it is not stated by all in the same terms. Thales of Miletus is convinced that the whole earth floats, and is upborne by moisture lying beneath it, which you may call either Ocean or the great sea, or still mere elemental water of a different character from the sea, the simple ingredient, moisture. In these waves, in his opinion, the globe is supported like some huge lumbering vessel in the water which bears it. It is unnecessary for me to reproduce his reasons for supposing that the heaviest part of the world cannot be sustained in such a rare and nimble element as air: for the earth's position is not the question here but its movement. By way of argument, to prove that water is the cause, he adduces the fact that in every considerable earthquake, as a rule, new springs burst out. So if a boat leans over to one side away from the straight, the result is that it ships water. And, generally speaking, in the case of all objects which water supports, if they are unduly sunk, the water either pours over them or at any rate rises to right and left above its ordinary height.

Now, no lengthened consideration is needed to prove the falsity of this view. Why, if the earth were supported by water, and from time to time shaken by it, it would be in perpetual shock; the wonder would be not that it was tossed about sometimes, but that it was ever at rest. Then, again, it would be shaken all over and not at a single point: we never find only half the ship tossed by the waves. But, according to present experience, a shock never occurs over the whole earth simultaneously, but is always felt at some particular spot. How, then, can it be that what is carried as a whole is not shaken as a whole, if the shock comes from the body by which it is carried? But, it may be urged, why do waters burst out at the time of earthquakes? Well, in the first place, there has often been earthquake without any fresh supply of water appearing. Secondly, if the supposed cause of the water rushing forth were the true one, it would pour all round the sides of the earth, as we see happening under similar circumstances in sea and rivers: when boats sink, the increase of water shows itself chiefly over the sides. Finally, the outburst of waters which Thales

describes would not be so small as he says, nor would it ooze in like bilge-water through a chink, but from the exhaustless reservoir that upbears all creation, a mighty deluge would ensue.

VII

SOME, who, like Thales, attribute earthquake to the effects of water, give a different explanation of its operation. There are, they say, many kinds of waters running over the whole earth. In one place there are constant rivers whose size renders them fit for navigation, even without the aid of rains. There is the Nile, rolling down its huge volume all summer long: here are the Danube and the Rhine separating with their streams the peaceful from the hostile, the former checking attacks from the Sarmatians and forming the boundary between Europe and Asia, the latter keeping back the Germans, a nation ever keen for war. Then there are lakes of very wide extent, great pools surrounded by tribes mutually ignorant of each other, marshes that no boat can struggle through, that cannot be passed even by the people that dwell on their borders. Add, then, the multitude of fountains, and of river sources that belch out of their recesses full-grown streams. Besides, there are many rushing torrents that gather only for a time, whose force is as shortlived as it is sudden. Now there are waters, in all this variety of form and character, within as well as above the earth. Away there below some are borne along in vast bulk, and tumble their whole volume down the steep: others more sluggish are dammed back in shallows, and flow with gentle, quiet stream. And can any one deny that within those vast underground hollows waters are formed, and lie sluggish and inactive in many places? It needs no long proof to show that there must be many waters in the place where all waters are. The earth would not be able to produce so many rivers unless it poured them from a copious reserve.

This being so, sometimes below the earth a river must become swollen, and leaving its banks assail with violence all obstacles that meet it. So there will be a movement of some point on which the river has made an onset, and which it will keep lashing until its waters fall. Or it may happen that the constant wear of a stream may eat away some quarter, dragging down thereby some mass above, by whose fall, in turn, the surface which rested on it is shaken. Now surely a man trusts too much to the sight of the eyes and cannot

launch out his imagination beyond, if he does not believe that the depths of earth contain a vast sea with winding shores. I see nothing to prevent or oppose the existence of a beach down there in the obscurity, or a sea finding its way through the hidden entrances to its appointed place. There, too, it occupies as much space as here, perhaps more, since the regions up on earth have had to be shared with so many living creatures; but the hidden regions being desert without inhabitant give freer scope to the waves of the nether ocean. And who is there to hinder the sea from swelling there and being tossed by all the winds that every interstice of the earth, and every species of atmosphere can create? So, then, when a storm greater than ordinary has arisen, it may beat upon some one side of the earth with too great vehemence and move it. For on the surface likewise, many places which had been far from the sea have felt the violence of its sudden approach: villas almost out of sight of it have been invaded by the waves which used only to be heard in the distance. The nether sea, too, can approach and retire; neither of which movements can take place without shock to the earth that stands above it.

VIII

I DO not, indeed, suppose that you will long hesitate to believe that there are underground rivers and a hidden sea. From what other cause could the rivers burst out and come to the surface unless the source of the moisture were shut up within the earth? For instance, when one sees the Tigris interrupted and dried up in the middle of its course, not diverted as a whole, but gradually with imperceptible; losses first lessen and then waste away, where do you suppose it goes to if not to the depths of the earth, especially as you see it emerge again not less in volume than its former stream? And what are you to say when you see the Alpheus, so celebrated by the poets, sink in Achaia and, having crossed beneath the sea, pour forth in Sicily the pleasant fountain Arethuse? And don't you know that among the explanations given of the occurrence of the inundation of the Nile in summer, one is that it bursts forth from the ground, and is swollen not by rain from above but by water given out from within the earth?

I have myself heard from their own lips the story told by the two non-commissioned officers sent to investigate the sources of the Nile by our good Emperor Nero, a monarch devoted to virtue in every form, but especially solicitous for the interests of truth. The King of Ethiopia had supplied them with assistance and furnished letters of introduction to the neighbouring kings, and so they had penetrated into the heart of Africa and accomplished a long journey. "We came indeed," I give their own words, "to huge marshes, the limit of which even the natives did not know, and no one else could hope to know; so completely was the river entangled with vegetable growth, so impassable the waters by foot, or even by boat, since the muddy overgrown marsh would bear only a small boat containing one person. There," my informants went on, "we saw with our eyes two rocks from which an immense quantity of water issued." Now whether that is the real source or only an addition to the river; whether it rises there or merely returns to the surface after its previous course underground; don't you think that, whatever it is, that water comes up from a great lake in the earth? The earth must

contain moisture scattered in numerous places and collected at depth in order to be able to belch it out with such violence.

IX

FIRE is the cause assigned by some for earthquakes, but they are not agreed as to its method of action. First among them is Anaxagoras, who is of opinion that pretty much the same cause produces concussion in the earth as in the atmosphere. In the nether parts of earth, air (gas) causes explosions of thick atmosphere massed in clouds with the same violence as on earth clouds are wont to be burst. Fire is struck out by this collision of clouds and by the rush of the atmosphere that is forced out. This fire in seeking an exit meets obstructions and bursts through all obstacles, until it has either found a way of escape to the light through the narrow passages, or has made one for itself by violence and destruction. Other writers who still believe the cause to lie in fire do not suppose that this is its method of action: they think the fire presents itself in more than one place and burns away everything in the vicinity. Then if the parts eaten away fall in at any time, a shock follows in the portions which are deprived of their supports; they first totter and then collapse; nothing encounters them to support their weight. Then chasms and vast gulfs are opened up, or it may be, after hanging a long time in the balance, the ground settles down over what is still left standing. We see the same thing happen ordinarily as often as a part of the city suffers from a fire. The joists are burnt through, or what gave support to the upper part of the buildings is undermined. Then the roofs after tossing about for a long time fall in; their swaying and oscillating continue until they find a resting-place on solid ground.

X

ANAXIMENES affirms that the earth is itself the cause of the earthquake, and that nothing encounters it from without to give it a shock. Within it, he thinks, certain parts of its substance fall of themselves, either loosened by moisture, or eaten away by fire, or shaken off by the violence of air. But even in absence of such active cause there is not wanting sufficient to account for the loss or removal of some portion of the earth. In the first place, all things fall through age, for nothing is safe from the ravages of time, which waste even the solidest and strongest edifice. In old buildings parts fall without being knocked off, merely because they have more weight [2] than strength. So in the earth's body as a whole it comes to pass that portions are loosened by age, and being loosened, fall, causing shock to the things above them. This they do primarily while they are leaving their place; for nothing, especially if it is large, can be wrenched off without movement of that to which it adhered. But further, when the objects have fallen, they meet the solid earth and rebound like a ball. When a ball falls, it jumps up and bounces repeatedly, just as often, in fact, as it recoils from the ground for a new flight. If the loosened objects within the earth are carried down into stagnant waters, this accident of itself causes a shock to the vicinity through the wave cast up by the weight of the objects shot suddenly down from a great height.

XI

SOME attribute these earthquakes to fire, but give different explanations of its action. When fire causes intense heat at various points beneath the earth, it must roll up a great cloud of vapour, which can find no exit, and which dilates the air by its high temperature. If the pressure of the vapour is excessive, it scatters all obstructions; but if it is comparatively moderate, it merely causes movement of the earth. We observe water smoke when fire is applied. What the fire does to this water in a narrow pot, one may suppose is done on a much greater scale when a violent and wide-spreading fire causes immense extents of water to boil. It then by evaporation from the overflowing waters shakes violently whatever it strikes.

XII

Many of the greatest authorities are persuaded that [1] earthquakes are to be attributed to air. Archelaus, who is well versed in the records of antiquity, speaks thus: Winds are carried down into the earth's hollows and recesses. When they are all full, and the atmosphere is condensed to the utmost extent, the air, which continues to come in, forces and thrusts the former air, and with frequent blows first compresses and then dislodges it. The air in its [2] endeavour to find room forces all the narrow passages and tries to burst its barriers. Through the struggle of the air as it seeks for an escape it comes to pass that the earth is moved. This explains why the approach of an earthquake is preceded by still and quiet of the atmosphere; the force of the air which is wont to rouse the winds is held in check in its nether abode. Even [3] on the present occasion of the earthquake in Campania, although the season was winter, the atmosphere was perfectly still and calm for several days before it. Well, then, did an earthquake never take place when there was a wind blowing? On very rare occasions have there been two winds blowing simultaneously. Still, such a thing is possible, and is wont to occur. But if we admit it as an established fact that two winds can be in activity at one and the same time, why shouldn't it happen that [at times] one of them agitates the upper air, the other the nether?

XIII

IN this category you may rank Aristotle and his disciple Theophrastus, a man of pleasant though not of superhuman eloquence, as the Greeks considered him, and of easy, polished style.” Let me unfold in more detail what they hold in common: There is always evaporation of some kind going on from the earth, which is at one time dry, at another has an admixture of moisture. When this, rising from the lowest parts of earth, has been raised to the utmost extent, and has no place beyond into which to issue, it is borne back and returns upon itself. The struggle of the air in its ebb and flow tosses to and fro all obstructions it meets, and, whether its egress is stopped or whether it escapes through the narrow openings, it causes movement of the earth and uproar. To the same school of opinion belongs Strato, who made a special study of this department of science, and was a diligent student of natural philosophy. His verdict on the matter is this: Cold and heat always move away from one another in opposite directions, and cannot remain in the same place. Cold flows into the spot whence the influence of heat has departed; and, conversely, there is heat in the place whence cold has been banished. The statement is beyond doubt, but the contrariety of the two may become plain to you from the following: In the winter [3] season, when there is cold on the earth’s surface, the wells are warm, and caves and all underground retreats equally so. The heat, yielding possession of the upper regions to the cold, retreats down there. When it reaches the lower regions, and is accumulated there to the utmost, the denser it is, the more powerful is it. To this a further supply is added, to which what has already gathered, and is compressed into a narrow space, of necessity gives way. The same thing happens from the opposite cause when a greater quantity of cold is borne down to these recesses. All the heat [4] that lurks there gives way to the cold, and retires to the narrow passages, and is driven onward with great impetuosity. The nature of the two, as I have said, does not allow agreement, or abode in the same place. In its flight, then, and eager haste to escape at all hazards the air pushes back and tosses about all that lies near it. This is why, previous to an

earthquake, a roaring is usually heard, through the tumult of the winds in the earth's bowels. For not otherwise, as our poet [5] Virgil says, could

The earth bellow beneath our feet and the lofty peaks be moved,
were not this the work of the winds. In this contest again there are ups and downs. There are cessations in the massing of the heat and, in turn, in its emission. Then the cold, too, is restrained and gives way, but some day soon it will be more powerful again. While, therefore, the alternating forces rush to and fro, and the air moves hither and thither, the earth is shaken.

XIV

[1] There are some who think that, while air and no other cause produces earthquake, it operates in a different way from that which Aristotle supposed. Listen to what they say: Our body is irrigated with blood, and with air which courses everywhere along its own routes. We have some comparatively narrow vessels through which they cannot do more than pass; some wider, in which they accumulate, and from which they are distributed [2] to the members. So this whole body of the earth at large has passages alike for water, which performs the function of blood, and for wind, which might be called simply the breath of its life. These two encounter each other at some points, at some points they are stationary. While in our bodies good health is enjoyed, the movement of the veins preserves its rate undisturbed; but when there is malady the pulse beats more rapidly, the deep breathing and panting betoken laboured, wearied effort. In like manner the earth remains unshaken [3] while it maintains its natural position. But if any flaw occur in it, there is a shaking, just as of a body suffering from disease; for the air which flowed through it with regularity is violently smitten, and causes its veins to quiver; but not, let me add, in the way, described a little above, imagined by those who will have it that the earth is a living creature. In that case the earth, just as an animal does, would feel the agitation equally all over. When a fever seizes any of us, it does not delay for a time its attack upon some parts, but with uniform regularity spreads over them all.

Perhaps you had better assume, therefore, that air from the surrounding atmosphere enters the earth. As long as it has free egress, it glides through it without doing harm; but if it meet some obstacle to block its way, then it is, to begin with, weighted with the atmosphere that pours in on the rear; by and by it escapes with difficulty through some chink, and makes its way with the greater violence the narrower the opening is. That cannot take place without a struggle, and a struggle involves shaking of the earth. But if the confined air cannot find even a chink by which to issue, it is massed and becomes furious, and is driven round in this direction and in that,

overthrowing or bursting one thing after another. It is excessively subtle, and at the same time exceedingly powerful; it can worm its way into obstructions however great, splitting and scattering whatever it enters. When this occurs, then there is a regular tossing of the earth. For the earth either opens to give room to the wind, or, after giving room, is deprived of its foundation and subsides into the very cavern from which it allowed the wind to issue.

XV

SOME entertain the following opinion: The earth is porous at many points, possessing not merely those first shafts which it received as ventilators at its creation, but many subsequently opened up by various changes. In some places water has washed away the soil that was on the surface; part has been eaten away by torrents, while parts have been exposed by the disruptive action of great tides. Through the interstices thus produced air enters. If it so happen now that the sea has shut it in and driven it deeper, and the waves prevent its escape by the same road, egress and regress being alike closed, the air rolls about within the earth. Its natural tendency is to hurry straight forward, but as that path is closed, it presses upward and lashes the earth, whose weight lies heavy upon it.

XVI

I MUST further mention a view held by the majority of writers, which probably I shall myself support. The earth does not lack air within; that everybody knows. I do not mean merely the air which holds it together and unites its parts, which exists even in stones and dead bodies; but I mean that fresh vital air which supports all life. Unless the earth possessed this store of air, how could she infuse it into so many trees and crops, which derive their life from this and no other source? How could she nourish all the different roots that sink into the soil in one place and another, some merely attached to the surface, others sunk deeper, had she not an abundant supply of the breath of life, which produces so many varied growths and rears them with its nourishing draught? These are the slighter arguments that I hitherto urge. Why, all the heaven we see, which is shut in by fiery ether, the highest portion of the universe, all these stars, whose number cannot be conceived, all this concourse of heavenly bodies, and, to mention only one more, this sun, that urges his course so close to us, many times larger than the whole circuit of the earth — all these draw their nourishment from materials of earth which they share among them, and are sustained, of course, by nothing else than the breath of the earth. This is their nourishment, this their pasturage. Now the earth would be unable to nourish so many bodies of such size, larger even than itself, unless it were full of breath, which it exhales from every part of it day and night. For there must be a large reserve of that from which so much is sought and taken; in fact, the supply to be drawn from it is created for the occasion. The earth would not possess a perennial supply of air sufficient for the wants of so many heavenly bodies, unless the elements issued and returned alternately and were transmutable into one another. But apart from this, it is necessary that the earth be abundantly filled with it, and be able to draw it forth from her hidden store. There is no doubt then that a great quantity of air lurks in the interstices of the earth, and a widely diffused atmosphere occupies the hidden spaces underground. If that is true, of necessity the earth must often be moved, since it is full of a most movable substance. No one, I suppose, can doubt that

there is nothing so restless, so capricious, so fond of disturbance as air.

XVII

IT follows, therefore, that air should obey the law of its being; what is wont to be moved will sometimes move other things. And when? Whenever its free course is checked. As long as it is not hindered it flows quietly along. When it is opposed and held back it becomes furious, bursting all obstacles just like that

Araxes that ever spurned a bridge.

[2] As long as the river has a free easy channel it rolls down its waters in due and regular succession. But if through chance or by human agency rocks are placed in its way to check its course, then it gathers fresh strength from the barrier, and the more numerous the obstacles opposed to it, the greater the force that it musters to overcome them. For all the water that accumulates behind, constantly increases, and being at last unable to bear its own weight manifests its violence through the havoc it works in its descent, and escapes headlong down its channel, bearing the very obstacles that blocked its [3] path. The same thing occurs with air, only that, in proportion to its greater strength and mobility, it is the more rapidly carried onward, and bursts the more violently all that encloses it. From this, of course, there is a disturbance in the part of the ground under which the struggle has occurred. The truth of this assertion may be proved from the consideration that often when an earthquake has taken place, involving a breach of only some part of the earth, wind has issued from it for several days.

[4] This is recorded to have taken place in the earthquake in which Chalcis suffered, as you will find in Asclepiodotus, Posidonius' pupil, in his discussion of my own topic of Physical Inquiries. In other authors, too, you will find it stated that after a chasm had opened up at one spot, in no long time wind issued from it, having no doubt made for itself the way along which it travelled.

XVIII

The chief cause of earthquake, therefore, is air, an element naturally swift and shifting from place to place. As long as it is not stirred, but lurks in a vacant space, it reposes innocently, giving no trouble to objects round it. But when any cause coming upon it from without rouses it, or compresses it, and drives it into a narrow space, in the first instance, to be sure, it merely retires and roams about its enclosure. But when opportunity of escape is cut off, and resistance meets it on all hands, then

... With deep murmur of the mountain

It roars around the barriers;...

which, after long battering, it dislodges and tosses on high, growing the more fierce, the stronger the obstacle with which it has contended. By and by, when it has traversed the whole space in which it was enclosed, and has failed to find a way of escape, it recoils from the side on which its impact was greatest. It is then either distributed through the secret openings which the earthquake of itself causes here and there, or escapes through a new rent. So uncontrollable is this mighty power. No bolt can imprison wind; it loosens every bond, bears with it every weight, and insinuating itself into the smallest crannies wins its release; for by the invincible power of nature it is free, especially when roused, and asserts its right for itself. Air is a thing no man can tame; nothing will be found which, When the winds struggle and the tempests roar, Can restrain them by its sway and rein them by bonds and prison.

Doubtless the poets wished the place in which the winds lay pent up underground to be considered a prison. But they did not perceive either that what was shut up is no longer wind, or that what is wind can no longer be shut up. What is shut up is at rest, and the atmosphere is at a standstill; whereas all wind is in flight. Besides these arguments, there is a consideration by which it becomes manifest that motion is brought about by air, namely, that our bodies never tremble except when some cause produces disturbance of the internal air, which is contracted by fear, grows sluggish in old age, languishes when the veins are numbed, is checked with cold, or after

some attack of fever is quite driven from its wonted course. As long as it flows unimpeded, and moves in its wonted fashion, there is no quivering of the body. When anything intervenes to prevent its functioning, then being no longer able to maintain what it upheld by its vigour, it fails, causing a collapse of everything that it had sustained when unimpaired.

XIX

We must now hear what Metrodorus of Chios desires to urge by way of opinion. I do not allow myself the liberty of passing over unnoticed even opinions that I disapprove; it is better to have the largest possible variety of views, and to condemn rather than omit what we do not approve. Well, then, what has Metrodorus to say? He compares the subterranean disturbances to the voice of a person who puts his head into a barrel and begins to sing out. In that case there is a kind of quavering as the voice extends and resounds through the whole hollow space; slight as the movement is, it passes all round the vessel in which it is enclosed, grazing its sides and causing disturbance all through. In the same way the vast empty caverns that stretch down beneath the earth have atmosphere of their own, on which other air coming from above falls with violence. The agitation produced differs in no wise from that of the empty vessels which I have just mentioned, when they resound through shouting into them.

XX

Let us now go on to consider the authors who have alleged as causes all the different factors mentioned, or, at any rate, several of them. Democritus is one of those who think that several are concerned. He asserts that the earthquake is produced sometimes by air, sometimes by water, sometimes by both. He pursues the argument in the following way: Some portion of the earth is hollow, in which a large quantity of water has gathered. Part of this water is thinner and less dense than the rest. When it is driven back by a heavy mass descending upon it from above, it comes violently against the earth, causing a commotion of it. The fluctuating movement of the water cannot take place without corresponding movement of the body on which it impinges. Besides, what we said a little above regarding air must be repeated in regard to water. When it is accumulated at one place, which becomes too small to contain it, it inclines in some particular direction, and opens up a passage for itself, at first by its mere weight, afterwards by the gathering force of its current. Being long shut up it cannot escape except down an incline, and it cannot drop straight down with any gentleness, or without violent shaking of the parts through which and on which it ^[3] falls. Now, if after it has begun its rapid downward movement it is checked at any point, and the force of the current is thrown back upon itself, it is driven back on the earth which encounters it, and attacks the earth at the point where it is most insecure. Moreover, the ground is sometimes so saturated with the moisture it has received into its heart that it subsides to a lower level and its very foundation is destroyed. The pressure is then exerted on the part toward which the weight of the descending waters most inclines. Air, too, sometimes urges the water. If it presses with some degree of violence, it naturally moves the part of the earth toward which it has urged the gathering of the ^[4] waters. Sometimes, again, the air is driven into passages through the earth, and in its search for a way of escape causes a general movement. The earth, as we know, is pervious to wind; air is too subtle to be excluded, too violent to be resisted when excited to rapid movement.

Turning from Democritus to Epicurus, we find the latter to assert that all the foregoing may be causes of earthquake, but he tries to introduce some additional ones. He criticises other authors for affirming too positively that some particular one of the causes is responsible, as it is difficult to pronounce anything as certain in matters in which conjecture must be resorted to. As he says, [5] then, water is capable of producing earthquake by washing and rubbing off certain portions, the weakening of which removes the support of what was upborne by them when unimpaired. The force of air is also capable of moving the earth. Perhaps the air within the earth is set in violent agitation by other air entering from without. Or, perchance, it may be that the earth receives an internal blow from the sudden fall of some portion of it, and derives thence the shock. Or, perchance, some portion of the earth is upheld, as it were, by certain pillars and stakes, the injury or withdrawal of which causes a tremor to run through the mass they support. Or, perchance, a quantity of hot air [6] turning to fire and assuming the character of lightning courses along to the widespread destruction of all obstacles it encounters. Or, perchance, some wind stirs the sluggish marshy waters, whose stroke in consequence shakes the earth; or the tossing of the air, increasing to violence through the mere movement, is carried from the lowest depths right up to the surface of the earth. Still, Epicurus is satisfied that there is no more potent cause of earthquake than air.

XXI

WE Stoics also are convinced that it is only air that [1] can attempt such a feat as the production of an earthquake, for than it nothing in the whole realm of nature is more powerful, more energetic; in absence of it even the elements that are most violent lose their force... It is by air that fire is kindled; if you withdraw wind, water is sluggish. Water becomes impetuous only when the blast tosses it with violence. This force it is that has power to scatter vast spaces of earth, to raise from the depths new mountains, and to set in mid-ocean [2] islands hitherto unseen. Can any one doubt that Thera and Therasia and this island which in our days under our very eyes rose out of the Aegean Sea, were carried up to the light by the force of air?

Posidonius will have it that there are two different varieties in the movements of the earth, each with its distinctive name. The one is a quaking when the earth is shaken and moves up and down; the other is a tilting when, like a [3] ship, it leans over to one or other side. I am of opinion that there is still a third variety, which we have a special term to denote. Our forefathers had good reason for speaking of a trembling of the earth, for it is unlike either of the other kinds of movement. On such an occasion things are neither all shaken nor all tilted, but they quiver. In a case of this kind no great damage is usually done; while, on the other hand, a tilting is far more destructive than a shock; for unless a contrary movement set in very quickly from the other side to restore the level, downfall follows of necessity.

XXII

[1] These movements being dissimilar, their causes are likewise different... Let us deal first with the shaking movement. If great loads are being conveyed by a row of many waggons, and the wheels, under the unusual strain, fall into the ruts of the road, one feels the earth shaken. Asclepiodotus has put it on record that on one occasion the fall of a rock that was torn off from the mountain-side caused by the tremor the collapse of some houses in its vicinity. Just the same thing may occur beneath the earth; parts of the overhanging crags may be loosened and fall with great weight and noise upon the floor of the cavern beneath, and with a violence proportionate to the weight of the mass and the height of the fall. The whole roof of the subterranean valley is disturbed by an occurrence of this kind. It is conceivable, too, that rocks are not always wrenched off by their own weight; when rivers roll over them, the constant moisture weakens the joints of the stone, and day by day bears away part of its fastening, causing abrasion, so to speak, of the skin in which the stone is enclosed. The long waste of ages, through constant daily rubbing, by and by so weakens the fastenings that they cease to be able to sustain their burden. Then blocks of vast size fall down, then the crag hurled headlong will not suffer anything to stand that it strikes in the rebound from its fall, but

Comes away with a roar; and all things seem suddenly to rush headlong,

as our countryman Virgil says. Such must be the cause of the earthquake that shakes the ground beneath. Now I must pass on to the second kind.

XXIII

THE earth is naturally full of cavities, containing much empty space. Through these cavities air roams. When an excessive quantity has entered and cannot escape it shakes the earth. This explanation is approved by others, too, as mentioned a little above. Perhaps the crowd of witnesses will impress you. The view has the adhesion of Callisthenes, and he is a man not lightly to be set aside. He was endowed with a lofty intellect, and he dared to brave the wrath of a king. His death is an eternal blot on the memory of Alexander, which no valour and no success in [2] war can ever remove. As often as it is said, Alexander slew many thousands of the Persians, the retort will be, And Callisthenes too. As often as it is said, He slew Darius, in whose hands there was then a mighty kingdom, the retort will be, Yes, and Callisthenes too. As often as it is said, He conquered all lands right up to the Ocean, the Ocean likewise he essayed with fleets strange to its waters, from a corner of Thrace he extended his empire to the bounds of the East; it will also be said, Yes, but he slew Callisthenes.

[3] Granted that he surpassed all former precedents of generals and kings, yet of all that he did, nothing will match his guilt in slaying Callisthenes.

Well, this Callisthenes, in the treatise in which he gives details of the sinking of Helice and Buris, and discusses the disaster which sent them into the sea, or the sea into them, says what I have said at a previous point. Air, he says, enters the earth by hidden openings under [4] the sea, just as everywhere else. By and by, when the path is blocked by which it had descended, and the resistance of the water in the rear has cut off its retreat, it is borne hither and thither, and encountering itself in its course it undermines the earth. That is the reason why land over against the sea is most frequently harassed by earthquakes; and hence it is that Neptune has been assigned this power of moving the earth. Any one who has learned the elements of Greek knows that he is called among the Greeks Earthshaker (*‘E,νοσίζθων*).

XXIV

I shall be ready to allow that air is the cause of ^[1] this form of destructive earthquake. » But I shall have some criticism to offer as to the method by which it enters the ground. Does it enter by fine openings that the eye cannot detect, or by larger and more evident ones? Does it come from the depths of the earth, or does it pass through the surface too? The last-mentioned view seems inconceivable. In our bodies the skin keeps out air, which finds no entrance except that through which it is inhaled. And even when taken in by us, it cannot settle except in the looser portion of the body. It does not remain among the sinews ^[2] or muscle, but in the bowels and the open vessels of our internal organs. The same arrangement may be suspected in regard to the earth's interior from the very fact that the movement in an earthquake is not on the surface of the earth or about the surface, but beneath in the lowest parts. A proof of this is that seas of immense depth are tossed up, no doubt from the movement of the ground over which they spread. It is therefore probable that the earth ^[3] is moved in its depths, and that the air is formed there in the immense caverns. Nay, says some critic, but just as when we shiver from cold a trembling follows, so, too, the earth is shaken by air affecting it from without. This I deny can by any possibility occur. Why, the earth must get a chill in order to have the same happen to it as to us, whom an external affection drives into a shuddering fit. I should quite allow that the earth shows symptoms of much the same kind as we do, but the cause is wholly different. An injury of a deeper kind, more toward its centre, must affect it, the very strongest proof of which may be found in the fact that when through violent earthquake the soil is laid open in wide destruction, the chasm sometimes takes in and buries whole cities. Thucydides tells us that, about the time of the Peloponnesian War, the island of Atalanta, either wholly, or, at any rate, for the most part, was swallowed up. You may take Posidonius for witness that the same thing happened to Sidon. But we do not require evidence of this. Within our own memory the earth has been torn by internal movement, adjoining places have been rent asunder, whole plains

have disappeared. I will now explain how I suppose this sort of thing to occur.

XXV

When air has completely filled a large vacant space within the earth, and has begun to struggle and meditate escape, it lashes again and again the sides of the enclosure within which it lurks, and right over which, as it happens, cities are sometimes situated. The shaking is at times so violent that buildings standing above the area of disturbance are thrown down. Sometimes it goes to such lengths that the walls by which the whole roof of the cavern is supported fall right down into that vacant underground space, and cities sink entire into the unfathomed depths. Long ago, if one may believe [2] the story, Ossa and Olympus were united; subsequently they were separated by an earthquake, and the one great mountain was split into two. Then the Peneus made its escape, draining the marshes with which Thessaly was overspread, and drawing off the waters, which from want of exit had hitherto formed a lake. It was an earthquake that let loose Ladon, the river which flows between Elis and Magalenopolis. What, it is asked, do these facts go to prove? Simply that air gathers in the spacious [3] caves — for what other name can I apply to the empty places under the earth? Were this not so, great spaces of the earth would be convulsed, and many of them would totter to ruin at one and the same time. As it is, only small portions suffer, nor does a shock ever extend as much as two hundred miles. Look at the recent one, the marvellous tales of which have filled the whole world; it did not pass beyond Campania. Need I say that when [4] Chalcis felt the earthquake shock Thebes did not fall? when Aegium suffered, Patras, which is quite close by, only learned by report about the earthquake? That mighty shock, which swallowed up the two cities Helice and Buris, stopped short of Aegium. Plainly, then, the movement extends only such distance as the empty space underground stretches.

XXVI

To prove my point I might have used, somewhat unfairly perhaps, the authority of the great writers who relate that Egypt never experienced an earthquake shock, the reason they allege for it being that it is all composed of mud. If one may believe Homer, Pharos used to be as far from the mainland as a ship under full sail could reach in a day's voyage; but it has now become attached to the mainland. The Nile's swollen stream brings down great quantities of mud, and by adding it from time to time to the existing land it has by an annual increase constantly carried forward the coast of Egypt. The country thus is composed of rich loamy soil without interstices, as it has become solid just by the drying up of the mud. The composition of the mud was close and firm, the particles of it being stuck together; no vacant space could intervene, since the solid was always being added to by the liquid and soft slime. But Egypt is, as a matter of fact, subject to earthquake; and Delos, too, though Virgil bade it stand fast,

And granted that it should be a settled land of tillage, and should laugh the winds to scorn.

The philosophers, too, a credulous set of people, relying on Pindar's authority, said that it did not experience movement. Thucydides asserts that in former times it was unshaken, but sustained a shock about the time of the Peloponnesian War. Callisthenes asserts that the same thing happened on another occasion also. Among the numerous portents — these are his words — by which warning was given of the overthrow of the two cities Helice and Buris, the most remarkable were the appearance of a huge pillar of fire and the earthquake shock in Delos. Yet he will have it that the island is comparatively firm for the reason that it is placed on the sea and has hollow crags and porous rocks, which afford a way of escape to air imprisoned in them. For this reason, too, islands have, he thinks, a firmer soil, and cities are safer in proportion to their proximity to the sea. The falsity of such an opinion surely Pompeii and Herculaneum learned to their cost. Add now the fact that every

sea-coast is particularly subject to earthquakes. Paphos, for instance, was more than once ruined, and the famous Nicopolis is already intimately acquainted with this mischief. Cyprus is surrounded by a deep sea, but is subject to shocks. Tyre is as regularly shaken by earthquake as it is washed by the waves. Such, then, are for the most part the explanations that have been suggested for the trembling of the earth.

XXVII

We must now essay an explanation of certain peculiar features which are said to have occurred in the recent Campanian earthquake. A flock of six hundred sheep is asserted to have been killed in the district near Pompeii, and there is no reason to suppose that this happened to the sheep through fright. We have said that after great earthquakes it is usual for a pestilence to occur. And no wonder, since in the depths of earth many deadly poisons lurk. In fact, the very atmosphere there, being stagnant through some fault in the earth or the sluggish movement and the everlasting darkness that prevails, is dangerous to breathe. Or being poisoned by the fumes of the internal fires, when it is released from its long inactivity, it taints and pollutes this pure clear air above, and brings new forms of disease to those who inhale the unwonted draught. You remember, too, that we found the water lurking in the secret depths to be useless and even pestilential, since activity never stirs it, and the free breath of heaven never ruffles it.

[3] Being therefore thick and covered beneath gross eternal darkness it contains only elements that are pestilential and injurious to our bodies. So, too, the atmosphere, which mingles with it and lies amid these marshes, scatters far and wide its poison when it issues out, and kills those who breathe it. The flocks, which the pestilence is wont to attack, feel the poisonous effects more readily, because they are more greedy in feeding. They live for the most part in the open, and they drink a great deal of water, which is chiefly responsible for the pestilence.

[4] Sheep are of rather delicate constitution, and, as they keep their heads close to the earth, I am not surprised at their being attacked by the infection; they receive the blasts of tainted air just as it issues from the ground. If it had issued in greater volume, it would have injured man too. But the abundant supply of pure air counteracted it before it could rise high enough to be breathed by any human being.

XXVIII

Now you may infer that the earth contains many ^[1] deadly elements from the mere fact that so many poisons grow of themselves without being sown; the soil no doubt contains seeds of evil as well as of good. Is it not the case that, earthquakes apart, in several places in Italy a pestilential steam is emitted through certain openings, which it is not safe for either man or beast to breathe? Even birds, if they meet it before it is neutralised by the purer breath of heaven, fall in mid-flight; their bodies become livid, and their jaws swell just as if they had been strangled. As long as this air is contained in ^[2] the earth and escapes by a narrow opening, it has no greater power than to kill creatures that look down into, or voluntarily approach too near, it. But when for centuries darkness has brooded over it, and the gloom of the place has increased the infection, it becomes more dangerous through mere lapse of time; the more sluggish it is, all the more deadly does it become. Then when it has gained an exit it lets loose all that mischief conceived in the cold shades through endless ages of nether darkness, tainting with it the atmosphere of our realms of earth. The better is ever conquered by the worse. ^[3] Even that purer air of heaven then changes to pestilential. Thence come sudden and continuous deaths, and portentous forms of disease that spring from unexampled causes. The disaster is long or short lived, according to the strength of the sources of infection. Nor does the plague cease until the freedom of heaven and the tossing of the winds have banished that fatal air.

XXIX

[1] Through fear some people have run about as if distracted or mad. For fear, even when in moderation and confined to individuals, shatters the mind's powers. But when there is public alarm through fall of cities, burying of whole nations, and shaking of earth's foundations, what wonder that minds in the distraction of suffering and terror should have wandered forth bereft of sense? It is no easy matter in the midst of overmastering evils not to lose one's reason. So it is, as a rule, the feeblest souls that reach such [2] a pitch of dread as to become unhinged. No one, indeed, has suffered extreme terror without some loss of sanity; one who is afraid is much like a madman. But some quickly recovering from the alarm regain self-possession. Others it more violently disturbs and reduces to sheer madness. Hence during times of war lunatics are to be met wandering about. On no occasion will one find more instances of raving prophets than when mingled terror and superstition have struck men's hearts.

I am not surprised that a statue is split by an earthquake, after I have recounted that mountains have been separated from mountains and the ground itself burst asunder down to its depths.

[3] These places, once convulsed by the force of vast ruin —
Such the power of change in the lapse of lengthened ages!
Leaped asunder, they tell us, whereas hitherto both lands
Were one; into their midst rushed the deep with its mighty billows,
Cutting off the Italian from the Sicilian side; fields and cities
Were parted in sea-line and washed by the narrow tide that flowed between.

One sees whole regions torn from their place, and what was once contiguous, now lying beyond the sea. One sees a separation of cities and nations when a part of nature is roused by internal motion, or the sea or fire or air has assailed some point; for their force is marvellous, since it has a boundless reserve from which to draw.

Though its rage is vented at but one point, yet it has the world's whole strength to reinforce its wrath. Thus it was that the sea tore away Spain from the mainland of Africa. Thus it was by the flood, which the greatest of poets have celebrated, that Sicily was cut away from Italy. The movements that proceed from depth have much more force. They are more energetic, as their effort is concentrated upon a narrow area. Enough has now been said to show what mighty deeds these earthquakes have wrought and what wondrous sights they have displayed.

XXX

WHY, then, should one be amazed that the bronze of a single statue is burst, and that, not even solid, but hollow and thin? as likely as not air in seeking an escape has got enclosed in it. And does not every one know that buildings are sometimes observed in time of earthquake to split at the corners and be united again? Other things badly set upon their base, and loosely and carelessly put together by the workmen, have been known to be welded firmly together by the repeated shaking of the earthquake. If it splits whole walls and whole houses, and rends the sides of great towers, which are constructed of solid masonry, and scatters the piles that support the foundations of great works, why should one think it worthy of remark that a statue had been cut equally into two from base to summit? But why, it may be asked, did the shock last for several days? For Campania went on trembling continuously, more gently it is true, but still causing great damage, because what it shook was already shaken and crushed. Things stood so insecurely as to require only a slight shake, but not a push, to bring them down. The explanation of the prolonged shaking is no doubt that all the air had not yet escaped, but though the greater part was discharged, a remnant was still roaming about here and there.

XXXI

There is yet a further proof that you may unhesitatingly add to the others that go to show that all these phenomena are the outcome of air. After the most violent shock that cities and provinces can experience has spent itself, another of like violence cannot immediately follow; after the crisis there are only slight shocks, just because the most violent one has opened a way of escape for the struggling winds. The remains of the air that is left have not the same power, nor do they require to struggle; they have now found a way of escape, and follow the path by which the first and greatest shock issued.

I am of opinion, too, that the observations of a certain learned and grave philosopher of my acquaintance deserve to be put on record; he happened to be taking a bath when the earthquake occurred. He asserted that he saw the tiles with which the floor of the bathroom was paved, separate one from another and unite again. At one moment, when the pavement opened, the water was taken in through the joints, the next, when the pavement closed, it was forced out all bubbling. I have heard the same learned man relate that he had seen soft materials undergo more frequent but more gentle shocks than materials naturally hard.

XXXII

So much, my esteemed Lucilius, with respect to the mere causes of earthquakes. Now we must adduce some considerations that will tend to reassure us in face of the perils of earthquakes. After all, it concerns us more closely to acquire resolution of mind than erudition, and yet the former cannot be had without the latter. Assurance comes to the mind from no source but elevating studies and the contemplation of nature. Is there any one, I say, that reflects upon causes, who will not be reassured and emboldened by this late catastrophe in Campania to face disasters of all kinds? Why should I — fear man or beast, bow or lance? Far greater perils are ever lurking for me. Lightning and earth-shock, and all the great forces of nature, aim their blows at us. Death must therefore be resolutely challenged whether its attack be with vast overpowering onset or by ordinary means of daily occurrence. It is of no moment how threatening its approach, or how great the engine it brings up against us. The life it asks of us is a very little thing. It will be taken from us by old age, or by a little pain in the ear, or by a superabundance of tainted moisture within, by food that the stomach cannot assimilate, or by a slight injury to one's toe. Man's life is a paltry affair, but a mighty affair is the contempt of life. He who can despise life may look unmoved upon the tossing of the sea, even though all the winds have roused it, even though by some upheaval of the world the tide has turned the whole Ocean bodily upon the land. Unmoved he will behold the fierce forbidding aspect of the thundering heavens, yes, though heaven itself be crushed and unite its fires for the destruction of mankind and of itself first of all. Unmoved he will behold earth's framework rent and earth's foundations yawning beneath. Though the realms of the nether world be uncovered, he will stand over the abyss still dauntless, and into the pit into which he is doomed to fall he will perhaps leap. What is it to me how great the powers by which I — perish? To perish is itself no great matter.

Wherefore, if we desire to be happy, to be harassed by no fear either of men, or gods, or circumstance, to despise fortune with her superfluous promises and her contemptible threats, if we desire to

live the peaceful life, and to vie with the very gods in happiness, then we must carry our life in our right hand. Whether snares or diseases attack it, the swords of foes or the crash of falling tenements, or the downfall of earth itself, or the violence of widespread fire enveloping city and field in common disaster, let who will take it. What more do I owe life than to encourage it on its journey, and to despatch it with good wishes? *Go resolutely, go prosperously!* There must be no hesitation in rendering back life. It is merely a question of time, not of fact. What you are doing must be done some day. Beseech not nor fear, nor draw back as if starting to face some peril. Nature, who bore you, waits your coming to a place better and safer than earth. There is no earthquake there, friend, no [7] winds clashing with loud noise of cloudy sky, no fires to waste province and city, no fear of shipwreck swallowing up whole fleets, no armies arrayed with opposing banners, or common fury of hosts prepared for mutual destruction, no plague, no pyres lit up around the promiscuous resting-place of slaughtered nations. If death is a light affair, why fear it? If it is heavy, then rather let it fall once for all than be always hanging over us. Should I fear to perish when earth must perish [8] before me, when the powers that shake are shaken, when they hasten to our destruction only through their own? The sea received Helice and Buris entire; shall I fear for one poor body? Ships sail over the site of two towns, aye, towns that we know well, that the record preserved by letters has brought to our intimate knowledge. How many others have been sunk in other places? how many nations has either earth or sea engulfed? Shall I rebel against my end when I know that 9

I am not endless? nay, when I am fully assured that all things come to an end, shall I fear my latest sigh?

Wherefore steel yourself, Lucilius, with all your might against fear of death. This fear it is that drags us down; this it is that torments and destroys the life it tries to preserve. It magnifies all those dangers, earthquakes and lightnings, and the rest. You will be able to bear them all resolutely if you but reflect that short and long in life make no difference. It is but hours we lose. 10

But suppose it is days, or months, or years, what we lose is, surely, bound to perish. What difference, pray, is it whether I manage

to reach them or not? Time flows on; it leaves behind those most eager to seize it. Neither what is to be is mine, nor what was. I am poised upon a point of fleeting time; it is a great thing to have been moderate in one's ambitions. Laelius the Wise made a neat retort once to a person who said, I am ^[11] sixty years old: you mean, said he, the sixty you no longer *are*. We show our failure to grasp the terms of this elusive life of ours, and the conditions of time that is never our own, in reckoning up as ours years that are now lost. Let us fix this in our minds, and constantly remind ourselves, I must die. When? What matter is that to you? Death is a law of nature; death is a tribute and a duty imposed on mortals; it is the remedy of all ills. Whoever now fears it will one day long for it. Giving up all else, Lucilius, make this your one meditation, not to dread the name death. By long reflection make death an intimate friend, that, if so required, you may be able even to go forth to welcome it.

BOOK VII. WHICH TREATS OF COMETS

I

No man is so utterly dull and obtuse, with head [1] so bent on earth, as never to lift himself up and rise with all his soul to the contemplation of the starry heavens, especially when some fresh wonder shows a beacon-light in the sky. As long as the ordinary course of heaven runs on, custom robs it of its real size. Such is our constitution that objects of daily occurrence pass us unnoticed even when most worthy of our admiration. On the other hand, the sight even of trifling things is attractive if their appearance is unusual. So this concourse of stars, [2] which paints with beauty the spacious firmament on high, gathers no concourse of the nation. But when there is any change in the wonted order, then all eyes are turned to the sky. The sun has no observer unless he is in eclipse. No one watches the moon unless she suffer obscuration. But then whole cities cry out, groundless superstition drives every one into panic. And yet how much greater [3] are the ordinary movements of the sun! He takes, so to speak, as many steps as there are days, completing the year in his circuit. From the summer solstice he turns back to the lessening days, from the solstice he slopes his rays, and gives more room to the nights; he occults the planets; though so much larger than the earth he does not burn it up, but cheers it by his heat, which he so regulates as to make it alternately more intense and more subdued. He never fills up with light, nor yet obscures, the [4] moon, except when she is right opposite to him. All this we allow to pass unnoticed as long as the usual order is preserved. But if there is any disturbance or any extraordinary light displayed in the sky, we gaze at it, ask questions, and point it out to our neighbours. So natural is it to admire what is strange rather than what is great.

The same thing holds in regard to comets. If one of these infrequent fires of unusual shape have made its appearance, everybody is eager to know what it is. Blind to all the other celestial bodies, each asks about the newcomer; one is not quite sure [5] whether to admire or to fear it. Persons there are who seek to inspire terror by forecasting its grave import. And so people keep asking and wishing to know whether it is a portent or a star. But, by my honour,

no one could embark on a more exalted study, or master a more useful branch of knowledge than that which treats of the nature of the stars and planets. Are they a concentration of flame as our vision avers, and as the very light that streams from them, and the heat that descends from them suggest?

[6] Or are their orbs not of flame, but, as it were, solid bodies of earth that glide through tracts of fire, and having no light of their own draw thence their brightness and heat? That is an opinion that has been held by great men who have believed the stars to be compact of hard material, and to be nourished by fire that is not their own. Flame by itself, they argue, would be dissipated and would have nothing to hold or to be held by. If it were merely massed and not attached to a solid body, the universe would assuredly long since have scattered it in its impetuous whirl.

II

IN view of this inquiry it will be well to ask [1] whether comets are wholly analogous to stars and planets. They seem to have certain elements in common with them — for example, rising and setting — as well as their general form, although comets are more scattered, and end in a longer tail. They are alike, too, in their fiery bright appearance. So, if all the stars are earthy bodies, comets must share the same lot. But if the stars are pure fire and nothing else, remaining for six months at a time unbroken by the rapid whirl of the universe, then comets, too, may consist of some rarefied material, which is not broken up by the constant revolution of the sky.

It will also tend to clear up this point if we endeavour to ascertain whether the earth stands still while the universe revolves round it, or whether the converse is the truth, the universe standing still while the earth revolves. There have been persons who made bold to say that it is we that all unwitting are borne round by the frame of things, that risings and settings are not produced by a movement of the heavens, but that we ourselves rise and set. The subject well [3] deserves our study, if we are to know where we really stand, whether the abode we have obtained as ours is the most sluggish or the swiftest of motion, whether God causes all things to revolve round us or causes us to revolve. Now, for this it is essential that we have a record of all the appearances of comets in former times. For, on account of their infrequency, their orbit cannot as yet be discovered or examined in detail, to see whether they observe periodic laws, and whether some fixed order causes their reappearance at the appointed day. Such a development of astronomy is recent, having been lately introduced into Greece.

III

DEMOCRITUS, the most acute of all the ancient philosophers, says he suspects there are several stars whose orbits are erratic. But he has given neither their number nor their names, as the motions of the five planets were not in his time understood. Eudoxus was, in fact, the first to import from Egypt into Greece the knowledge of these motions, though he says nothing about comets. From this it becomes plain that, even among the Egyptians, the people that bestowed most care on observation of the sky, the portion of astronomy that relates to comets had not been worked out. Subsequently Conon, who was himself a careful investigator, made a record of the sun's eclipses that had been observed by the Egyptians; but he made no mention of comets, though he would certainly not have omitted anything definite on the subject that he had learned in Egypt. So much is certain; two authors, Epigenes and Apollonius of Myndus, the latter highly skilled in casting horoscopes, who say that they studied among the Chaldaeans, are at variance in their accounts. The latter asserts that comets are placed by the Chaldaeans among the number of the wandering stars (*i e* planets), and that their orbits have been determined. Epigenes, on the contrary, asserts that the Chaldaeans have ascertained nothing regarding comets, which are thought by them to be fires produced by a kind of eddy of violently rotating air.

IV

IN the first place, if it like you, let us set down the views of the last-mentioned author and refute them. He supposes that the planet Saturn has most influence in determining all motions of the heavenly bodies. When it presses upon the constellations next Mars, or crosses to the neighbourhood of the moon, or encounters the rays of the sun, being naturally cold and windy, it contracts and masses the atmosphere at more than one place. By and by, if Saturn absorb all the sun's rays, there is thunder and lightning. If he has Mars in agreement, the lightning is forked. Moreover, he continues, forked and sheet lightning contain different materials. Evaporation from water or other moisture produces only gleams that threaten but stop short of striking. The hotter and drier exhalation of the earth forges the bolts of forked lightning. Beam meteors and torches, which differ from one another only in size, are produced in this same way. When any ball of air — what we call a whirlwind — encloses moist earthy matter, wherever it rushes it presents the appearance of an extended line of fire, which lasts just so long as the mass of air remains, which carries within it the supply of moist earthy matter.

V

THIS account of Epigenes is a tissue of falsehoods. To begin with the nearest one, the last, it is not true that torch and beam meteors are due to the violent action of a whirlwind. The whirlwind is formed in the neighbourhood of the earth, and there it runs its course. This is the reason why it tears up trees by the roots, and wherever it swoops down it lays bare the soil, carrying off in the meanwhile woods and roofs of houses; as a rule, it is lower than the clouds, and assuredly never higher. But, on the contrary, it is the more exalted part of heaven that displays beam meteors, and so they never intervene between us and the clouds. Besides, a whirlwind is borne along more swiftly than any cloud, and rotates as on a pivot. And in addition to this, it ceases all of a sudden, bursting by its own force. "Beams," on the contrary, do not run or fly across, like torches, but remain shining for some time in the same quarter of the sky. Charimander, too, in the book he wrote on comets, asserts that a great and unusual light in the sky of the size of a large beam was once seen by Anaxagoras, and continued to shine for a long period. Callisthenes puts it on record that a similar appearance of a trail of fire was observed before the sea swallowed up Buris and Helice. Aristotle says it was not a "beam," but a comet; the characteristic dispersion of the fire was not seen at first on account of its excessive brightness, but, in process of time, when the glare began to die down, it recovered the distinctive appearance of a comet. In this fiery phenomenon there were many points worthy of remark, none more so than this, that, immediately it shone in the sky, the sea came over Buris and Helice. Did Aristotle, then, one ^[4] may ask, believe that not merely that beam but all beams are comets? Surely not, for there is this difference, that beams have their fire continuous, while in the other bodies it is dispersed. Beams have a regular flame, not interrupted or dull at any point, while in the end parts it is condensed, just like what Callisthenes describes the one to have been, to which I referred a moment ago.

VI

There are, Epigenes goes on to say, two classes ^[1] of comets. One kind sheds its light on all sides without changing its position; the other extends a loose kind of fire in one direction, after the fashion of hair, and passes through among the stars; of the latter kind were the two seen in our own days. The former variety, with hair on all sides, that do not move, are usually low down, and arise from the same causes as beams and torches, that is, from a distempered thick atmosphere that carries in it many of the earth's exhalations, both dry and moist. Air driven out through narrow apertures ^[2] is capable of setting on fire the atmosphere situated over it, which is full of elements suitable for feeding a fire; and it is able after that to drive it forward from the clear space, lest from any cause it should fall back and relax its force. After that, it can rise again on the next and following days and set fire to the same spot. As presumptive proof of this, we see winds return during several days at their set time. Rain, too, and storms in other forms recur ^[3] according to appointment. His opinion may be briefly expressed by saying that he supposes comets to be formed pretty much in the same way as fires excited by whirlwind. There is this one difference, that those whirlwinds are pressed down to earth from a higher region, while these others are raised from earth to the upper regions.

VII

[1] A great deal can be urged against this view. First of all, if wind were responsible, a comet would never make its appearance without wind. As a matter of fact, it appears when the air is perfectly still. In the next place, if it were due to wind, it would fall with the wind; and if it began through wind, would increase with increase of wind, and would be the brighter the more furious the wind was. This point, too, has to be added to the foregoing: while the wind impels many parts of the atmosphere, a comet appears in one spot. The wind does not mount up high, but comets are seen higher up than [2] the winds are permitted to go. Epigenes afterwards goes on to speak of the comets that, he says, have a more definite resemblance to stars, traversing an orbit and passing through the zodiacal signs. He attributes their origin to the same causes as produce those that he called lower comets, the only difference being that the earth's exhalations in this case contain many dry elements, and therefore seek the higher region, and are driven by the north wind toward the more exalted portions of the heavens. But, surely, if the north wind urged them, they would always be borne toward the south, whither this wind urges its course. And yet, as a fact, they have had different movements, some to east, others to west, all in a curved path, a direction which the wind could not impart. Besides, if the impulse which produced the comet carried up on high those north winds from the earth, comets would not arise when other winds blew; yet they do arise.

VIII

LET us now refute this other explanation of Epigenes, for he employs two. He believes that when all the moist and dry exhalations of the earth unite, the mere discord of the different bodies turns the air into whirlwind. Then the force of that wind as it revolves sets fire by its rapid motion to all that it embraces in itself, and raises it on high. The gleam of the fire that is thus extracted remains as long as there is sufficient nutriment; when the fuel fails, the fire subsides too. Now, one who talks thus pays no attention to the nature of the course of whirlwinds as compared with that of comets. The career of the former is swift and violent, more rapid than the winds themselves. But a comet's movement is so gradual as to render imperceptible the space traversed during a day and a night. Besides, whirlwinds have an erratic, disorderly, and, to use a word of Sallust's, eddying, motion. Comets have a regular course, which observes the appointed track. Surely none of us will believe that either the moon or the five planets are carried by the wind or spun round by the whirlwind. I trow not. And why? Just because they have not an irregular and unrestrained motion. Let us apply the principle to comets. They do not move in confusion or irregularity so as to justify the belief that they are impelled by unruly and fickle forces. Besides, even if those eddies could enclose moist earthy elements, and had power to raise them from the depths to the heights, still they could not carry them up higher than the moon. All their force is spent when they reach the region of clouds. But as for the comets, we see them sailing through the upper regions, mingling with the very stars. It is, therefore, improbable that a whirlwind could persist over such a long distance, for the greater it is, the more rapidly is it spent.

IX

LET Epigenes, therefore, make his choice of the two alternatives: if the force is small, it cannot reach so high; if it is great and violent, it will the more quickly break up. But further, according to the opinion of people like Epigenes, these lower comets do not mount higher because they have too much earthiness in them. Their weight keeps them in the neighbourhood of earth. And yet these other comets, which are higher and last longer, must have a more abundant material. For they could not last so long were their supplies not replenished from a larger stock. I said a moment ago that the whirlwind's eddy could not long endure, nor could it mount higher than the moon, or as far as the place of stars. Of course, the whirlwind is caused by the mutual struggle of several winds, and the contest cannot be kept up for any long time. When the wandering uncertain air assumes a rotatory form, in the last instance the force of all the winds yields to the single strongest one. No hurricane lasts long. The more strength squalls have, the shorter their duration. When winds reach their maximum, they quickly abate all their violence. By that headlong speed they must needs hasten to their own destruction. So no one has ever seen a whirlwind last a whole day, or even an hour. Its velocity is astonishing, its brevity no less astonishing. Moreover, on the earth and near it, its rotation is swifter and more violent; the higher it is, the less condensed and compact is it, and that is the reason of its more rapid dissipation. Add the fact, too, that even if it reached the highest region where the stars' path lies, it would most certainly be broken up by the motion which causes the universe to revolve. For what can compare in rapidity with the revolution of the world? Thereby the strength of all the winds combined in one would be shattered, aye, and the strong solid chain that binds the earth, not to say a wisp of whirling air.

X

AGAIN, a fire carried along by a whirlwind cannot remain on high unless the whirlwind also remain. But then what is so inconceivable as any prolonged duration in a whirlwind? Above all, the whirlwind motion is neutralised by the opposite motion of the heavens. That region on high to which it is alleged to mount has an eddying motion of its own, which carries onward the sky,

And drags the lofty stars, and turns them in rapid whirl.

And even though one grant some duration to whirlwinds, which is quite contrary to the fact, yet what is to be said of the comets that have continued in sight for six months? Then, as hinted above, there must be two motions in the same spot — one that constant motion of the heaven, accomplishing its task without intermission, the other a strange new motion conveyed by the whirlwind. The one must inevitably obstruct the other. And yet that motion we see of the moon in her orbit, and of the other heavenly bodies that pass above the moon, is irrevocable. It nowhere falters or stops, nor does it convey to us the slightest suggestion of an obstacle being ever placed in its way. It is utterly beyond belief that a whirlwind, the most violent and unruly species of storm, should reach the very centre of the ranks of the stars, and should find a sphere for its boisterous activity in that ordered peace of heaven. Supposing that the revolution of a whirlwind kindles fire, which is shot up to the heights, furnishing apparent ground for the belief that what we see is a trail of fire; yet surely the shape of the fire ought to be something like that which produces it. Now a whirlwind is round in appearance; it remains in the same track, and revolves after the fashion of a rotating pillar. The fire, therefore, that is enclosed ought to resemble it in shape. But in reality it is a trail of scattered fire, and resembles anything rather than fire gathered into a ball.

XI

LET US now say good-bye to Epigenes, and proceed [1] to examine the opinions of other writers. But before beginning to set them forth, I must first, by way of preface, remark that comets are not observed only in one part of the sky, nor merely in the zodiac, but in the east as well as in the west, more frequently, however, toward the north. Nor is [2] their shape uniform. The Greeks, indeed, distinguished three classes of them: those from which the flame hangs down, after the fashion of a beard; those that shoot out what looks like hair round them on all sides; and those which have a scattered kind of fire, which, however, stretches toward an apex. But all the classes have a common characteristic, and are rightly called comets (*i e* long-haired). As the different shapes present themselves only at long intervals, it is difficult to compare them with one another. Even at the time of their appearance [3] spectators are not agreed as to their shape. According as one's eyesight is keener or duller, one asserts that the comet is brighter or redder, and that its hair is compressed toward the interior of the star, or spread out toward its sides. But whether or not there are any differences in comets, they must all be produced by the same method. The [4] one fact about which there ought to be agreement is, that a star of strange unwonted appearance is beheld which drags along with it scattered fire. Some of the ancients are convinced of the truth of this explanation: When one of the planets has come into conjunction with another, the light of the two blends in one, producing the appearance of a more elongated star. This happens not merely when star touches star, but even when one approaches another. The space between the two is in that case lit up by both, and seems aflame, producing the trail of fire.

XII

OUR first answer to this theory is that the number of moving stars (planets) is fixed. It is quite usual for them and comets to appear at the same time; whence it is manifest that the comet is not due to the conjunction of planets, but is a distinctive independent star. Besides, it is a matter of frequent occurrence for a star to come under the orbit of a more elevated star. Saturn, for example, is sometimes above Jupiter; Mars looks down in a straight line on Venus or Mercury. But yet no comet is formed from this movement whereby the one planet approaches the other. Were it otherwise, there would be a comet every year, for every year there are planets in the same constellation. Again, if the approach of star to star produced a comet, the latter would cease to be in a moment. The transit of stars takes place with the utmost rapidity, thence all eclipse of heavenly bodies is of brief duration; by the same motion they are as swiftly separated as they were brought together. The sun and the moon, as we see, part company within a brief space after the eclipse has begun. How much swifter must be the separation of stars, which are so much smaller? Yet comets last for six months at a time, which would not happen if they sprang from the union of two stars. The stars cannot stick to one another for any long time, and the law of their swift motion must ever drive them asunder. Besides, those stars appear to [4] us to be close to one another, but in reality are separated by immense distances. How, then, could the one star transmit fire to the other so that the two should seem in union, when they are thus parted by an immense tract? The light of the two stars, it is replied, mixes, furnishing the appearance of one. I suppose this means that the phenomenon is much the same as when a cloud takes a ruddy colouring from the rays of the sun striking on it, or as when there is the golden glow of evening or morning, or as when the bow is painted in its varied hues, but only in sunshine.

Well, my first criticism is that all the instances [5] mentioned are the result of great force. It is the sun that lights them up. The stars do not possess anything like the same power. My second remark is that none of the phenomena arises except below the moon in the vicinity

of the earth. The upper regions are pure and spotless, always retaining their own colour. I remark further, that if anything of the kind did occur, it would not last but would speedily disappear, as halos which surround the sun or moon fade in a very brief space of time. Even [6] the rainbow does not long remain. If there was anything of the kind supposed, to unite the space between the two stars, it would disappear with equal rapidity. In any case it would not remain as long as comets are in the habit of doing. The planets have their orbits within the zodiac, they lie near this circle; but comets are seen in all parts of the sky. Their time of appearance is no more certain than the limits of the space which they may not exceed.

XIII

IN reply to arguments like mine it is urged by Artemidorus that the five planets are not the only stars with erratic courses, but merely the only ones of the class that have been observed. But innumerable others revolve in secret, unknown to us either by reason of the faintness of their light, or the situation of their orbit being such that they become visible only when they reach its extremities. It is thus, he says, that certain new stars enter our field of vision, mingling their light with the fixed stars, but displaying a brightness greater than is usual in stars. This is the least serious of his lies: his account of the universe is from end to end a shameless tissue of lies. For instance, if we are to believe him, the upper regions of heaven are perfectly solid — a lofty thick vault, as hard as the roof of a house, formed by the accumulation of masses of atoms. The surface immediately above it is of fire so compact that it cannot be broken up or altered. Nevertheless, it has certain ventilators, and, as it were, windows through which portions of the fire stream from the outer part of the universe, but not so large as to cause commotion in the inner; and again the fires pass from the world back into the outer spaces. These extraordinary appearances, therefore, Artemidorus supposes, have streamed in from that mass of matter which lies outside the world. To set about disproving such a theory is nothing short of beating the air for the sake of exercising the muscles!

XIV

STILL, I will descend to the task. Let the man who has placed such a solid roof on the world tell me what reason there is for believing his statement that the heavens have such a thickness. What was it that took all these solid bodies up there and kept them there? Then, a firmament of such thickness must necessarily be of immense weight too. How is it that heavy bodies remain aloft? How is it that the huge mass does not come down and smash itself by its own weight? It is, I imagine, a physical impossibility that such a vast weight as Artemidorus has brought to the support of the heavens should hang suspended, or be supported by a slight foundation. Nor can it be alleged that there are stays of some kind outside by which it is prevented from falling. Nor again can there be any support in the centre to receive and prop up the threatening mass. And again, no one will venture to assert that the universe is being constantly carried down through the immensities of space, falling all the time, though it is not evident that it falls, because its headlong course is to all eternity, having no final obstacle with which to collide. This is indeed a statement people have made about the earth, when they could discover no explanation for a mass standing poised in air. It is borne down, say they, for ever; but it is not evident that it falls because the space into which it falls is endless.

Well, what argument then justifies the assertion that it is not merely the five planets that move, but that there are many such in many quarters of the universe? Or if there is no probable proof of this, one may rejoin: What is there to prevent one from saying either that all the stars [6] move or that none of them does? Besides, your argument is in no way helped by that crowd of stars which you assume to be everywhere roaming about! For the more there are of them, the oftener will they meet with others; whereas comets are rare, and for that reason marvellous. And will not every age give evidence against you by noting and recording for the use of posterity the emergence of such stars?

XV

[1] After the death of Demetrius, king of Syria, whose kingdom was divided by his sons Demetrius and Antiochus, a little before the Achaean War, a comet blazed forth not inferior to the sun in size. Its orb was at first fiery red, and emitted a bright light sufficient to dispel the darkness of night. By and by its size was gradually reduced and its brightness waned. Finally it went completely out. How many stars, suppose you, would require to [2] combine to make up such a huge mass? You might collect in one a thousand of them without ever matching the size of the sun. In the reign of Attalus a comet appeared, moderately small in size to begin with. By and by it mounted up and spread out and moved as far as the equator, equalling in the extent of its immense length the whole quarter of the sky which we call the Milky Way. How many planets must have combined to occupy with an unbroken line of fire such a long tract of the sky?

XVI

I HAVE refuted the argument; I must now discredit ^[1] its authors. It requires no great effort to strip Ephorus of his authority; he is a mere chronicler. Some of his class seek to recommend their narrative by incredible stories, and by their marvels try to interest the reader, who would probably soon find some other occupation if he were called on to wade through their tedious narrative of ordinary events. Some, again, are too credulous, some too careless, some are deluded, some delighted, by falsehood. The former do not shun it, the latter go in quest of it. The whole clan of them have this in common; ^[2] they fancy their work cannot merit approval, and become popular unless they freely interlard it with lies. Ephorus is not a person of any scrupulous honour; he is often duped often he tries to dupe. For example, he asserts that the great comet which, by its rising, sank Helice and Buris, which was carefully watched by the eyes of the whole world since it drew issues of great moment in its train, split up into two stars; but nobody besides him has recorded it. Who, I wonder, could observe the ^[3] moment at which the comet broke up and was resolved into two parts? And if there is any one who saw it split up into two, how is it that no one saw it first formed out of the two? And why did Ephorus not add the names of the two stars into which it was broken up, since they must have been some of the five planets?

XVII

[1] APOLLONIUS of Myndus differs in his view from Epigenes. He asserts that a comet is not one star made up of many planets, but that many comets are planetary. A comet, he goes on, is not an illusion nor a trail of fire produced on the borders of two stars, but is a distinctive heavenly body, just as the sun or the moon is. Its shape is not limited to the round, but is somewhat extended and produced lengthwise.

[2] On the other hand its orbit is not visible. It cuts (= intersects) the upper part of the universe, but only emerges when at length it reaches the lowest portion of its course. There is no reason to suppose that the same comet reappears; for instance that the one seen in the reign of Claudius was the same as the one we saw in the reign of Augustus; or that the recent one which appeared during the reign of Nero Caesar — which has redeemed comets from their bad character — was similar to the one which burst out after the death of the late Emperor Julius Caesar, about sunset on the day of the games to [3] Venus Genetrix. Comets are as varied as they are numerous. They are unequal in size, unlike in colour. Some are ruddy without any light; others are bright with a pure clear light; others are flame-coloured, but the flame is not a pure thin flame, but is enveloped in a mass of smoky fire. Some are blood-stained and threatening, bringing prognostication of bloodshed to follow in their train. They wax and wane like other planets. They are brighter when they come down toward us, and show larger from a nearer point, smaller when they depart from us, and dimmer when they retire to a greater distance.

XVIII

THE reply is ready to this last statement, that the ^[1] same thing does *not* happen in comets as in the other stars. Some comets attain their maximum on the very first day of their appearance. But, according to the argument, they ought to increase the nearer they approach. As it is, their first aspect remains until they begin to fade. Besides, what has been said in reply to former authorities applies here too: If the comet had an erratic orbit, and were a true planet, it would move within the limits of the zodiac, within which all the planets confine their orbits. Again, a star is never seen through another ^[2] star. Our sight cannot pierce through the centre of a planet so as to view through it what lies beyond. But through a comet the further regions are discerned as through a cloud. Whence it is evident that it is no planet but an insubstantial, irregular fire.

XIX

THE following is the opinion of our Stoic sage Zeno. [1] He is convinced that the stars act in concert, and unite their rays with one another — a partnership in light which creates the image of a more elongated star. Therefore some persons suppose that comets have no real existence, and that it is only the appearance of them that is reproduced through the reflection of neighbouring stars or the union of stars that [1] stick together. Some, again, say that comets are true stars, but with orbits of their own, and that after certain periods they come out into the view of mankind. Some allow their existence but refuse them the title of stars, because they glide out of sight without long duration, and within a brief space are scattered to the winds.

XX

[1] MOST of our Stoic brethren entertain another view, which they do not regard as inconsistent with fact. Let me explain it. We observe many *spécies* of fire engendered on high, now the heavens ablaze, now

Long glistening trains of flame behind,

now huge torches of fire being hurried along. The lightning itself, whose velocity is so marvellous that it at once blinds, and at the same instant restores, the sight, is fire arising from the friction of air that suffers more violent internal pressure [2] than usual. That is why it does not remain long, but glides off once it issues from the cloud, forthwith perishing. But other fiery appearances remain for a considerable time, and do not break up until all the fuel on which they fed has been used up. Here belong the strange sights recorded by Posidonius — pillars and shields all ablaze, and other flames of marvellous strangeness. They would attract no attention if they ran their course after customary laws; but now the sight of them sends all men agape.

[3] They bring down sudden fire from the heights of heaven, sometimes producing a flash which is gone in a moment, sometimes compressing the air, which is forced into a glow; it is a miracle all the same. Yes, and is not sometimes a gulf opened in the ether, which seems to retire on all sides, with a great glare of light in the hollow centre? You are ready to cry out. What is this?

... I see the very centre of heaven open,
And the stars wandering in the sky....

These stars sometimes do not wait for night to show their light, but burst out in the full light of day. The reason, however, for the stars showing at a time not their own is different from that alleged; it is well known that they are there all the time, though hidden. Many comets, too, we cannot see because they are obscured by the sun's rays. Posidonius, in fact, tells us that during an eclipse of the sun a

comet once appeared which the sun's proximity had hitherto concealed. Often, when the sun has just set, straggling fires are seen close to him. No doubt the nucleus of the comet is bathed in sunlight, and therefore cannot be discerned; but the tail escapes the effect of the sun's rays.

XXI

OUR Stoic friends, therefore, are satisfied that, like trumpet meteors and beams, and other portents of the sky, comets are formed by dense air. They appear in greatest number toward the north, because there is most of the sluggish air there. Why, then, you naturally ask, does the comet not remain stationary, but advance in the sky from day to day? Let me explain. The comet, according to this account, pursues its fuel just as fires do. Although its tendency is to rise to the upper regions, still, if material fail it, it retrogrades and sinks. In the air, too, it does not pursue a direct path to right [2] or left. It has no particular route assigned to it; wherever the supply of its fuel leads it, thither it crawls; it does not advance in its orbit as a star, but feeds as a fire. Why, then, does it appear for a long period, and why is it not quickly extinguished? For the recent one which we saw during this joyous reign of Nero displayed itself to view for six months, revolving in the opposite direction to the former one in Claudius' time. That one rising from the north up toward the zenith made for the east, always growing dimmer. This one began in the same quarter, but making toward the west, turned finally toward the south, where it withdrew from [3] view. No doubt the former found moister elements, more suitable for its fire, and pursued them; the latter in turn chose a richer and more substantial district. So they descend toward the direction in which they are invited by their material, and not by a definite path, which in the two we have seen was different, since the one moved off toward the right and the other toward the left. Now all stars have their orbit in one direction, namely, contrary to the motion of the universe. The latter moves from east to west, the stars go from west to east. For this reason they have a double motion, — one, their own proper motion; the other, which carries them round along with the heavens.

XXII

[5] I DO not agree with my school here, for I cannot [1] think a comet is a sudden fire, but I rank it among Nature's permanent creations. First of all, everything that the atmosphere creates is short-lived; such things arise in an element that is fugitive and changeable. How can anything continue the same for long in the air, which itself never remains the same? It is always in a state of flux, and its quiet is short-lived. It changes within a brief moment to another condition from that in which it had been.

It is now rainy, now clear, now alternates from [2] one to the other. The clouds, so intimately connected with it, into which it collects and from which it is released again, now gather, now disperse, but never remain at rest. Fire cannot possibly abide securely in a volatile body, nor can it keep its place so persistently as does a fire that Nature has fixed never to be dislodged. Further, if the fire stuck close to its fuel, it would always sink. For the air [3] is the thicker, the nearer it is to the earth. But a comet is never depressed to the lowest strata of the atmosphere, nor does it ever approach the ground. Besides, fire either goes in the direction its nature prompts, that is, upwards, or else in the direction in which it is drawn by the material on which it has fastened, and on which it feeds.

XXIII

IN none of the ordinary fires in the sky is the route ^[1] curved; it is distinctive of a star (planet) that it describes a curve in its orbit. Whether other comets had this circular orbit I cannot say. The two in our own age at any rate had. Again, everything kindled by a temporary cause quickly gives out. Thus torches gleam only while they flit across the sky; thus lightning has strength for just one stroke; thus so-called shooting and falling stars fly ^[2] past, cutting through the air. No fires have any considerable duration unless their strength is inherent. I mean the divine fires which the universe maintains eternally, because they are its parts and works. These, I say, are always active; they have an orbit the even tenor of which they preserve, and they are uniform. They would on alternate days be larger or smaller if the fire was merely casual, the sudden outcome of some accidental cause. Such a fire would be greater or less according as it was fed more abundantly or more scantily. I said a moment ago that no fire could be lasting which ^[3] arose from some defect in the atmosphere. I have now to add further, that it can by no means be fixed and steady. Both torch and lightning and shooting star, and any other kind of fire forced out of the air by pressure, are in flight; none of them is visible save in the course of its fall. But a comet has its own settled position. For that reason it is not expelled in haste, but steadily traverses its course; it is not snuffed out, but takes its departure. If it were a wandering star (*i e* planet), says some one, it would be in the zodiac. Who, say I, ever thinks of placing a single bound to the stars? or of cooping ^[4] up the divine into narrow space? These very stars, which you suppose to be the only ones that move, have, as every one knows, orbits differing one from another. Why, then, should there not be some stars that have a separate distinctive orbit far removed from them? What reason is there why there should not be passages into the heavens at some part of them? But if you are convinced that every star (planet) cannot but touch the zodiac, then I say the comet might have such a wide orbit that at some point it may coincide with the zodiac. This is not necessary, but it is possible.

XXIV

CONSIDER whether it is not more in keeping with the size of the universe that it be supposed to be divided into many routes, and do not keep this one beaten track while every other portion is a waste. Do you suppose that in this great and fair creation, among the countless stars that adorn the night with varied beauty, never suffering the atmosphere to become empty and sluggish, there are only five stars that are allowed to move freely, while all the rest stand still, a fixed, immovable crowd? Should any one here ask me: Why, then, has their course not been observed like that of the five planets? my answer to him shall be: There are many things whose existence we allow, but whose character we are still in ignorance of. We shall all admit that we have a mind, by whose behest we are urged forward and called back; but what that mind is which directs and rules us, no one can explain any more than he can tell where it resides. One will say that it is breath; another, a kind of harmony; another, a divine force and part of God; another, subtlest air; another, disembodied power. Some will even be found to call it blood, or heat. So far is the mind from being clear on all other subjects that it is still in search of itself.

XXV

[1] WHY should we be surprised, then, that comets, so rare a sight in the universe, are not embraced under definite laws, or that their beginning and end are not known, seeing that their return is at long intervals? It is not yet fifteen hundred years since Greece Counted the number of the stars and named them every one.

[2] And there are many nations at the present hour who merely know the face of the sky and do not yet understand why the moon is obscured in an eclipse. It is but recently indeed that science brought home to ourselves certain knowledge on the subject. The day will yet come when the progress of research through long ages will reveal to sight the mysteries of nature that are now concealed. A single lifetime, though it were wholly devoted to the study of the sky, does not suffice for the investigation of problems of such complexity. And then we never make a fair division of the few brief years of life as between study and vice. It must, therefore, require long [3] successive ages to unfold all. The day will yet come when posterity will be amazed that we remained ignorant of things that will to them seem so plain. The five planets are constantly thrusting themselves on our notice; they meet us in all the different quarters of the sky with a positive challenge to our curiosity. Yet it is but lately we have begun to understand their motions, to realise what their morning and evening settings mean, what their turnings when they move straight toward us, why they are driven back from us. We have learned but a few years ago whether Jupiter would rise or set, or whether he would retrograde — the term that has been applied to his retirement from us. People have been found bold enough to say to us: You are mistaken in thinking that any star ever stops or wheels in its course. The heavenly bodies may not stand or turn away. All advance; once the signal is given they start on their race. Their career will end only with their existence. This eternal creation has motions that suffer no recall. Should they once be arrested, they will encounter obstacles in front which are meantime held in place by the ordered, regular march of the universe.

XXVI

WHAT then is the reason, you may ask, for the apparent retrogression of some heavenly bodies? The appearance of slowness in their motion is caused by their encountering the sun, as well as by the character of their paths and the position of their orbits, which are at certain periods calculated to deceive the eye. Ships in the same way moving under full sail seem withal to be stationary. Men will some day be able to demonstrate in what regions comets have their paths, why their course is so far removed from the other stars, what is their size and constitution. Let us be satisfied with what we have discovered, and leave a little truth for our descendants to find out.

We cannot, Apollonius says, see through the stars what is beyond, but sight passes easily [2] through the comets. Well, in the first place, if that is the case, it is not so in the part of the body which consists of dense solid fire, but only where the dispersed glow extends as it breaks up into the appearance of hair. One can see through the gaps in the fire and not through the fire itself. Stars again, it is said, are all round, comets extended; whence it is plain that they are not true stars. But who, pray, will allow that comets are long? Their tendency like that of other stars is to a globe shape, only the light from them is prolonged. The sun shoots out his rays far and wide, but has himself a shape different from that of the light that streams from him. So in comets, the body is rounded, but the glow from them presents the appearance of being longer than that of the other stars.

XXVII

[1] WHY is this so, you ask. Do you tell me first why the light the moon receives is wholly unlike the sun although she receives it from the sun. Why is it now ruddy, now pale? why is her colour ashen or black when she is cut off from the sun's view? Or tell me why all the stars have aspects to some extent dissimilar to one another and all as different as possible from the sun. It is no hindrance to their being true stars that they are not all alike; so there is nothing to prevent comets from being permanent through all time, sharing the same destiny as the other stars, even though they have not an appearance [2] like theirs. Besides, is not the universe, if you will only examine it carefully, made up of contrarities? Why is it that the sun should be always blazing hot in Leo, scorching the ground with his fierce glow, while in Aquarius he brings winter's chain and closes the rivers with ice? The one constellation is subject to the same law as the other, though its characteristics and influence are so different. Aries again rises in a moment, Libra lifts its scales very slowly; yet the one sign is of the same nature as the other, though that one mounts in a brief space, this comes forth very deliberately. Do you not see, too, how contrary the elements are to one another? They are heavy and light, cold and hot, moist and dry. The whole concord of the universe is a harmony of discords. You say a comet is not a star, because its form does not correspond to the type, but is unlike other stars. You can see, no doubt, how very like that star that returns to its place after thirty years is to this which revisits its haunt within the year! Nature does not turn out her work according to a single pattern; she prides herself upon her power of variation. She has made some things larger, some swifter than others; some stronger, some more limited in power; some she has separated from the crowd, that their splendid isolation might render their progress conspicuous; some she has consigned to a place in the common herd. He has little conception of nature's power who thinks that she may not do exceptionally what she does not do repeatedly. She does not often display comets; she has assigned them a different place, different periods from the other stars, and motions unlike theirs. She wished to enhance the greatness

of her work by these strange visitants whose form is too beautiful to be thought accidental, whether you consider their vastness or their brightness that surpasses in size and brilliance all other stars. Their appearance has, in truth, an exceptional distinction; they are not cribbed and cabined within narrow bonds, but let loose to roam freely, to range over the region of many stars.

XXVIII

[1] ACCORDING to Aristotle, comets give indications of storm and disturbances that bring wind and rain. Well, then, are you of opinion it is not a star because it foretells what is coming? True the comet is not a sign of storm in the same way as it is a sign of coming rain when

The oil splutters, and rotten fungus covers the wick;
or in the same way as it is a forecast of a raging sea — if

the sea

Coots sport on land; her haunts in the marshes Are deserted by the heron, and she soars above the heights of cloud:

[2] but in the same way as the equinox is a sign of the turn of the year toward cold or heat, or as the predictions of the Chaldaean soothsayers who tell what sorrow or joy is determined at birth by the natal star, are indications of coming events. To convince you of the truth of this, I must warn you that the rising of a comet does not convey a threat of wind and rain in the immediate future, as Aristotle says, but casts suspicion over the whole year. Hence it is plain that the comet has not derived prognostications from its immediate surroundings to reveal for the immediate future, but that it has them stored up and buried deep within by the laws of the universe. The comet which appeared in the consulship of Paterculus and Vopiscus fulfilled the anticipations of this kind entertained by Aristotle, and for that matter by Theophrastus; for there were everywhere severe [3] and prolonged storms, while in Achaia and Macedonia cities were overturned by earthquakes. The slowness of the comets' motion, Aristotle says, is a proof that they are rather heavy, containing much earthy matter. So are their orbits too, for they are usually confined to the neighbourhood of the poles.

XXIX

BOTH statements are false. Let me take them in [1] their order. Well, it is asserted, is it, that all bodies are heavy that move more slowly? What! is the planet Saturn, which accomplishes its circuit most slowly of all the planets, heavy? It has, in fact, a proof of lightness in being higher than all the rest. But, you say, it takes a wider sweep, and does not go more slowly than the others, but only a longer distance. Let me suggest that I can make the same statement of the comets; even if their course is more sluggish, they have farther to go. But it is a falsehood to assert that they [2] move more slowly. For this last comet traversed within six months half the span of heaven; the previous one withdrew from sight in a shorter period. But again, it is urged, on account of their weight, they are borne down lower. Well, in the first place, a comet is not borne down, but round. In the second, this recent one began its motion in the north, and passing by way of the west, reached the southern quarters, and was elevating its orbit when [5] it faded from sight. That other one, in Claudius' reign, also first appeared in the north, and continued without intermission to rise straight up to a higher elevation until it disappeared. Such are the matters relating to comets which have had weight with others and with myself. Whether they are true or not, those who attain knowledge of the truth must decide. We are permitted only to conjecture and grope in the dark, with no assurance of discovery, and yet not without hope.

XXX

[1] ARISTOTLE has finely said that we should never be more reverent than when we are treating of the gods. We enter a temple with all due gravity, we lower our eyes, draw up our toga, and assume every token of modesty when we approach the sacrifice. How much more is all this due when we discuss the heavenly bodies, the stars, the nature of the gods, lest in ignorance we make any assertion regarding them that is hasty, or [2] disrespectful; or lest we wittingly lie. Let us not be surprised that what is buried so deeply should be unearthed so slowly. Panaetius and others, who will have it that a comet is not an ordinary star but the mere counterfeit of a star, have bestowed careful treatment on the question whether all seasons of the year are equally fitted to produce comets, and whether all quarters of the sky are equally suitable for their creation. They have inquired, too, whether they can be formed in all regions through which they can pass, and have discussed other points of a like kind. But all these questions are foreclosed by my statement that they are not accidental fires, but inwoven in the texture of the universe, directed by it in secret, but not often revealed. And how many bodies besides revolve [3] in secret, never dawning upon human eyes? Nor is it for man that God has made all things. How small a portion of His mighty work is entrusted to us? But He who directs them all, who established and laid the foundations of all this world, who has clothed Himself with creation, and is the greater and better part of His work, He is hidden from our eyes, He can be perceived only by thought.

XXXI

MANY things, moreover, akin to highest deity or [1] holding power near it, are still obscure. Or, perhaps, one may be still more surprised to find that they at once fill and elude our sight. Either their subtlety is too great for human vision to grasp, or such exalted majesty conceals itself in the holier sanctuary, and rules its kingdom, which is itself, without permitting access to any power except the spirit. What that is, without which nothing is, we cannot know: and when God, the greatest part of the universe, is an unknown God, we are surprised, are we, that there are some specks of fire we do not fully understand? How many animals we have come to [2] know for the first time in our own days! Many, too, that are unknown to us, the people of a coming day will know. Many discoveries are reserved for the ages still to be, when our memory shall have perished. The world is a poor affair if it do not contain matter for investigation for the whole world in every age. Some of the sacred rites are not revealed to worshippers all at once. Eleusis retains some of its mysteries to show to votaries on their second visit. Nature does not reveal all *her* secrets at once. We imagine we are initiated in her mysteries: we are, as yet, but hanging around her [2] outer courts. Those secrets of hers are not opened to all indiscriminately. They are withdrawn and shut up in the inner shrine. Of one of them this age will catch a glimpse, of another, the age that will come after.

When, then, it may be asked, will all these things come to our full knowledge? Great schemes mature slowly, especially if effort is relaxed. There is one object we are bent on, heart and soul, — to be as wicked as possible — and we have not [3] yet attained perfection. Vice is still making progress. Luxury is constantly discovering some new outlet for its madness, indecency some new form of insult on itself. Dissolute effeminacy and corruption are constantly discovering some more refined and delicate means of self-destruction. We have not yet wholly cast off our vigour. We are still doing our best to extinguish any spark of virtue that is left. By the smoothness and polish of our bodies we men have outdone the refinements of women; we have adopted the colours of harlots, that even an honest

woman would^[4] not put on. With delicate mincing step we check our gait; we do not walk, with measured pace we go. We adorn our fingers with rings. A precious stone sparkles on every joint. Day by day we devise means of wronging and degrading our manhood, vexed that we cannot strip it off. One becomes a eunuch, another assumes the scandalous part of a gladiator, and, hired for death, arms for disgrace. The very pauper selects a victim on whom to sate his morbid lust.

XXXII

Do you wonder that wisdom has not yet attained ^[1] her perfect work? Why, vice has not wholly revealed itself. It is still in its infancy, and yet on it we bestow all our efforts; our eyes and our hands are its slaves. Who attends the school of wisdom now? Who thinks it worth while to have more than a bowing acquaintance with her? Who has regard for philosophy or any liberal pursuit, except when a rainy day comes round to interrupt the games, and it may be wasted without loss? And so the many sects of philosophers are all dying out ^[2] for lack of successors. The Academy, both old and new, has left no disciple. Who is there to hand down the precepts of Pyrrho? That famous school of Pythagoras, despised of the rabble, can find no master. The new sect of the Sextii, which contained the vigour of Rome, started with great enthusiasm, but on the very threshold of its career is also dead.

But what anxious care we bestow that the name ^[3] of no actor may be lost! The house of Pylades and Bathyllus stands in a long line of successors. For arts of that kind there are plenty of pupils and plenty of teachers. The actor's platform resounds in every private house in the whole city. On it men and women alike practise the ballet step. Husbands and wives vie in paying court to actors. By and by, when the brow is rubbed smooth by long wearing of the mask, the transition to the ^[8] brothel is easy and natural. Philosophy gets never a thought. And so it comes to pass that, far from advance being made toward the discovery of what the older generations left insufficiently investigated, many of their discoveries are being lost. But yet, on my soul of honour, if we urged on this task with all our powers, if our youth in sobriety braced themselves to it, if the elder taught it and the younger learned it, even then scarce should we reach the bottom of the well in which truth lies. As it is, we search for her on the surface, and with a slack hand.

ON BENEFITS



Translated by Aubrey Stewart

De Beneficiis was composed circa 63 AD and comprises seven books, forming part of a series of moral essays. The dialogue opens with Seneca's opinion that "Among the many and diverse errors of those who live reckless and thoughtless lives, almost nothing... is more disgraceful than the fact that we do not know how either to give or to receive benefits." Seneca then provides arguments concerning the nature of the soul with respect to gratitude, when in receipt of a gift or benefit. The dialogue is in favour of generosity over scrupulousness. Seneca then considers the causes of lack of gratitude by those he perceives to be thoughtless and reckless. This he attributes to a lack of expediency (discernment) on the part of the giver when deferring benefits (monetary), i.e. that the fault is initially with the giver. Written in the form of rhetoric, the first book gives insight into the lives of the rich and powerful Romans. The dialogue is directed at the improvement of the souls of Seneca's peers through arguments proving that generosity is a valid response when considering the realities of the society they inhabit.



Eighteenth century bust of Seneca, Château de Hautefort, Dordogne, France

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PREFACE

Seneca, the favourite classic of the early fathers of the church and of the Middle Ages, whom Jerome, Tertullian, and Augustine speak of as “Seneca noster,” who was believed to have corresponded with St. Paul, and upon whom [Footnote: On the “De Clementia,” an odd subject for the man who burned Servetus alive for differing with him.] Calvin wrote a commentary, seems almost forgotten in modern times. Perhaps some of his popularity may have been due to his being supposed to be the author of those tragedies which the world has long ceased to read, but which delighted a period that preferred Euripides to Aeschylus: while casuists must have found congenial matter in an author whose fantastic cases of conscience are often worthy of Sanchez or Escobar. Yet Seneca’s morality is always pure, and from him we gain, albeit at second hand, an insight into the doctrines of the Greek philosophers, Zeno, Epicurus, Chrysippus, &c., whose precepts and system of religious thought had in cultivated Roman society taken the place of the old worship of Jupiter and Quirinus.

Since Lodge’s edition (fol. 1614), no complete translation of Seneca has been published in England, though Sir Roger L’Estrange wrote paraphrases of several Dialogues, which seem to have been enormously popular, running through more than sixteen editions. I think we may conjecture that Shakespeare had seen Lodge’s translation, from several allusions to philosophy, to that impossible conception “the wise man,” and especially from a passage in “All’s Well that ends Well,” which seems to breathe the very spirit of “De Beneficiis.”

“’Tis pity —

That wishing well had not a body in it
Which might be felt: that we, the poorer born,
Whose baser stars do shut us up in wishes,
Might with effects of them follow our friends
And show what we alone must think; which never
Returns us thanks.”

Though, if this will not fit the supposed date of that play, he may have taken the idea from "The Woorke of Lucius Annaeus Seneca concerning Benefyting, that is too say, the dooing, receyving, and requyting of good turnes, translated out of Latin by A. Golding. J. Day, London, 1578." And even during the Restoration, Pepys's ideal of virtuous and lettered seclusion is a country house in whose garden he might sit on summer afternoons with his friend, Sir W. Coventry, "it maybe, to read a chapter of Seneca." In sharp contrast to this is Vahlen's preface to the minor Dialogues, which he edited after the death of his friend Koch, who had begun that work, in which he remarks that "he has read much of this writer, in order to perfect his knowledge of Latin, for otherwise he neither admires his artificial subtleties of thought, nor his childish mannerisms of style" (Vahlen, preface, p. v., ed. 1879, Jena).

Yet by the student of the history of Rome under the Caesars, Seneca is not to be neglected, because, whatever may be thought of the intrinsic merit of his speculations, he represents, more perhaps even than Tacitus, the intellectual characteristics of his age, and the tone of society in Rome — nor could we well spare the gossiping stories which we find imbedded in his graver dissertations. The following extract from Dean Merivale's "History of the Romans under the Empire" will show the estimate of him which has been formed by that accomplished writer: —

"At Rome, we, have no reason, to suppose that Christianity was only the refuge of the afflicted and miserable; rather, if we may lay any stress on the documents above referred to, it was first embraced by persons in a certain grade of comfort and respectability; by persons approaching to what we should call the MIDDLE CLASSES in their condition, their education, and their moral views. Of this class Seneca himself was the idol, the oracle; he was, so to speak, the favourite preacher of the more intelligent and humane disciples of nature and virtue. Now the writings of Seneca show, in their way, a real anxiety among this class to raise the moral tone of mankind around them; a spirit of reform, a zeal for the conversion of souls, which, though it never rose, indeed, under the teaching of the

philosophers, to boiling heat, still simmered with genial warmth on the surface of society. Far different as was their social standing-point, far different as were the foundations and the presumed sanctions of their teaching respectively, Seneca and St. Paul were both moral reformers; both, be it said with reverence, were fellow-workers in the cause of humanity, though the Christian could look beyond the proximate aims of morality and prepare men for a final development on which the Stoic could not venture to gaze. Hence there is so much in their principles, so much even in their language, which agrees together, so that the one has been thought, though it must be allowed without adequate reason, to have borrowed directly from the other. [Footnote: It is hardly necessary to refer to the pretended letters between St. Paul and Seneca. Besides the evidence from style, some of the dates they contain are quite sufficient to condemn them as clumsy forgeries. They are mentioned, but with no expression of belief in their genuineness, by Jerome and Augustine. See Jones, "On the Canon," ii. 80.]

"But the philosopher, be it remembered, discoursed to a large and not inattentive audience, and surely the soil was not all unfruitful on which his seed was scattered when he proclaimed that God dwells not in temples of wood and stone, nor wants the ministrations of human hands;[Footnote: Sen., E, and in Lactantius, Inst. vi.] that He has no delight in the blood of victims:[Footnote: E: "Colitur Deus non tauris sed pia et recta voluntate."] that He is near to all His creatures:[Footnote: E, 73.] that His Spirit resides in men's hearts: [Footnote: E: "Sacer intra nos spiritus sedet."] that all men are truly His offspring:[Footnote: "De Prov," i.] that we are members of one body, which is God or Nature;[Footnote: E, 95: "Membra sumus magni corporis."] that men must believe in God before they can approach Him:[Footnote: E: "Primus Deorum cultus est Deos credere."] that the true service of God is to be like unto Him: [Footnote: E: "Satis coluit quisquis imitatus est."] that all men have sinned, and none performed all the works of the law:[Footnote: Sen. de Ira. i. 14; ii. 27: "Quis est iste qui se profitetur omnibus legibus innocentem?"] that God is no respecter of nations, ranks, or conditions, but all, barbarian and Roman, bond and free, are alike under His all-seeing Providence.[Footnote: "De Benef.," iii. 18:

“Virtus omnes admittit, libertinos, servos, reges.” These and many other passages are collected by Champagny, ii. 546, after Fabricius and others, and compared with well-known texts of Scripture. The version of the Vulgate shows a great deal of verbal correspondence. M. Troplong remarks, after De Maistre, that Seneca has written a fine book on Providence, for which there was not even a name at Rome in the time of Cicero.—“L’Influence du Christianisme,” &c., i., ch. 4.]

“St. Paul enjoined submission and obedience even to the tyranny of Nero, and Seneca fosters no ideas subversive of political subjection. Endurance is the paramount virtue of the Stoic. To forms of government the wise man was wholly indifferent; they were among the external circumstances above which his spirit soared in serene self-contemplation. We trace in Seneca no yearning for a restoration of political freedom, nor does he even point to the senate, after the manner of the patriots of the day, as a legitimate check to the autocracy of the despot. The only mode, in his view, of tempering tyranny is to educate the tyrant himself in virtue. His was the self-denial of the Christians, but without their anticipated compensation. It seems impossible to doubt that in his highest flights of rhetoric — and no man ever recommended the unattainable with a finer grace — Seneca must have felt that he was labouring to build up a house without foundations; that his system, as Caius said of his style, was sand without lime. He was surely not unconscious of the inconsistency of his own position, as a public man and a minister, with the theories to which he had wedded himself; and of the impossibility of preserving in it the purity of his character as a philosopher or a man. He was aware that in the existing state of society at Rome, wealth was necessary to men high in station; wealth alone could retain influence, and a poor minister became at once contemptible. The distributor of the Imperial favours must have his banquets, his receptions, his slaves and freedmen; he must possess the means of attracting if not of bribing; he must not seem too virtuous, too austere, among an evil generation; in order to do good at all he must swim with the stream, however polluted it might be. All this inconsistency Seneca must have contemplated without blenching; and there is something touching in the serenity he preserved amidst the conflict that must have perpetually raged

between his natural sense and his acquired principles. Both Cicero and Seneca were men of many weaknesses, and we remark them the more because both were pretenders to unusual strength of character; but while Cicero lapsed into political errors, Seneca cannot be absolved of actual crime. Nevertheless, if we may compare the greatest masters of Roman wisdom together, the Stoic will appear, I think, the more earnest of the two, the more anxious to do his duty for its own sake, the more sensible of the claims of mankind upon him for such precepts of virtuous living as he had to give. In an age of unbelief and compromise he taught that Truth was positive and Virtue objective. He conceived, what never entered Cicero's mind, the idea of improving his fellow-creatures; he had, what Cicero had not, a heart for conversion to Christianity."

To this eloquent account of Seneca's position and of the tendency of his writings I have nothing to add. The main particulars of his life, his Spanish extraction (like that of Lacan and Martial), his father's treatises on Rhetoric, his mother Helvia, his brothers, his wealth, his exile in Corsica, his outrageous flattery of Claudius and his satiric poem on his death— "The Vision of Judgment," Merivale calls it, after Lord Byron — his position as Nero's tutor, and his death, worthy at once of a Roman and a Stoic, by the orders of that tyrant, may be read of in "The History of the Romans under the Empire," or in the article "Seneca" in the "Dictionary of Classical Biography," and need not be reproduced here: but I cannot resist pointing out how entirely Grote's view of the "Sophists" as a sort of established clergy, and Seneca's account of the various sects of philosophers as representing the religious thought of the time, is illustrated by his anecdote of Julia Augusta, the mother of Tiberius, better known to English readers as Livia the wife of Augustus, who in her first agony of grief at the loss of her first husband applied to his Greek philosopher, Areus, as to a kind of domestic chaplain, for spiritual consolation. ("Ad Marciam de Consolatione," ch. iv.)

I take this opportunity of expressing my gratitude to the Rev. J. E. B. Mayor, Professor of Latin in the University of Cambridge, for his kindness in finding time among his many and important literary labours for reading and correcting the proofs of this work.

The text which I have followed for *De Beneficiis* is that of Gertz,

Berlin (1876.).

AUBREY STEWART

London, March, 1887.

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ON BENEFITS.

DEDICATED TO AEBUTIUS LIBERALIS.

BOOK I.

I.

Among the numerous faults of those who pass their lives recklessly and without due reflexion, my good friend Liberalis, I should say that there is hardly any one so hurtful to society as this, that we neither know how to bestow or how to receive a benefit. It follows from this that benefits are badly invested, and become bad debts: in these cases it is too late to complain of their not being returned, for they were thrown away when we bestowed them. Nor need we wonder that while the greatest vices are common, none is more common than ingratitude: for this I see is brought about by various causes. The first of these is, that we do not choose worthy persons upon whom to bestow our bounty, but although when we are about to lend money we first make a careful enquiry into the means and habits of life of our debtor, and avoid sowing seed in a worn-out or unfruitful soil, yet without any discrimination we scatter our benefits at random rather than bestow them. It is hard to say whether it is more dishonourable for the receiver to disown a benefit, or for the giver to demand a return of it: for a benefit is a loan, the repayment of which depends merely upon the good feeling of the debtor. To misuse a benefit like a spendthrift is most shameful, because we do not need our wealth but only our intention to set us free from the obligation of it; for a benefit is repaid by being acknowledged. Yet while they are to blame who do not even show so much gratitude as to acknowledge their debt, we ourselves are to blame no less. We find many men ungrateful, yet we make more men so, because at one time we harshly and reproachfully demand some return for our bounty, at another we are fickle and regret what we have given, at another we are peevish and apt to find fault with trifles. By acting thus we destroy all sense of gratitude, not only after we have given anything, but while we are in the act of giving it. Who has ever thought it enough to be asked for anything in an off-hand manner, or to be asked only once? Who, when he suspected that he was going to be asked for any thing, has not frowned, turned away his face, pretended to be busy, or purposely talked without ceasing, in order not to give his suitor a chance of preferring his request, and avoided by various

tricks having to help his friend in his pressing need? and when driven into a corner, has not either put the matter off, that is, given a cowardly refusal, or promised his help ungraciously, with a wry face, and with unkind words, of which he seemed to grudge the utterance. Yet no one is glad to owe what he has not so much received from his benefactor, as wrung out of him. Who can be grateful for what has been disdainfully flung to him, or angrily cast at him, or been given him out of weariness, to avoid further trouble? No one need expect any return from those whom he has tired out with delays, or sickened with expectation. A benefit is received in the same temper in which it is given, and ought not, therefore, to be given carelessly, for a man thanks himself for that which he receives without the knowledge of the giver. Neither ought we to give after long delay, because in all good offices the will of the giver counts for much, and he who gives tardily must long have been unwilling to give at all. Nor, assuredly, ought we to give in offensive manner, because human nature is so constituted that insults sink deeper than kindnesses; the remembrance of the latter soon passes away, while that of the former is treasured in the memory; so what can a man expect who insults while he obliges? All the gratitude which he deserves is to be forgiven for helping us. On the other hand, the number of the ungrateful ought not to deter us from earning men's gratitude; for, in the first place, their number is increased by our own acts. Secondly, the sacrilege and indifference to religion of some men does not prevent even the immortal gods from continuing to shower their benefits upon us: for they act according to their divine nature and help all alike, among them even those who so ill appreciate their bounty. Let us take them for our guides as far as the weakness of our mortal nature permits; let us bestow benefits, not put them out at interest. The man who while he gives thinks of what he will get in return, deserves to be deceived. But what if the benefit turns out ill? Why, our wives and our children often disappoint our hopes, yet we marry — and bring up children, and are so obstinate in the face of experience that we fight after we have been beaten, and put to sea after we have been shipwrecked. How much more constancy ought we to show in bestowing benefits! If a man does not bestow benefits because he has not received any, he must have bestowed them in order to receive them in return, and

he justifies ingratitude, whose disgrace lies in not returning benefits when able to do so. How many are there who are unworthy of the light of day? and nevertheless the sun rises. How many complain because they have been born? yet Nature is ever renewing our race, and even suffers men to live who wish that they had never lived. It is the property of a great and good mind to covet, not the fruit of good deeds, but good deeds themselves, and to seek for a good man even after having met with bad men. If there were no rogues, what glory would there be in doing good to many? As it is, virtue consists in bestowing benefits for which we are not certain of meeting with any return, but whose fruit is at once enjoyed by noble minds. So little influence ought this to have in restraining us from doing good actions, that even though I were denied the hope of meeting with a grateful man, yet the fear of not having my benefits returned would not prevent my bestowing them, because he who does not give, forestalls the vice of him who is ungrateful. I will explain what I mean. He who does not repay a benefit, sins more, but he who does not bestow one, sins earlier.

“If thou at random dost thy bounties waste,
Much must be lost, for one that’s rightly placed.”

II.

In the former verse you may blame two things, for one should not cast them at random, and it is not right to waste anything, much less benefits; for unless they be given with judgement, they cease to be benefits, and, may be called by any other name you please. The meaning of the latter verse is admirable, that one benefit rightly bestowed makes amends for the loss of many that have been lost. See, I pray you, whether it be not truer and more worthy of the glory of the giver, that we should encourage him to give, even though none of his gifts should be worthily placed. "Much must be lost." Nothing is lost because he who loses had counted the cost before. The book-keeping of benefits is simple: it is all expenditure; if any one returns it, that is clear gain; if he does not return it, it is not lost, I gave it for the sake of giving. No one writes down his gifts in a ledger, or like a grasping creditor demands repayment to the day and hour. A good man never thinks of such matters, unless reminded of them by some one returning his gifts; otherwise they become like debts owing to him. It is a base usury to regard a benefit as an investment. Whatever may have been the result of your former benefits, persevere in bestowing others upon other men; they will be all the better placed in the hands of the ungrateful, whom shame, or a favourable opportunity, or imitation of others may some day cause to be grateful. Do not grow weary, perform your duty, and act as becomes a good man. Help one man with money, another with credit, another with your favour; this man with good advice, that one with sound maxims. Even wild beasts feel kindness, nor is there any animal so savage that good treatment will not tame it and win love from it. The mouths of lions are handled by their keepers with impunity; to obtain their food fierce elephants become as docile as slaves: so that constant unceasing kindness wins the hearts even of creatures who, by their nature, cannot comprehend or weigh the value of a benefit. Is a man ungrateful for one benefit? perhaps he will not be so after receiving a second. Has he forgotten two kindnesses? perhaps by a third he may be brought to remember the former ones also.

III.

He who is quick to believe that he has thrown away his benefits, does really throw them away; but he who presses on and adds new benefits to his former ones, forces out gratitude even from a hard and forgetful breast. In the face of many kindnesses, your friend will not dare to raise his eyes; let him see you whithersoever he turns himself to escape from his remembrance of you; encircle him with your benefits. As for the power and property of these, I will explain it to you if first you will allow me to glance at a matter which does not belong to our subject, as to why the Graces are three in number, why they are sisters, why hand in hand, and why they are smiling and young, with a loose and transparent dress. Some writers think that there is one who bestows a benefit, one who receives it, and a third who returns it; others say that they represent the three sorts of benefactors, those who bestow, those who repay, and those who both receive and repay them. But take whichever you please to be true; what will this knowledge profit us? What is the meaning of this dance of sisters in a circle, hand in hand? It means that the course of a benefit is from hand to hand, back to the giver; that the beauty of the whole chain is lost if a single link fails, and that it is fairest when it proceeds in unbroken regular order. In the dance there is one, esteemed beyond the others, who represents the givers of benefits. Their faces are cheerful, as those of men who give or receive benefits are wont to be. They are young, because the memory of benefits ought not to grow old. They are virgins, because benefits are pure and untainted, and held holy by all; in benefits there should be no strict or binding conditions, therefore the Graces wear loose flowing tunics, which are transparent, because benefits love to be seen. People who are not under the influence of Greek literature may say that all this is a matter of course; but there can be no one who would think that the names which Hesiod has given them bear upon our subject. He named the eldest Aglaia, the middle one Euphrosyne, the third Thalia. Every one, according to his own ideas, twists the meaning of these names, trying to reconcile them with some system, though Hesiod merely gave his maidens their names from his own

fancy. So Homer altered the name of one of them, naming her Pasithea, and betrothed her to a husband, in order that you may know that they are not vestal virgins. [Footnote: i.e. not vowed to chastity.]

I could find another poet, in whose writings they are girded, and wear thick or embroidered Phrygian robes. Mercury stands with them for the same reason, not because argument or eloquence commends benefits, but because the painter chose to do so. Also Chrysippus, that man of piercing intellect who saw to the very bottom of truth, who speaks only to the point, and makes use of no more words than are necessary to express his meaning, fills his whole treatise with these puerilities, insomuch that he says but very little about the duties of giving, receiving, and returning a benefit, and has not so much inserted fables among these subjects, as he has inserted these subjects among a mass of fables. For, not to mention what Hecaton borrows from him, Chrysippus tells us that the three Graces are the daughters of Jupiter and Eurynome, that they are younger than the Hours, and rather more beautiful, and that on that account they are assigned as companions to Venus. He also thinks that the name of their mother bears upon the subject, and that she is named Eurynome because to distribute benefits requires a wide inheritance; as if the mother usually received her name after her daughters, or as if the names given by poets were true. In truth, just as with a 'nomenclator' audacity supplies the place of memory, and he invents a name for every one whose name he cannot recollect, so the poets think that it is of no importance to speak the truth, but are either forced by the exigencies of metre, or attracted by sweetness of sound, into calling every one by whatever name runs neatly into verse. Nor do they suffer for it if they introduce another name into the list, for the next poet makes them bear what name he pleases. That you may know that this is so, for instance Thalia, our present subject of discourse, is one of the Graces in Hesiod's poems, while in those of Homer she is one of the Muses.

IV.

But lest I should do the very thing which I am blaming, I will pass over all these matters, which are so far from the subject that they are not even connected with it. Only do you protect me, if any one attacks me for putting down Chrysippus, who, by Hercules, was a great man, but yet a Greek, whose intellect, too sharply pointed, is often bent and turned back upon itself; even when it seems to be in earnest it only pricks, but does not pierce. Here, however, what occasion is there for subtlety? We are to speak of benefits, and to define a matter which is the chief bond of human society; we are to lay down a rule of life, such that neither careless openhandedness may commend itself to us under the guise of goodness of heart, and yet that our circumspection, while it moderates, may not quench our generosity, a quality in which we ought neither to exceed nor to fall short. Men must be taught to be willing to give, willing to receive, willing to return; and to place before themselves the high aim, not merely of equalling, but even of surpassing those to whom they are indebted, both in good offices and in good feeling; because the man whose duty it is to repay, can never do so unless he out-does his benefactor; [Footnote: That is, he never comes up to his benefactor unless he leaves him behind: he can only make a dead heat of it by getting a start.] the one class must be taught to look for no return, the other to feel deeper gratitude. In this noblest of contests to outdo benefits by benefits, Chrysippus encourages us by bidding us beware lest, as the Graces are the daughters of Jupiter, to act ungratefully may not be a sin against them, and may not wrong those beauteous maidens. Do thou teach me how I may bestow more good things, and be more grateful to those who have earned my gratitude, and how the minds of both parties may vie with one another, the giver in forgetting, the receiver in remembering his debt. As for those other follies, let them be left to the poets, whose purpose is merely to charm the ear and to weave a pleasing story; but let those who wish to purify men's minds, to retain honour in their dealings, and to imprint on their minds gratitude for kindnesses, let them speak in sober earnest and act with all their strength; unless you imagine,

perchance, that by such flippant and mythical talk, and such old wives' reasoning, it is possible for us to prevent that most ruinous consummation, the repudiation of benefits.

V.

However, while I pass over what is futile and irrelevant I must point out that the first thing which we have to learn is, what we owe in return for a benefit received. One man says that he owes the money which he has received, another that he owes a consulship, a priesthood, a province, and so on. These, however, are but the outward signs of kindnesses, not the kindnesses themselves. A benefit is not to be felt and handled, it is a thing which exists only in the mind. There is a great difference between the subject-matter of a benefit, and the benefit itself. Wherefore neither gold, nor silver, nor any of those things which are most highly esteemed, are benefits, but the benefit lies in the goodwill of him who gives them. The ignorant take notice only of that which comes before their eyes, and which can be owned and passed from hand to hand, while they disregard that which gives these things their value. The things which we hold in our hands, which we see with our eyes, and which our avarice hugs, are transitory, they may be taken from us by ill luck or by violence; but a kindness lasts even after the loss of that by means of which it was bestowed; for it is a good deed, which no violence can undo. For instance, suppose that I ransomed a friend from pirates, but another pirate has caught him and thrown him into prison. The pirate has not robbed him of my benefit, but has only robbed him of the enjoyment of it. Or suppose that I have saved a man's children from a shipwreck or a fire, and that afterwards disease or accident has carried them off; even when they are no more, the kindness which was done by means of them remains. All those things, therefore, which improperly assume the name of benefits, are means by which kindly feeling manifests itself. In other cases also, we find a distinction between the visible symbol and the matter itself, as when a general bestows collars of gold, or civic or mural crowns upon any one. What value has the crown in itself? or the purple-bordered robe? or the fasces? or the judgment-seat and car of triumph? None of these things is in itself an honour, but is an emblem of honour. In like manner, that which is seen is not a benefit — it is but the trace and mark of a benefit.

VI.

What, then, is a benefit? It is the art of doing a kindness which both bestows pleasure and gains it by bestowing it, and which does its office by natural and spontaneous impulse. It is not, therefore, the thing which is done or given, but the spirit in which it is done or given, that must be considered, because a benefit exists, not in that which is done or given, but in the mind of the doer or giver. How great the distinction between them is, you may perceive from this, that while a benefit is necessarily good, yet that which is done or given is neither good nor bad. The spirit in which they are given can exalt small things, can glorify mean ones, and can discredit great and precious ones; the objects themselves which are sought after have a neutral nature, neither good nor bad; all depends upon the direction given them by the guiding spirit from which things receive their shape. That which is paid or handed over is not the benefit itself, just as the honour which we pay to the gods lies not in the victims themselves, although they be fat and glittering with gold, [Footnote: Alluding to the practice of gilding the horns of the victims.] but in the pure and holy feelings of the worshippers.

Thus good men are religious, though their offering be meal and their vessels of earthenware; whilst bad men will not escape from their impiety, though they pour the blood of many victims upon the altars.

VII.

If benefits consisted of things, and not of the wish to benefit, then the more things we received the greater the benefit would be. But this is not true, for sometimes we feel more gratitude to one who gives us trifles nobly, who, like Virgil's poor old soldier, "holds himself as rich as kings," if he has given us ever so little with a good will a man who forgets his own need when he sees mine, who has not only a wish but a longing to help, who thinks that he receives a benefit when he bestows one, who gives as though he would receive no return, receives a repayment as though he had originally given nothing, and who watches for and seizes an opportunity of being useful. On the other hand, as I said before, those gifts which are hardly wrung from the giver, or which drop unheeded from his hands, claim no gratitude from us, however great they may appear and may be. We prize much more what comes from a willing hand, than what comes from a full one. This man has given me but little, yet more he could not afford, while what that one has given is much indeed, but he hesitated, he put it off, he grumbled when he gave it, he gave it haughtily, or he proclaimed it aloud, and did it to please others, not to please the person to whom he gave it; he offered it to his own pride, not to me.

VIII.

As the pupils of Socrates, each in proportion to his means, gave him large presents, Aeschines, a poor pupil, said, "I can find nothing to give you which is worthy of you; I feel my poverty in this respect alone. Therefore I present you with the only thing I possess, myself. I pray that you may take this my present, such as it is, in good part, and may remember that the others, although they gave you much, yet left for themselves more than they gave." Socrates answered, "Surely you have bestowed a great present upon me, unless perchance you set a small value upon yourself. I will accordingly take pains to restore you to yourself a better man than when I received you." By this present Aeschines outdid Alcibiades, whose mind was as great as his Wealth, and all the splendour of the most wealthy youths of Athens.

IX.

You see how the mind even in the straitest circumstances finds the means of generosity. Aeschines seems to me to have said, "Fortune, it is in vain that you have made me poor; in spite of this I will find a worthy present for this man. Since I can give him nothing of yours, I will give him something of my own." Nor need you suppose that he held himself cheap; he made himself his own price. By a stroke of genius this youth discovered a means of presenting Socrates to himself. We must not consider how great presents are, but in what spirit they are given.

A rich man is well spoken of if he is clever enough to render himself easy of access to men of immoderate ambition, and although he intends to do nothing to help them, yet encourages their unconscionable hopes; but he is thought the worse of if he be sharp of tongue, sour in appearance, and displays his wealth in an invidious fashion. For men respect and yet loathe a fortunate man, and hate him for doing what, if they had the chance, they would do themselves.

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Men nowadays no longer secretly, but openly outrage the wives of others, and allow to others access to their own wives. A match is thought countrified, uncivilized, in bad style, and to be protested against by all matrons, if the husband should forbid his wife to appear in public in a litter, and to be carried about exposed to the gaze of all observers. If a man has not made himself notorious by a LIAISON with some mistress, if he does not pay an annuity to some one else's wife, married women speak of him as a poor-spirited creature, a man given to low vice, a lover of servant girls. Soon adultery becomes the most respectable form of marriage, and widowhood and celibacy are commonly practised. No one takes a wife unless he takes her away from some one else. Now men vie with one another in wasting what they have stolen, and in collecting together what they have wasted with the keenest avarice; they

become utterly reckless, scorn poverty in others, fear personal injury more than anything else, break the peace by their riots, and by violence and terror domineer over those who are weaker than themselves. No wonder that they plunder provinces and offer the seat of judgment for sale, knocking it down after an auction to the highest bidder, since it is the law of nations that you may sell what you have bought.

X.

However, my enthusiasm has carried me further than I intended, the subject being an inviting one. Let me, then, end by pointing out that the disgrace of these crimes does not belong especially to our own time. Our ancestors before us have lamented, and our children after us will lament, as we do, the ruin, of morality, the prevalence of vice, and the gradual deterioration of mankind; yet these things are really stationary, only moved slightly to and fro like the waves which at one time a rising tide washes further over the land, and at another an ebbing one restrains within a lower water mark. At one time the chief vice will be adultery, and licentiousness will exceed all bounds; at another time a rage for feasting will be in vogue, and men will waste their inheritance in the most shameful of all ways, by the kitchen; at another, excessive care for the body, and a devotion to personal beauty which implies ugliness of mind; at another time, injudiciously granted liberty will show itself in wanton recklessness and defiance of authority; sometimes there will be a reign of cruelty both in public and private, and the madness of the civil wars will come upon us, which destroy all that is holy and inviolable. Sometimes even drunkenness will be held in honour, and it will be a virtue to swallow most wine. Vices do not lie in wait for us in one place alone, but hover around us in changeful forms, sometimes even at variance one with another, so that in turn they win and lose the field; yet we shall always be obliged to pronounce the same verdict upon ourselves, that we are and always were evil, and, I unwillingly add, that we always shall be. There always will be homicides, tyrants, thieves, adulterers, ravishers, sacrilegious, traitors: worse than all these is the ungrateful man, except we consider that all these crimes flow from ingratitude, without which hardly any great wickedness has ever grown to full stature. Be sure that you guard against this as the greatest of crimes in yourself, but pardon it as the least of crimes in another. For all the injury which you suffer is this: you have lost the subject-matter of a benefit, not the benefit itself, for you possess unimpaired the best part of it, in that you have given it. Though we ought to be careful to bestow our benefits by preference upon those who are likely to show

us gratitude for them, yet we must sometimes do what we have little hope will turn out well, and bestow benefits upon those who we not only think will prove ungrateful, but who we know have been so. For instance, if I should be able to save a man's children from a great danger with no risk to myself, I should not hesitate to do so. If a man be worthy I would defend him even with my blood, and would share his perils; if he be unworthy, and yet by merely crying for help I can rescue him from robbers, I would without reluctance raise the shout which would save a fellow-creature.

XI.

The next point to be defined is, what kind of benefits are to be given, and in what manner. First let us give what is necessary, next what is useful, and then what is pleasant, provided that they be lasting. We must begin with what is necessary, for those things which support life affect the mind very differently from, those which adorn and improve it. A man may be nice, and hard to please, in things which he can easily do without, of which he can say, "Take them back; I do not want them, I am satisfied with what I have." Sometimes, we wish not only to, return what we have received, but even to throw it away. Of necessary things, the first class consists of things without which we cannot live; the second, of things without which we ought not to live; and the third, of things without which we should not care to live. The first class are, to be saved from the hands of the enemy, from the anger of tyrants, from proscription, and the various other perils which beset human life. By averting any one of these, we shall earn gratitude proportionate to the greatness of the danger, for when men think of the greatness of the misery from which they have been saved, the terror which they have gone through enhances the value of our services. Yet we ought not to delay rescuing any one longer than we are obliged, solely in order to make his fears add weight to our services. Next come those things without which we can indeed live, but in such a manner that it would be better to die, such as liberty, chastity, or a good conscience. After these are what we have come to hold dear by connexion and relationship and long use and custom, such as our wives and children, our household gods, and so on, to which the mind so firmly attaches itself that separation from them seems worse than death.

After these come useful things, which form a very wide and varied class; in which will be money, not in excess, but enough for living in a moderate style; public office, and, for the ambitious, due advancement to higher posts; for nothing can be more useful to a man than to be placed in a position in which he can benefit himself. All benefits beyond these are superfluous, and are likely to spoil those who receive them. In giving these we must be careful to make

them acceptable by giving them at the appropriate time, or by giving things which are not common, but such as few people possess, or at any rate few possess in our times; or again, by giving things in such a manner, that though not naturally valuable, they become so by the time and place at which they are given. We must reflect what present will produce the most pleasure, what will most frequently come under the notice of the possessor of it, so that whenever he is with it he may be with us also; and in all cases we must be careful not to send useless presents, such as hunting weapons to a woman or old man, or books to a rustic, or nets to catch wild animals to a quiet literary man. On the other hand, we ought to be careful, while we wish to send what will please, that we do not send what will insultingly remind our friends of their failings, as, for example, if we send wine to a hard drinker or drugs to an invalid, for a present which contains an allusion to the shortcomings of the receiver, becomes an outrage.

XII.

If we have a free choice as to what to give, we should above all choose lasting presents, in order that our gift may endure as long as possible; for few are so grateful as to think of what they have received, even when they do not see it. Even the ungrateful remember us by our gifts, when they are always in their sight and do not allow themselves to be forgotten, but constantly obtrude and stamp upon the mind the memory of the giver. As we never ought to remind men of what we have given them, we ought all the more to choose presents that will be permanent; for the things themselves will prevent the remembrance of the giver from fading away. I would more willingly give a present of plate than of coined money, and would more willingly give statues than clothes or other things which are soon worn out. Few remain grateful after the present is gone: many more remember their presents only while they make use of them. If possible, I should like my present not to be consumed; let it remain in existence, let it stick to my friend and share his life. No one is so foolish as to need to be told not to send gladiators or wild beasts to one who has just given a public show, or not to send summer clothing in winter time, or winter clothing in summer. Common sense must guide our benefits; we must consider the time and the place, and the character of the receiver, which are the weights in the scale, which cause our gifts to be well or ill received. How far more acceptable a present is, if we give a man what he has not, than if we give him what he has plenty of! if we give him what he has long been searching for in vain, rather than what he sees everywhere! Let us make presents of things which are rare and scarce rather than costly, things which even a rich man will be glad of, just as common fruits, such as we tire of after a few days, please us if they have ripened before the usual season. People will also esteem things which no one else has given to them, or which we have given to no one else.

XIII.

When the conquest of the East had flattered Alexander of Macedon into believing himself to be more than man, the people of Corinth sent an embassy to congratulate him, and presented him with the franchise of their city. When Alexander smiled at this form of courtesy, one of the ambassadors said, "We have never enrolled any stranger among our citizens except Hercules and yourself." Alexander willingly accepted the proffered honour, invited the ambassadors to his table, and showed them other courtesies. He did not think of who offered the citizenship, but to whom they had granted it; and being altogether the slave of glory, though he knew neither its true nature or its limits, had followed in the footsteps of Hercules and Bacchus, and had not even stayed his march where they ceased; so that he glanced aside from the givers of this honour to him with whom he shared it, and fancied that the heaven to which his vanity aspired was indeed opening before him when he was made equal to Hercules. In what indeed did that frantic youth, whose only merit was his lucky audacity, resemble Hercules? Hercules conquered nothing for himself; he travelled throughout the world, not coveting for himself but liberating the countries which he conquered, an enemy to bad men, a defender of the good, a peacemaker both by sea and land; whereas the other was from his boyhood a brigand and desolator of nations, a pest to his friends and enemies alike, whose greatest joy was to be the terror of all mankind, forgetting that men fear not only the fiercest but also the most cowardly animals, because of their evil and venomous nature.

XIV.

Let us now return to our subject. He who bestows a benefit without discrimination, gives what pleases no one; no one considers himself to be under any obligation to the landlord of a tavern, or to be the guest of any one with whom he dines in such company as to be able to say, "What civility has he shown to me? no more than he has shown to that man, whom he scarcely knows, or to that other, who is both his personal enemy and a man of infamous character. Do you suppose that he wished to do me any honour? not so, he merely wished to indulge his own vice of profusion." If you wish men to be grateful for anything, give it but seldom; no one can bear to receive what you give to all the world. Yet let no one gather from this that I wish to impose any bonds upon generosity; let her go to what lengths she will, so that she go a steady course, not at random. It is possible to bestow gifts in such a manner that each of those who receive them, although he shares them with many others, may yet feel himself to be distinguished from the common herd. Let each man have some peculiarity about his gift which may make him consider himself more highly favoured than the rest. He may say, "I received the same present that he did, but I never asked for it." "I received the same present, but mine was given me after a few days, whereas he had earned it by long service." "Others have the same present, but it was not given to them with the same courtesy and gracious words with which it was given to me." "That man got it because he asked for it; I did not ask." "That man received it as well as I, but then he could easily return it; one has great expectations from a rich man, old and childless, as he is; whereas in giving the same present to me he really gave more, because he gave it without the hope of receiving any return for it." Just as a courtesan divides her favours among many men, so that no one of her friends is without some proof of her affection, so let him who wishes his benefits to be prized consider how he may at the same time gratify many men, and nevertheless give each one of them some especial mark of favour to distinguish him from the rest.

XV.

I am no advocate of slackness in giving benefits: the more and the greater they are, the more praise they will bring to the giver. Yet let them be given with discretion; for what is given carelessly and recklessly can please no one. Whoever, therefore, supposes that in giving this advice I wish to restrict benevolence and to confine it to narrower limits, entirely mistakes the object of my warning. What virtue do we admire more than benevolence? Which do we encourage more? Who ought to applaud it more than we Stoics, who preach the brotherhood of the human race? What then is it? Since no impulse of the human mind can be approved of, even though it springs from a right feeling, unless it be made into a virtue by discretion, I forbid generosity to degenerate into extravagance. It is, indeed, pleasant to receive a benefit with open arms, when reason bestows it upon the worthy, not when it is flung hither or thither thoughtlessly and at random; this alone we care to display and claim as our own. Can you call anything a benefit, if you feel ashamed to mention the person who gave it you? How far more grateful is a benefit, how far more deeply does it impress itself upon the mind, never to be forgotten, when we rejoice to think not so much of what it is, as from whom we have received it! Crispus Passienus was wont to say that some men's advice was to be preferred to their presents, some men's presents to their advice; and he added as an example, "I would rather have received advice from Augustus than a present; I would rather receive a present from Claudius than advice." I, however, think that one ought not to wish for a benefit from any man whose judgement is worthless. What then? Ought we not to receive what Claudius gives? We ought; but we ought to regard it as obtained from fortune, which may at any moment turn against us. Why do we separate this which naturally is connected? That is not a benefit, to which the best part of a benefit, that it be bestowed with judgment, is wanting: a really great sum of money, if it be given neither with discernment nor with good will, is no more a benefit than if it remained hoarded. There are, however, many things which we ought not to reject, yet for which we cannot feel indebted.

BOOK II.

I.

Let us consider, most excellent Liberalis, what still remains of the earlier part of the subject; in what way a benefit should be bestowed. I think that I can point out the shortest way to this; let us give in the way in which we ourselves should like to receive. Above all we should give willingly, quickly, and without any hesitation; a benefit commands no gratitude if it has hung for a long time in the hands of the giver, if he seems unwilling to part with it, and gives it as though he were being robbed of it. Even though some delay should intervene, let us by all means in our power strive not to seem to have been in two minds about giving it at all. To hesitate is the next thing to refusing to give, and destroys all claim to gratitude. For just as the sweetest part of a benefit is the kindly feeling of the giver, it follows that one who has by his very delay proved that he gives unwillingly, must be regarded not as having given anything, but as having been unable to keep it from an importunate suitor. Indeed, many men are made generous by want of firmness. The most acceptable benefits are those which are waiting for us to take them, which are easy to be received, and offer themselves to us, so that the only delay is caused by the modesty of the receiver. The best thing of all is to anticipate a person's wishes; the next, to follow them; the former is the better course, to be beforehand with our friends by giving them what they want before they ask us for it, for the value of a gift is much enhanced by sparing an honest man the misery of asking for it with confusion and blushes. He who gets what he asked for does not get it for nothing, for indeed, as our austere ancestors thought, nothing is so dear as that which is bought by prayers. Men would be much more modest in their petitions to heaven, if these had to be made publicly; so that even when addressing the gods, before whom we can with all honour bend our knees, we prefer to pray silently and within ourselves.

II.

It is unpleasant, burdensome, and covers one with shame to have to say, "Give me." You should spare your friends, and those whom you wish to make your friends, from having to do this; however quick he may be, a man gives too late who gives what he has been asked for. We ought, therefore, to divine every man's wishes, and when we have discovered them, to set him free from the hard necessity of asking; you may be sure that a benefit which comes unasked will be delightful and will not be forgotten. If we do not succeed in anticipating our friends, let us at any rate cut them short when they ask us for anything, so that we may appear to be reminded of what we meant to do, rather than to have been asked to do it. Let us assent at once, and by our promptness make it appear that we meant to do so even before we were solicited. As in dealing with sick persons much depends upon when food is given, and plain water given at the right moment sometimes acts as a remedy, so a benefit, however slight and commonplace it may be, if it be promptly given without losing a moment of time, gains enormously in importance, and wins our gratitude more than a far more valuable present given after long waiting and deliberation. One who gives so readily must needs give with good will; he therefore gives cheerfully and shows his disposition in his countenance.

III.

Many who bestow immense benefits spoil them by their silence or slowness of speech, which gives them an air of moroseness, as they say “yes” with a face which seems to say “no.” How much better is it to join kind words to kind actions, and to enhance the value of our gifts by a civil and gracious commendation of them! To cure your friend of being slow to ask a favour of you, you may join to your gift the familiar rebuke, “I am angry with you for not having long ago let me know what you wanted, for having asked for it so formally, or for having made interest with a third party.” “I congratulate myself that you have been pleased to make trial of me; hereafter, if you want anything, ask for it as your right; however, for this time I pardon your want of manners.” By so doing you will cause him to value your friendship more highly than that, whatever it may have been, which he came to ask of you. The goodness and kindness of a benefactor never appears so great as when on leaving him one says, “I have to-day gained much; I am more pleased at finding him so kind than if I had obtained many times more of this, of which I was speaking, by some other means; I never can make any adequate return to this man for his goodness.”

IV.

Many, however, there are who, by harsh words and contemptuous manner, make their very kindnesses odious, for by speaking and acting disdainfully they make us sorry that they have granted our requests. Various delays also take place after we have obtained a promise; and nothing is more heartbreaking than to be forced to beg for the very thing which you already have been promised. Benefits ought to be bestowed at once, but from some persons it is easier to obtain the promise of them than to get them. One man has to be asked to remind our benefactor of his purpose; another, to bring it into effect; and thus a single present is worn away in passing through many hands, until hardly any gratitude is left for the original promiser, since whoever we are forced to solicit after the giving of the promise receives some of the gratitude which we owe to the giver. Take care, therefore, if you wish your gifts to be esteemed, that they reach those to whom they are promised entire, and, as the saying is, without any deduction. Let no one intercept them or delay them; for no one can take any share of the gratitude due for your gifts without robbing you of it.

V.

Nothing is more bitter than long uncertainty; some can bear to have their hopes extinguished better than to have them deferred. Yet many men are led by an unworthy vanity into this fault of putting off the accomplishment of their promises, merely in order to swell the crowd of their suitors, like the ministers of royalty, who delight in prolonging the display of their own arrogance, hardly thinking themselves possessed of power unless they let each man see for a long time how powerful they are. They do nothing promptly, or at one sitting; they are indeed swift to do mischief, but slow to do good. Be sure that the comic poet speaks the most absolute truth in the verses: —

“Know you not this? If you your gifts delay,
You take thereby my gratitude away.”

And the following lines, the expression of virtuous pain — a high-spirited man’s misery, —

“What thou doest, do quickly;”
and: —

“Nothing in the world
Is worth this trouble; I had rather you
Refused it to me now.”

When the mind begins through weariness to hate the promised benefit, or while it is wavering in expectation of it, how can it feel grateful for it? As the most refined cruelty is that which prolongs the torture, while to kill the victim at once is a kind of mercy, since the extremity of torture brings its own end with it — the interval is the worst part of the execution — so the shorter time a benefit hangs in the balance, the more grateful it is to the receiver. It is possible to look forward with anxious disquietude even to good things, and, seeing that most benefits consist in a release from some form of misery, a man destroys the value of the benefit which he confers, if he has the power to relieve us, and yet allows us to suffer or to lack pleasure longer than we need. Kindness always eager to do good, and one who acts by love naturally acts at once; he who does us good, but does it tardily and with long delays, does not do so from the

heart. Thus he loses two most important things: time, and the proof of his good will to us; for a lingering consent is but a form of denial.

VI.

The manner in which things are said or done, my Liberalis, forms a very important part of every transaction. We gain much by quickness, and lose much by slowness. Just as in darts, the strength of the iron head remains the same, but there is an immeasurable difference between the blow of one hurled with the full swing of the arm and one which merely drops from the hand, and the same sword either grazes or pierces according as the blow is delivered; so, in like manner, that which is given is the same, but the manner in which it is given makes the difference. How sweet, how precious is a gift, when he who gives does not permit himself to be thanked, and when while he gives he forgets that he has given! To reproach a man at the very moment that you are doing him a service is sheer madness; it is to mix insult with your favours. We ought not to make our benefits burdensome, or to add any bitterness to them. Even if there be some subject upon which you wish to warn your friend, choose some other time for doing so.

VII.

Fabius Verrucosus used to compare a benefit bestowed by a harsh man in an offensive manner to a gritty loaf of bread, which a hungry man is obliged to receive, but which is painful to eat. When Marius Nepos of the praetorian guard asked Tiberius Caesar for help to pay his debts, Tiberius asked him for a list of his creditors; this is calling a meeting of creditors, not paying debts. When the list was made out, Tiberius wrote to Nepos telling him that he had ordered the money to be paid, and adding some offensive reproaches. The result of this was that Nepos owed no debts, yet received no kindness; Tiberius, indeed, relieved him from his creditors, but laid him under no obligation. Tiberius, however, had some design in doing so; I imagine he did not wish more of his friends to come to him with the same request. His mode of proceeding was, perhaps, successful in restraining men's extravagant desires by shame, but he who wishes to confer benefits must follow quite a different path. In all ways you should make your benefit as acceptable as possible by presenting it in the most attractive form; but the method of Tiberius is not to confer benefits, but to reproach.

VIII.

Moreover, if incidentally I should say what I think of this part of the subject, I do not consider that it is becoming even to an emperor to give merely in order to cover a man with shame. "And yet," we are told, "Tiberius did not even by this means attain his object; for after this a good many persons were found to make the same request. He ordered all of them to explain the reasons of their indebtedness before the senate, and when they did so, granted them certain definite sums of money." This is not an act of generosity, but a reprimand. You may call it a subsidy, or an imperial contribution; it is not a benefit, for the receiver cannot think of it without shame. I was summoned before a judge, and had to be tried at bar before I obtained what I asked for.

IX.

Accordingly, all writers on ethical philosophy tell us that some benefits ought to be given in secret, others in public. Those things which it is glorious to receive, such as military decorations or public offices, and whatever else gains in value the more widely it is known, should be conferred in public; on the other hand, when they do not promote a man or add to his social standing, but help him when in weakness, in want, or in disgrace, they should be given silently, and so as to be known only to those who profit by them.

X.

Sometimes even the person who is assisted must be deceived, in order that he may receive our bounty without knowing the source from whence it flows. It is said that Arcesilaus had a friend who was poor, but concealed his poverty; who was ill, yet tried to hide his disorder, and who had not money for the necessary expenses of existence. Without his knowledge, Arcesilaus placed a bag of money under his pillow, in order that this victim of false shame might rather seem to find what he wanted than to receive. "What," say you, "ought he not to know from whom he received it?" Yes; let him not know it at first, if it be essential to your kindness that he should not; afterwards I will do so much for him, and give him so much that he will perceive who was the giver of the former benefit; or, better still, let him not know that he has received any thing, provided I know that I have given it. "This," you say, "is to get too little return for one's goodness." True, if it be an investment of which you are thinking; but if a gift, it should be given in the way which will be of most service to the receiver. You should be satisfied with the approval of your own conscience; if not, you do not really delight in doing good, but in being seen to do good. "For all that," say you, "I wish him to know it." Is it a debtor that you seek for? "For all that, I wish him to know it." What! though it be more useful, more creditable, more pleasant for him not to know his benefactor, will you not consent to stand aside? "I wish him to know." So, then, you would not save a man's life in the dark? I do not deny that, whenever the matter admits of it, one ought to take into consideration the pleasure which we receive from the joy of the receiver of our kindness; but if he ought to have help and is ashamed to receive it — if what we bestow upon him pains him unless it be concealed — I forbear to make my benefits public. Why should I not refrain from hinting at my having given him anything, when the first and most essential rule is, never to reproach a man with what you have done for him, and not even to remind him of it. The rule for the giver and receiver of a benefit is, that the one should straightway forget that he has given, the other should never forget that he has received it.

XI.

A constant reference to one's own services wounds our friend's feelings. Like the man who was saved from the proscription under the triumvirate by one of Caesar's friends, and afterwards found it impossible to endure his preserver's arrogance, they wish to cry, "Give me back to Caesar." How long will you go on saying, "I saved you, I snatched you from the jaws of death?" This is indeed life, if I remember it by my own will, but death if I remember it at yours; I owe you nothing, if you saved me merely in order to have some one to point at. How long do you mean to lead me about? how long do you mean to forbid me to forget my adventure? If I had been a defeated enemy, I should have been led in triumph but once. We ought not to speak of the benefits which we have conferred; to remind men of them is to ask them to return them. We should not obtrude them, or recall the memory of them; you should only remind a man of what you have given him by giving him something else. We ought not even to tell others of our good deeds. He who confers a benefit should be silent, it should be told by the receiver; for otherwise you may receive the retort which was made to one who was everywhere boasting of the benefit which he had conferred: "You will not deny," said his victim, "that you have received a return for it?" "When?" asked he. "Often," said the other, "and in many places, that is, wherever and whenever you have told the story." What need is there for you to speak, and to take the place which belongs to another? There is a man who can tell the story in a way much more to your credit, and thus you will gain glory for not telling it your self. You would think me ungrateful if, through your own silence, no one is to know of your benefit. So far from doing this, even if any one tells the story in our presence, we ought to make answer, "He does indeed deserve much more than this, and I am aware that I have not hitherto done any great things for him, although I wish to do so." This should not be said jokingly, nor yet with that air by which some persons repel those whom they especially wish to attract. In addition to this, we ought to act with the greatest politeness towards such persons. If the farmer ceases his labours after he has

put in the seed, he will lose what he has sown; it is only by great pains that seeds are brought to yield a crop; no plant will bear fruit unless it be tended with equal care from first to last, and the same rule is true of benefits. Can any benefits be greater than those which children receive from their parents? Yet these benefits are useless if they be deserted while young, if the pious care of the parents does not for a long time watch over the gift which they have bestowed. So it is with other benefits; unless you help them, you will lose them; to give is not enough, you must foster what you have given. If you wish those whom you lay under an obligation to be grateful to you, you must not merely confer benefits upon them, but you must also love them. Above all, as I said before, spare their ears; you will weary them if you remind them of your goodness, if you reproach them with it you will make them hate you. Pride ought above all things to be avoided when you confer a benefit. What need have you for disdainful airs, or swelling phrases? the act itself will exalt you. Let us shun vain boasting: let us be silent, and let our deeds speak for us. A benefit conferred with haughtiness not only wins no gratitude, but causes dislike.

XII.

Gaius Caesar granted Pompeius Pennus his life, that is, if not to take away life be to grant it; then, when Pompeius was set free and returning thanks to him, he stretched out his left foot to be kissed. Those who excuse this action, and say that it was not done through arrogance, say that he wished to show him a gilded, nay a golden slipper studded with pearls. "Well," say they, "what disgrace can there be in a man of consular rank kissing gold and pearls, and what part of Caesar's whole body was it less pollution to kiss?" So, then, that man, the object of whose life was to change a free state into a Persian despotism, was not satisfied when a senator, an aged man, a man who had filled the highest offices in the state, prostrated himself before him in the presence of all the nobles, just as the vanquished prostrate themselves before their conqueror! He discovered a place below his knees down to which he might thrust liberty. What is this but trampling upon the commonwealth, and that, too, with the left foot, though you may say that this point does not signify? It was not a sufficiently foul and frantic outrage for the emperor to sit at the trial of a consular for his life wearing slippers, he must needs push his shoes into a senator's face.

XIII.

O pride, the silliest fault of great good fortune! how pleasant it is to take nothing from thee! how dost thou turn all benefits into outrages! how dost thou delight in all excess! how ill all things become thee! The higher thou risest the lower thou art, and provest that the good things by which thou art so puffed up profit thee not; thou spoilest all that thou givest. It is worth while to inquire why it is that pride thus swaggers and changes the form and appearance of her countenance, so that she prefers a mask to her own face. It is pleasant to receive gifts when they are conferred in a kindly and gentle manner, when a superior in giving them does not exalt himself over me, but shows as much good feeling as possible, placing himself on a level with me, giving without parade, and choosing a time when I am glad of his help, rather than waiting till I am in the bitterest need. The only way by which you can prevail upon proud men not to spoil their gifts by their arrogance is by proving to them that benefits do not appear greater because they are bestowed with great pomp and circumstance; that no one will think them greater men for so doing, and that excessive pride is a mere delusion which leads men to hate even what they ought to love.

XIV.

There are some things which injure those who receive them, things which it is not a benefit to give but to withhold; we should therefore consider the usefulness of our gift rather than the wish of the petitioner to receive it; for we often long for hurtful things, and are unable to discern how ruinous they are, because our judgment is biassed by our feelings; when, however, the longing is past, when that frenzied impulse which masters our good sense has passed away, we abhor those who have given us hurtful gifts. As we refuse cold water to the sick, or swords to the grief-stricken or remorseful, and take from the insane whatever they might in their delirium use to their own destruction, so must we persist in refusing to give anything whatever that is hurtful, although our friends earnestly and humbly, nay, sometimes even most piteously beg for it. We ought to look at the end of our benefits as well as the beginning, and not merely to give what men are glad to receive, but what they will hereafter be glad to have received. There are many who say, "I know that this will do him no good, but what am I to do? he begs for it, I cannot withstand his entreaties. Let him see to it; he will blame himself, not me." Not so: you he will blame, and deservedly; when he comes to his right mind, when the frenzy which now excites him has left him, how can he help hating the man who has assisted him to harm and to endanger himself? It is a cruel kindness to allow one's self to be won over into granting that which injures those who beg for it. Just as it is the noblest of acts to save men from harm against their will, so it is but hatred, under the mask of civility, to grant what is harmful to those who ask for it. Let us confer benefits of such a kind, that the more they are made use of the better they please, and which never can turn into injuries. I never will give money to a man if I know that he will pay it to an adulteress, nor will I be found in connexion with any wicked act or plan; if possible, I will restrain men from crime; if not, at least I will never assist them in it. Whether my friend be driven into doing wrong by anger, or seduced from the path of safety by the heat of ambition, he shall never gain the means of doing mischief except from himself, nor will I enable him one day to say,

“He ruined me out of love for me.” Our friends often give us what our enemies wish us to receive; we are driven by the unseasonable fondness of the former into the ruin which the latter hope will befall us. Yet, often as it is the case, what can be more shameful than that there should be no difference between a benefit and hatred?

XV.

Let us never bestow gifts which may recoil upon us to our shame. As the sum total of friendship consists in making our friends equal to ourselves, we ought to consider the interests of both parties; I must give to him that wants, yet so that I do not want myself; I must help him who is perishing, yet so that I do not perish myself, unless by so doing I can save a great man or a great cause. I must give no benefit which it would disgrace me to ask for. I ought not to make a small benefit appear a great one, nor allow great benefits to be regarded as small; for although it destroys all feeling of gratitude to treat what you give like a creditor, yet you do not reproach a man, but merely set off your gift to the best advantage by letting him know what it is worth. Every man must consider what his resources and powers are, so that we may not give either more or less than we are able. We must also consider the character and position of the person to whom we give, for some men are too great to give small gifts, while others are too small to receive great ones. Compare, therefore, the character both of the giver and the receiver, and weigh that which you give between the two, taking care that what is given be neither too burdensome nor too trivial for the one to give, nor yet such as the receiver will either treat with disdain as too small, or think too great for him to deal with.

XVI.

Alexander, who was of unsound mind, and always full of magnificent ideas, presented somebody with a city. When the man to whom he gave it had reflected upon the scope of his own powers, he wished to avoid the jealousy which so great a present would excite, saying that the gift did not suit a man of his position. "I do not ask," replied Alexander, "what is becoming for you to receive, but what is becoming for me to give." This seems a spirited and kingly speech, yet really it is a most foolish one. Nothing is by itself a becoming gift for any one: all depends upon who gives it, to whom he gives it, when, for what reason, where, and so forth, without which details it is impossible to argue about it. Inflated creature! if it did not become him to receive this gift, it could not become thee to give it. There should be a proportion between men's characters and the offices which they fill; and as virtue in all cases should be our measure, he who gives too much acts as wrongly as he who gives too little. Even granting that fortune has raised you so high, that, where other men give cups, you give cities (which it would show a greater mind in you not to take than to take and squander), still there must be some of your friends who are not strong enough to put a city in their pockets.

XVII.

A certain cynic asked Antigonus for a talent. Antigonus answered that this was too much for a cynic to ask for. After this rebuff he asked for a penny. Antigonus answered that this was too little for a king to give. "This kind of hair-splitting" (you say) "is contemptible: he found the means of giving neither. In the matter of the penny he thought of the king, in that of the talent he thought of the cynic, whereas with respect to the cynic it would have been right to receive the penny, with respect to the king it would have been right to give the talent. Though there may be things which are too great for a cynic to receive, yet nothing is so small, that it does not become a gracious king to bestow it." If you ask me, I applaud Antigonus; for it is not to be endured that a man who despises money should ask for it. Your cynic has publicly proclaimed his hatred of money, and assumed the character of one who despises it: let him act up to his professions. It is most inconsistent for him to earn money by glorifying his poverty. I wish to use Chrysippus's simile of the game of ball, in which the ball must certainly fall by the fault either of the thrower or of the catcher; it only holds its course when it passes between the hands of two persons who each throw it and catch it suitably. It is necessary, however, for a good player to send the ball in one way to a comrade at a long distance, and in another to one at a short distance. So it is with a benefit: unless it be suitable both for the giver and the receiver, it will neither leave the one nor reach the other as it ought. If we have to do with a practised and skilled player, we shall throw the ball more recklessly, for however it may come, that quick and agile hand will send it back again; if we are playing with an unskilled novice, we shall not throw it so hard, but far more gently, guiding it straight into his very hands, and we shall run to meet it when it returns to us. This is just what we ought to do in conferring benefits; let us teach some men how to do so, and be satisfied if they attempt it, if they have the courage and the will to do so. For the most part, however, we make men ungrateful, and encourage them, to be so, as if our benefits were only great when we cannot receive any gratitude for them; just as some spiteful ball-

players purposely put out their companion, of course to the ruin of the game, which cannot be carried on without entire agreement. Many men are of so depraved a nature that they had rather lose the presents which they make than be thought to have received a return for them, because they are proud, and like to lay people under obligations: yet how much better and more kindly would it be if they tried to enable the others also to perform their parts, if they encouraged them in returning gratitude, put the best construction upon all their acts, received one who wished to thank them just as cordially as if he came to repay what he had received, and easily lent themselves to the belief that those whom they have laid under an obligation wish to repay it. We blame usurers equally when they press harshly for payment, and when they delay and make difficulties about taking back the money which they have lent; in the same way, it is just as right that a benefit should be returned, as it is wrong to ask any one to return it. The best man is he who gives readily, never asks for any return, and is delighted when the return is made, because, having really and truly forgotten what he gave, he receives it as though it were a present.

XVIII.

Some men not only give, but even receive benefit haughtily, a mistake into which we ought not to fall: for now let us cross over to the other side of the subject, and consider how men should behave when they receive benefits. Every function which is performed by two persons makes equal demands upon both: after you have considered what a father ought to be, you will perceive that there remains an equal task, that of considering what a son ought to be: a husband has certain duties, but those of a wife are no less important. Each of these give and take equally, and each require a similar rule of life, which, as Hecaton observes, is hard to follow: indeed, it is difficult for us to attain to virtue, or even to anything that comes near virtue: for we ought not only to act virtuously but to do so upon principle. We ought to follow this guide throughout our lives, and to do everything great and small according to its dictates: according as virtue prompts us we ought both to give and to receive. Now she will declare at the outset that we ought not to receive benefits from every man. "From whom, then, ought we to receive them?" To answer you briefly, I should say, from those to whom we have given them. Let us consider whether we ought not to be even more careful in choosing to whom we should owe than to whom we should give. For even supposing that no unpleasantness should result (and very much always does), still it is a great misery to be indebted to a man to whom you do not wish to be under an obligation; whereas it is most delightful to receive a benefit from one whom you can love even after he has wronged you, and when the pleasure which you feel in his friendship is justified by the grounds on which it is based. Nothing is more wretched for a modest and honourable man than to feel it to be his duty to love one whom it does not please him to love. I must constantly remind you that I do not speak of wise men, who take pleasure in everything that is their duty, who have their feelings under command, and are able to lay down whatever law they please to themselves and keep it, but that I speak of imperfect beings struggling to follow the right path, who often have trouble in bending their passions to their will. I must therefore choose the man from

whom I will accept a benefit; indeed, I ought to be more careful in the choice of my creditor for a benefit than for money; for I have only to pay the latter as much as I received of him, and when I have paid it I am free from all obligation; but to the other I must both repay more, and even when I have repaid his kindness we remain connected, for when I have paid my debt I ought again to renew it, while our friendship endures unbroken. Thus, as I ought not to make an unworthy man my friend, so I ought not to admit an unworthy man into that most holy bond of gratitude for benefits, from which friendship arises. You reply, "I cannot always say 'No': sometimes I must receive a benefit even against my will. Suppose I were given something by a cruel and easily offended tyrant, who would take it as an affront if his bounty were slighted? am I not to accept it? Suppose it were offered by a pirate, or a brigand, or a king of the temper of a pirate or brigand. What ought I to do? Such a man is not a worthy object for me to owe a benefit to." When I say that you ought to choose, I except vis major and fear, which destroy all power of choice. If you are free, if it lies with you to decide whether you will or not, then you will turn over in your own mind whether you will take a gift from a man or not; but if your position makes it impossible for you to choose, then be assured that you do not receive a gift, you merely obey orders. No one incurs any obligation by receiving what it was not in his power to refuse; if you want to know whether I wish to take it, arrange matters so that I have the power of saying 'No.' "Yet suppose he gave you your life." It does not matter what the gift was, unless it be given and received with good will: you are not my preserver because you have saved my life. Poison sometimes acts as a medicine, yet it is not on that account regarded as wholesome. Some things benefit us but put us under no obligation: for instance a man who intended to kill a tyrant, cut with his sword a tumour from which he suffered: yet the tyrant did not show him gratitude because by wounding him he had healed a disease which surgeons had feared to meddle with.

XIX.

You see that the actual thing itself is not of much importance, because it is not regarded as a benefit at all, if you do good when you intended to do evil; in such a case the benefit is done by chance, the man did harm. I have seen a lion in the amphitheatre, who recognized one of the men who fought with wild beasts, who once had been his keeper, and protected him against the attacks of the other animals. Are we, then, to say that this assistance of the brute was a benefit? By no means, because it did not intend to do it, and did not do it with kindly intentions. You may class the lion and your tyrant together: each of them saved a man's life, yet neither conferred a benefit. Because it is not a benefit to be forced to receive one, neither is it a benefit to be under an obligation to a man to whom we do not wish to be indebted. You must first give me personal freedom of decision, and then your benefit.

XX.

The question has been raised, whether Marcus Brutus ought to have received his life from the hands of Julius Caesar, who, he had decided, ought to be put to death.

As to the grounds upon which he put him to death, I shall discuss them elsewhere; for to my mind, though he was in other respects a great man, in this he seems to have been entirely wrong, and not to have followed the maxims of the Stoic philosophy. He must either have feared the name of “King,” although a state thrives best under a good king, or he must have hoped that liberty could exist in a state where some had so much to gain by reigning, and others had so much to gain by becoming slaves. Or, again, he must have supposed that it would be possible to restore the ancient constitution after all the ancient manners had been lost, and that citizens could continue to possess equal rights, or laws remain inviolate, in a state in which he had seen so many thousands of men fighting to decide, not whether they should be slaves or free, but which master they should serve. How forgetful he seems to have been, both of human nature and of the history of his own country, in supposing that when one despot was destroyed another of the same temper would not take his place, though, after so many kings had perished by lightning and the sword, a Tarquin was found to reign! Yet Brutus did right in receiving his life from Caesar, though he was not bound thereby to regard Caesar as his father, since it was by a wrong that Caesar had come to be in a position to bestow this benefit. A man does not save your life who does not kill you; nor does he confer a benefit, but merely gives you your discharge. [The ‘discharge’ alluded to is that which was granted to the beaten one of a pair of gladiators, when their duel was not to the death.]

XXI.

It seems to offer more opportunity for debate to consider what a captive ought to do, if a man of abominable vices offers him the price of his ransom? Shall I permit myself to be saved by a wretch? When safe, what recompense can I make to him? Am I to live with an infamous person? Yet, am I not to live with my preserver? I will tell you my opinion. I would accept money, even from such a person, if it were to save my life; yet I would only accept it as a loan, not as a benefit. I would repay him the money, and if I were ever able to preserve him from danger I would do so. As for friendship, which can only exist between equals, I would not condescend to be such a man's friend; nor would I regard him as my preserver, but merely as a money-lender, to whom I am only bound to repay what I borrowed from him.

A man may be a worthy person for me to receive a benefit from, but it will hurt him to give it. For this reason I will not receive it, because he is ready to help me to his own prejudice, or even danger. Suppose that he is willing to plead for me in court, but by so doing will make the king his enemy. I should be his enemy, if, when he is willing to risk himself for me, if I were not to risk myself without him, which moreover is easier for me to do.

As an instance of this, Hecaton calls the case of Arcesilaus silly, and not to the purpose. Arcesilaus, he says, refused to receive a large sum of money which was offered to him by a son, lest the son should offend his penurious father. What did he do deserving of praise, in not receiving stolen goods, in choosing not to receive them, instead of returning them? What proof of self-restraint is there in refusing to receive another man's property. If you want an instance of magnanimity, take the case of Julius Graecinus, whom Caius Caesar put to death merely on the ground that he was a better man than it suited a tyrant for anyone to be. This man, when he was receiving subscriptions from many of his friends to cover his expenses in exhibiting public games, would not receive a large sum which was sent him by Fabius Persicus; and when he was blamed for rejecting it by those who think more of what is given than of who gives it, he

answered, "Am I to accept a present from a man when I would not accept his offer to drink a glass of wine with him?"

When a consular named Rebilus, a man of equally bad character, sent a yet larger sum to Graecinus, and pressed him to receive it. "I must beg," answered he, "that you will excuse me. I did not take money from Persicus either." Ought we to call this receiving presents, or rather taking one's pick of the senate?

XXII.

When we have decided to accept, let us accept with cheerfulness, showing pleasure, and letting the giver see it, so that he may at once receive some return for his goodness: for as it is a good reason for rejoicing to see our friend happy, it is a better one to have made him so. Let us, therefore, show how acceptable a gift is by loudly expressing our gratitude for it; and let us do so, not only in the hearing of the giver, but everywhere. He who receives a benefit with gratitude, repays the first instalment of it.

XXIII.

There are some, who only like to receive benefits privately: they dislike having any witnesses and confidants. Such men, we may believe, have no good intentions. As a giver is justified in dwelling upon those qualities of his gift which will please the receiver, so a man, when he receives, should do so publicly; you should not take from a man what you are ashamed to owe him. Some return thanks to one stealthily, in a corner, in a whisper. This is not modesty, but a kind of denying of the debt: it is the part of an ungrateful man not to express his gratitude before witnesses. Some object to any accounts being kept between them and their benefactors, and wish no brokers to be employed or witnesses to be called, but merely to give their own signature to a receipt. Those men do the like, who take care to let as few persons as possible know of the benefits which they have received. They fear to receive them in public, in order that their success may be attributed rather to their own talents than to the help of others: they are very seldom to be found in attendance upon those to whom they owe their lives and their fortunes, and thus, while avoiding the imputation of servility, they incur that of ingratitude.

XXIV.

Some men speak in the most offensive terms of those to whom they owe most. There are men whom it is safer to affront than to serve, for their dislike leads them to assume the airs of persons who are not indebted to us: although nothing more is expected of them than that they should remember what they owe us, refreshing their memory from time to time, because no one can be grateful who forgets a kindness, and he who remembers it, by so doing proves his gratitude. We ought neither to receive benefits with a fastidious air, nor yet with a slavish humility: for if a man does not care for a benefit when it is freshly bestowed — a time at which all presents please us most — what will he do when its first charms have gone off? Others receive with an air of disdain, as much as to say. “I do not want it; but as you wish it so very much, I will allow you to give it to me.” Others take benefits languidly, and leave the giver in doubt as to whether they know that they have received them; others barely open their lips in thanks, and would be less offensive if they said nothing. One ought to proportion one’s thanks to the importance of the benefit received, and to use the phrases, “You have laid more of us than you think under an obligation,” for everyone likes to find his good actions extend further than he expected. “You do not know what it is that you have done for me; but you ought to know how much more important it is than you imagine.” It is in itself an expression of gratitude to speak of one’s self as overwhelmed by kindness; or “I shall never be able to thank you sufficiently; but, at any rate, I will never cease to express everywhere my inability to thank you.”

XXV.

By nothing did Furnius gain greater credit with Augustus, and make it easy for him to obtain anything else for which he might ask, than by merely saying, when at his request Augustus pardoned his father for having taken Antonius's side, "One wrong alone I have received at your hands, Caesar; you have forced me to live and to die owing you a greater debt of gratitude than I can ever repay." What can prove gratitude so well as that a man should never be satisfied, should never even entertain the hope of making any adequate return for what he has received? By these and similar expressions we must try not to conceal our gratitude, but to display it as clearly as possible. No words need be used; if we only feel as we ought, our thankfulness will be shown in our countenances. He who intends to be grateful, let him think how he shall repay a kindness while he is receiving it. Chrysippus says that such a man must watch for his opportunity, and spring forward whenever it offers, like one who has been entered for a race, and who stands at the starting-point waiting for the barriers to be thrown open; and even then he must use great exertions and great swiftness to catch the other, who has a start of him.

XXVI.

We must now consider what is the main cause of ingratitude. It is caused by excessive self-esteem, by that fault innate in all mortals, of taking a partial view of ourselves and our own acts, by greed, or by jealousy.

Let us begin with the first of these. Every one is prejudiced in his own favour, from which it follows that he believes himself to have earned all that he receives, regards it as payment for his services, and does not think that he has been appraised at a valuation sufficiently near his own. "He has given me this," says he, "but how late, after how much toil? how much more might I have earned if I had attached myself to So and so, or to So and so? I did not expect this; I have been treated like one of the herd; did he really think that I only deserved so little? why, it would have been less insulting to have passed me over altogether."

XXVII.

The augur Cnaeus Lentulus, who, before his freedmen reduced him to poverty, was one of the richest of men, who saw himself in possession of a fortune of four hundred millions — I say advisedly, “saw,” for he never did more than see it — was as barren and contemptible in intellect as he was in spirit. Though very avaricious, yet he was so poor a speaker that he found it easier to give men coins than words. This man, who owed all his prosperity to the late Emperor Augustus, to whom he had brought only poverty, encumbered with a noble name, when he had risen to be the chief man in Rome, both in wealth and influence, used sometimes to complain that Augustus had interrupted his legal studies, observing that he had not received anything like what he had lost by giving up the study of eloquence. Yet the truth was that Augustus, besides loading him with other gifts, had set him free from the necessity of making himself ridiculous by labouring at a profession in which he never could succeed.

Greed does not permit any one to be grateful; for what is given is never equal to its base desires, and the more we receive the more we covet, for avarice is much more eager when it has to deal with great accumulations of wealth, just as the power of a flame is enormously greater in proportion to the size of the conflagration from which it springs. Ambition in like manner suffers no man to rest satisfied with that measure of public honours, to gain which was once the limit of his wildest hope; no one is thankful for becoming tribune, but grumbles at not being at once promoted to the post of praetor; nor is he grateful for this if the consulship does not follow; and even this does not satisfy him if he be consul but once. His greed ever stretches itself out further, and he does not understand the greatness of his success because he always looks forward to the point at which he aims, and never back towards that from which he started.

XXVIII.

A more violent and distressing vice than any of these is jealousy which disturbs us by suggesting comparisons. "He gave me this, but he gave more to that man, and he gave it to him before me;" after which he sympathises with no one, but pushes his own claims to the prejudice of every one else. How much more straightforward and modest is it to make the most of what we have received, knowing that no man is valued so highly by any one else as by his own, self! "I ought to have received more, but it was not easy for him to give more; he was obliged to distribute his liberality among many persons. This is only the beginning; let me be contented, and by my gratitude encourage him to show me more favour; he has not done as much as he ought, but he will do so the more frequently; he certainly preferred that man to me, but he has preferred me before many others; that man is not my equal either in virtue or in services, but he has some charm of his own: by complaining I shall not make myself deserve to receive more, but shall become unworthy of what I have received. More has been given to those most villainous men than has been given to me; well, what is that to the purpose? how seldom does Fortune show judgment in her choice? We complain every day of the success of bad men; very often the hail passes over the estates of the greatest villains and strikes down the crops of the best of men; every man has to take his chance, in friendship as well as in everything else." There is no benefit so great that spitefulness can pick no holes in it, none so paltry that it cannot be made more of by friendly interpretation. We shall never want a subject for complaint if we look at benefits on their wrong side.

XXIX.

See how unjustly the gifts of heaven are valued even by some who profess themselves philosophers, who complain that we are not as big as elephants, as swift as stags, as light as birds, as strong as bulls; that the skins of seals are stronger, of hinds prettier, of bears thicker, of beavers softer than ours; that dogs excel us in delicacy of scent, eagles in keenness of sight, crows in length of days, and many beasts in ease of swimming. And although nature itself does not allow some qualities, as for example strength and swiftness, to be combined in the same person, yet they call it a monstrous thing that men are not compounded of different and inconsistent good qualities, and call the gods neglectful of us because we have not been given health which even our vices cannot destroy, or knowledge of the future. They scarcely refrain from rising to such a pitch of impudence as to hate nature because we are below the gods, and not on an equality with them. How much better is it to turn to the contemplation of so many great blessings, and to be thankful that the gods have been pleased to give us a place second only to themselves in this most beautiful abode, and that they have appointed us to be the lords of the earth! Can any one compare us with the animals over whom we rule? Nothing has been denied us except what could not have been granted. In like manner, thou that takest an unfair view of the lot of mankind, think what blessings our Father has bestowed upon us, how far more powerful animals than ourselves we have broken to harness, how we catch those which are far swifter, how nothing that has life is placed beyond the reach of our weapons! We have received so many excellencies, so many crafts, above all our mind, which can pierce at once whatever it is directed against, which is swifter than the stars in their courses, for it arrives before them at the place which they will reach after many ages; and besides this, so many fruits of the earth, so much treasure, such masses of various things piled one upon another. You may go through the whole order of nature, and since you find no entire creature which you would prefer to be, you may choose from each, the special qualities which you would like to be given to yourself; then, if you rightly appreciate the partiality of

nature for you, you cannot but confess yourself to be her spoiled child. So it is; the immortal gods have unto this day always held us most dear, and have bestowed upon us the greatest possible honour, a place nearest to themselves. We have indeed received great things, yet not too great.

XXX.

I have thought it necessary, my friend Liberalis, to state these facts, both because when speaking of small benefits one ought to make some mention of the greatest, and because also this shameless and hateful vice (of ingratitude), starting with these, transfers itself from them to all the rest. If a man scorn these, the greatest of all benefits, to whom will he feel gratitude, what gift will he regard as valuable or deserving to be returned: to whom will he be grateful for his safety or his life, if he denies that he has received from the gods that existence which he begs from them daily? He, therefore, who teaches men to be grateful, pleads the cause not only of men, but even of the gods, for though they, being placed above all desires, cannot be in want of anything, yet we can nevertheless offer them our gratitude.

No one is justified in seeking an excuse for ingratitude in his own weakness or poverty, or in saying, "What am I to do, and how? When can I repay my debt to my superiors the lords of heaven and earth?" Avaricious as you are, it is easy for you to give them thanks, without expense; lazy though you be, you can do it without labour. At the same instant at which you received your debt towards them, if you wish to repay it, you have done as much as any one can do, for he returns a benefit who receives it with good will.

XXXI.

This paradox of the Stoic philosophy, that he returns a benefit who receives it with good will, is, in my opinion, either far from admirable, or else it is incredible. For if we look at everything merely from the point of view of our intentions, every man has done as much as he chose to do; and since filial piety, good faith, justice, and in short every virtue is complete within itself, a man may be grateful in intention even though he may not be able to lift a hand to prove his gratitude. Whenever a man obtains what he aimed at, he receives the fruit of his labour. When a man bestows a benefit, at what does he aim? clearly to be of service and afford pleasure to him upon whom he bestows it. If he does what he wishes, if his purpose reaches me and fills us each with joy, he has gained his object. He does not wish anything to be given to him in return, or else it becomes an exchange of commodities, not a bestowal of benefits. A man steers well who reaches the port for which he started: a dart hurled by a steady hand performs its duty if it hits the mark; one who bestows a benefit wishes it to be received with gratitude; he gets what he wanted if it be well received. "But," you say, "he hoped for some profit also." Then it was not a benefit, the property of which is to think nothing of any repayment. I receive what was given me in the same spirit in which it was given: then I have repaid it. If this be not true, then this best of deeds has this worst of conditions attached to it, that it depends entirely upon fortune whether I am grateful or not, for if my fortune is adverse I can make no repayment. The intention is enough. What then? am I not to do whatever I may be able to repay it, and ought I not ever to be on the watch for an opportunity of filling the bosom [Footnote: Sinus, the fold of the toga over the breast, used as a pocket by the Romans. The great French actor Talma, when dressed for the first time in correct classical costume, indignantly asked where he was to put his snuff-box.] of him from whom I have received any kindness? True; but a benefit is in an evil plight if we cannot be grateful for it even when we are empty-handed.

XXXII.

“A man,” it is argued, “who has received a benefit, however gratefully he may have received it, has not yet accomplished all his duty, for there remains the part of repayment; just as in playing at ball it is something to catch the ball cleverly and carefully, but a man is not called a good player unless he can handily and quickly send back the ball which he has caught.” This analogy is imperfect; and why? Because to do this creditably depends upon the movement and activity of the body, and not upon the mind: and an act of which we judge entirely by the eye, ought to be all clearly displayed. But if a man caught the ball as he ought to do, I should not call him a bad player for not returning it, if his delay in returning it was not caused by his own fault. “Yet,” say you, “although the player is not wanting in skill, because he did one part of his duty, and was able to do the other part, yet in such a case the game is imperfect, for its perfection lies in sending the ball backwards and forwards.” I am unwilling to expose this fallacy further; let us think that it is the game, not the player that is imperfect: so likewise in the subject which we are discussing, the thing which is given lacks something, because another equal thing ought to be returned for it, but the mind of the giver lacks nothing, because it has found another mind equal to itself, and as far as intentions go, has effected what it wished.

XXXIII.

A man bestows a benefit upon me: I receive it just as he wished it to be received: then he gets at once what he wanted, and the only thing which he wanted, and therefore I have proved myself grateful. After this it remains for me to enjoy my own resources, with the addition of an advantage conferred upon me by one whom I have obliged; this advantage is not the remainder of an imperfect service, but an addition to a perfected service. [Footnote: Nothing is wanted to make a benefit, conferred from good motives, perfect: if it is returned, the gratitude is to be counted as net profit.] For example, Phidias makes a statue. Now the product of an art is one thing, and that of a trade is another. It is the business of the art to make the thing which he wished to make, and that of the trade to make it with a profit. Phidias has completed his work, even though he does not sell it. The product, therefore, of his work is threefold: there is the consciousness of having made it, which he receives when his work is completed; there is the fame which he receives; and thirdly, the advantage which he obtains by it, in influence, or by selling it, or otherwise. In like manner the first fruit of a benefit is the consciousness of it, which we feel when we have bestowed it upon the person whom we chose; secondly and thirdly there is the credit which we gain by doing so, and there are those things which we may receive in exchange for it. So when a benefit has been graciously received, the giver has already received gratitude, but has not yet received recompense for it: that which we owe in return is therefore something apart from the benefit itself, for we have paid for the benefit itself when we accept it in a grateful spirit.

XXXIV.

“What,” say you, “can a man repay a benefit, though he does nothing?” He has taken the first step, he has offered you a good thing with good feeling, and, which is the characteristic of friendship, has placed you both on the same footing. In the next place, a benefit is not repaid in the same manner as a loan: you have no reason for expecting me to offer you any payment; the account between us depends upon the feelings alone. What I say will not appear difficult, although it may not at first accord with your ideas, if you will do me the favour to remember that there are more things than there are words to express them. There is an enormous mass of things without names, which we do not speak of under distinctive names of their own, but by the names of other things transferred to them. We speak of our own foot, of the foot of a couch, of a sail, or of a poem; we apply the word ‘dog’ to a hound, a fish, and a star. Because we have not enough words to assign a separate name to each thing, we borrow a name whenever we want one. Bravery is the virtue which rightly despises danger, or the science of repelling, sustaining, or inviting dangers: yet we call a brave man a gladiator, and we use the same word for a good-for-nothing slave, who is led by rashness to defy death. Economy is the science of avoiding unnecessary expenditure, or the art of using one’s income with moderation: yet we call a man of mean and narrow mind, most economical, although there is an immeasurable distance between moderation and meanness. These things are naturally distinct, yet the poverty of our language compels us to call both these men economical, just as he who views slight accidents with rational contempt, and he who without reason runs into danger are alike called brave. Thus a benefit is both a beneficent action, and also is that which is bestowed by that action, such as money, a house, an office in the state: there is but one name for them both, though their force and power are widely different.

XXXV.

Wherefore, give me your attention, and you will soon perceive that I say nothing to which you can object. That benefit which consists of the action is repaid when we receive it graciously; that other, which consists of something material, we have not then repaid, but we hope to do so. The debt of goodwill has been discharged by a return of goodwill; the material debt demands a material return. Thus, although we may declare that he who has received a benefit with good-will has returned the favour, yet we counsel him to return to the giver something of the same kind as that which he has received. Some part of what we have said departs from the conventional line of thought, and then rejoins it by another path. We declare that a wise man cannot receive an injury; yet, if a man hits him with his fist, that man will be found guilty of doing him an injury. We declare that a fool can possess nothing; yet if a man stole anything from a fool, we should find that man guilty of theft. We declare that all men are mad, yet we do not dose all men with hellebore; but we put into the hands of these very persons, whom we call madmen, both the right of voting and of pronouncing judgment. Similarly, we say that a man who has received a benefit with good-will has returned the favour, yet we leave him in debt nevertheless — bound to repay it even though he has repaid it. This is not to disown benefits, but is an encouragement to us neither to fear to receive benefits, nor to faint under the too great burden of them. “Good things have been given to me; I have been preserved from starving; I have been saved from the misery of abject poverty; my life, and what is dearer than life, my liberty, has been preserved. How shall I be able to repay these favours? When will the day come upon which I can prove my gratitude to him?” When a man speaks thus, the day has already come. Receive a benefit, embrace it, rejoice, not that you have received it, but that you have to owe it and return it; then you will never be in peril of the great sin of being rendered ungrateful by mischance. I will not enumerate any difficulties to you, lest you should despair, and faint at the prospect of a long and laborious servitude. I do not refer you to the future; do it with what means you

have at hand. You never will be grateful unless you are so straightway. What, then, will you do? You need not take up arms, yet perhaps you may have to do so; you need not cross the seas, yet it may be that you will pay your debt, even when the wind threatens to blow a gale. Do you wish to return the benefit? Then receive it graciously; you have then returned the favour — not, indeed, so that you can think yourself to have repaid it, but so that you can owe it with a quieter conscience.

BOOK III.

I.

Not to return gratitude for benefits, my Aebutius Liberalis, is both base in itself, and is thought base by all men; wherefore even ungrateful men complain of ingratitude, and yet what all condemn is at the same time rooted in all; and so far do men sometimes run into the other extreme that some of them become our bitterest enemies, not merely after receiving benefits from us, but because they have received them. I cannot deny that some do this out of sheer badness of nature; but more do so because lapse of time destroys their remembrance, for time gradually effaces what they felt vividly at the moment. I remember having had an argument with you about this class of persons, whom you wished to call forgetful rather than ungrateful, as if that which caused a man to be ungrateful was any excuse for his being so, or as if the fact of this happening to a man prevented his being ungrateful, when we know that it only happens to ungrateful men. There are many classes of the ungrateful, as there are of thieves or of homicides, who all have the same fault, though there is a great variety in its various forms. The man is ungrateful who denies that he has received a benefit; who pretends that he has not received it; who does not return it. The most ungrateful man of all is he who forgets it. The others, though they do not repay it, yet feel their debt, and possess some traces of worth, though obstructed by their bad conscience. They may by some means and at some time be brought to show their gratitude, if, for instance, they be pricked by shame, if they conceive some noble ambition such as occasionally rises even in the breasts of the wicked, if some easy opportunity of doing so offers; but the man from whom all recollection of the benefit has passed away can never become grateful. Which of the two do you call the worse — he who is ungrateful for kindness, or he who does not even remember it? The eyes which fear to look at the light are diseased, but those which cannot see it are blind. It is filial impiety not to love one's parents, but not to recognise them is madness.

II.

Who is so ungrateful as he who has so completely laid aside and cast away that which ought to be in the forefront of his mind and ever before him, that he knows it not? It is clear that if forgetfulness of a benefit steals over a man, he cannot have often thought about repaying it.

In short, repayment requires gratitude, time, opportunity, and the help of fortune; whereas, he who remembers a benefit is grateful for it, and that too without expenditure. Since gratitude demands neither labour, wealth, nor good fortune, he who fails to render it has no excuse behind which to shelter himself; for he who places a benefit so far away that it is out of his sight, never could have meant to be grateful for it. Just as those tools which are kept in use, and are daily touched by the hand, are never in danger of growing rusty, while those which are not brought before our eyes, and lie as if superfluous, not being required for common use, collect dirt by the mere lapse of time, so likewise that which our thoughts frequently turn over and renew never passes from our memory, which only loses those things to which it seldom directs its eyes.

III.

Besides this, there are other causes which at times erase the greatest services from our minds. The first and most powerful of these is that, being always intent upon new objects of desire, we think, not of what we have, but of what we are striving to obtain. Those whose mind is fixed entirely upon what they hope to gain, regard with contempt all that is their own already. It follows that since men's eagerness for something new makes them undervalue whatever they have received, they do not esteem those from whom they have received it. As long as we are satisfied with the position we have gained, we love our benefactor, we look up to him, and declare that we owe our position entirely to him; then we begin to entertain other aspirations, and hurry forward to attain them after the manner of human beings, who when they have gained much always covet more; straightway all that we used to regard as benefits slip from our memory, and we no longer consider the advantages which we enjoy over others, but only the insolent prosperity of those who have outstripped us. Now no one can at the same time be both jealous and grateful, because those who are jealous are querulous and sad, while the grateful are joyous. In the next place, since none of us think of any time but the present, and but few turn back their thoughts to the past, it results that we forget our teachers, and all the benefits which we have obtained from them, because we have altogether left our childhood behind us: thus, all that was done for us in our youth perishes unremembered, because our youth itself is never reviewed. What has been is regarded by every one, not only as past, but as gone; and for the same reason, our memory is weak for what is about to happen in the future.

IV.

Here I must do Epicurus the justice to say that he constantly complains of our ingratitude for past benefits, because we cannot bring back again, or count among our present pleasures, those good things which we have received long ago, although no pleasures can be more undeniable than those which cannot be taken from us. Present good is not yet altogether complete, some mischance may interrupt it; the future is in suspense, and uncertain; but what is past is laid up in safety. How can any man feel gratitude for benefits, if he skips through his whole life entirely engrossed with the present and the future? It is remembrance that mates men grateful; and the more men hope, the less they remember.

V.

In the same way, my Liberalis, as some things remain in our memory as soon as they are learned, while to know others it is not enough to have learned them, for our knowledge slips away from us unless it be kept up — I allude to geometry and astronomy, and such other sciences as are Hard to remember because of their intricacy — so the greatness of some benefits prevents their being forgotten, while others, individually less, though many more in number, and bestowed at different times, pass from our minds, because, as I have stated above, we do not constantly think about them, and do not willingly recognize how much we owe to each of our benefactors. Listen to the words of those who ask for favours. There is not one of them who does not declare that his remembrance will be eternal, who does not vow himself your devoted servant and slave, or find, if he can, some even greater expression of humility with which to pledge himself. After a brief space of time these same men avoid their former expressions, thinking them abject, and scarcely befitting free-born men; afterwards they arrive at the same point to which, as I suppose, the worst and most ungrateful of men come — that is, they forget. So little does forgetfulness excuse ingratitude, that even the remembrance of a benefit may leave us ungrateful.

VI.

The question has been raised, whether this most odious vice ought to go unpunished; and whether the law commonly made use of in the schools, by which we can proceed against a man for ingratitude, ought to be adopted by the State also, since all men agree that it is just. “Why not?” you may say, “seeing that even cities cast in each other’s teeth the services which they have performed to one another, and demand from the children some return for benefits conferred upon their fathers?” On the other hand, our ancestors, who were most admirable men, made demands upon their enemies alone, and both gave and lost their benefits with magnanimity. With the exception of Macedonia, no nation has ever established an action at law for ingratitude. And this is a strong argument against its being established, because all agree in blaming crime; and homicide, poisoning, parricide, and sacrilege are visited with different penalties in different countries, but everywhere with some penalty; whereas this most common vice is nowhere punished, though it is everywhere blamed. We do not acquit it; but as it would be most difficult to reckon accurately the penalty for so varying a matter, we condemn it only to be hated, and place it upon the list of those crimes which we refer for judgment to the gods.

VII.

Many arguments occur to me which prove that this vice ought not to come under the action of the law. First of all, the best part of a benefit is lost if the benefit can be sued for at law, as in the case of a loan, or of letting and hiring. Indeed, the finest part of a benefit is that we have given it without considering whether we shall lose it or not, that we have left all this to the free choice of him who receives it: if I call him before a judge, it begins to be not a benefit, but a loan. Next, though it is a most honourable thing to show gratitude, it ceases to be honourable if it be forced, for in that case no one will praise a grateful man any more than he praises him who restores the money which was deposited in his keeping, or who pays what he borrowed without the intervention of a judge. We should therefore spoil the two finest things in human life, — a grateful man and a beneficent man; for what is there admirable in one who does not give but merely lends a benefit, or in one who repays it, not because he wishes, but because he is forced to do so? There is no credit in being grateful, unless it is safe to be ungrateful. Besides this, all the courts would hardly be enough for the action of this one law. Who would not plead under it? Who would not be pleaded against? for every one exalts his own merits, every one magnifies even the smallest matters which he has bestowed upon another. Besides this, those things which form the subject of a judicial inquiry can be distinctly defined, and cannot afford unlimited licence to the judge; wherefore a good cause is in a better position if it be before a judge than before an arbitrator, because the words of the law tie down a judge and define certain limits beyond which he may not pass, whereas the conscience of an arbitrator is free and not fettered by any rules, so that he can either give or take away, and can arrange his decision, not according to the precepts of law and justice, but just as his own kindly feeling or compassion may prompt him. An action for ingratitude would not bind a judge, but would place him in the position of an autocrat. It cannot be known what or how great a benefit is; all that would be really important would be, how indulgently the judge might interpret it. No law defines an ungrateful person, often, indeed, one who

repays what he has received is ungrateful, and one who has not returned it is grateful. Even an unpractised judge can give his vote upon some matters; for instance, when the thing to be determined is whether something has or has not been done, when a dispute is terminated by the parties giving written bonds, or when the casting up of accounts decides between the disputants. When, however, motives have to be guessed at, when matters upon which wisdom alone can decide, are brought into court, they cannot be tried by a judge taken at random from the list of “select judges,” [Footnote: See Smith’s “Dict. of Antiq.,” s. v] whom property and the inheritance of an equestrian fortune [Footnote: 400,000 sesterces] has placed upon the roll.

VIII.

Ingratitude, therefore, is not only matter unfit to be brought into court, but no judge could be found fit to try it; and this you will not be surprised at, if you examine the difficulties of any one who should attempt to prosecute a man upon such a charge. One man may have given a large sum of money, but he is rich and would not feel it; another may have given it at the cost of his entire inheritance. The sum given is the same in each case, but the benefit conferred is not the same. Add another instance: suppose that to redeem a debtor from slavery one man paid money from his own private means, while another man paid the same sum, but had to borrow it or beg for it, and allow himself to be laid under a great obligation to some one; would you rank the man who so easily bestowed his benefit on an equality with him who was obliged to receive a benefit himself before he could bestow it? Some benefits are great, not because of their amount, but because of the time at which they are bestowed; it is a benefit to give an estate whose fertility can bring down the price of corn, and it is a benefit to give a loaf of bread in time of famine; it is a benefit to give provinces through which flow vast navigable rivers, and it is a benefit, when men are parched with thirst, and can scarcely draw breath through their dry throats, to show them a spring of water. Who will compare these cases with one another, or weigh one against the other? It is hard to give a decision when it is not the thing given, but its meaning, which has to be considered; though what is given is the same, yet if it be given under different circumstances it has a different value. A man may have bestowed a benefit upon me, but unwillingly; he may have complained of having given it; he may have looked at me with greater haughtiness than he was wont to do; he may have been so slow in giving it, that he would have done me a greater service if he had promptly refused it. How could a judge estimate the value of these things, when words, hesitation, or looks can destroy all their claim to gratitude?

IX.

What, again, could he do, seeing that some things are called benefits because they are unduly coveted, whilst others are not benefits at all, according to this common valuation, yet are of even greater value, though not so showy? You call it a benefit to cause a man to be adopted as a member of a powerful city, to get him enrolled among the knights, or to defend one who is being tried for his life: what do you say of him who gives useful advice? of him who holds you back when you would rush into crime? of him who strikes the sword from the hands of the suicide? of him who by his power of consolation brings back to the duties of life one who was plunged in grief, and eager to follow those whom he had lost? of him who sits at the bedside of the sick man, and who, when health and recovery depend upon seizing the right moment, administers food in due season, stimulates the failing veins with wine, or calls in the physician to the dying man? Who can estimate the value of such services as these? who can bid us weigh dissimilar benefits one with another? "I gave you a house," says one. Yes, but I forewarned you that your own house would come down upon your head. "I gave you an estate," says he. True, but I gave a plank to you when shipwrecked. "I fought for you and received wounds for you," says another. But I saved your life by keeping silence. Since a benefit is both given and returned differently by different people, it is hard to make them balance.

X.

Besides this, no day is appointed for repayment of a benefit, as there is for borrowed money; consequently he who has not yet repaid a benefit may do so hereafter: for tell me, pray, within what time a man is to be declared ungrateful? The greatest benefits cannot be proved by evidence; they often lurk in the silent consciousness of two men only; are we to introduce the rule of not bestowing benefits without witnesses? Next, what punishment are we to appoint for the ungrateful? is there to be one only for all, though the benefits which they have received are different? or should the punishment be varying, greater or less according to the benefit which each has received? Are our valuations to be restricted to pecuniary fines? what are we to do, seeing that in some cases the benefit conferred is life, and things dearer than life? What punishment is to be assigned to ingratitude for these? One less than the benefit? That would be unjust. One equal to it; death? What could be more inhuman than to cause benefits to result in cruelty?

XI.

It may be argued, "Parents have certain privileges: these are regarded as exempt from the action of ordinary rules, and so also ought to be the case with other beneficent persons." Nay; mankind has assigned a peculiar sanctity to the position of parents, because it was advantageous that children should be reared, and people had to be tempted into undergoing the toil of doing so, because the issue of their experiment was doubtful. One cannot say to them, as one does to others who bestow benefits, "Choose the man to whom you give: you must only blame yourself if you are deceived; help the deserving." In rearing children nothing depends upon the judgment of those who rear them; it is a matter of hope: in order, therefore, that people may be more willing to embark upon this lottery, it was right that they should be given a certain authority; and since it is useful for youth to be governed, we have placed their parents in the position of domestic magistrates, under whose guardianship their lives may be ruled. Moreover, the position of parents differs from that of other benefactors, for their having given formerly to their children does not stand in the way of their giving now and hereafter; and also, there is no fear of their falsely asserting that they have given: with others one has to inquire not only whether they have received, but whether they have given; but the good deeds of parents are placed beyond doubt. In the next place, one benefit bestowed by parents is the same for all, and might be counted once for all; while the others which they bestow are of various kinds, unlike one to another, differing from one another by the widest possible intervals; they can therefore come under no regular rule, since it would be more just to leave them all unrewarded than to give the same reward to all.

XII.

Some benefits cost much to the givers, some are of much value to the receivers but cost the givers nothing. Some are bestowed upon friends, others on strangers: now although that which is given be the same, yet it becomes more when it is given to one with whom you are beginning to be acquainted through the benefits which you have previously conferred upon him. One man may give us help, another distinctions, a third consolation. You may find one who thinks nothing pleasanter or more important than to have some one to save him from distress; you may again find one who would rather be helped to great place than to security; while some consider themselves more indebted to those who save their lives than to those who save their honour. Each of these services will be held more or less important, according as the disposition of our judge inclines to one or the other of them. Besides this, I choose my creditors for myself, whereas I often receive benefits from those from whom I would not, and sometimes I am laid under an obligation without my knowledge. What will you do in such a case? When a man has received a benefit unknown to himself, and which, had he known of it, he would have refused to receive, will you call him ungrateful if he does not repay it, however he may have received it? Suppose that some one has bestowed a benefit upon me, and that the same man has afterwards done me some wrong; am I to be bound by his one bounty to endure with patience any wrong that he may do me, or will it be the same as if I had repaid it, because he himself has by the subsequent wrong cancelled his own benefit? How, in that case, would you decide which was the greater; the present which the man has received, or the injury which has been done him? Time would fail me if I attempted to discuss all the difficulties which would arise.

XIII.

It may be argued that “we render men less willing to confer benefits by not supporting the claim of those which have been bestowed to meet with gratitude, and by not punishing those who repudiate them.” But you would find, on the other hand, that men would be far less willing to receive benefits, if by so doing they were likely to incur the danger of having to plead their cause in court, and having more difficulty in proving their integrity. This legislation would also render us less willing to give: for no one is willing to give to those who are unwilling to receive, but one who is urged to acts of kindness by his own good nature and by the beauty of charity, will give all the more freely to those who need make no return unless they choose. It impairs the credit of doing a service, if in doing it we are carefully protected from loss.

XIV.

“Benefits, then, will be fewer, but more genuine: well, what harm is there in restricting people from giving recklessly?” Even those who would have no legislation upon the subject follow this rule, that we ought to be somewhat careful in giving, and in choosing those upon whom we bestow favours. Reflect over and over again to whom you are giving: you will have no remedy at law, no means of enforcing repayment. You are mistaken if you suppose that the judge will assist you: no law will make full restitution to you, you must look only to the honour of the receiver. Thus only can benefits retain their influence, and thus only are they admirable: you dishonour them if you make them the grounds of litigation, “Pay what you owe” is a most just proverb; and one which carries with it the sanction of all nations; but in dealing with benefits it is most shameful. “Pay!” How is a man to pay who owes his life, his position, his safety, or his reason to another? None of the greatest benefits can be repaid. “Yet,” it is said, “you ought to give in return for them something of equal value.” This is just what I have been saying, that the grandeur of the act is ruined if we make our benefits commercial transactions. We ought not to encourage ourselves in avarice, in discontent, or in quarrels; the human mind is prone enough to these by nature. As far as we are able, let us check it, and cut off the opportunities for which it seeks.

XV.

Would that we could indeed persuade men to receive back money which they have lent from those debtors only who are willing to pay! would that no agreement ever bound the buyer to the seller, and that their interests were not protected by sealed covenants and agreements, but rather by honour and a sense of justice! However, men prefer what is needful to what is truly best, and choose rather to force their creditors to keep faith with them than to trust that they will do so. Witnesses are called on both sides; the one, by calling in brokers, makes several names appear in his accounts as his debtors instead of one; the other is not content with the legal forms of question and answer unless he holds the other party by the hand. What a shameful admission of the dishonesty and wickedness of mankind! men trust more to our signet-rings than to our intentions. For what are these respectable men summoned? for what do they impress their seals? it is in order that the borrower may not deny that he has received what he has received. You regard these men, I suppose, as above bribes, as maintainers of the truth: well, these very men will not be entrusted with money except on the same terms. Would it not, then, be more honourable to be deceived by some than to suspect all men of dishonesty? To fill up the measure of avarice one thing only is lacking, that we should bestow no benefit without a surety. To help, to be of service, is the part of a generous and noble mind; he who gives acts like a god, he who demands repayment acts like a money-lender. Why then, by trying to protect the rights of the former class, should we reduce them to the level of the basest of mankind?

XVI.

“More men,” our opponent argues, “will be ungrateful, if no legal remedy exists against ingratitude.” Nay, fewer, because then benefits will be bestowed with more discrimination, In the next place, it is not advisable that it should be publicly known how many ungrateful men there are: for the number of sinners will do away with the disgrace of the sin, and a reproach which applies to all men will cease to be dishonourable. Is any woman ashamed of being divorced, now that some noble ladies reckon the years of their lives, not by the number of the consuls, but by that of their husbands, now that they leave their homes in order to marry others, and marry only in order to be divorced? Divorce was only dreaded as long as it was unusual; now that no gazette appears without it, women learn to do what they hear so much about. Can any one feel ashamed of adultery, now that things have come to such a pass that no woman keeps a husband at all unless it be to pique her lover? Chastity merely implies ugliness. Where will you find any woman so abject, so repulsive, as to be satisfied with a single pair of lovers, without having a different one for each hour of the day; nor is the day long enough for all of them, unless she has taken her airing in the grounds of one, and passes the night with another. A woman is frumpish and old-fashioned if she does not know that “adultery with one paramour is nick-named marriage.” Just as all shame at these vices has disappeared since the vice itself became so widely spread, so if you made the ungrateful begin to count their own numbers, you would both make them more numerous, and enable them to be ungrateful with greater impunity.

XVII.

“What then? shall the ungrateful man go unpunished?” What then, I answer, shall we punish the undutiful, the malicious, the avaricious, the headstrong, and the cruel? Do you imagine that those things which are loathed are not punished, or do you suppose that any punishment is greater than the hate of all men? It is a punishment not to dare receive a benefit from anyone, not to dare to bestow one, to be, or to fancy that you are a mark for all men’s eyes, and to lose all appreciation of so excellent and pleasant a matter. Do you call a man unhappy who has lost his sight, or whose hearing has been impaired by disease, and do you not call him wretched who has lost the power of feeling benefits? He fears the gods, the witnesses of all ingratitude; he is tortured by the thought of the benefit which he has misapplied, and, in fine, he is sufficiently punished by this great penalty, that, as I said before, he cannot enjoy the fruits of this most delightful act. On the other hand, he who takes pleasure in receiving a benefit, enjoys an unvarying and continuous happiness, which he derives from consideration, not of the thing given, but of the intention of the giver. A benefit gives perpetual joy to a grateful man, but pleases an ungrateful one only for a moment. Can the lives of such men be compared, seeing that the one is sad and gloomy — as it is natural that a denier of his debts and a defrauder should be, a man who does not give his parents, his nurses, or his teachers the honour which is their due — while the other is joyous, cheerful, on the watch for an opportunity of proving his gratitude, and gaining much pleasure from this frame of mind itself? Such a man has no wish to become bankrupt, but only to make the fullest and most copious return for benefits, and that not only to parents and friends, but also to more humble persons; for even if he receives a benefit from his own slave, he does not consider from whom he receives it, but what he receives.

XVIII.

It has, however, been doubted by Hecaton and some other writers, whether a slave can bestow a benefit upon his master. Some distinguish between benefits, duties, and services, calling those things benefits which are bestowed by a stranger — that is, by one who could discontinue them without blame — while duties are performed by our children, our wives, and those whom relationship prompts and orders to afford us help; and, thirdly, services are performed by slaves, whose position is such that nothing which they do for their master can give them any claim upon him....

Besides this, he who affirms that a slave does not sometimes confer a benefit upon his master is ignorant of the rights of man; for the question is, not what the station in life of the giver may be, but what his intentions are. The path of virtue is closed to no one, it lies open to all; it admits and invites all, whether they be free-born men, slaves or freed-men, kings or exiles; it requires no qualifications of family or of property, it is satisfied with a mere man. What, indeed, should we have to trust to for defence against sudden misfortunes, what could — a noble mind promise to itself to keep unshaken, if virtue could be lost together with prosperity? If a slave cannot confer a benefit upon his master, then no subject can confer a benefit upon his king, and no soldier upon his general; for so long as the man is subject to supreme authority, the form of authority can make no difference. If main force, or the fear of death and torture, can prevent a slave from gaining any title to his master's gratitude, they will also prevent the subjects of a king, or the soldiers of a general from doing so, for the same things may happen to either of these classes of men, though under different names.

Yet men do bestow benefits upon their kings and their generals; therefore slaves can bestow benefits upon their masters. A slave can be just, brave, magnanimous; he can therefore bestow a benefit, for this is also the part of a virtuous man. So true is it that slaves can bestow benefits upon their masters, that the masters have often owed their lives to them.

XIX.

There is no doubt that a slave can bestow a benefit upon anyone; why, then, not upon his master? "Because," it is argued, "he cannot become his master's creditor if he gives him money. If this be not so, he daily lays his master under an obligation to him; he attends him when on a journey, he nurses him when sick, he works most laboriously at the cultivation of his estate; yet all these, which would be called benefits if done for us by anyone else, are merely called service when done by a slave. A benefit is that which some one bestows who has the option of withholding it: — now a slave has no power to refuse, so that he does not afford us his help, but obeys our orders, and cannot boast of having done what he could not leave undone." Even under these conditions I shall win the day, and will place a slave in such positions, that for many purposes he will be free; in the meanwhile, tell me, if I give you an instance of a slave fighting for his master's safety without regard to himself, pierced through with wounds, yet spending the last drops of his blood, and gaining time for his master to escape by the sacrifice of his life, will you say that this man did not bestow a benefit upon his master because he was a slave? If I give an instance of one who could not be bribed to betray his master's secrets by any of the offers of a tyrant, who was not terrified by any threats, nor overpowered by any tortures, but who, as far as he was able, placed his questioners upon a wrong scent, and, paid for his loyalty with his life; will you say that this man did not confer a benefit upon his master because he was a slave? Consider, rather, whether an example of virtue in a slave be not all the greater because it is rarer than in free men, and whether it be not all the more gratifying that, although to be commanded is odious, and all submission to authority is irksome, yet in some particular cases love for a master has been more powerful than men's general dislike to servitude. A benefit does not, therefore, cease to be a benefit because it is bestowed by a slave, but is all the greater on that account, because not even slavery could restrain him from bestowing it.

XX.

It is a mistake to imagine that slavery pervades a man's whole being; the better part of him is exempt from it: the body indeed is subjected and in the power of a master, but the mind is independent, and indeed is so free and wild, that it cannot be restrained even by this prison of the body, wherein it is confined, from following its own impulses, dealing with gigantic designs, and soaring into the infinite, accompanied by all the host of heaven. It is, therefore, only the body which misfortune hands over to a master, and which he buys and sells; this inward part cannot be transferred as a chattel. Whatever comes from this, is free; indeed, we are not allowed to order all things to be done, nor are slaves compelled to obey us in all things; they will not carry out treasonable orders, or lend their hands to an act of crime.

XXI.

There are some things which the law neither enjoins nor forbids; it is in these that a slave finds the means of bestowing benefits. As long as we only receive what is generally demanded from a slave, that is mere service; when more is given than a slave need afford us, it is a benefit; as soon as what he does begins to partake of the affection of a friend, it can no longer be called service. There are certain things with which a master is bound to provide his slave, such as food and clothing; no one calls this a benefit; but supposing that he indulges his slave, educates him above his station, teaches him arts which free-born men learn, that is a benefit. The converse is true in the case of the slave; anything which goes beyond the rules of a slave's duty, which is done of his own free will, and not in obedience to orders, is a benefit, provided it be of sufficient importance to be called by such a name if bestowed by any other person.

XXII.

It has pleased Chrysippus to define a slave as “a hireling for life.” Just as a hireling bestows a benefit when he does more than he engaged himself to do, so when a slave’s love for his master raises him above his condition and urges him to do something noble — something which would be a credit even to men more fortunate by birth — he surpasses the hopes of his master, and is a benefit found in the house. Do you think it is just that we should be angry with our slaves when they do less than their duty, and that we should not be grateful to them when they do more? Do you wish to know when their service is not a benefit? When the question can be asked, “What if he had refused to do it?” When he does that which he might have refused to do, we must praise his good will. Benefits and wrongs are opposites; a slave can bestow a benefit upon his master, if he can receive a wrong from his master. Now an official has been appointed to hear complaints of the wrongs done by masters to their slaves, whose duty it is to restrain cruelty and lust, or avarice in providing them with the necessities of life. What follows, then? Is it the master who receives a benefit from his slave? nay, rather, it is one man who receives it from another. Lastly, he did all that lay in his power; he bestowed a benefit upon his master; it lies in your power to receive or not to receive it from a slave. Yet who is so exalted, that fortune may not make him need the aid even of the lowliest?

XXIII.

I shall now quote a number of instances of benefits, not all alike, some even contradictory. Some slaves have given their master life, some death; have saved him when perishing, or, as if that were not enough, have saved him by their own death; others have helped their master to die, some have saved his life by stratagem. Claudius Quadrigarius tells us in the eighteenth book of his "Annals," that when Grumentum was being besieged, and had been reduced to the greatest straits, two slaves deserted to the enemy, and did valuable service. Afterwards, when the city was taken, and the victors were rushing wildly in every direction, they ran before every one else along the streets, which they well knew, to the house in which they had been slaves, and drove their mistress before them; when they were asked who she might be, they answered that she was their mistress, and a most cruel one, and that they were leading her away for punishment. They led her outside the walls, and concealed her with the greatest care until the fighting was over; then, as the soldiery, satisfied with the sack of the city, quickly resumed the manners of Romans, they also returned to their own countrymen, and themselves restored their mistress to them. She manumitted each of them on the spot, and was not ashamed to receive her life from men over whom she had held the power of life and death. She might, indeed, especially congratulate herself upon this; for had she been saved otherwise, she would merely have received a common and hackneyed piece of kindness, whereas, by being saved as she was, she became a glorious legend, and an example to two cities. In the confusion of the captured city, when every one was thinking only of his own safety, all deserted her except these deserters; but they, that they might prove what had been their intentions in effecting that desertion, deserted again from the victors to the captive, wearing the masks of unnatural murderers.

They thought — and this was the greatest part of the service which they rendered — they were content to seem to have murdered their mistress, if thereby their mistress might be saved from murder. Believe me, it is the mark of no slavish soul to purchase a noble deed

by the semblance of crime.

When Vettius, the praetor of the Marsi, was being led into the presence of the Roman general, his slave snatched a sword from the soldier who was dragging him along, and first slew his master. Then he said, "It is now time for me to look to myself; I have already set my master free," and with these words transfixed himself with one blow. Can you tell me of anyone who saved his master more gloriously?

XXIV.

When Caesar was besieging Corfinium, Domitius, who was shut up in the city, ordered a slave of his own, who was also a physician, to give him poison. Observing the man's hesitation, he said, "Why do you delay, as though the whole business was in your power? I ask for death with arms in my hands." Then the slave assented, and gave him a harmless drug to drink. When Domitius fell asleep after drinking this, the slave went to his son, and said, "Give orders for my being kept in custody until you learn from the result whether I have given your father poison or no." Domitius lived, and Caesar saved his life; but his slave had saved it before.

XXV.

During the civil war, a slave hid his master, who had been proscribed, put on his rings and clothes, met the soldiers who were searching for him, and, after declaring that he would not stoop to entreat them not to carry out their orders, offered his neck to their swords. What a noble spirit it shows in a slave to have been willing to die for his master, at a time when few were faithful enough to wish their master to live! to be found kind when the state was cruel, faithful when it was treacherous! to be eager for the reward of fidelity, though it was death, at a time when such rich rewards were offered for treachery!

XXVI.

I will not pass over the instances which our own age affords. In the reign of Tiberius Caesar, there was a common and almost universal frenzy for informing, which was more ruinous to the citizens of Rome than the whole civil war; the talk of drunkards, the frankness of jesters, was alike reported to the government; nothing was safe; every opportunity of ferocious punishment was seized, and men no longer waited to hear the fate of accused persons, since it was always the same. One Paulus, of the Praetorian guard, was at an entertainment, wearing a portrait of Tiberius Caesar engraved in relief upon a gem. It would be absurd for me to beat about the bush for some delicate way of explaining that he took up a chamber-pot, an action which was at once noticed by Maro, one of the most notorious informers of that time, and the slave of the man who was about to fall into the trap, who drew the ring from the finger of his drunken master. When Maro called the guests to witness that Paulus had dishonoured the portrait of the emperor, and was already drawing up an act of accusation, the slave showed the ring upon his own finger. Such a man no more deserves to be called a slave, than Maro deserved to be called a guest.

XXVII.

In the reign of Augustus men's own words were not yet able to ruin them, yet they sometimes brought them into trouble. A senator named Rufus, while at dinner, expressed a hope that Caesar would not return safe from a journey for which he was preparing, and added that all bulls and calves wished the same thing. Some of those present carefully noted these words. At daybreak, the slave who had stood at his feet during the dinner, told him what he had said in his cups, and urged him to be the first to go to Caesar, and denounce himself. Rufus followed this advice, met Caesar as he was going down to the forum, and, swearing that he was out of his mind the day before, prayed that what he had said might fall upon his own head and that of his children; he then begged Caesar pardon him, and to take him back into favour. When Caesar said that he would do so, he added, "No one will believe that you have taken me back into favour unless you make me a present of something;" and he asked for and obtained a sum of money so large, that it would have been a gift not to be slighted even if bestowed by an unoffended prince. Caesar added: "In future I will take care never to quarrel with you, for my own sake." Caesar acted honourably in pardoning him, and in being liberal as well as forgiving; no one can hear this anecdote without praising Caesar, but he must praise the slave first. You need not wait for me to tell you that the slave who did his master this service was set free; yet his master did not do this for nothing, for Caesar had already paid him the price of the slave's liberty.

XXVIII.

After so many instances, can we doubt that a master may sometimes receive a benefit from a slave? Why need the person of the giver detract from the thing which he gives? why should not the gift add rather to the glory of the giver. All men descend from the same original stock; no one is better born than another, except in so far as his disposition is nobler and better suited for the performance of good actions. Those who display portraits of their ancestors in their halls, and set up in the entrance to their houses the pedigree of their family drawn out at length, with many complicated collateral branches, are they not notorious rather than noble? The universe is the one parent of all, whether they trace their descent from this primary source through a glorious or a mean line of ancestors. Be not deceived when men who are reckoning up their genealogy, wherever an illustrious name is wanting, foist in that of a god in its place. You need despise no one, even though he bears a commonplace name, and owes little to fortune. Whether your immediate ancestors were freedmen, or slaves, or foreigners, pluck up your spirits boldly, and leap over any intervening disgraces of your pedigree; at its source, a noble origin awaits you. Why should our pride inflate us to such a degree that we think it beneath us to receive benefits from slaves, and think only of their position, forgetting their good deeds? You, the slave of lust, of gluttony, of a harlot, nay, who are owned as a joint chattel by harlots, can you call anyone else a slave? Call a man a slave? why, I pray you, whither are you being hurried by those bearers who carry your litter? whither are these men with their smart military-looking cloaks carrying you? is it not to the door of some door-keeper, or to the gardens of some one who has not even a subordinate office? and then you, who regard the salute of another man's slave as a benefit, declare that you cannot receive a benefit from your own slave. What inconsistency is this? At the same time you despise and fawn upon slaves, you are haughty and violent at home, while out of doors you are meek, and as much despised as you despise your slaves; for none abase themselves lower than those who unconscionably give themselves airs, nor are anymore prepared to

trample upon others than those who have learned how to offer insults by having endured them.

XXIX.

I felt it my duty to say this, in order to crush the arrogance of men who are themselves at the mercy of fortune, and to claim the right of bestowing a benefit for slaves, in order that I may claim it also for sons. The question arises, whether children can ever bestow upon their parents greater benefits than those which they have received from them.

It is granted that many sons become greater and more powerful than their parents, and also that they are better men. If this be true, they may give better gifts to their fathers than they have received from them, seeing that their fortune and their good nature are alike greater than that of their father. "Whatever a father receives from his son," our opponent will urge, "must in any case be lees than what the son received from him, because the son owes to his father the very power of giving. Therefore the father can never be surpassed in the bestowal of benefits, because the benefit which surpasses his own is really his." I answer, that some things derive their first origin from others, yet are greater than those others; and a thing may be greater than that from which it took its rise, although without that thing to start from it never could have grown so great. All things greatly outgrow their beginnings. Seeds are the causes of all things, and yet are the smallest part of the things which they produce. Look at the Rhine, or the Euphrates, or any other famous rivers; how small they are, if you only view them at the place from whence they take their rise? they gain all that makes them terrible and renowned as they flow along. Look at the trees which are tallest if you consider their height, and the broadest if you look at their thickness and the spread of their branches; compared with all this, how small a part of them is contained in the slender fibres of the root? Yet take away their roots, and no more groves will arise, nor great mountains be clothed with trees. Temples and cities are supported by their foundations; yet what is built as the foundation of the entire building lies out of sight. So it is in other matters; the subsequent greatness of a thing ever eclipses its origin. I could never have obtained anything without having previously received the boon of existence from my parents; yet it

does not follow from this that whatever I obtain is less than that without which I could not obtain it. If my nurse had not fed me when I was a child, I should not have been able to conduct any of those enterprises which I now carry on, both with my head and with my hand, nor should I ever have obtained the fame which is due to my labours both in peace and war; would you on that account argue that the services of a nurse were more valuable than the most important undertakings? Yet is not the nurse as important as the father, since without the benefits which I have received from each of them alike, I should have been alike unable to effect anything? If I owe all that I now can do to my original beginning, I cannot regard my father or my grandfather as being this original beginning; there always will be a spring further back, from which the spring next below is derived. Yet no one will argue that I owe more to unknown and forgotten ancestors than to my father; though really I do owe them more, if I owe it to my ancestors that my father begat me.

XXX.

“Whatever I have bestowed upon my father,” says my opponent, “however great it may be, yet is less valuable than what my father has bestowed upon me, because if he had not begotten me, it never could have existed at all.” By this mode of reasoning, if a man has healed my father when ill, and at the point of death, I shall not be able to bestow anything upon him equivalent to what I have received from him; for had my father not been healed, he could not have begotten me. Yet think whether it be not nearer the truth to regard all that I can do, and all that I have done, as mine, due to my own powers and my own will? Consider what the fact of my birth is in itself; you will see that it is a small matter, the outcome of which is dubious, and that it may lead equally to good or to evil; no doubt it is the first step to everything, but because it is the first, it is not on that account more important than all the others. Suppose that I have saved my father’s life, raised him to the highest honours, and made him the chief man in his city, that I have not merely made him illustrious by my own deeds, but have furnished him himself with an opportunity of performing great exploits, which is at once important, easy, and safe, as well as glorious; that I have loaded him with appointments, wealth, and all that attracts men’s minds; still, even when I surpass all others, I am inferior to him. Now if you say, “You owe to your father the power of doing all this,” I shall answer, “Quite true, if to do all this it is only necessary to be born; but if life is merely an unimportant factor in the art of living well, and if you have bestowed upon me only that which I have in common with wild beasts and the smallest, and some of the foulest of creatures, do not claim for yourself what did not come into being in consequence of the benefits which you bestowed, even though it could not have come into being without them.”

XXXI.

Suppose, father, that I have saved your life, in return for the life which I received from you: in this case also I have outdone your benefit, because I have given life to one who understands what I have done, and because I understood what I was doing, since I gave you your life not for the sake of, or by the means of my own pleasure; for just as it is less terrible to die before one has time to fear death, so it is a much greater boon to preserve one's life than to receive it. I have given life to one who will at once enjoy it, you gave it to one who knew not if he should ever live; I have given life to one who was in fear of death, your gift of life merely enables me to die; I have given you a life complete, perfect; you begat me without intelligence, a burden upon others. Do you wish to know how far from a benefit it was to give life under such conditions? You should have exposed me as a child, for you did me a wrong in begetting me. What do I gather from this? That the cohabitation of a father and mother is the very least of benefits to their child, unless in addition this beginning of kindnesses be followed up by others, and confirmed by other services. It is not a good thing to live, but to live well. "But," say you, "I do live well." True, but I might have lived ill; so that your part in me is merely this, that I live. If you claim merit to yourself for giving me mere life, bare and helpless, and boast of it as a great boon, reflect that this you claim merit for giving me is a boon which I possess in common with flies and worms. In the next place, if I say no more than that I have applied myself to honourable pursuits, and have guided the course of my life along the path of rectitude, then you have received more from your benefit than you gave; for you gave me to myself ignorant and unlearned, and I have returned to you a son such as you would wish to have begotten.

XXXII.

My father supported me. If I repay this kindness, I give him more than I received, because he has the pleasure, not only of being supported, but of being supported by a son, and receives more delight from my filial devotion than from the food itself, whereas the food which he used to give me merely affected my body. What? if any man rises so high as to become famous among nations for his eloquence, his justice, or his military skill, if much of the splendour of his renown is shed upon his father also, and by its clear light dispels the obscurity of his birth, does not such a man confer an inestimable benefit upon his parents? Would anyone have heard of Aristo and Gryllus except through Xenophon and Plato, their sons? Socrates keeps alive the memory of Sophroniscus. It would take long to recount the other men whose names survive for no other reason than that the admirable qualities of their sons have handed them down to posterity. Did the father of Marcus Agrippa, of whom nothing was known, even after Agrippa became famous, confer the greater benefit upon his son, or was that greater which Agrippa conferred upon his father when he gained the glory, unique in the annals of war, of a naval crown, and when he raised so many vast buildings in Rome, which not only surpassed all former grandeur, but have been surpassed by none since? Did Octavius confer a greater benefit upon his son, or the Emperor Augustus upon his father, obscured as he was by the intervention of an adoptive father? What joy would he have experienced, if, after the putting down of the civil war, he had seen his son ruling the state in peace and security? He would not have recognized the good which he had himself bestowed, and would hardly have believed, when he looked back upon himself, that so great a man could have been born in his house. Why should I go on to speak of others who would now be forgotten, if the glory of their sons had not raised them from obscurity, and kept them in the light until this day? In the next place, as we are not considering what son may have given back to his father greater benefits than he received from him, but whether a son can give back greater benefits, even if the examples which I have quoted are not sufficient, and such

benefits do not outweigh the benefits bestowed by the parents, if no age has produced. an actual example, still it is not in the nature of things impossible. Though no solitary act can outweigh the deserts of a parent, yet many such acts combined by one son may do so.

XXXIII.

Scipio, while under seventeen years of age, rode among the enemy in battle, and saved his father's life. Was it not enough, that in order to reach his father he despised so many dangers when they were pressing hardest upon the greatest generals, that he, a novice in his first battle, made his way through so many obstacles, over the bodies of so many veteran soldiers, and showed strength and courage beyond his years? Add to this, that he also defended his father in court, and saved him from a plot of his powerful enemies, that he heaped upon him a second and a third consulship and other posts which were coveted even by consulars, that when his father was poor he bestowed upon him the plunder which he took by military licence, and that he made him rich with the spoils of the enemy, which is the greatest honour of a soldier. If even this did not repay his debt, add to it that he caused him to be constantly employed in the government of provinces and in special commands, add, that after he had destroyed the greatest cities, and became without a rival either in the east or in the west, the acknowledged protector and second founder of the Roman Empire, he bestowed upon one who was already of noble birth the higher title of "the father of Scipio;" can we doubt that the commonplace benefit of his birth was outdone by his exemplary conduct, and by the valour which was at once the glory and the protection of his country? Next, if this be not enough, suppose that a son were to rescue his father from the torture, or to undergo it in his stead. You can suppose the benefits returned by the son as great as you please, whereas the gift he received from his father was of one sort only, was easily performed, and was a pleasure to the giver; that he must necessarily have given the same thing to many others, even to some to whom he knows not that he has given it, that he had a partner in doing so, and that he had in view the law, patriotism, the rewards bestowed upon fathers of families by the state, the maintenance of his house and family: everything rather than him to whom he was giving life. What? supposing that any one were to learn philosophy and teach it to his father, could it be any longer disputed that the son had given him something greater than he had

received from him, having returned to his father a happy life, whereas he had received from him merely life?

XXXIV.

“But,” says our opponent, “whatever you do, whatever you are able to give to your father, is part of his benefit bestowed upon you.” So it is the benefit of my teacher that I have become proficient in liberal studies; yet we pass on from those who taught them to us, at any rate from those who taught us the alphabet; and although no one can learn anything without them, yet it does not follow that whatsoever success one subsequently obtains, one is still inferior to those teachers. There is a great difference between the beginning of a thing and its final development; the beginning is not equal to the thing at its greatest, merely upon the ground that, without the beginning, it could never have become so great.

XXXV.

It is now time for me to bring forth something, so to speak, from my own mint. So long as there is something better than the benefit which a man bestows, he may be outdone. A father gives life to his son; there is something better than life; therefore a father may be outdone, because there is something better than the benefit which he has bestowed. Still further, he who has given any one his life, if he be more than once saved from peril of death by him, has received a greater benefit than he bestowed. Now, a father has given life to his son: if, therefore, he be more than once saved from peril by his son, he can receive a greater benefit than he gave. A benefit becomes greater to the receiver in proportion to his need of it. Now he who is alive needs life more than he who has not been born, seeing that such a one can have no need at all; consequently a father, if his life is saved by his son, receives a greater benefit than his son received from him by being born. It is said, "The benefits conferred by fathers cannot be outdone by those returned by their sons." Why? "Because the son received life from his father, and had he not received it, he could not have returned any benefits at all." A father has this in common with all those who have given any men their lives; it is impossible that these men could repay the debt if they had not received their life. Then I suppose one cannot overpay one's debt to a physician, for a physician gives life as well as a father; or to a sailor who has saved us when shipwrecked? Yet the benefits bestowed by these and by all the others who give us life in whatever fashion, can be outdone: consequently those of our fathers can be outdone. If any one bestows upon me a benefit which requires the help of benefits from many other persons, whereas I give him what requires no one to help it out, I have given more than I have received; now a father gave to his son a life which, without many accessories to preserve it, would perish; whereas a son, if he gives life to his father, gives him a life which requires no assistance to make it lasting; therefore the father who receives life from his son, receives a greater benefit than he himself bestowed upon his son.

XXXVI.

These considerations do not destroy the respect due to parents, or make their children behave worse to them, nay, better; for virtue is naturally ambitious, and wishes to outstrip those who are before it. Filial piety will be all the more eager, if, in returning a father's benefits, it can hope to outdo them; nor will this be against the will or the pleasure of the father, since in many contests it is to our advantage to be outdone. How does this contest become so desirable? How comes it to be such happiness to parents that they should confess themselves outdone by the benefits bestowed by their children? Unless we decide the matter thus, we give children an excuse, and make them less eager to repay their debt, whereas we ought to spur them on, saying, "Noble youths, give your attention to this! You are invited to contend in an honourable strife between parents and children, as to which party has received more than it has given. Your fathers have not necessarily won the day because they are first in the field: only take courage, as befits you, and do not give up the contest; you will conquer if you wish to do so. In this honourable warfare you will have no lack of leaders who will encourage you to perform deeds like their own, and bid you follow in their footsteps upon a path by which victory has often before now been won over parents."

XXXVII.

AEneas conquered his father in well doing, for he himself had been but a light and a safe burden for him when he was a child, yet he bore his father, when heavy with age, through the midst of the enemy's lines and the crash of the city which was falling around him, albeit the devout old man, who bore the sacred images and the household gods in his hands, pressed him with more than his own weight; nevertheless (what cannot filial piety accomplish!) AEneas bore him safe through the blazing city, and placed him in safety, to be worshipped as one of the founders of the Roman Empire. Those Sicilian youths outdid their parents whom they bore away safe, when Aetna, roused to unusual fury, poured fire over cities and fields throughout a great part of the island. It is believed that the fires parted, and that the flames retired on either side, so as to leave a passage for these youths to pass through, who certainly deserved to perform their daring task in safety. Antigonus outdid his father when, after having conquered the enemy in a great battle, he transferred the fruits of it to him, and handed over to him the empire of Cyprus. This is true kingship, to choose not to be a king when you might. Manlius conquered his father, imperious [Footnote: There is an allusion to the surname of both the father and the son, "Imperiosus" given them on account of their severity.] though he was, when, in spite of his having previously been banished for a time by his father on, account of his dulness and stupidity as a boy, he came to an interview which he had demanded with the tribune of the people, who had filed an action against his father. The tribune had granted him the interview, hoping that he would betray his hated father, and believed that he had earned the gratitude of the youth, having, amongst other matters, reproached old Manlius with sending him into exile, treating it as a very serious accusation; but the youth, having caught him alone, drew a sword which he had hidden in his robe, and said, "Unless you swear to give up your suit against my father, I will run you through with this sword. It is in your power to decide how my father shall be freed from his prosecutor." The tribune swore, and kept his oath; he related the reason of his abandonment of his action to an assembly at

the Rostra. No other man was ever permitted to put down a tribune with impunity.

XXXVIII.

There are instances without number of men who have saved their parents from danger, have raised them from the lowest to the highest station, and, taking them from the nameless mass of the lower classes, have given them a name glorious throughout all ages. By no force of words, by no power of genius, can one rightly express how desirable, how admirable, how never to be erased from human memory it is to be able to say, "I obeyed my parents, I gave way to them, I was submissive to their authority whether it was just, or unjust and harsh; the only point in which I resisted them was, not to be conquered by them in benefits." Continue this struggle, I beg of you, and even though weary, yet re-form your ranks. Happy are they who conquer, happy they who are conquered. What can be more glorious than the youth who can say to himself — it would not be right to say it to another— "I have conquered my father with benefits"? What is more fortunate than that old man who declares everywhere to everyone that he has been conquered in benefits by his son? What, again, is more blissful than to be overcome in such a contest?

BOOK IV.

I.

Of all the matters which we have discussed, Aebutius Liberalis, there is none more essential, or which, as Sallust says, ought to be stated with more care than that which is now before us: whether the bestowal of benefits and the return of gratitude for them are desirable objects in themselves. Some men are found who act honourably from commercial motives, and who do not care for unrewarded virtue, though it can confer no glory if it brings any profit. What can be more base than for a man to consider what it costs him to be a good man, when virtue neither allures by gain nor deters by loss, and is so far from bribing any one with hopes and promises, that on the other hand she bids them spend money upon herself, and often consists in voluntary gifts? We must go to her, trampling what is merely useful under our feet: whithersoever she may call us or send us we must go, without any regard for our private fortunes, sometimes without sparing even our own blood, nor must we ever refuse to obey any of her commands. "What shall I gain," says my opponent, "if I do this bravely and gratefully?" You will gain the doing of it — the deed itself is your gain. Nothing beyond this is promised. If any advantage chances to accrue to you, count it as something extra. The reward of honourable dealings lies in themselves. If honour is to be sought after for itself, since a benefit is honourable, it follows that because both of these are of the same nature, their conditions must also be the same. Now it has frequently and satisfactorily been proved, that honour ought to be sought after for itself alone.

II.

In this part of the subject we oppose the Epicureans, an effeminate and dreamy sect who philosophize in their own paradise, amongst whom virtue is the handmaid of pleasures, obeys them, is subject to them, and regards them as superior to itself. You say, "there is no pleasure without virtue." But wherefore is it superior to virtue? Do you imagine that the matter in dispute between them is merely one of precedence? Nay, it is virtue itself and its powers which are in question. It cannot be virtue if it can follow; the place of virtue is first, she ought to lead, to command, to stand in the highest rank; you bid her look for a cue to follow. "What," asks our opponent, "does that matter to you? I also declare that happiness is impossible without virtue. Without virtue I disapprove of and condemn the very pleasures which I pursue, and to which I have surrendered myself. The only matter in dispute is this, whether virtue be the cause of the highest good, or whether it be itself the highest good." Do you suppose, though this be the only point in question, that it is a mere matter of precedence? It is a confusion and obvious blindness to prefer the last to the first. I am not angry at virtue being placed below pleasure, but at her being mixed up at all with pleasure, which she despises, whose enemy she is, and from which she separates herself as far as possible, being more at home with labour and sorrow, which are manly troubles, than with your womanish good things.

III.

It was necessary to insert this argument, my Liberalis, because it is the part of virtue to bestow those benefits which we are now discussing, and it is most disgraceful to bestow benefits for any other purpose than that they should be free gifts. If we give with the hope of receiving a return, we should give to the richest men, not to the most deserving: whereas we prefer a virtuous poor man to an unmannerly rich one. That is not a benefit, which takes into consideration the fortune of the receiver. Moreover, if our only motive for benefiting others was our own advantage, those who could most easily distribute benefits, such as rich and powerful men, or kings, and persons who do not stand in need of the help of others, ought never to do so at all; the gods would not bestow upon us the countless blessings which they pour upon us unceasingly by night and by day, for their own nature suffices them in all respects, and renders them complete, safe, and beyond the reach of harm; they will, therefore, never bestow a benefit upon any one, if self and self interest be the only cause for the bestowal of benefits. To take thought, not where your benefit will be best bestowed, but where it may be most profitably placed at interest, from whence you will most easily get it back, is not bestowal of benefits, but usury. Now the gods have nothing to do with usury; it follows, therefore, that they cannot be liberal; for if the only reason for giving is the advantage of the giver, since God cannot hope to receive any advantages from us, there is no cause why God should give anything.

IV.

I know what answer may be made to this. "True; therefore God does not bestow benefits, but, free from care and unmindful of us, He turns away from our world and either does something else, or else does nothing, which Epicurus thought the greatest possible happiness, and He is not affected either by benefits or by injuries." The man who says this cannot surely hear the voices of worshippers, and of those who all around him are raising their hands to heaven and praying for the success both of their private affairs and those of the state; which certainly would not be the case, all men would not agree in this madness of appealing to deaf and helpless gods, unless we knew that their benefits are sometimes bestowed upon us unasked, sometimes in answer to our prayers, and that they give us both great and seasonable gifts, which shield us from the most terrible dangers. Who is there so poor, so uncared for, born to sorrow by so unkind a fate, as never to have felt the vast generosity of the Gods? Look even at those who complain and are discontented with their lot; you will find that they are not altogether without a share in the bounty of heaven, that there is no one upon whom something has not been shed from that most gracious fount. Is the gift which is bestowed upon all alike, at their birth, not enough? However unequally the blessings of after life may be dealt out to us, did nature give us too little when she gave us herself?

V.

It is said, "God does not bestow benefits." Whence, then, comes all that you possess, that you give or refuse to give, that you hoard or steal? whence come these innumerable delights of our eyes, our ears, and our minds? whence the plenty which provides us even with luxury — for it is not our bare necessities alone against which provision is made; we are loved so much as actually to be pampered — whence so many trees bearing various fruits, so many wholesome herbs, so many different sorts of food distributed throughout the year, so that even the slothful may find sustenance in the chance produce of the earth? Then, too, whence come the living creatures of all kinds, some inhabiting the dry land, others the waters, others alighting from the sky, that every part of nature may pay us some tribute; the rivers which encircle our meadows with most beautiful bends, the others which afford a passage to merchant fleets as they flow on, wide and navigable, some of which in summer time are subject to extraordinary overflowings in order that lands lying parched under a glowing sun may suddenly be watered by the rush of a midsummer torrent?

What of the fountains of medicinal waters? What of the bursting forth of warm waters upon the seashore itself? Shall I

“Tell of the seas round Italy that flow,
Which laves her shore above, and which below;
Or of her lakes, unrivalled Larius, thee,
Or thee, Benacus, roaring like a sea?”

VI.

If any one gave you a few acres, you would say that you had received a benefit; can you deny that the boundless extent of the earth is a benefit? If any one gave you money, and filled your chest, since you think that so important, you would call that a benefit. God has buried countless mines in the earth, has poured out from the earth countless rivers, rolling sands of gold; He has concealed in every place huge masses of silver, copper and iron, and has bestowed upon you the means of discovering them, placing upon the surface of the earth signs of the treasures hidden below; and yet do you say that you have received no benefit? If a house were given you, bright with marble, its roof beautifully painted with colours and gilding, you would call it no small benefit. God has built for you a huge mansion that fears no fire or ruin, in which you see no flimsy veneers, thinner than the very saw with which they are cut, but vast blocks of most precious stone, all composed of those various and different substances whose paltriest fragments you admire so much; he has built a roof which glitters in one fashion by day, and in another by night; and yet do you say that you have received no benefit? When you so greatly prize what you possess, do you act the part of an ungrateful man, and think that there is no one to whom you are indebted for them? Whence comes the breath which you draw? the light by which you arrange and perform all the actions of your life? the blood by whose circulation your vital warmth is maintained? those meats which excite your palate by their delicate flavour after your hunger is appeased? those provocatives which rouse you when wearied with pleasure? that repose in which you are rotting and mouldering? Will you not, if you are grateful, say —

“Tis to a god that this repose I owe,
For him I worship, as a god below.
Oft on his altar shall my firstlings bleed,
See, by his bounty here with rustic reed
I play the airs I love the livelong day,
The while my oxen round about me stray.”

The true God is he who has placed, not a few oxen, but all the

herds on their pastures throughout the world; who furnishes food to the flocks wherever they wander; who has ordained the alternation of summer and winter pasturage, and has taught us not merely to play upon a reed, and to reduce to some order a rustic and artless song, but who has invented so many arts and varieties of voice, so many notes to make music, some with our own breath, some with instruments. You cannot call our inventions our own any more than you call our growth our own, or the various bodily functions which correspond to each stage of our lives; at one time comes the loss of childhood's teeth, at another, when our age is advancing and growing into robuster manhood, puberty and the last wisdom-tooth marks the end of our youth. "We have implanted in us the seeds of all ages, of all arts, and God our master brings forth our intellects from obscurity."

VII.

“Nature,” says my opponent, “gives me all this.” Do you not perceive when you say this that you merely speak of God under another name? for what is nature but God and divine reason, which pervades the universe and all its parts? You may address the author of our world by as many different titles as you please; you may rightly call him Jupiter, Best and Greatest, and the Thunderer, or the Stayer, so called, not because, as the historians tell us, he stayed the flight of the Roman army in answer to the prayer of Romulus, but because all things continue in their stay through his goodness. If you were to call this same personage Fate, you would not lie; for since fate is nothing more than a connected chain of causes, he is the first cause of all upon which all the rest depend. You will also be right in applying to him any names that you please which express supernatural strength and power: he may have as many titles as he has attributes.

VIII.

Our school regards him as Father Liber, and Hercules, and Mercurius: he is Father Liber because he is the parent of all, who first discovered the power of seed, and our being led by pleasure to plant it; he is Hercules, because his might is unconquered, and when it is wearied after completing its labours, will retire into fire; he is Mercurius, because in him is reasoning, and numbers, and system, and knowledge. Whither-soever you turn yourself you will see him meeting you: nothing is void of him, he himself fills his own work. Therefore, most ungrateful of mortals, it is in vain that you declare yourself indebted, not to God, but to nature, because there can be no God without nature, nor any nature without God; they are both the same thing, differing only in their functions. If you were to say that you owe to Annaeus or to Lucius what you received from Seneca, you would not change your creditor, but only his name, because he remains the same man whether you use his first, second, or third name. So whether you speak of nature, fate, or fortune, these are all names of the same God, using his power in different ways. So likewise justice, honesty, discretion, courage, frugality, are all the good qualities of one and the same mind; if you are pleased with any one of these, you are pleased with that mind.

IX.

However, not to drift aside into a distinct controversy, God bestows upon us very many and very great benefits without hope of receiving any return; since he does not require any offering from us, and we are not capable of bestowing anything upon him: wherefore, a benefit is desirable in itself. In it the advantage of the receiver is all that is taken into consideration: we study this without regarding our own interests. "Yet," argues our opponent, "you say that we ought to choose with care the persons upon whom we bestow benefits, because neither do husbandmen sow seed in the sand: now if this be true, we follow our own interest in bestowing benefits, just as much as in ploughing and sowing: for sowing is not desirable in itself. Besides this you inquire where and how you ought to bestow a benefit, which would not need to be done if the bestowal of a benefit was desirable in itself: because in whatever place and whatever manner it might be bestowed, it still would be a benefit." We seek to do honourable acts, solely because they are honourable; yet even though we need think of nothing else, we consider to whom we shall do them, and when, and how; for in these points the act has its being. In like manner, when I choose upon whom I shall bestow a benefit, and when I aim at making it a benefit; because if it were bestowed upon a base person, it could neither be a benefit nor an honourable action.

X.

To restore what has been entrusted to one is desirable in itself; yet I shall not always restore it, nor shall I do so in any place or at any time you please. Sometimes it makes no difference whether I deny that I have received it, or return it openly. I shall consider the interests of the person to whom I am to return it, and shall deny that I have received a deposit, which would injure him if returned. I shall act in the same manner in bestowing a benefit: I shall consider when to give it, to whom, in what manner, and on what grounds. Nothing ought to be done without a reason: a benefit is not truly so, if it be bestowed without a reason, since reason accompanies all honorable action. How often do we hear men reproaching themselves for some thoughtless gift, and saying, "I had rather have thrown it away than have given it to him!" What is thoughtlessly given away is lost in the most discreditable manner, and it is much worse to have bestowed a benefit badly than to have received no return for it; that we receive no return is the fault of another; that we did not choose upon whom we should bestow it, is our own. In choosing a fit person, I shall not, as you expect, pay the least attention to whether I am likely to get any return from him, for I choose one who will be grateful, not one who will return my goodness, and it often happens that the man who makes no return is grateful, while he who returns a benefit is ungrateful for it. I value men by their hearts alone, and, therefore, I shall pass over a rich man if he be unworthy, and give to a good man though he be poor; for he will be grateful however destitute he may be, since whatever he may lose, his heart will still be left him.

XI.

I do not fish for gain, for pleasure, or for credit, by bestowing benefits: satisfied in doing so with pleasing one man alone, I shall give in order to do my duty. Duty, however, leaves one some choice; do you ask me, how I am to choose? I shall choose an honest, plain, man, with a good memory, and grateful for kindness; one who keeps his hands off other men's goods, yet does not greedily hold to his own, and who is kind to others; when I have chosen such a man, I shall have acted to my mind, although fortune may have bestowed upon him no means of returning my kindness. If my own advantage and mean calculation made me liberal, if I did no one any service except in order that he might in turn do a service to me, I should never bestow a benefit upon one who was setting out for distant and foreign countries, never to return; I should not bestow a benefit upon one who was so ill as to be past hope of recovery, nor should I do so when I myself was failing, because I should not live long enough to receive any return. Yet, that you may know that to do good is desirable in itself, we afford help to strangers who put into our harbour only to leave it straightway; we give a ship and fit it out for a shipwrecked stranger to sail back in to his own country. He leaves us hardly knowing who it was who saved him, and, as he will never return to our presence, he hands over his debt of gratitude to the gods, and beseeches them to fulfil it for him: in the meanwhile we rejoice in the barren knowledge that we have done a good action. What? when we stand upon the extreme verge of life, and make our wills, do we not assign to others benefits from which we ourselves shall receive no advantage? How much time we waste, how long we consider in secret how much property we are to leave, and to whom! What then? does it make any difference to us to whom we leave our property, seeing that we cannot expect any return from any one? Yet we never give anything with more care, we never take such pains in deciding upon our verdict, as when, without any views of personal advantage, we think only of what is honourable, for we are bad judges of our duty as long as our view of it is distorted by hope and fear, and that most indolent of vices, pleasure: but when death has

shut off all these, and brought us as incorrupt judges to pronounce sentence, we seek for the most worthy men to leave our property to, and we never take more scrupulous care than in deciding what is to be done with what does not concern us. Yet, by Hercules, then there steals over us a great satisfaction as we think, "I shall make this man richer, and by bestowing wealth upon that man I shall add lustre to his high position." Indeed, if we never give without expecting some return, we must all die without making our wills.

XII.

It may be said, "You define a benefit as a loan which cannot be repaid: now a loan is not a desirable thing in itself." When we speak of a loan, we make use of a figure, or comparison, just as we speak of law as; the standard of right and wrong, although a standard is not a thing to be desired for its own sake. I have adopted this phrase in order to illustrate my subject: when I speak of a loan, I must be understood to mean something resembling a loan. Do you wish to know how it differs from one? I add the words "which cannot be repaid," whereas every loan both can and ought to be repaid. It is so far from being right to bestow a benefit for one's own advantage, that often, as I have explained, it is one's duty to bestow it when it involves one's own loss and risk: for instance, if I assist a man when beset by robbers, so that he gets away from them safely, or help some victim of power, and bring upon myself the party spite of a body of influential men, very, probably incurring myself the same disgrace from which I saved him, although I might have taken the other side, and looked on with safety at struggles with which I have nothing to do: if I were to give bail for one who has been condemned, and when my friend's goods were advertised for sale I were to give a bond to the effect that I would make restitution to the creditors, if, in order to save a proscribed person I myself run the risk of being proscribed. No one, when about to buy a villa at Tusculum or Tibur, for a summer retreat, because of the health of the locality, considers how many years' purchase he gives for it; this must be looked to by the man who makes a profit by it. The same is true with benefits; when you ask what return I get for them, I answer, the consciousness of a good action. "What return does one get for benefits?" Pray tell me what return one gets for righteousness, innocence, magnanimity, chastity, temperance? If you wish for anything beyond these virtues, you do not wish for the virtues themselves. For what does the order of the universe bring round the seasons? for what does the sun make the day now longer and now shorter? all these things are benefits, for they take place for our good. As it is the duty of the universe to maintain the round of the seasons, as it is the duty of the sun to vary

the points of his rising and setting, and to do all these things by which we profit, without any reward, so is it the duty of man, amongst other things, to bestow benefits. Wherefore then does he give? He gives for fear that he should not give, lest he might lose an opportunity of doing a good action.

XIII.

You Epicureans take pleasure in making a study of dull torpidity, in seeking for a repose which differs little from sound sleep, in lurking beneath the thickest shade, in amusing with the feeblest possible trains of thought that sluggish condition of your languid minds which you term tranquil contemplation, and in stuffing with food and drink, in the recesses of your gardens, your bodies which are pallid with want of exercise; we Stoics, on the other hand, take pleasure in bestowing benefits, even though they cost us labour, provided that they lighten the labours of others; though they lead us into danger, provided that they save others, though they straiten our means, if they alleviate the poverty and distresses of others. What difference does it make to me whether I receive benefits or not? even if I receive them, it is still my duty to bestow them. A benefit has in view the advantage of him upon whom we bestow it, not our own; otherwise we merely bestow it upon ourselves. Many things, therefore, which are of the greatest possible use to others lose all claim to gratitude by being paid for. Merchants are of use to cities, physicians to invalids, dealers to slaves; yet all these have no claim to the gratitude of those whom they benefit, because they seek their own advantage through that of others. That which is bestowed with a view to profit is not a benefit. "I will give this in order that I may get a return for it" is the language of a broker.

XIV.

I should not call a woman modest, if she rebuffed her lover in order to increase his passion, or because she feared the law or her husband; as Ovid says:

“She that denies, because she does not dare
To yield, in spirit grants her lover’s prayer.”

Indeed, the woman who owes her chastity, not to her own virtue, but to fear, may rightly be classed as a sinner. In the same manner, he who merely gave in order that he might receive, cannot be said to have given. Pray, do we bestow benefits upon animals when we feed them for our use or for our table? do we bestow benefits upon trees when we tend them that they may not suffer from drought or from hardness of ground? No one is moved by righteousness and goodness of heart to cultivate an estate, or to do any act in which the reward is something apart from the act itself; but he is moved to bestow benefits, not by low and grasping motives, but by a kind and generous mind, which even after it has given is willing to give again, to renew its former bounties by fresh ones, which thinks only of how much good it can do the man to whom it gives; whereas to do any one a service because it is our interest to do so is a mean action, which deserves no praise, no credit. What grandeur is there in loving oneself, sparing oneself, gaining profit for oneself? The true love of giving calls us away from all this, forcibly leads us to put up with loss, and foregoes its own interest, deriving its greatest pleasure from the mere act of doing good.

XV.

Can we doubt that the converse of a benefit is an injury? As the infliction of injuries is a thing to be avoided, so is the bestowal of benefits to be desired for its own sake. In the former, the disgrace of crime outweighs all the advantages which incite us to commit it; while we are urged to the latter course by the appearance of honour, in itself a powerful incentive to action, which attends it.

I should not lie if I were to affirm that every one takes pleasure in the benefits which he has bestowed, that everyone loves best to see the man whom he has most largely benefited. Who does not think that to have bestowed one benefit is a reason for bestowing a second? and would this be so, if the act of giving did not itself give us pleasure? How often you may hear a man say, "I cannot bear to desert one whose life I have preserved, whom I have saved from danger. True, he asks me to plead his cause against men of great influence. I do not wish to do so, yet what am I to do? I have already helped him once, nay twice." Do you not perceive how very powerful this instinct must be, if it leads us to bestow benefits first because it is right to do so, and afterwards because we have already bestowed somewhat? Though at the outset a man may have had no claim upon us, we yet continue to give to him because we have already given to him. So untrue is it that we are urged to bestow benefits by our own interest, that even when our benefits prove failures we continue to nurse them and encourage them out of sheer love of benefiting, which has a natural weakness even for what has been ill-bestowed, like that which we feel for our vicious children.

XVI.

These same adversaries of ours admit that they are grateful, yet not because it is honourable, but because it is profitable to be so. This can be proved to be untrue all the more easily, because it can be established by the same arguments by which we have established that to bestow a benefit is desirable for its own sake. All our arguments start from this settled point, that honour is pursued for no reason except because it is honour. Now, who will venture to raise the question whether it be honourable to be grateful? who does not loathe the ungrateful man, useless as he is even to himself? How do you feel when any one is spoken of as being ungrateful for great benefits conferred upon him by a friend? Is it as though he had done something base, or had merely neglected to do something useful and likely to be profitable to himself? I imagine that you think him a bad man, and one who deserves punishment, not one who needs a guardian; and this would not be the case, unless gratitude were desirable in itself and honourable. Other qualities, it may be, manifest their importance less clearly, and require an explanation to prove whether they be honourable or no; this is openly proved to be so in the sight of all, and is too beautiful for anything to obscure or dim its glory. What is more praiseworthy, upon what are all men more universally agreed, than to return gratitude for good offices?

XVII.

Pray tell me, what is it that urges us to do so? Is it profit? Why, unless a man despises profit, he is not grateful. Is it ambition? why, what is there to boast of in having paid what you owe? Is it fear? The ungrateful man feels none, for against this one crime we have provided no law, as though nature had taken sufficient precautions against it. Just as there is no law which bids parents love and indulge their children, seeing that it is superfluous to force us into the path which we naturally take, just as no one needs to be urged to love himself, since self-love begins to act upon him as soon as he is born, so there is no law bidding us to seek that which is honourable in itself; for such things please us by their very nature, and so attractive is virtue that the disposition even of bad men leads them to approve of good rather than of evil. Who is there who does not wish to appear beneficent, who does not even when steeped in crime and wrongdoing strive after the appearance of goodness, does not put some show of justice upon even his most intemperate acts, and endeavour to seem to have conferred a benefit even upon those whom he has injured? Consequently, men allow themselves to be thanked by those whom they have ruined, and pretend to be good and generous, because they cannot prove themselves so; and this they never would do were it not that a love of honour for its own sake forces them to seek a reputation quite at variance with their real character, and to conceal their baseness, a quality whose fruits we covet, though we regard it itself with dislike and shame. No one has ever so far rebelled against the laws of nature and put off human feeling as to act basely for mere amusement. Ask any of those who live by robbery whether he would not rather obtain what he steals and plunders by honest means; the man whose trade is highway robbery and the murder of travellers would rather find his booty than take it by force; you will find no one who would not prefer to enjoy the fruits of wickedness without acting wickedly. Nature bestows upon us all this immense advantage, that the light of virtue shines into the minds of all alike; even those who do not follow her, behold her.

XVIII.

A proof that gratitude is desirable for itself lies in the fact that ingratitude is to be avoided for itself, because no vice more powerfully rends asunder and destroys the union of the human race. To what do we trust for safety, if not in mutual good offices one to another? It is by the interchange of benefits alone that we gain some measure of protection for our lives, and of safety against sudden disasters. Taken singly, what should we be? a prey and quarry for wild beasts, a luscious and easy banquet; for while all other animals have sufficient strength to protect themselves, and those which are born to a wandering solitary life are armed, man is covered by a soft skin, has no powerful teeth or claws with which to terrify other creatures, but weak and naked by himself is made strong by union.

God has bestowed upon him two gifts, reason and union, which raise him from weakness to the highest power; and so he, who if taken alone would be inferior to every other creature, possesses supreme dominion. Union has given him sovereignty over all animals; union has enabled a being born upon the earth to assume power over a foreign element, and bids him be lord of the sea also; it is union which has checked the inroads of disease, provided supports for our old age, and given us relief from pain; it is union which makes us strong, and to which we look for protection against the caprices of fortune. Take away union, and you will rend asunder the association by which the human race preserves its existence; yet you will take it away if you succeed in proving that ingratitude is not to be avoided for itself, but because something is to be feared for it; for how many are there who can with safety be ungrateful? In fine, I call every man ungrateful who is merely made grateful by fear.

XIX.

No sane man fears the gods; for it is madness to fear what is beneficial, and no man loves those whom he fears. You, Epicurus, ended by making God unarmed; you stripped him of all weapons, of all power, and, lest anyone should fear him, you banished him out of the world. There is no reason why you should fear this being, cut off as he is, and separated from the sight and touch of mortals by a vast and impassable wall; he has no power either of rewarding or of injuring us; he dwells alone half-way between our heaven and that of another world, without the society either of animals, of men, or of matter, avoiding the crash of worlds as they fall in ruins above and around him, but neither hearing our prayers nor interested in us. Yet you wish to seem to worship this being just as a father, with a mind, I suppose, full of gratitude; or, if you do not wish to seem grateful, why should you worship him, since you have received no benefit from him, but have been put together entirely at random and by chance by those atoms and mites of yours? "I worship him," you answer, "because of his glorious majesty and his unique nature." Granting that you do this, you clearly do it without the attraction of any reward, or any hope; there is therefore something which is desirable for itself, whose own worth attracts you, that is, honour. Now what is more honourable than gratitude? the means of practising this virtue are as extensive as life itself.

XX.

“Yet,” argues he, “there is also a certain amount of profit inherent in this virtue.” In what virtue is there not? But that which we speak of as desirable for itself is such, that although it may possess some attendant advantages, yet it would be desirable even if stripped of all these. It is profitable to be grateful; yet I will be grateful even though it harm me. What is the aim of the grateful man? is it that his gratitude may win for him more friends and more benefits? What then? If a man is likely to meet with affronts by showing his gratitude, if he knows that far from gaining anything by it, he must lose much even of what he has already acquired, will he not cheerfully act to his own disadvantage? That man is ungrateful who, in returning a kindness, looks forward to a second gift — who hopes while he repays. I call him ungrateful who sits at the bedside of a sick man because he is about to make a will, when he is at leisure to think of inheritances and legacies. Though he may do everything which a good and dutiful friend ought to do, yet, if any hope of gain be floating in his mind, he is a mere legacy-hunter, and is angling for an inheritance. Like the birds which feed upon carcases, which come close to animals weakened by disease, and watch till they fall, so these men are attracted by death and hover around a corpse.

XXI.

A grateful mind is attracted only by a sense of the beauty of its purpose. Do you wish to know this to be so, and that it is not bribed by ideas of profit? There are two classes of grateful men: a man is called grateful who has made some return for what he received; this man may very possibly display himself in this character, he has something to boast of, to refer to. We also call a man grateful who receives a benefit with goodwill, and owes it to his benefactor with goodwill; yet this man's gratitude lies concealed within his own mind. What profit can accrue to him from this latent feeling? yet this man, even though he is not able to do anything more than this, is grateful; he loves his benefactor, he feels his debt to him, he longs to repay his kindness; whatever else you may find wanting, there is nothing wanting in the man. He is like a workman who has not the tools necessary for the practice of his craft, or like a trained singer whose voice cannot be heard through the noise of those who interrupt him. I wish to repay a kindness: after this there still remains something for me to do, not in order that I may become grateful, but that I may discharge my debt; for, in many cases, he who returns a kindness is ungrateful for it, and he who does not return it is grateful. Like all other virtues, the whole value of gratitude lies in the spirit in which it is done; so, if this man's purpose be loyal, any shortcomings on his part are due not to himself, but to fortune. A man who is silent may, nevertheless, be eloquent; his hands may be folded or even bound, and he may yet be strong; just as a pilot is a pilot even when upon dry land, because his knowledge is complete, and there is nothing wanting to it, though there may be obstacles which prevent his making use of it. In the same way, a man is grateful who only wishes to be so, and who has no one but himself who can bear witness to his frame of mind. I will go even further than this: a man sometimes is grateful when he appears to be ungrateful, when ill-judging report has declared him to be so. Such a man can look to nothing but his own conscience, which can please him even when overwhelmed by calumny, which contradicts the mob and common rumour, relies only upon itself, and though it beholds a vast crowd of

the other way of thinking opposed to it, does not count heads, but wins by its own vote alone. Should it see its own good faith meet with the punishment due to treachery, it will not descend from its pedestal, and will remain superior to its punishment. "I have," it says, "what I wished, what I strove for. I do not regret it, nor shall I do so; nor shall fortune, however unjust she may be, ever hear me say, 'What did I want? What now is the use of having meant well?'" A good conscience is of value on the rack, or in the fire; though fire be applied to each of our limbs, gradually encircle our living bodies, and burst our heart, yet if our heart be filled with a good conscience, it will rejoice in the fire which will make its good faith shine before the world.

XXII.

Now let that question also which has been already stated be again brought forward; Why is it that we should wish to be grateful when we are dying, that we should carefully weigh the various services rendered us by different individuals, and carefully review our whole life, that we may not seem to have forgotten any kindness? Nothing then remains for us to hope for; yet when on the very threshold, we wish to depart from human life as full of gratitude as possible. There is in truth an immense reward for this thing merely in doing it, and what is honourable has great power to attract men's minds, which are overwhelmed by its beauty and carried off their balance, enchanted by its brilliancy and splendour. "Yet," argues our adversary, "from it many advantages take their rise, and good men obtain a safer life and love, and the good opinion of the better class, while their days are spent in greater security when accompanied by innocence and gratitude."

Indeed, nature would have been most unjust had she rendered this great blessing miserable, uncertain, and fruitless. But consider this point, whether you would make your way to that virtue, to which it is generally safe and easy to attain, even though the path lay over rocks and precipices, and were beset with fierce beasts and venomous serpents. A virtue is none the less to be desired for its own sake, because it has some adventitious profit connected with it: indeed, in most cases the noblest virtues are accompanied by many extraneous advantages, but it is the virtues that lead the way, and these merely follow in their train.

XXIII.

Can we doubt that the climate of this abode of the human race is regulated by the motion of the sun and moon in their orbits? that our bodies are sustained, the hard earth loosened, excessive moisture reduced, and the surly bonds of winter broken by the heat of the one, and that crops are brought to ripeness by the effectual all-pervading warmth of the other? that the fertility of the human race corresponds to the courses of the moon? that the sun by its revolution marks out the year, and that the moon, moving in a smaller orbit, marks out the months? Yet, setting aside all this, would not the sun be a sight worthy to be contemplated and worshipped, if he did no more than rise and set? would not the moon be worth looking at, even if it passed uselessly through the heavens? Whose attention is not arrested by the universe itself, when by night it pours forth its fires and glitters with innumerable stars? Who, while he admires them, thinks of their being of use to him? Look at that great company gliding over our heads, how they conceal their swift motion under the semblance of a fixed and immovable work. How much takes place in that night which you make use of merely to mark and count your days! What a mass of events is being prepared in that silence! What a chain of destiny their unerring path is forming! Those which you imagine to be merely strewn about for ornament are really one and all at work. Nor is there any ground for your belief that only seven stars revolve, and that the rest remain still: we understand the orbits of a few, but countless divinities, further removed from our sight, come and go; while the greater part of those whom our sight reaches move in a mysterious manner and by an unknown path.

XXIV.

What then? would you not be captivated by the sight of such a stupendous work, even though it did not cover you, protect you, cherish you, bring you into existence and penetrate you with its spirit? Though these heavenly bodies are of the very first importance to us, and are, indeed, essential to our life, yet we can think of nothing but their glorious majesty, and similarly all virtue, especially that of gratitude, though it confers great advantages upon us, does not wish to be loved for that reason; it has something more in it than this, and he who merely reckons it among useful things does not perfectly comprehend it. A man, you say, is grateful because it is to his advantage to be so. If this be the case, then his advantage will be the measure of his gratitude. Virtue will not admit a covetous lover; men must approach her with open purse. The ungrateful man thinks, "I did wish to be grateful, but I fear the expense and danger and insults to which I should expose myself: I will rather consult my own interest." Men cannot be rendered grateful and ungrateful by the same line of reasoning: their actions are as distinct as their purposes. The one is ungrateful, although it is wrong, because it is his interest; the other is grateful, although it is not his interest, because it is right.

XXV.

It is our aim to live in harmony with the scheme of the universe, and to follow the example of the gods. Yet in all their acts the gods have no object in view other than the act itself, unless you suppose that they obtain a reward for their work in the smoke of burnt sacrifices and the scent of incense. See what great things they do every day, how much they divide amongst us, with how great crops they fill the earth, how they move the seas with convenient winds to carry us to all shores, how by the fall of sudden showers they soften the ground, renew the dried-up springs of fountains, and call them into new life by unseen supplies of water. All this they do without reward, without any advantage accruing to themselves. Let our line of conduct, if it would not depart from its model, preserve this direction, and let us not act honourably because we are hired to do so. We ought to feel ashamed that any benefit should have a price: we pay nothing for the gods.

XXVI.

“If,” our adversary may say, “you wish to imitate the gods, then bestow benefits upon the ungrateful as well as the grateful; for the sun rises upon the wicked as well as the good, the seas are open even to pirates.” By this question he really asks whether a good man would bestow a benefit upon an ungrateful person, knowing him to be ungrateful. Allow me here to introduce a short explanation, that we may not be taken in by a deceitful question. Understand that according to the system of the Stoics there are two classes of ungrateful persons. One man is ungrateful because he is a fool; a fool is a bad man; a man who is bad possesses every vice: therefore he is ungrateful. In the same way we speak of all bad men as dissolute, avaricious, luxurious, and spiteful, not because each man has all these vices in any great or remarkable degree, but because he might have them; they are in him, even though they be not seen. The second form of ungrateful person is he who is commonly meant by the term, one who is inclined by nature to this vice. In the case of him who has the vice of ingratitude just as he has every other, a wise man will bestow a benefit, because if he sets aside all such men there will be no one left for him to bestow it on. As for the ungrateful man who habitually misapplies benefits and acts so by choice, he will no more bestow a benefit upon him than he would lend money to a spendthrift, or place a deposit in the hands of one who had already often refused to many persons to give up the property with which they had entrusted him.

XXVII.

We call some men timid because they are fools: in this they are like the bad men who are steeped in all vices without distinction. Strictly speaking, we call those persons timid who are alarmed even at unmeaning noises. A fool possesses all vices, but he is not equally inclined by nature to all; one is prone to avarice, another to luxury, and another to insolence. Those persons, therefore, are mistaken, who ask the Stoics, "What do you say, then? is Achilles timid? Aristides, who received a name for justice, is he unjust? Fabius, who 'by delays retrieved the day,' is he rash? Does Decius fear death? Is Mucius a traitor? Camillus a betrayer?" We do not mean that all vices are inherent in all men in the same way in which some especial ones are noticeable in certain men, but we declare that the bad man and the fool possess all vices; we do not even acquit them of fear when they are rash, or of avarice when they are extravagant. Just as a man has all his senses, yet all men have not on that account as keen a sight as Lynceus, so a man that is a fool has not all vices in so active and vigorous a form as some persons have spine of them, yet he has them all. All vices exist in all of them, yet all are not prominent in each individual. One man is naturally prone to avarice, another is the slave of wine, a third of lust; or, if not yet enslaved by these passions, he is so fashioned by nature that this is the direction in which his character would probably lead him. Therefore, to return to my original proposition, every bad man is ungrateful, because he has the seeds of every villainy in him; but he alone is rightly so called who is naturally inclined to this vice. Upon such a person as this, therefore, I shall not bestow a benefit. One who betrothed his daughter to an ill-tempered man from whom many women had sought a divorce, would be held to have neglected her interests; a man would be thought a bad father if he entrusted the care of his patrimony to one who had lost his own family estate, and it would be the act of a madman to make a will naming as the guardian of one's son a man who had already defrauded other wards. So will that man be said to bestow benefits as badly as possible, who chooses ungrateful persons, in whose hands they will perish.

XXVIII.

“The gods,” it may be said, “bestow much, even upon the ungrateful.” But what they bestow they had prepared for the good, and the bad have their share as well, because they cannot be separated. It is better to benefit the bad as well, for the sake of benefiting the good, than to stint the good for fear of benefiting the bad. Therefore the gods have created all that you speak of, the day, the sun, the alternations of winter and summer, the transitions through spring and autumn from one extreme to the other, showers, drinking fountains, and regularly blowing winds for the use of all alike; they could not except individuals from the enjoyment of them. A king bestows honours upon those who deserve them, but he gives largesse to the undeserving as well. The thief, the bearer of false witness, and the adulterer, alike receive the public grant of corn, and all are placed on the register without any examination as to character; good and bad men share alike in all the other privileges which a man receives, because he is a citizen, not because he is a good man. God likewise has bestowed certain gifts upon the entire human race, from which no one is shut out. Indeed, it could not be arranged that the wind which was fair for good men should be foul for bad ones, while it is for the good of all men that the seas should be open for traffic and the kingdom of mankind be enlarged; nor could any law be appointed for the showers, so that they should not fall upon the fields of wicked and evil men. Some things are given to all alike: cities are founded for good and bad men alike; works of genius reach, by publication, even unworthy men; medicine points out the means of health even to the wicked; no one has checked the making up of wholesome remedies for fear that the undeserving should be healed. You must seek for examination and preference of individuals in such things as are bestowed separately upon those who are thought to deserve them; not in these, which admit the mob to share them without distinction. There is a great difference between not shutting a man out and choosing him. Even a thief receives justice; even murderers enjoy the blessings of peace; even those who have plundered others can recover their own property; assassins and

private bravoos are defended against the common enemy by the city wall; the laws protect even those who have sinned most deeply against them. There are some things which no man could obtain unless they were given to all; you need not, therefore, cavil about those matters in which all mankind is invited to share. As for things which men receive or not at my discretion, I shall not bestow them upon one whom I know to be ungrateful.

XXIX.

“Shall we, then,” argues he, “not give our advice to an ungrateful man when he is at a loss, or refuse him a drink of water when he is thirsty, or not show him the path when he has lost his way? or would you do him these services and yet not give him anything?” Here I will draw a distinction, or at any rate endeavour to do so. A benefit is a useful service, yet all useful service is not a benefit; for some are so trifling as not to claim the title of benefits. To produce a benefit two conditions must concur. First, the importance of the thing given; for some things fall short of the dignity of a benefit. Who ever called a hunch of bread a benefit, or a farthing dole tossed to a beggar, or the means of lighting a fire? yet sometimes these are of more value than the most costly benefits; still their cheapness detracts from their value even when, by the exigency of time, they are rendered essential. The next condition, which is the most important of all, must necessarily be present, namely, that I should confer the benefit for the sake of him whom I wish to receive it, that I should judge him worthy of it, bestow it of my own free will, and receive pleasure from my own gift, none of which conditions are present in the cases of which we have just now spoken; for we do not bestow such things as those upon these who are worthy of them, but we give them carelessly, as trifles, and do not give them so much to a man as to humanity.

XXX.

I shall not deny that sometimes I would give even to the unworthy, out of respect for others; as, for instance, in competition for public offices, some of the basest of men are preferred on account of their noble birth, to industrious men of no family, and that for good reasons; for the memory of great virtues is sacred, and more men will take pleasure in being good, if the respect felt for good men does not cease with their lives. What made Cicero's son a consul, except his father? What lately brought Cinna [Footnote: See Seneca on "Clemency," book i., ch. ix.] out of the camp of the enemy and raised him to the consulate? What made Sextus Pompeius and the other Pompeii consuls, unless it was the greatness of one man, who once was raised so high that, by his very fall, he sufficiently exalted all his relatives. What lately made Fabius Persicus a member of more than one college of priests, though even profligates avoided his kiss? Was it not Verrucosus, and Allobrogicus, and the three hundred who to serve their country blocked the invader's path with the force of a single family? It is our duty to respect the virtuous, not only when present with us, but also when removed from our sight: as they have made it their study not to bestow their benefits upon one age alone, but to leave them existing after they themselves have passed away, so let us not confine our gratitude to a single age. If a man has begotten great men, he deserves to receive benefits, whatever he himself may be: he has given us worthy men. If a man descends from glorious ancestors, whatever he himself may be, let him find refuge under the shadow of his ancestry. As mean places are lighted up by the rays of the sun, so let the degenerate shine in the light of their forefathers.

XXXI.

In this place, my Liberalis, I wish to speak in defence of the gods. We sometimes say, "What could Providence mean by placing an Arrhidaeus upon the throne?" Do you suppose that the crown was given to Arrhidaeus? nay, it was given to his father and his brother. Why did Heaven bestow the empire of the world upon Caius Caesar, the most bloodthirsty of mankind, who was wont to order blood to be shed in his presence as freely as if he wished to drink of it? Why, do you suppose that it was given to him? It was given to his father, Germanicus, to his grandfather, his great grandfather, and to others before them, no less illustrious men, though they lived as private citizens on a footing of equality with others. Why, when you yourself were making Mamercus Scaurus consul, were you ignorant of his vices? did he himself conceal them? did he wish to appear decent?

Did you admit a man who was so openly filthy to the fasces and the tribunal? Yes, it was because you were thinking of the great old Scaurus, the chief of the Senate, and were unwilling that his descendant should be despised.

XXXII.

It is probable that the gods act in the same manner, that they show greater indulgence to some for the sake of their parents and their ancestry, and to others for the sake of their children and grandchildren, and a long line of descendants beyond them; for they know the whole course of their works, and have constant access to the knowledge of all that shall hereafter pass through their hands. These things come upon us from the unknown future, and the gods have foreseen and are familiar with the events by which we are startled. "Let these men," says Providence, "be kings, because their ancestors were good kings, because they regarded righteousness and temperance as the highest rule of life, because they did not devote the state to themselves, but devoted themselves to the state. Let these others reign, because some one of their ancestors before them was a good man, who bore a soul superior to fortune, who preferred to be conquered rather than to conquer in civil strife, because it was more to the advantage of the state. [Footnote: Gertz, "Stud. Crit," , note.] It was not possible to make a sufficient return to him for this during so long a time; let this other, therefore, out of regard for him, be chief of the people, not because he knows how, or is capable, but because the other has earned it for him. This man is misshapen, loathsome to look upon, and will disgrace the insignia of his office. Men will presently blame me, calling me blind and reckless, not knowing upon whom I am conferring what ought to be given to the greatest and noblest of men; but I know that, in giving this dignity to one man, I am paying an old debt to another. How should the men of to-day know that ancient hero, who so resolutely avoided the glory which pressed upon him, who went into danger with the same look which other men wear when they have escaped from danger, who never regarded his own interest as apart from that of the commonwealth?" "Where," you ask, "or who is he? whence does he come?" "You know him not; it lies with me to balance the debit and credit account in such cases as these; I know how much I owe to each man; I repay some after a long interval, others beforehand, according as my opportunities and the exigencies of my social system permit." I shall,

therefore, sometimes bestow somewhat upon an ungrateful man,
though not for his own sake.

XXXIII.

“What,” argues he, “if you do not know whether your man be ungrateful or grateful — will you wait until you know, or will you not lose the opportunity of bestowing a benefit? To wait is a long business — for, as Plato says, it is hard to form an opinion about the human mind, — not to wait, is rash.” To this objector we shall answer, that we never should wait for absolute knowledge of the whole case, since the discovery of truth is an arduous task, but should proceed in the direction in which truth appeared to direct us. All our actions proceed in this direction: it is thus that we sow seed, that we sail upon the sea, that we serve in the army, marry, and bring up children. The result of all these actions is uncertain, so we take that course from which we believe that good results may be hoped for. Who can guarantee a harvest to the sower, a harbour to the sailor, victory to the soldier, a modest wife to the husband, dutiful children to the father? We proceed in the way in which reason, not absolute truth, directs us. Wait, do nothing that will not turn out well, form no opinion until you have searched but the truth, and your life will pass in absolute in action. Since it is only the appearance of truth, not truth itself, which leads me hither or thither, I shall confer benefits upon the man who apparently will be grateful.

XXXIV.

“Many circumstances,” argues he, “may arise which may enable a bad man to steal into the place of a good one, or may cause a good man to be disliked as though he were a bad one; for appearances, to which we trust, are deceptive.” Who denies it? Yet I can find nothing else by which to guide my opinion. I must follow these tracks in my search after truth, for I have none more trustworthy than these; I will take pains to weigh the value of these with all possible care, and will not hastily give my assent to them. For instance, in a battle, it may happen that my hand may be deceived by some mistake into turning my weapon against my comrade, and sparing my enemy as though he were on my side; but this will not often take place, and will not take place through any fault of mine, for my object is to strike the enemy, and defend my countryman. If I know a man to be ungrateful, I shall not bestow a benefit upon him. But the man has passed himself off as a good man by some trick, and has imposed upon me. Well, this is not at all the fault of the giver, who gave under the impression that his friend was grateful. “Suppose,” asks he, “that you were to promise to bestow a benefit, and afterwards were to learn that your man was ungrateful, would you bestow it or not? If you do, you do wrong knowingly, for you give to one to whom you ought not; if you refuse, you do wrong likewise, for you do not give to him to whom you promised to give. This case upsets your consistency, and that proud assurance of yours that the wise man never regrets his actions, or amends what he has done, or alters his plans.” The wise man never changes his plans while the conditions under which he formed them remain the same; therefore, he never feels regret, because at the time nothing better than what he did could have been done, nor could any better decision have been arrived at than that which was made; yet he begins everything with the saving clause, “If nothing shall occur to the contrary.” This is the reason why we say that all goes well with him, and that nothing happens contrary to his expectation, because he bears in mind the possibility of something happening to prevent the realization of his projects. It is an imprudent confidence to trust that fortune will be on our side. The wise man considers both sides: he

knows how great is the power of errors, how uncertain human affairs are, how many obstacles there are to the success of plans. Without committing himself, he awaits the doubtful and capricious issue of events, and weighs certainty of purpose against uncertainty of result. Here also, however, he is protected by that saving clause, without which he decides upon nothing, and begins nothing.

XXXV.

When I promise to bestow a benefit, I promise it, unless something occurs which makes it my duty not to do so. What if, for example, my country orders me to give to her what I had promised to my friend? or if a law be passed forbidding any one to do what I had promised to do for him? Suppose that I have promised you my daughter in marriage, that then you turn out to be a foreigner, and that I have no right of intermarriage with foreigners; in this case, the law, by which I am forbidden to fulfil my promise, forms my defence. I shall be treacherous, and hear myself blamed for inconsistency, only if I do not fulfil, my promise when all conditions remain the same as when I made it; otherwise, any change makes me free to reconsider the entire case, and absolves me from my promise. I may have promised to plead a cause; afterwards it appears that this cause is designed to form a precedent for an attack upon my father. I may have promised to leave my country, and travel abroad; then news comes that the road is beset with robbers. I was going to an appointment at some particular place; but my son's illness, or my wife's confinement, prevented me. All conditions must be the same as they were when I made the promise, if you mean to hold me bound in honour to fulfil it. Now what greater change can take place than that I should discover you to be a bad and ungrateful man? I shall refuse to an unworthy man that which I had intended to give him supposing him to be worthy, and I shall also have reason to be angry with him for the trick which he has put upon me.

XXXVI.

I shall nevertheless look into the matter, and consider what the value of the thing promised may be. If it be trifling, I shall give it, not because you are worthy of it, but because I promised it, and I shall not give it as a present, but merely in order to make good my words and give myself a twitch of the ear. I will punish my own rashness in promising by the loss of what I gave. "See how grieved you are; mind you take more care what you say in future." As the saying is, I will take tongue money from you. If the matter be important, I will not, as Maecenas said, let ten million sesterces reproach me. I will weigh the two sides of the question one against the other: there is something in abiding by what you have promised; on the other hand, there is a great deal in not bestowing a benefit upon one who is unworthy of it. Now, how great is this benefit? If it is a trifling one, let us wink and let it pass; but if it will cause me much loss or much shame to give it, I had rather excuse myself once for refusing it than have to do so ever after for giving it. The whole point, I repeat, depends upon how much the thing given is worth: let the terms of my promise be appraised. Not only shall I refuse to give what I may have promised rashly, but I shall also demand back again what I may have wrongly bestowed: a man must be mad who keeps a promise made under a mistake.

XXXVII.

Philip, king of the Macedonians, had a hardy soldier whose services he had found useful in many campaigns. From time to time he made this man presents of part of the plunder as the reward of his valour, and used to excite his greedy spirit by his frequent gifts. This man was cast by shipwreck upon the estate of a certain Macedonian, who as soon as he heard the news hastened to him, restored his breath, removed him to his own farmhouse, gave up his own bed to him, nursed him out of his weakened and half-dead condition, took care of him at his own expense for thirty days, restored him to health and gave him a sum of money for his journey, as the man kept constantly saying, "If only I can see my chief, I will repay your kindness." He told Philip of his shipwreck, said nothing about the help which he had received, and at once demanded that a certain man's estate should be given to him. The man was a friend of his: it was that very man by whom he had been rescued and restored to health. Sometimes, especially in time of war, kings bestow many gifts with their eyes shut. One just man cannot deal with such a mass of armed selfishness. It is not possible for any one to be at the same time a good man and a good general. How are so many thousands of insatiable men to be satiated? What would they have, if every man had his own? Thus Philip reasoned with himself while he ordered the man to be put in possession of the property which he asked for. However, the other, when driven out of his estate, did not, like a peasant, endure his wrongs in silence, thankful that he himself was not given away also, but sent a sharp and outspoken letter to Philip, who, on reading it, was so much enraged that he straightway ordered Pausanias to restore the property to its former owner, and to brand that wickedest of soldiers, that most ungrateful of guests, that greediest of shipwrecked men, with letters bearing witness to his ingratitude. He, indeed, deserved to have the letters not merely branded but carved in his flesh, for having reduced his host to the condition in which he himself had been when he lay naked and shipwrecked upon the beach; still, let us see within what limits one ought to keep in punishing him. Of course what he had so

villainously seized ought to be taken from him. But who would be affected by the spectacle of his punishment? The crime which he had committed would prevent his being pitied even by any humane person.

XXXVIII.

Will Philip then give you a thing because he has promised to give it, even though he ought not to do so, even though he will commit a wrong by doing so, nay, a crime, even though by this one act he will make it impossible for shipwrecked men to reach the shore? There is no inconsistency in giving up an intention which we have discovered to be wrong and have condemned as wrong; we ought candidly to admit, "I thought that it was something different; I have been deceived." It is mere pride and folly to persist, "what I once have said, be it what it may, shall remain unaltered and settled." There is no disgrace in altering one's plans according to circumstances. Now, if Philip had left this man in possession of that seashore which he obtained by his shipwreck, would he not have practically pronounced sentence of banishment against all unfortunates for the future? "Rather," says Philip, "do thou carry upon thy forehead of brass those letters, that they may be impressed upon the eyes of all throughout my kingdom. Go, let men see how sacred a thing is the table of hospitality; show them your face, that upon it they may read the decree which prevents its being a capital crime to give refuge to the unfortunate under one's roof. The order will be more certainly respected by this means than if I had inscribed it upon tablets of brass."

XXXIX.

“Why then,” argues our adversary, “did your Stoic philosopher Zeno, when he had promised a loan of five hundred denarii to some person, whom he afterwards discovered to be of doubtful character, persist in lending it, because of his promise, though his friends dissuaded him from doing so?” In the first place a loan is on a different footing to a benefit. Even when we have lent money to an undesirable person we can recall it; I can demand payment upon a certain day, and if he becomes bankrupt, I can obtain my share of his property; but a benefit is lost utterly and instantly. Besides, the one is the act of a bad man, the other that of a bad father of a family. In the next place, if the sum had been a larger one, not even Zeno would have persisted in lending it. It was five hundred denarii; the sort of sum of which one says, “May he spend it in sickness,” and it was worth paying so much to avoid breaking his promise. I shall go out to supper, even though the weather be cold, because I have promised to go; but I shall not if snow be falling. I shall leave my bed to go to a betrothal feast, although I may be suffering from indigestion; but I shall not do so if I am feverish. I will become bail for you, because I promised; but not if you wish me to become bail in some transaction of uncertain issue, if you expose me to forfeiting my money to the state. There runs through all these cases, I argue, an implied exception; if I am able, provided it is right for me to do so, if these things be so and so. Make the position the same when you ask me to fulfil my promise, as it was when I gave it, and it will be mere fickleness to disappoint you; but if something new has taken place in the meanwhile, why should you wonder at my intentions being changed when the conditions under which I gave the promise are changed? Put everything back as it was, and I shall be the same as I was. We enter into recognizances to appear, yet if we fail to do so an action will not in all cases lie against us, for we are excused for making default if forced to do so by a power which we cannot resist.

XL.

You may take the same answer to the question as to whether we ought in all cases to show gratitude for kindness, and whether a benefit ought in all cases to be repaid. It is my duty to show a grateful mind, but in some cases my own poverty, in others the prosperity of the friend to whom I owe some return, will not permit me to give it. What, for instance, am I, a poor man, to give to a king or a rich man in return for his kindness, especially as some men regard it as a wrong to have their benefits repaid, and are wont to pile one benefit upon another? In dealing with such persons, what more can I do than wish to repay them? Yet I ought not to refuse to receive a new benefit, because I have not repaid the former one. I shall take it as freely as it is given, and will offer myself to my friend as a wide field for the exercise of his good nature: he who is unwilling to receive new benefits must be dissatisfied with what he has already received. Do you say, "I shall not be able to return them?" What is that to the purpose? I am willing enough to do so if opportunity or means were given me. He gave it to me, of course, having both opportunity and means: is he a good man or a bad one? if he is a good man, I have a good case against him, and I will not plead if he be a bad one. Neither do I think it right to insist on making repayment, even though it be against the will of those whom we repay, and to press it upon them however reluctant they may be; it is not repayment to force an unwilling man to resume what you were once willing to take. Some people, if any trifling present be sent to them, afterwards send back something else for no particular reason, and then declare that they are under no obligation; to send something back at once, and balance one present by another, is the next thing to refusing to receive it. On some occasions I shall not return a benefit, even though I be able to do so. When? When by so doing I shall myself lose more than he will gain, or if he would not notice any advantage to himself in receiving that which it would be a great loss to me to return. The man who is always eager to repay under all circumstances, has not the feeling of a grateful man, but of a debtor; and, to put it shortly, he who is too eager to repay, is unwilling to be

in his friend's debt; he who is unwilling, and yet is in his friend's debt, is ungrateful.

BOOK V.

I.

In the preceding books I seem to have accomplished the object which I proposed to myself, since in them I have discussed how a benefit ought to be bestowed, and how it ought to be received. These are the limits of this action; when I dwell upon it further I am not obeying the orders, but the caprices of my subject which ought to be followed whither it leads, not whither it allures us to wander; for now and then something will arise, which, although it is all but unconnected with the subject, instead of being a necessary part of it, still thrills the mind with a certain charm. However, since you wish it to be so, let us go on, after having completed our discussion of the heads of the subject itself, to investigate those matters which, if you wish for truth, I must call adjacent to it, not actually connected with it; to examine which carefully is not one worth one's while, and yet is not labour in vain. No praise, however, which I can give to benefits does justice to you, Aebutius Liberalis, a man of excellent disposition and naturally inclined to bestow them. Never have I seen any one esteem even the most trifling services more kindly; indeed, your good-nature goes so far as to regard whatever benefit is bestowed upon anyone as bestowed upon yourself; you are prepared to pay even what is owed by the ungrateful, that no one may regret having bestowed benefits. You yourself are so far from any boastfulness, you are so eager at once to free those whom you serve from any feeling of obligation to you, that you like, when giving anything to any one, to seem not so much to be giving a present as returning one; and therefore what you give in this manner will all the more fully be repaid to you: for, as a rule, benefits come to one who does not demand repayment of them; and just as glory follows those who avoid it, so men receive a more plentiful harvest in return for benefits bestowed upon those who had it in their power to be ungrateful. With you there is no reason why those who have received benefits from you should not ask for fresh ones; nor would you refuse to bestow others, to overlook and conceal what you have given, and to add to it more and greater gifts, since it is the aim of all the best men and the noblest dispositions to bear with an ungrateful man until you make him grateful. Be not deceived

in pursuing this plan; vice, if you do not too soon begin to hate it, will yield to virtue.

II.

Thus it is that you are especially pleased with what you think the grandly-sounding phrase, "It is disgraceful to be worsted in a contest of benefits." Whether this be true or not deserves to be investigated, and it means something quite different from what you imagine; for it is never disgraceful to be worsted in any honourable contest, provided that you do not throw down your arms, and that even when conquered you wish to conquer. All men do not strive for a good object with the same strength, resources, and good fortune, upon which depend at all events the issues of the most admirable projects, though we ought to praise the will itself which makes an effort in the right direction. Even though another passes it by with swifter pace, yet the palm of victory does not, as in publicly-exhibited races, declare which is the better man; though even in the games chance frequently brings an inferior man to the front. As far as loyalty of feeling goes, which each man wishes to be possessed in the fullest measure on his own side, if one of the two be the more powerful, if he have at his disposal all the resources which he wishes to use, and be favoured by fortune in his most ambitious efforts, while the other, although equally willing, can only return less than he receives, or perhaps can make no return at all, but still wishes to do so and is entirely devoted to this object; then the latter is no more conquered than he who dies in arms, whom the enemy found it easier to slay than to turn back. To be conquered, which you consider disgraceful, cannot happen to a good man; for he will never surrender, never give up the contest, to the last day of his life he will stand prepared and in that posture he will die, testifying that though he has received much, yet that he had the will to repay as much as he had received.

III.

The Lacedaemonians forbid their young men to contend in the pancratium, or with the caestus, in which games the defeated party has to acknowledge himself beaten. The winner of a race is he who first reaches the goal; he outstrips the others in swiftness, but not in courage. The wrestler who has been thrown three times loses the palm of victory, but does not yield it up. Since the Lacedaemonians thought it of great importance that their countrymen should be invincible, they kept them away from those contests in which victory is assigned, not by the judge, or by the issue of the contest itself, but by the voice of the vanquished begging the victor to spare him as he falls. This attribute of never being conquered, which they so jealously guard among their citizens, can be attained by all men through virtue and goodwill, because even when all else is vanquished, the mind remains unconquered. For this cause no one speaks of the three hundred Fabii as conquered, but slaughtered. Regulus was taken captive by the Carthaginians, not conquered; and so were all other men who have not yielded in spirit when overwhelmed by the strength and weight of angry fortune.

So is it with benefits. A man may have received more than he gave, more valuable ones, more frequently bestowed; yet is he not vanquished. It may be that, if you compare the benefits with one another, those which he has received will outweigh those which he has bestowed; but if you compare the giver and the receiver, whose intentions also ought to be considered apart, neither will prove the victor. It often happens that even when one combatant is pierced with many wounds, while the other is only slightly injured, yet they are said to have fought a drawn battle, although the former may appear to be the worse man.

IV.

No one, therefore, can be conquered in a contest of benefits, if he knows how to owe a debt, if he wishes to make a return for what he has received, and raises himself to the same level with his friend in spirit, though he cannot do so in material gifts. As long as he remains in this temper of mind, as long as he has the wish to declare by proofs that he has a grateful mind, what difference does it make upon which side we can count the greater number of presents? You are able to give much; I can do nothing but receive. Fortune abides with you, goodwill alone with me; yet I am as much on an equality with you as naked or lightly armed men are with a large body armed to the teeth. No one, therefore, is worsted by benefits, because each man's gratitude is to be measured by his will. If it be disgraceful to be worsted in a contest of benefits, you ought not to receive a benefit from very powerful men whose kindness you cannot return, I mean such as princes and kings, whom fortune has placed in such a station that they can give away much, and can only receive very little and quite inadequate returns for what they give. I have spoken of kings and princes, who alone can cause works to be accomplished, and whose superlative power depends upon the obedience and services of inferiors; but some there are, free from all earthly lusts, who are scarcely affected by any human objects of desire, upon whom fortune herself could bestow nothing. I must be worsted in a contest of benefits with Socrates, or with Diogenes, who walked naked through the treasures of Macedonia, treading the king's wealth under his feet. In good sooth, he must then rightly have seemed, both to himself and to all others whose eyes were keen enough to perceive the real truth, to be superior even to him at whose feet all the world lay. He was far more powerful, far richer even than Alexander, who then possessed everything; for there was more that Diogenes could refuse to receive than that Alexander was able to give.

V.

It is not disgraceful to be worsted by these men, for I am not the less brave because you pit me against an invulnerable enemy, nor does fire not burn because you throw into it something over which flames have no power, nor does iron lose its power of cutting, though you may wish to cut up a stone which is hard, impervious to blows, and of such a nature that hard tools are blunted upon it. I give you the same answer about gratitude. A man is not disgracefully worsted in a contest of benefits if he lays himself under an obligation to such persons as these, whose enormous wealth or admirable virtue shut out all possibility of their benefits being returned. As a rule we are worsted by our parents; for while we have them with us, we regard them as severe, and do not understand what they do for us. When our age begins to bring us a little sense, and we gradually perceive that they deserve our love for those very things which used to prevent our loving them, their advice, their punishments, and the careful watch which they used to keep over our youthful recklessness, they are taken from us. Few live to reap any real fruit from children; most men feel their sons only as a burden. Yet there is no disgrace in being worsted by one's parent in bestowing benefits; how should there be, seeing that there is no disgrace in being worsted by anyone. We are equal to some men, and yet not equal; equal in intention, which is all that they care for, which is all that we promise to be, but unequal in fortune. And if fortune prevents any one from repaying a kindness, he need not, therefore, blush, as though he were vanquished; there is no disgrace in failing to reach your object, provided you attempt to reach it. It often is necessary, that before making any return for the benefits which we have received, we should ask for new ones; yet, if so, we shall not refrain from asking for them, nor shall we do so as though disgraced by so doing, because, even if we do not repay the debt, we shall owe it; because, even if something from without befalls us to prevent our repaying it, it will not be our fault if we are not grateful. We can neither be conquered in intention, nor can we be disgraced by yielding to what is beyond our strength to contend with.

VI.

Alexander, the king of the Macedonians, used to boast that he had never been worsted by anybody in a contest of benefits. If so, it was no reason why, in the fulness of his pride, he should despise the Macedonians, Greeks, Carians, Persians, and other tribes of whom his army was composed, nor need he imagine that it was this that gave him an empire reaching from a corner of Thrace to the shore of the unknown sea. Socrates could make the same boast, and so could Diogenes, by whom Alexander was certainly surpassed; for was he not surpassed on the day when, swelling as he was beyond the limits of merely human pride, he beheld one to whom he could give nothing, from whom he could take nothing? King Archelaus invited Socrates to come to him. Socrates is reported to have answered that he should be sorry to go to one who would bestow benefits upon him, since he should not be able to make him an adequate return for them. In the first place, Socrates was at liberty not to receive them; next, Socrates himself would have been the first to bestow a benefit, for he would have come when invited, and would have given to Archelaus that for which Archelaus could have made no return to Socrates. Even if Archelaus were to give Socrates gold and silver, if he learned in return for them to despise gold and silver, would not Socrates be able to repay Archelaus? Could Socrates receive from him as much value as he gave, in displaying to him a man skilled in the knowledge of life and of death, comprehending the true purpose of each? Suppose that he had found this king, as it were, groping his way in the clear sunlight, and had taught him the secrets of nature, of which he was so ignorant, that when there was an eclipse of the sun, he up his palace, and shaved his son's head, [Footnote: Gertz very reasonably conjectures that he shaved his own head which reading would require a very trifling alteration of the text.] which men are wont to do in times of mourning and distress. What a benefit it would have been if he had dragged the terror-stricken king out of his hiding-place, and bidden him be of good cheer, saying, "This is not a disappearance of the sun, but a conjunction of two heavenly bodies; for the moon, which proceeds along a lower path, has placed her disk

beneath the sun, and hidden it by the interposition of her own mass. Sometimes she only hides a small portion of the sun's disk, because she only grazes it in passing; sometimes she hides more, by placing more of herself before it; and sometimes she shuts it out from our sight altogether, if she passes in an exactly even course between the sun and the earth. Soon, however, their own swift motion will draw these two bodies apart; soon the earth will receive back again the light of day. And this system will continue throughout centuries, having certain days, known beforehand, upon which the sun cannot display all rays, because of the intervention of the moon. Wait only for a short time; he will soon emerge, he will soon leave that seeming cloud, and freely shed abroad his light without any hindrances." Could Socrates not have made an adequate return to Archelaus, if he had taught him to reign? as though Socrates would not benefit him sufficiently, merely by enabling him to bestow a benefit upon Socrates. Why, then, did Socrates say this? Being a joker and a speaker in parables — a man who turned all, especially the great, into ridicule — he preferred giving him a satirical refusal, rather than an obstinate or haughty one, and therefore said that he did not wish to receive benefits from one to whom he could not return as much as he received. He feared, perhaps, that he might be forced to receive something which he did not wish, he feared that it might be something unfit for Socrates to receive. Some one may say, "He ought to have said that he did not wish to go." But by so doing he would have excited against himself the anger of an arrogant king, who wished everything connected with himself to be highly valued. It makes no difference to a king whether you be unwilling to give anything to him or to accept anything from him; he is equally incensed at either rebuff, and to be treated with disdain is more bitter to a proud spirit than not to be feared. Do you wish to know what Socrates really meant? He, whose freedom of speech could not be borne even by a free state, was not willing of his own choice to become a slave.

VII.

I think that we have sufficiently discussed this part of the subject, whether it be disgraceful to be worsted in a contest of benefits. Whoever asks this question must know that men are not wont to bestow benefits upon themselves, for evidently it could not be disgraceful to be worsted by oneself. Yet some of the Stoics debate this question, whether any one can confer a benefit upon himself, and whether one ought to return one's own kindness to oneself. This discussion has been raised in consequence of our habit of saying, "I am thankful to myself," "I can complain of no one but myself," "I am angry with myself," "I will punish myself," "I hate myself," and many other phrases of the same sort, in which one speaks of oneself as one would of some other person. "If," they argue, "I can injure myself, why should I not be able also to bestow a benefit upon myself? Besides this, why are those things not called benefits when I bestow them upon myself which would be called benefits if I bestowed them upon another? If to receive a certain thing from another would lay me under an obligation to him, how is it that if I give it to myself, I do not contract an obligation to myself? why should I be ungrateful to my own self, which is no less disgraceful than it is to be mean to oneself, or hard and cruel to oneself, or neglectful of oneself?" The procurer is equally odious whether he prostitutes others or himself. We blame a flatterer, and one who imitates another man's mode of speech, or is prepared to give praise whether it be deserved or not; we ought equally to blame one who humours himself and looks up to himself, and so to speak is his own flatterer. Vices are not only hateful when outwardly practised, but also when they are repressed within the mind. Whom would you admire more than he who governs himself and has himself under command? It is easier to rule savage nations, impatient of foreign control, than to restrain one's own mind and keep it under one's own control. Plato, it is argued, was grateful to Socrates for having been taught by him; why should not Socrates be grateful to himself for having taught himself? Marcus Cato said, "Borrow from yourself whatever you lack;" why, then, if I can lend myself anything, should

I be unable to give myself anything? The instances in which usage divides us into two persons are innumerable; we are wont to say, "Let me converse with myself," and, "I will give myself a twitch of the ear;" [Footnote: See book iv. ch. xxxvi.] and if it be true that one can do so, then a man ought to be grateful to himself, just as he is angry with himself; as he blames himself, SO he ought to praise himself; since he can impoverish himself, he can also enrich himself. Injuries and benefits are the converse of one another: if we say of a man, 'he has done himself an injury,' we can also say 'he has bestowed upon himself a benefit?'

VIII.

It is natural that a man should first incur an obligation, and then that he should return gratitude for it; a debtor cannot exist without a creditor, any more than a husband without a wife, or a son without a father; someone must give in order that some one may receive. Just as no one carries himself, although he moves his body and transports it from place to place; as no one, though he may have made a speech in his own defence, is said to have stood by himself, or erects a statue to himself as his own patron; as no sick man, when by his own care he has regained his health, asks himself for a fee; so in no transaction, even when a man does what is useful to himself, need he return thanks to himself, because there is no one to whom he can return them. Though I grant that a man can bestow a benefit upon himself, yet at the same time that he gives it, he also receives it; though I grant that a man may receive a benefit from himself, yet he receives it at the same time that he gives it. The exchange takes place within doors, as they say, and the transfer is made at once, as though the debt were a fictitious one; for he who gives is not a different person to he who receives, but one and the same. The word "to owe" has no meaning except as between two persons; how then can it apply to one man who incurs an obligation, and by the same act frees himself from it? In a disk or a ball there is no top or bottom, no beginning or end, because the relation of the parts is changed when it moves, what was behind coming before, and what went down on one side coming up on the other, so that all the parts, in whatever direction they may move, come back to the same position. Imagine that the same thing takes place in a man; into however many pieces you may divide him, he remains one. If he strikes himself, he has no one to call to account for the insult; if he binds himself and locks himself up, he cannot demand damages; if he bestows a benefit upon himself, he straightway returns it to the giver. It is said that there is no waste in nature, because everything which is taken from nature returns to her again, and nothing can perish, because it cannot fall out of nature, but goes round again to the point from whence it started. You ask, "What connection has this illustration with the subject?" I

will tell you. Imagine yourself to be ungrateful, the benefit bestowed upon you is not lost, he who gave it has it; suppose that you are unwilling to receive it, it still belongs to you before it is returned. You cannot lose anything, because what you take away from yourself, you nevertheless gain yourself. The matter revolves in a circle within yourself; by receiving you give, by giving you receive.

IX.

“It is our duty,” argues our adversary, “to bestow benefits upon ourselves, therefore we ought also to be grateful to ourselves.” The original axiom, upon which the inference depends, is untrue, for no one bestows benefits upon himself, but obeys the dictates of his nature, which disposes him to affection for himself, and which makes him take the greatest pains to avoid hurtful things, and to follow after those things which are profitable to him. Consequently, the man who gives to himself is not generous, nor is he who pardons himself forgiving, nor is he who is touched by his own misfortunes tender-hearted; it is natural to do those things to oneself which when done to others become generosity, clemency, and tenderness of heart. A benefit is a voluntary act, but to do good to oneself is an instinctive one. The more benefits a man bestows, the more beneficent he is, yet who ever was praised for having been of service to himself? or for having rescued himself from brigands? No one bestows a benefit upon himself any more than he bestows hospitality upon himself; no one gives himself anything, any more than he lends himself anything. If each man bestows benefits upon himself, is always bestowing them, and bestows them without any cessation, then it is impossible for him to make any calculation of the number of his benefits; when then can he show his gratitude, seeing that by the very act of doing so he would bestow a benefit? for what distinction can you draw between giving himself a benefit or receiving a benefit for himself, when the whole transaction takes place in the mind of the same man? Suppose that I have freed myself from danger, then I have bestowed a benefit upon myself; suppose I free myself a second time, by so doing do I bestow or repay a benefit? In the next place, even if I grant the primary axiom, that we can bestow benefits upon ourselves, I do not admit that which follows; for even if we can do so, we ought not to do so. Wherefore? Because we receive a return for them at once. It is right for me to receive a benefit, then to lie under an obligation, then to repay it; now here there is no time for remaining under an obligation, because we receive the return without any delay. No one really gives except to another, no one owes except to another,

no one repays except to another. An act which always requires two persons cannot take place within the mind of one.

X.

A benefit means the affording of something useful, and the word **AFFORDING** implies other persons. Would not a man be thought mad if he said that he had sold something to himself, because selling means alienation, and the transferring of a thing and of one's rights in that thing to another person? Yet giving, like selling anything, consists in making it pass away from you, handing over what you yourself once owned into the keeping of some one else.

If this be so, no one ever gave himself a benefit, because no one gives to himself; if not, two opposites coalesce, so that it becomes the same thing to give and to receive. Yet there is a great difference between giving and receiving; how should there not be, seeing that these words are the converse of one another? Still, if any one can give himself a benefit, there can be no difference between giving and receiving. I said a little before that some words apply only to other persons, and are so constituted that their whole meaning lies apart from ourselves; for instance, I am a brother, but a brother of some other man, for no one is his own brother; I am an equal, but equal to somebody else, for who is equal to himself? A thing which is compared to another thing is unintelligible without that other thing; a thing which is joined to something else does not exist apart from it; so that which is given does not exist without the other person, nor can a benefit have any existence without another person. This is clear from the very phrase which describes it, 'to do good,' yet no one does good to himself, any more than he favours himself or is on his own side. I might enlarge further upon this subject and give many examples. Why should benefits not be included among those acts which require two persons to perform them? Many honourable, most admirable and highly virtuous acts cannot take place without a second person. Fidelity is praised and held to be one of the chief blessings known among men, yet was any one ever on that account said to have kept faith with himself?

XI.

I come now to the last part of this subject. The man who returns a kindness ought to expend something, just as he who repays expends money; but the man who returns a kindness to himself expends nothing, just as he who receives a benefit from himself gains nothing. A benefit and gratitude for it must pass to and fro between two persons; their interchange cannot take place within one man. He who returns a kindness does good in his turn to him from whom he has received something; but the man who returns his own kindness, to whom does he do good? To himself? Is there any one who does not regard the returning of a kindness, and the bestowal of a benefit, as distinct acts? 'He who returns a kindness to himself does good to himself.' Was any man ever unwilling to do this, even though he were ungrateful? nay, who ever was ungrateful from any other motive than this? "If," it is argued, "we are right in thanking ourselves, we ought to return our own kindness;" yet we say, "I am thankful to myself for having refused to marry that woman," or "for having refused to join a partnership with that man." When we speak thus, we are really praising ourselves, and make use of the language of those who return thanks to approve our own acts. A benefit is something which, when given, may or may not be returned. Now, he who gives a benefit to himself must needs receive what he gives; therefore, this is not a benefit. A benefit is received at one time, and is returned at another; (but when a man bestows a benefit upon himself, he both receives it and returns it at the same time). In a benefit, too, what we commend and admire is, that a man has for the time being forgotten his own interests, in order that he may do good to another; that he has deprived himself of something, in order to bestow it upon another. Now, he who bestows a benefit upon himself does not do this. The bestowal of a benefit is an act of companionship — it wins some man's friendship, and lays some man under an obligation; but to bestow it upon oneself is no act of companionship — it wins no man's friendship, lays no man under an obligation, raises no man's hopes, or leads him to say, "This man must be courted; he bestowed a benefit upon that person, perhaps he

will bestow one upon me also.” A benefit is a thing which one gives not for one’s own sake, but for the sake of him to whom it is given; but he who bestows a benefit upon himself, does so for his own sake; therefore, it is not a benefit.

XII.

Now I seem to you not to have made good what I said at the beginning of this book. You say that I am far from doing what is worth any one's while; nay, that in real fact I have thrown away all my trouble. Wait, and soon you will be able to say this more truly, for I shall lead you into covert lurking-places, from which when you have escaped, you will have gained nothing except that you will have freed yourself from difficulties with which you need never have hampered yourself. What is the use of laboriously untying knots which you yourself have tied, in order that you might untie them? Yet, just as some knots are tied in fun and for amusement, so that a tyro may find difficulty in untying them, which knots he who tied them can loose without any trouble, because he knows the joinings and the difficulties of them, and these nevertheless afford us some pleasure, because they test the sharpness of our wits, and engross, our attention; so also these questions, which seem subtle and tricky, prevent our intellects becoming careless and lazy, for they ought at one time to have a field given them to level, in order that they may wander about it, and at another to have some dark and rough passage thrown in their way for them to creep through, and make their way with caution. It is said by our opponent that no one is ungrateful; and this is supported by the following arguments: "A benefit is that which does good; but, as you Stoics say, no one can do good to a bad man; therefore, a bad man does not receive a benefit. (If he does not receive it, he need not return it; therefore, no bad man is ungrateful.) Furthermore, a benefit is an honourable and commendable thing. No honourable or commendable thing can find any place with a bad man; therefore, neither can a benefit. If he cannot receive one, he need not repay one; therefore, he does not become ungrateful. Moreover, as you say, a good man does everything rightly; if he does everything rightly, he cannot be ungrateful. A good man returns a benefit, a bad man does not receive one. If this be so, no man, good or bad, can be ungrateful. Therefore, there is no such thing in nature as an ungrateful man: the word is meaningless." We Stoics have only one kind of good, that which is honourable. This cannot come to a

bad man, for he would cease to be bad if virtue entered into him; but as long as he is bad, no one can bestow a benefit upon him, because good and bad are contraries, and cannot exist together. Therefore, no one can do good to such a man, because whatever he receives is corrupted by his vicious way of using it. Just as the stomach, when disordered by disease and secreting bile, changes all the food which it receives, and turns every kind of sustenance into a source of pain, so whatever you entrust to an ill-regulated mind becomes to it a burden, an annoyance, and a source of misery. Thus the most prosperous and the richest men have the most trouble; and the more property they have to perplex them, the less likely they are to find out what they really are. Nothing, therefore, can reach bad men which would do them good; nay, nothing which would not do them harm. They change whatever falls to their lot into their own evil nature; and things which elsewhere would, if given to better men, be both beautiful and profitable, are ruinous to them. They cannot, therefore, bestow benefits, because no one can give what he does not possess, and, therefore, they lack the pleasure of doing good to others.

XIII.

But, though this be so, yet even a bad man can receive some things which resemble benefits, and he will be ungrateful if he does not return them. There are good things belonging to the mind, to the body, and to fortune. A fool or a bad man is debarred from the first — those, that is, of the mind; but he is admitted to a share in the two latter, and, if he does not return them, he is ungrateful. Nor does this follow from our (Stoic) system alone the Peripatetics, also, who widely extend the boundaries of human happiness, declare that trifling benefits reach bad men, and that he who does not return them is ungrateful. We therefore do not agree that things which do not tend to improve the mind should be called benefits, yet do not deny that these things are convenient and desirable. Such things as these a bad man may bestow upon a good man, or may receive from him — such, for example, as money, clothes, public office, or life; and, if he makes no return for these, he will come under the denomination of ungrateful. “But how can you call a man ungrateful for not returning that which you say is not a benefit?” Some things, on account of their similarity, are included under the same designation, although they do not really deserve it. Thus we speak of a silver or golden box; [“The original word is ‘pyx,’ which means a box made of box-wood.”] thus we call a man illiterate, although he may not be utterly ignorant, but only not acquainted with the higher branches of literature; thus, seeing a badly-dressed ragged man we say that we have seen a naked man. These things of which we spoke are not benefits, but they possess the appearance of benefits. “Then, just as they are quasi-benefits, so your man is quasi-ungrateful, not really ungrateful.” This is untrue, because both he who gives and he who receives them speaks of them as benefits; so he who fails to return the semblance of a real benefit is as much an ungrateful man as he who mixes a sleeping draught, believing it to be poison, is a poisoner.

XIV.

Cleanthes speaks more impetuously than this. "Granted," says he, "that what he received was not a benefit, yet he is ungrateful, because he would not have returned a benefit if he had received one." So he who carries deadly weapons and has intentions of robbing and murdering, is a brigand even before he has dipped his hands in blood; his wickedness consists and is shown in action, but does not begin thereby. Men are punished for sacrilege, although no one's hands can reach to the gods. "How," asks our opponent, "can any one be ungrateful to a bad man, since a bad man cannot bestow a benefit?" In the same way, I answer, because that which he received was not a benefit, but was called one; if any one receives from a bad man any of those things which are valued by the ignorant, and of which bad men often possess great store, it becomes his duty to make a return in the same kind, and to give back as though they were truly good those things which he received as though they were truly good. A man is said to be in debt, whether he owes gold pieces or leather marked with a state stamp, such as the Lacedaemonians used, which passes for coined money. Pay your debts in that kind in which you incurred them. You have nothing to do with the definition of benefits, or with the question whether so great and noble a name ought to be degraded by applying it to such vulgar and mean matters as these, nor do we seek for truth that we may use it to the disadvantage of others; do you adjust your minds to the semblance of truth, and while you are learning what is really honourable, respect everything to which the name of honour is applied.

XV.

“In the same way,” argues our adversary, “that your school proves that no one is ungrateful, you afterwards prove that all men are ungrateful. For, as you say, all fools are bad men; he who has one vice has all vices; all men are both fools and bad men; therefore all men are ungrateful.” Well, what then? Are they not? Is not this the universal reproach of the human race? is there not a general complaint that benefits are thrown away, and that there are very few men who do not requite their benefactors with the basest ingratitude? Nor need you suppose that what we say is merely the grumbling of men who think every act wicked and depraved which falls short of an ideal standard of righteousness. Listen! I know not who it is who speaks, yet the voice with which he condemns mankind proceeds, not from the schools of philosophers, but from the midst of the crowd:

“Host is not safe from guest;

Father-in-law from son; but seldom love

Exists ‘twixt brothers; wives long to destroy

Their husbands; husbands long to slay their wives.”

This goes even further: according to this, crimes take the place of benefits, and men do not shrink from shedding the blood of those for whom they ought to shed their own; we requite benefits by steel and poison. We call laying violent hands upon our own country, and putting down its resistance by the fasces of its own lictors, gaining power and great place; every man thinks himself to be in a mean and degraded position if he has not raised himself above the constitution; the armies which are received from the state are turned against her, and a general now says to his men, “Fight against your wives, fight against your children, march in arms against your altars, your hearths and homes!” Yes, [Footnote: I believe, in spite of Gertz, that this is part of the speech of the Roman general, and that the conjecture of Muretus, “without the command of the senate,” gives better sense.] you, who even when about to triumph ought not to enter the city at the command of the senate, and who have often, when bringing home a victorious army, been given an audience outside the walls, you now, after slaughtering your countrymen, stained with the blood of

your kindred, march into the city with standards erect. "Let liberty," say you, "be silent amidst the ensigns of war, and now that wars are driven far away and no ground for terror remains, let that people which conquered and civilized all nations be beleaguered within its own walls, and shudder at the sight of its own eagles."

XVI.

Coriolanus was ungrateful, and became dutiful late, and after repenting of his crime; he did indeed lay down his arms, but only in the midst of his unnatural warfare. Catilina was ungrateful; he was not satisfied with taking his country captive without overturning it, without despatching the hosts of the Allobroges against it, without bringing an enemy from beyond the Alps to glut his old inborn hatred, and to offer Roman generals as sacrifices which had been long owing to the tombs of the Gaulish dead. Caius Marius was ungrateful, when, after being raised from the ranks to the consulship, he felt that he would not have wreaked his vengeance upon fortune, and would sink to his original obscurity, unless he slaughtered Romans as freely as he had slaughtered the Cimbri, and not merely gave the signal, but was himself the signal for civil disasters and butcheries. Lucius Sulla was ungrateful, for he saved his country by using remedies worse than the perils with which it was threatened, when he marched through human blood all the way from the citadel of Praeneste to the Colline Gate, fought more battles and caused more slaughter afterwards within the city, and most cruelly after the victory was won, most wickedly after quarter had been promised them, drove two legions into a corner and put them to the sword, and, great gods! invented a proscription by which he who slew a Roman citizen received indemnity, a sum of money, everything but a civic crown! Cnaeus Pompeius was ungrateful, for the return which he made to his country for three consulships, three triumphs, and the innumerable public offices into most of which he thrust himself when under age, was to lead others also to lay hands upon her under the pretext of thus rendering his own power less odious; as though what no one ought to do became right if more than one person did it. Whilst he was coveting extraordinary commands, arranging the provinces so as to have his own choice of them, and dividing the whole state with a third person, [Footnote: Crassus.] in such a manner as to leave two-thirds of it in the possession of his own family, [Footnote: Pompey was married to Caesar's daughter. Cf. Virg., "Aen.," vi., 831, sq., and Lucan's beautiful verses, "Phars.," i.,

114.] he reduced the Roman people to such a condition that they could only save themselves by submitting to slavery. The foe and conqueror [Footnote: Seneca is careful to avoid the mention of Caesar's name, which might have given offence to the emperors under whom he lived, who used the name as a title.] of Pompeius was himself ungrateful; he brought war from Gaul and Germany to Rome, and he, the friend of the populace, the champion of the commons, pitched his camp in the Circus Flaminius, nearer to the city than Porsena's camp had been. He did, indeed, use the cruel privileges of victory with moderation; as was said at the time, he protected his countrymen, and put to death no man who was not in arms. Yet what credit is there in this? Others used their arms more cruelly, but flung them away when glutted with blood, while he, though he soon sheathed the sword, never laid it aside. Antonius was ungrateful to his dictator, who he declared was rightly slain, and whose murderers he allowed to depart to their commands in the provinces; as for his country, after it had been torn to pieces by so many proscriptions, invasions, and civil wars, he intended to subject it to kings, not even of Roman birth, and to force that very state to pay tribute to eunuchs, [Footnote: The allusion is to Antonius's connection with Cleopatra. Cf. Virg. "Aen.," viii., 688.] which had itself restored sovereign rights, autonomy, and immunities, to the Achaeans, the Rhodians, and the people of many other famous cities.

XVII.

The day would not be long enough for me to enumerate those who have pushed their ingratitude so far as to ruin their native land. It would be as vast a task to mention how often the state has been ungrateful to its best and most devoted lovers, although it has done no less wrong than it has suffered. It sent Camillus and Scipio into exile; even after the death of Catiline it exiled Cicero, destroyed his house, plundered his property, and did everything which Catiline would have done if victorious; Rutilius found his virtue rewarded with a hiding-place in Asia; to Cato the Roman people refused the praetorship, and persisted in refusing the consulship. We are ungrateful in public matters; and if every man asks himself, you will find that there is no one who has not some private ingratitude to complain of. Yet it is impossible that all men should complain, unless all were deserving of complaint, therefore all men are ungrateful. Are they ungrateful alone? nay, they are also all covetous, all spiteful, and all cowardly, especially those who appear daring; and, besides this, all men fawn upon the great, and all are impious. Yet you need not be angry with them; pardon them, for they are all mad. I do not wish to recall you to what is not proved, or to say, "See how ungrateful is youth! what young man, even if of innocent life, does not long for his father's death? even if moderate in his desires, does not look forward to it? even if dutiful, does not think about it? How few there are who fear the death even of the best of wives, who do not even calculate the probabilities of it. Pray, what litigant, after having been successfully defended, retains any remembrance of so great a benefit for more than a few days?" All agree that no one dies without complaining. Who on his last day dares to say,

"I've lived, I've done the task which Fortune set me."

Who does not leave the world with reluctance, and with lamentations? Yet it is the part of an ungrateful man not to be satisfied with the past. Your days will always be few if you count them. Reflect that length of time is not the greatest of blessings; make the best of your time, however short it may be; even if the day of your death be postponed, your happiness will not be increased, for

life is merely made longer, not pleasanter, by delay. How much better is it to be thankful for the pleasures which one has received, not to reckon up the years of others, but to set a high value upon one's own, and score them to one's credit, saying, "God thought me worthy of this; I am satisfied with it; he might have given me more, but this, too, is a benefit." Let us be grateful towards both gods and men, grateful to those who have given us anything, and grateful even to those who have given anything to our relatives.

XVIII.

“You render me liable to an infinite debt of gratitude,” says our opponent, “when you say ‘even to those who have given any thing to our relations,’ so fix some limit. He who bestows a benefit upon the son, according to you, bestows it likewise upon the father: this is the first question I wish to raise. In the next place I should like to have a clear definition of whether a benefit, if it be bestowed upon your friend’s father as well as upon himself, is bestowed also upon his brother? or upon his uncle? or his grandfather? or his wife and his father-in-law? tell me where I am to stop, how far I am to follow out the pedigree of the family?”

SENECA. If I cultivate your land, I bestow a benefit upon you; if I extinguish your house when burning, or prop it so as to save it from falling, I shall bestow a benefit upon you; if I heal your slave, I shall charge it to you; if I save your son’s life, will you not thereby receive a benefit from me?

XIX.

THE ADVERSARY. Your instances are not to the purpose, for he who cultivates my land, does not benefit the land, but me; he who props my house so that it does not fall, does this service to me, for the house itself is without feeling, and as it has none, it is I who am indebted to him; and he who cultivates my land does so because he wishes to oblige me, not to oblige the land. I should say the same of a slave; he is a chattel owned by me; he is saved for my advantage, therefore I am indebted for him. My son is himself capable of receiving a benefit; so it is he who receives it; I am gratified at a benefit which comes so near to myself, but am not laid under any obligation.

SE. Still I should like you, who say that you are under no obligation, to answer me this. The good health, the happiness, and the inheritance of a son are connected with his father; his father will be more happy if he keeps his son safe, and more unhappy if he loses him. What follows, then? when a man is made happier by me and is freed from the greatest danger of unhappiness, does he not receive a benefit?

AD. No, because there are some things which are bestowed upon others, and yet flow from them so as to reach ourselves; yet we must ask the person upon whom it was bestowed for repayment; as for example, money must be sought from the man to whom it was lent, although it may, by some means, have come into my hands. There is no benefit whose advantages do not extend to the receiver's nearest friends, and sometimes even to those less intimately connected with him; yet we do not enquire whither the benefit has proceeded from him to whom it was first given, but where it was first placed. You must demand repayment from the defendant himself personally.

SE. Well, but I pray you, do you not say, "you have preserved my son for me; had he perished, I could not have survived him?" Do you not owe a benefit for the life of one whose safety you value above your own? Moreover, should I save your son's life, you would fall down before my knees, and would pay vows to heaven as though you yourself had been saved; you would say, "It makes no difference

whether you have saved mine or me; you have saved us both, yet me more than him.” Why do you say this, if you do not receive a benefit?

A.D. Because, if my son were to contract a loan, I should pay his creditor, yet I should not, therefore, be indebted to him; or if my son were taken in adultery, I should blush, yet I should not, therefore, be an adulterer. I say that I am under an obligation to you for saving my son, not because I really am, but because I am willing to constitute myself your debtor of my own free will. On the other hand I have derived from his safety the greatest possible pleasure and advantage, and I have escaped that most dreadful blow, the loss of my child. True, but we are not now discussing whether you have done me any good or not, but whether you have bestowed a benefit upon me; for animals, stones, and herbs can do one good, but do not bestow benefits, which can only be given by one who wishes well to the receiver. Now you do not wish well to the father, but only to the son; and sometimes you do not even know the father. So when you have said, “Have I not bestowed a benefit upon the father by saving the son?” you ought to meet this with, “Have I, then, bestowed a benefit upon a father whom I do not know, whom I never thought of?” And what will you say when, as is sometimes the case, you hate the father, and yet save his son? Can you be thought to have bestowed a benefit upon one whom you hated most bitterly while you were bestowing it?

However, if I were to lay aside the bickering of dialogue, and answer you as a lawyer, I should say that you ought to consider the intention of the giver, you must regard his benefit as bestowed upon the person upon whom he meant to bestow it. If he did it in honour of the father, then the father received the benefit; if he thought only of the son, then the father is not laid under any obligation: by the benefit which was conferred upon the son, even though the father derives pleasure from it. Should he, however, have an opportunity, he will himself wish to give you something, yet not as though he were forced to repay a debt, but rather as if he had grounds for beginning an exchange of favours. No return for a benefit ought to be demanded from the father of the receiver; if he does you any kindness in return for it, he should be regarded as, a righteous man, but not as a grateful

one. For there is no end to it; if I bestow a benefit on the receiver's father, do I likewise bestow it upon his mother, his grandfather, his maternal uncle, his children, relations, friends, slaves, and country? Where, then, does a benefit begin to stop? for there follows it this endless chain of people, to whom it is hard to assign bounds, because they join it by degrees, and are always creeping on towards it.

XX.

A common question is, "Two brothers are at variance. If I save the life of one, do I confer a benefit upon the other, who will be sorry that his hated brother did not perish?" There can be no doubt that it is a benefit to do good to a man, even against that man's will, just as he, who against his own will does a man good, does not bestow a benefit upon him. "Do you," asks our adversary, "call that by which he is displeased and hurt a benefit?" Yes; many benefits have a harsh and forbidding appearance, such as cutting or burning to cure disease, or confining with chains. We must not consider whether a man is grieved at receiving a benefit, but whether he ought to rejoice: a coin is not bad because it is refused by a savage who is unacquainted with its proper stamp. A man receives a benefit even though he hates what is done, provided that it does him good, and that the giver bestowed it in order to do him good. It makes no difference if he receives a good thing in a bad spirit. Consider the converse of this. Suppose that a man hates his brother, though it is to his advantage to have a brother, and I kill this brother, this is not a benefit, though he may say that it is, and be glad of it. Our most artful enemies are those whom we thank for the wrongs which they do us.

"I understand; a thing which does good is a benefit, a thing which does harm is not a benefit. Now I will suggest to you an act which neither does good nor harm, and yet is a benefit. Suppose that I find the corpse of some one's father in a wilderness, and bury it, then I certainly have done him no good, for what difference could it make to him in what manner his body decayed? Nor have I done any good to his son, for what advantage does he gain by my act?" I will tell you what he gains. He has by my means performed a solemn and necessary rite; I have performed a service for his father which he would have wished, nay, which it would have been his duty to have performed himself. Yet this act is not a benefit, if I merely yielded to those feelings of pity and kindness which would make me bury any corpse whatever, but only if I recognized this body, and buried it, with the thought in my mind that I was doing this service to the son; but, by merely throwing earth over a dead stranger, I lay no one

under an obligation for an act performed on general principles of humanity.

It may be asked, “Why are you so careful in inquiring upon whom you bestow benefits, as though some day you meant to demand repayment of them? Some say that repayment should never be demanded; and they give the following reasons. An unworthy man will not repay the benefit which he has received, even if it be demanded of him, while a worthy man will do so of his own accord. Consequently, if you have bestowed it upon a good man, wait; do not outrage him by asking him for it, as though of his own accord he never would repay it. If you have bestowed it upon a bad man, suffer for it, but do not spoil your benefit by turning it into a loan. Moreover the law, by not authorizing you, forbids you, by implication, to demand the repayment of a benefit.” All this is nonsense. As long as I am in no pressing need, as long as I am not forced by poverty, I will lose my benefits rather than ask for repayment; but if the lives of my children were at stake, if my wife were in danger, if my regard for the welfare of my country and for my own liberty were to force me to adopt a course which I disliked, I should overcome my delicacy, and openly declare that I had done all that I could to avoid the necessity of receiving help from an ungrateful man; the necessity of obtaining repayment of one’s benefit will in the end overcome one’s delicacy about asking for it. In the next place, when I bestow a benefit upon a good man, I do so with the intention of never demanding repayment, except in case of absolute necessity.

XXI.

“But,” argues he, “by not authorizing you, the law forbids you to exact repayment.” There are many things which are not enforced by any law or process, but which the conventions of society, which are stronger than any law, compel us to observe. There is no law forbidding us to divulge our friend’s secrets; there is no law which bids us keep faith even with an enemy; pray what law is there which binds us to stand by what we have promised? There is none. Nevertheless I should remonstrate with one who did not keep a secret, and I should be indignant with one who pledged his word and broke it. “But,” he argues, “you are turning a benefit into a loan.” By no means, for I do not insist upon repayment, but only demand it; nay, I do not even demand it, but remind my friend of it. Even the direst need will not bring me to apply for help to one with whom I should have to undergo a long struggle.

If there be any one so ungrateful that it is not sufficient to remind him of his debt, I should pass him over, and think that he did not deserve to be made grateful by force. A money-lender does not demand repayment from his debtors if he knows they have become bankrupt, and, to their shame, have nothing but shame left to lose; and I, like him, should pass over those who are openly and obstinately ungrateful, and would demand repayment only from those who were likely to give it me, not from those from whom I should have to extort it by force.

XXII.

There are many who cannot deny that they have received a benefit, yet cannot return it — men who are not good enough to be termed grateful, nor yet bad enough to be termed ungrateful; but who are dull and sluggish, backward debtors, though not defaulters. Such men as these I should not ask for repayment, but forcibly remind them of it, and, from a state of indifference, bring them back to their duty. They would at once reply, “Forgive me; I did not know, by Hercules, that you missed this, or I would have offered it of my own accord, I beg that you will not think me ungrateful; I remember your goodness to me.” Why need I hesitate to make such men as these better to themselves and to me? I would prevent any one from doing wrong, if I were able; much more would I prevent a friend, both lest he should do wrong, and lest he should do wrong to me in particular. I bestow a second benefit upon him by not permitting him to be ungrateful; and I should not reproach him harshly with what I had done for him, but should speak as gently as I could. In order to afford him an opportunity of returning my kindness, I should refresh his remembrance of it, and ask for a benefit; he would understand that I was asking for repayment. Sometimes I would make use of somewhat severe language, if I had any hope that by it he might be amended; though I would not irritate a hopelessly ungrateful man, for fear that I might turn him into an enemy. If we spare the ungrateful even the affront of reminding them of their conduct, we shall render them’ more backward in returning benefits; and although some might be cured of their evil ways, and be made into good men, if their consciences were stung by remorse, yet we shall allow them to perish for want of a word of warning, with which a father sometimes corrects his son, a wife brings back to herself an erring husband, or a man stimulates the wavering fidelity of his friend.

XXIII.

To awaken some men, it is only necessary to stir them, not to strike them; in like manner, with some men, the feeling of honour about returning a benefit is not extinct, but slumbering. Let us rouse it. "Do not," they will say, "make the kindness you have done me into a wrong: for it is a wrong, if you do not demand some return from me, and so make me ungrateful. What if I do not know what sort of repayment you wish for? if I am so occupied by business, and my attention is so much diverted to other subjects that I have not been able to watch for an opportunity of serving you? Point out to me what I can do for you, what you wish me to do. Why do you despair, before making a trial of me? Why are you in such haste to lose both your benefit and your friend? How can you tell whether I do not wish, or whether I do not know how to repay you: whether it be in intention or in opportunity that I am wanting? Make a trial of me." I would therefore remind him of what I had done, without bitterness, not in public, or in a reproachful manner, but so that he may think that he himself has remembered it rather than that it has been recalled to him.

XXIV.

One of Julius Caesar's veterans was once pleading before him against his neighbours, and the cause was going against him. "Do you remember, general," said he, "that in Spain you dislocated your ankle near the river Sucro [Footnote: Xucar]?" When Caesar said that he remembered it, he continued, "Do you remember that when, during the excessive heat, you wished to rest under a tree which afforded very little shade, as the ground in which that solitary tree grew was rough and rocky, one of your comrades spread his cloak under you?" Caesar answered, "Of course, I remember; indeed, I was perishing with thirst; and since was unable to walk to the nearest spring, I would have crawled thither on my hands and knees, had not my comrade, a brave and active man, brought me water in his helmet." "Could you, then, my general, recognize that man or that helmet?" Caesar replied that he could not remember the helmet, but that he could remember the man well; and he added, I fancy in anger at being led away to this old story in the midst of a judicial enquiry, "At any rate, you are not he." "I do not blame you, Caesar," answered the man, "for not recognizing me; for when this took place, I was unwounded; but afterwards, at the battle of Munda, my eye was struck out, and the bones of my skull crushed. Nor would you recognize that helmet if you saw it, for it was split by a Spanish sword." Caesar would not permit this man to be troubled with lawsuits, and presented his old soldier with the fields through which a village right of way had given rise to the dispute.

XXV.

In this case, what ought he to have done? Because his commander's memory was confused by a multitude of incidents, and because his position as the leader of vast armies did not permit him to notice individual soldiers, ought the man not to have asked for a return for the benefit which he had conferred? To act as he did is not so much to ask for a return as to take it when it lies in a convenient position ready for us, although we have to stretch out our hands in order to receive it. I shall therefore ask for the return of a benefit, whenever I am either reduced to great straits, or where by doing so I shall act to the advantage of him from whom I ask it. Tiberius Caesar, when some one addressed him with the words, "Do you remember....?" answered, before the man could mention any further proofs of former acquaintance, "I do not remember what I was." Why should it not be forbidden to demand of this man repayment of former favours? He had a motive for forgetting them: he denied all knowledge of his friends and comrades, and wished men only to see, to think, and to speak of him as emperor. He regarded his old friend as an impertinent meddler.

We ought to be even more careful to choose a favorable opportunity when we ask for a benefit to be repaid to us than when we ask for one to be bestowed upon us. We must be temperate in our language, so that the grateful may not take offence, or the ungrateful pretend to do so. If we lived among wise men, it would be our duty to wait in silence until our benefits were returned. Yet even to wise men it would be better to give some hint of what our position required. We ask for help even from the gods themselves, from whose knowledge nothing is hid, although our prayers cannot alter their intentions towards us, but can only recall them to their minds. Homer's priest, [Il. i. 39 sqq.] I say, recounts even to the gods his duteous conduct and his pious care of their altars. The second best form of virtue is to be willing and able to take advice.[Hes. O.] A horse who is docile and prompt to obey can be guided hither and thither by the slightest movement of the reins. Very few men are led by their own reason: those who come next to the best are those who

return to the right path in consequence of advice; and these we must not deprive of their guide. When our eyes are covered they still possess sight; but it is the light of day which, when admitted to them, summons them to perform their duty: tools lie idle, unless the workman uses them to take part in his work. Similarly men's minds contain a good feeling, which, however, lies torpid, either through luxury and disuse, or through ignorance of its duties. This we ought to render useful, and not to get into a passion with it, and leave it in its wrong doing, but bear with it patiently, just as schoolmasters bear patiently with the blunders of forgetful scholars; for as by the prompting of a word or two their memory is often recalled to the text of the speech which they have to repeat, so men's goodwill can be brought to return kindness by reminding them of it.

BOOK VI.

I.

There are some things, my most excellent Liberalis, which lie completely outside of our actual life, and which we only inquire into in order to exercise our intellects, while others both give us pleasure while we are discovering them, and are of use when discovered. I will place all these in your hands; you, at your own discretion, may order them either to be investigated thoroughly, or to be reserved, and be used as agreeable interludes. Something will be gained even by those which you dismiss at once, for it is advantageous even to know what subjects are not worth learning. I shall be guided, therefore, by your face: according to its expression, I shall deal with some questions at greater length, and drive others out of court, and put an end to them at once.

II.

It is a question whether a benefit can be taken away from one by force. Some say that it cannot, because it is not a thing, but an act. A gift is not the same as the act of giving, any more than a sailor is the same as the act of sailing. A sick man and a disease are not the same thing, although no one can be ill without disease; and, similarly, a benefit itself is one thing, and what any of us receive through a benefit is another. The benefit itself is incorporeal, and never becomes invalid; but its subject-matter changes owners, and passes from hand to hand. So, when you take away from anyone what you have given him, you take away the subject-matter only of the benefit, not the benefit itself. Nature herself cannot recall what she has given. She may cease to bestow benefits, but cannot take them away: a man who dies, yet has lived; a man who becomes blind, nevertheless has seen. She can cut off her blessings from us in the future, but she cannot prevent our having enjoyed them in the past. We are frequently not able to enjoy a benefit for long, but the benefit is not thereby destroyed. Let Nature struggle as hard as she please, she cannot give herself retrospective action. A man may lose his house, his money, his property — everything to which the name of benefit can be given — yet the benefit itself will remain firm and unmoved; no power can prevent his benefactor's having bestowed them, or his having received them.

III.

I think that a fine passage in Rabirius's poem, where M. Antonius, seeing his fortune deserting him, nothing left him except the privilege of dying, and even that only on condition that he used it promptly, exclaims,

“What I have given, that I now possess!”

How much he might have possessed, had he chosen! These are riches to be depended upon, which through all the turmoil of human life will remain steadfast; and the greater they are, the less envy they will attract. Why are you sparing of your property, as though it were your own? You are but the manager of it. All those treasures, which make you swell with pride, and soar above mere mortals, till you forget the weakness of your nature; all that which you lock up in iron-grated treasuries, and guard in arms, which you win from other men with their lives, and defend at the risk of your own; for which you launch fleets to dye the sea with blood, and shake the walls of cities, not knowing what arrows fortune may be preparing for you behind your back; to gain which you have so often violated all the ties of relationship, of friendship, and of colleagueship, till the whole world lies crushed between the two combatants: all these are not yours; they are a kind of deposit, which is on the point of passing into other hands: your enemies, or your heirs, who are little better, will seize upon them. “How,” do you ask, “can you make them your own?” “By giving them away.” Do, then, what is best for your own interests, and gain a sure enjoyment of them, which cannot be taken from you, making them at once more certainly yours, and more honorable to you. That which you esteem so highly, that by which you think that you are made rich and powerful, owns but the shabby title of “house,” “slave,” or “money;” but when you have given it away, it becomes a benefit.

IV.

“You admit,” says our adversary, “that we sometimes are under no obligation to him from whom we have received a benefit. In that case it has been taken by force.” Nay, there are many things which would cause us to cease to feel gratitude for a benefit, not because the benefit has been taken from me, but because it has been spoiled. Suppose that a man has defended me in a lawsuit, but has forcibly outraged my wife; he has not taken away the benefit which he conferred upon me, but by balancing it with an equivalent wrong, he has set me free from my debt; indeed, if he has injured me more than he had previously benefited me, he not only puts an end to my gratitude, but makes me free to revenge myself upon him, and to complain of him, when the wrong outweighs the benefit; in such a case the benefit is not taken away, but is overcome. Why, are not some fathers so cruel and so wicked that it is right and proper for their sons to turn away from them, and disown them? Yet, pray, have they taken away the life which they gave? No, but their unnatural conduct in later years has destroyed all the gratitude which was due to them for their original benefit. In these cases it is not a benefit itself, but the gratitude owing for a benefit which is taken away, and the result is, not that one does not possess the benefit, but that one is not laid under any obligation by it. It is as though a man were to lend me money, and then burn my house down; the advantage of the loan is balanced by the damage which he has caused: I do not repay him, and yet I am not in his debt. In like manner any one who may have acted kindly and generously to me, and who afterwards has shown himself haughty, insulting, and cruel, places me in just the same position as though I never had received anything from him: he has murdered his own benefits. Though the lease may remain in force, still a man does not continue to be a tenant if his landlord tramples down his crops, or cuts down his orchard; their contract is at an end, not because the landlord has received the rent which was agreed upon, but because he has made it impossible that he should receive it. So, too, a creditor often has to pay money to his debtor, should he have taken more property from him in other transactions than he

claims as having lent him. The judge does not sit merely to decide between debtor and creditor, when he says, "You did lend the man money; but then, what followed? You have driven away his cattle, you have murdered his slave, you have in your possession plate which you have not paid for. After valuing what each has received, I order you, who came to this court as a creditor, to leave it as a debtor." In like manner a balance is struck between benefits and injuries. In many cases, I repeat, a benefit is not taken away from him who receives it, and yet it lays him under no obligation, if the giver has repented of giving it, called himself unhappy because he gave it, sighed or made a wry face while he gave it; if he thought that he was throwing it away rather than giving it, if he gave it to please himself, or to please any one except me, the receiver; if he persistently makes himself offensive by boasting of what he has done, if he brags of his gift everywhere, and makes it a misery to me, then indeed the benefit remains in my hands, but I owe him nothing for it, just as sums of money to which a creditor has no legal right are owed to him, but cannot be claimed by him.

V.

Though you have bestowed a benefit upon me, yet you have since done me a wrong; the benefit demanded gratitude, the wrong required vengeance: the result is that I do not owe you gratitude, nor do you owe me compensation — each is cancelled by the other. When we say, “I returned him his benefit,” we do not mean that we restored to him the very thing which we had received, but something else in its place. To return is to give back one thing instead of another, because, of course, in all repayment it is not the thing itself, but its equivalent which is returned. We are said to have returned money even though we count out gold pieces instead of silver ones, or even if no money passes between us, but the transaction be effected verbally by the assignment of a debt.

I think I see you say, “You are wasting your time; of what use is it to me to know whether what I do not owe to another still remains in my hands or not? These are like the ingenious subtleties of the lawyers, who declare that one cannot acquire an inheritance by prescription, but can only acquire those things of which the inheritance consists, as though there were any difference between the heritage and the things of which it consists. Rather decide this point for me, which may be of use. If the same man confers a benefit upon me, and afterwards does me a wrong, is it my duty to return the benefit to him, and nevertheless to avenge myself upon him, having, as it were, two distinct accounts open with him, or to mix them both together, and do nothing, leaving the benefit to be wiped out by the injury, the injury by the benefit? I see that the former course is adopted by the law of the land; you know best what the law may be among you Stoic philosophers in such a case. I suppose that you keep the action which I bring against another distinct from that which he brings against me, and the two processes are not merged into one? For instance, if a man entrusts me with money, and afterwards robs me, I shall bring an action against him for theft, and he will bring one against me for unlawfully detaining his property?”

VI.

The cases which you have mentioned, my Liberalis, come under well-established laws, which it is necessary for us to follow. One law cannot be merged in another: each one proceeds its own way. There is a particular action which deals with deposits just as there is one which deals with theft. A benefit is subject to no law; it depends upon my own arbitration. I am at liberty to contrast the amount of good or harm which any one may have done me, and then to decide which of us is indebted to the other. In legal processes we ourselves have no power, we must go whither they lead us; in the case of a benefit the supreme power is mine, I pronounce sentence. Consequently I do not separate or distinguish between benefits and wrongs, but send them before the same judge. Unless I did so, you would bid me love and hate, give thanks and make complaints at the same time, which human nature does not admit of. I would rather compare the benefit and the injury with one another, and see whether there were any balance in my favour. If anybody puts lines of other writing upon my manuscript he conceals, though he does not take away, the letters which were there before, and in like manner a wrong coming after a benefit does not allow it to be seen.

VII.

Your face, by which I have agreed to be guided, now becomes wrinkled with frowns, as though I were straying too widely from the subject. You seem to say to me:

“Why steer to seaward?

Hither bend thy course,

Hug close the shore...”

I do hug it as close as possible. So now, if you think that we have dwelt sufficiently upon this point, let us proceed to the consideration of the next — that is, whether we are at all indebted to any one who does us good without wishing to do so. I might have expressed this more clearly, if it were not right that the question should be somewhat obscurely stated, in order that by the distinction immediately following it may be shown that we mean to investigate the case both of him who does us good against his will, and that of him who does us good without knowing it. That a man who does us good by acting under compulsion does not thereby lay us under any obligation, is so clear, that no words are needed to prove it. Both this question, and any other of the like character which may be raised, can easily be settled if in each case we bear in mind that, for anything to be a benefit, it must reach us in the first place through some thought, and secondly through the thought of a friend and well-wisher. Therefore we do not feel any gratitude towards rivers, albeit they may bear large ships, afford an ample and unvarying stream for the conveyance of merchandise, or flow beautifully and full of fish through fertile fields. No one conceives himself to be indebted for a benefit to the Nile, any more than he would owe it a grudge if its waters flooded his fields to excess, and retired more slowly than usual; the wind does not bestow benefits, gentle and favorable though it may be, nor does wholesome and useful food; for he who would bestow a benefit upon me, must not only do me good, but must wish to do so. No obligation can therefore be incurred towards dumb animals; yet how many men have been saved from peril by the swiftness of a horse! — nor yet towards trees — yet how many sufferers from summer heat have been sheltered by the thick foliage

of a tree! What difference can it make, whether I have profited by the act of one who did not know that he was doing me good, or one who could not know it, when in each case the will to do me good was wanting? You might as well bid me be grateful to a ship, a carriage, or a lance for saving me from danger, as bid me be grateful to a man who may have done me good by chance, but with no more intention of doing me good than those things could have.

VIII.

Some men may receive benefits without knowing it, but no man can bestow them without knowing it. Many sick persons have been cured by chance circumstances, which do not therefore become specific remedies; as, for instance, one man was restored to health by falling into a river during very cold weather, as another was set free from a quartan fever by means of a flogging, because the sudden terror turned his attention into a new channel, so that the dangerous hours passed unnoticed. Yet none of these are remedies, even though they may have been successful; and in like manner some men do us good, though they are unwilling — indeed, because they are unwilling to do so — yet we need not feel grateful to them as though we had received a benefit from them, because fortune has changed the evil which they intended into good. Do you suppose that I am indebted to a man who strikes my enemy with a blow which he aimed at me, who would have injured me had he not missed his mark? It often happens that by openly perjuring himself a man makes even trustworthy witnesses disbelieved, and renders his intended victim an object of compassion, as though he were being ruined by a conspiracy. Some have been saved by the very power which was exerted to crush them, and judges who would have condemned a man by law, have refused to condemn him by favour. Yet they did not confer a benefit upon the accused, although they rendered him a service, because we must consider at what the dart was aimed, not what it hits, and a benefit is distinguished from an injury not by its result, but by the spirit in which it was meant. By contradicting himself, by irritating the judge by his arrogance, or by rashly allowing his whole case to depend upon the testimony of one witness, my opponent may have saved my cause. I do not consider whether his mistakes benefited me or not, for he wished me ill.

IX.

In order that I may be grateful, I must wish to do what my benefactor must have wished in order that he might bestow a benefit. Can anything be more unjust than to bear a grudge against a person who may have trodden upon one's foot in a crowd, or splashed one, or pushed one the way which one did not wish to go? Yet it was by his act that we were injured, and we only refrain from complaining of him, because he did not know what he was doing. The same reason makes it possible for men to do us good without conferring benefits upon us, or to harm us without doing us wrong, because it is intention which distinguishes our friends from our enemies. How many have been saved from service in the army by sickness! Some men have been saved from sharing the fall of their house, by being brought up upon their recognizances to a court of law by their enemies; some have been saved by ship-wreck from falling into the hands of pirates; yet we do not feel grateful to such things, because chance has no feeling of the service it renders, nor are we grateful to our enemy, though his lawsuit, while it harassed and detained us, still saved our lives. Nothing can be a benefit which does not proceed from good will, and which is not meant as such by the giver. If any one does me a service, without knowing it, I am under no obligation to him; should he do so, meaning to injure me, I shall imitate his conduct.

X.

Let us turn our attention to the first of these. Can you desire me to do anything to express my gratitude to a man who did nothing in order to confer a benefit upon me? Passing on to the next, do you wish me to show my gratitude to such a man, and of my own will to return to him what I received from him against his will? What am I to say of the third, he who, meaning to do an injury, blunders into bestowing a benefit? That you should have wished to confer a benefit upon me is not sufficient to render me grateful; but that you should have wished not to do so is enough to set me free from any obligation to you. A mere wish does not constitute a benefit; and just as the best and heartiest wish is not a benefit when fortune prevents its being carried into effect, neither is what fortune bestows upon us a benefit, unless good wishes preceded it. In order to lay me under an obligation, you must not merely do me a service, but you must do so intentionally.

XI.

Cleanthes makes use of the following example:— “I sent,” says he, “two slaves to look for Plato and bring him to me from the Academy. One of them searched through the whole of the colonnade, and every other place in which he thought that he was likely to be found, and returned home alike weary and unsuccessful; the other sat down among the audience of a mountebank close by, and, while amusing himself in the society of other slaves like a careless vagabond as he was, found Plato, without seeking for him, as he happened to pass that way. We ought,” says he, “to praise that slave who, as far as lay in his power, did what he was ordered, and we ought to punish the other whose laziness turned out so fortunate.” It is goodwill alone which does one real service; let us then consider under what conditions it lays us under obligations. It is not enough to wish a man well, without doing him good; nor is it enough to do him good without wishing him well. Suppose that some one wished to give me a present, but did not give it; I have his good will, but I do not have his benefit, which consists of subject matter and goodwill together. I owe nothing to one who wished to lend me money but did not do so, and in like manner I shall be the friend of one who wished but was not able to bestow a benefit upon me, but I shall not be under any obligation to him. I also shall wish to bestow something upon him, even as he did upon me; but if fortune be more favorable to me than to him, and I succeed in bestowing something upon him, my doing so will be a benefit bestowed upon him, not a repayment out of gratitude for what he did for me. It will become his duty to be grateful to me; I shall have begun the interchange of benefits; the series must be counted from my act.

XII.

I already understand what you wish to ask; there is no need for you to say anything, your countenance speaks for you. "If any one does us good for his own sake, are we," you ask, "under an obligation to him? I often hear you complain that there are some things which men make use of themselves, but which they put down to the account of others." I will tell you, my Liberalis; but first let me distinguish between the two parts of your question, and separate what is fair from what is unfair. It makes a great difference whether any one bestows a benefit upon us for his own sake, or whether he does so partly for his own sake and partly for ours. He who looks only to his own interests, and who does us good because he cannot otherwise make a profit for himself, seems to me to be like the farmer who provides winter and summer fodder for his flocks, or like the man who feeds up the captives whom he has bought in order that they may fetch a better price in the slave market, or who crams and curry-combs fat oxen for sale; or like the keeper of a school of arms, who takes great pains in exercising and equipping his gladiators. As Cleanthes says, there is a great difference between benefits and trade.

XIII.

On the other hand, I am not so unjust as to feel no gratitude to a man, because, while helping me, he helped himself also; for I do not insist upon his consulting my interests to the exclusion of his own — nay, I should prefer that the benefit which I receive may be of even greater advantage to the giver, provided that he thought of us both when giving it, and meant to divide it between me and himself. Even should he possess the larger portion of it, still, if he admits me to a share, if he meant it for both of us, I am not only unjust but ungrateful, if I do not rejoice in what has benefited me benefiting him also. It is the essence of spitefulness to say that nothing can be a benefit which does not cause some inconvenience to the giver.

As for him who bestows a benefit for his own sake, I should say to him, “You have made use of me, and how can you say that you have bestowed a benefit upon me, rather than I upon you?” “Suppose,” answers he, “that I cannot obtain a public office except by ransoming ten citizens out of a great number of captives, will you owe me nothing for setting you free from slavery and bondage? Yet I shall do so for my own sake.” To this I should answer, “You do this partly for my sake, partly for your own. It is for your own sake that you ransom captives, but it is for my sake that you ransom me; for to serve your purpose it would be enough for you to ransom any one. I am therefore your debtor, not for ransoming me but for choosing me, since you might have attained the same result by ransoming some one else instead of me. You divide the advantages of the act between yourself and me, and you confer upon me a benefit by which both of us profit. What you do entirely for my sake is, that you choose me in preference to others. If therefore you were to be made praetor for ransoming ten captives, and there were only ten of us captives, none of us would be under any obligation to you, because there is nothing for which you can ask any one of us to give you credit apart from your own advantage. I do not regard a benefit jealously and wish it to be given to myself alone, but I wish to have a share in it.”

XIV.

“Well, then,” says he, “suppose that I were to order all your names to be put into a ballot-box, and that your name was drawn among those who were to be ransomed, would you owe me nothing?” Yes, I should owe you something, but very little: how little, I will explain to you. By so doing you do something for my sake, in that you grant me the chance of being ransomed; I owe to fortune that my name was drawn, all I owe to you is that my name could be drawn. You have given me the means of obtaining your benefit. For the greater part of that benefit I am indebted to fortune; that I could be so indebted, I owe to you.

I shall take no notice whatever of those whose benefits are bestowed in a mercenary spirit, who do not consider to whom, but upon what terms they give, whose benefits are entirely selfish. Suppose that some one sells me corn; I cannot live unless I buy it; yet I do not owe my life to him because I have bought it. I do not consider how essential it was to me, and that I could not live without it; but how little thanks are due for it, since I could not have had it without paying for it, and since the merchant who imported it did not consider how much good he would do me, but how much he would gain for himself, I owe nothing for what I have bought and paid for.

XV.

“According to this reasoning,” says my opponent, “you would say that you owe nothing to a physician beyond his paltry fee, nor to your teacher, because you have paid him some money; yet these persons are all held very dear, and are very much respected.” In answer to this I should urge that some things are of greater value than the price which we pay for them. You buy of a physician life and good health, the value of which cannot be estimated in money; from a teacher of the liberal sciences you buy the education of a gentleman and mental culture; therefore you pay these persons the price, not of what they give us, but of their trouble in giving it; you pay them for devoting their attention to us, for disregarding their own affairs to attend to us: they receive the price, not of their services, but of the expenditure of their time. Yet this may be more truly stated in another way, which I will at once lay before you, having first pointed out how the above may be confuted. Our adversary would say, “If some things are of greater value than the price which we pay for them, then, though you may have bought them, you still owe me something more for them.” I answer, in the first place, what does their real value matter, since the buyer and seller have settled the price between them? Next, I did not buy it at its own price, but at yours. “It is,” you say, “worth more than its sale price.” True, but it cannot be sold for more. The price of everything varies according to circumstances; after you have well praised your wares, they are worth only the highest price at which you can sell them; a man who buys things cheap is not on that account under any obligation to the seller. In the next place, even if they are worth more, there is no generosity in your letting them go for less, since the price is settled by custom and the rate of the market, not by the uses and powers of the merchandise. What would you state to be the proper payment of a man who crosses the seas, holding a true course through the midst of the waves after the land has sunk out of sight, who foresees coming storms, and suddenly, when no one expects danger, orders sails to be furled, yards to be lowered, and the crew to stand at their posts ready to meet the fury of the unexpected gale? and yet the price of such

great skill is fully paid for by the passage money. At what sum can you estimate the value of a lodging in a wilderness, of a shelter in the rain, of a bath or fire in cold weather? Yet I know on what terms I shall be supplied with these when I enter an inn. How much the man does for us who props our house when it is about to fall, and who, with a skill beyond belief, suspends in the air a block of building which has begun to crack at the foundation; yet we can contract for underpinning at a fixed and cheap rate. The city wall keeps us safe from our enemies, and from sudden inroads of brigands; yet it is, well known how much a day a smith would earn for erecting towers and scaffoldings [Footnote: See Viollet-le-Duc's "Dictionnaire d'Architecture," articles "Architecture Militaire" and "Hourds," for the probable meaning of "Propugnacula."]to provide for the public safety.

XVI.

I might go on for ever collecting instances to prove that valuable things are sold at a low price. What then? why is it that I owe something extra both to my physician and to my teacher, and that I do not acquit myself of all obligation to them by paying them their fee? It is because they pass from physicians and teachers into friends, and lay us under obligations, not by the skill which they sell to us, but by kindly and familiar good will. If my physician does no more than feel my pulse and class me among those whom he sees in his daily rounds, pointing out what I ought to do or to avoid without any personal interest, then I owe him no more than his fee, because he views me with the eye not of a friend, but of a commander. [Footnote: I read “*Nbn tamquam amicus videt sed tamquam imperator.*”] Neither have I any reason for loving my teacher, if he has regarded me merely as one of the mass of his scholars, and has not thought me worthy of taking especial pains with by myself, if he has never fixed his attention upon me, and if when he discharged his knowledge on the public, I might be said rather to have picked it up than to have learnt it from him. What then is our reason for owing them much? It is, not that what they have sold us is worth more than we paid for it, but that they have given something to us personally. Suppose that my physician has spent more consideration upon my case than was professionally necessary; that it was for me, not for his own credit, that he feared: that he was not satisfied with pointing out remedies, but himself applied them, that he sat by my bedside among my anxious friends, and came to see me at the crises of my disorder; that no service was too troublesome or too disgusting for him to perform; that he did not hear my groans unmoved; that among the numbers who called for him I was his favourite case; and that he gave the others only so much time as his care of my health permitted him: I should feel obliged to such a man not as to a physician, but as to a friend. Suppose again that my teacher endured labour and weariness in instructing me; that he taught me something more than is taught by all masters alike; that he roused my better feelings by his encouragement, and that at one time he would raise my spirits by

praise, and at another warn me to shake off slothfulness: that he laid his hand, as it were, upon my latent and torpid powers of intellect and drew them out into the light of day; that he did not stingily dole out to me what he knew, in order that he might be wanted for a longer time, but was eager, if possible, to pour all his learning into me; then I am ungrateful, if I do not love him as much as I love my nearest relatives and my dearest friends.

XVII.

We give something additional even to those who teach the meanest trades, if their efforts appear to be extraordinary; we bestow a gratuity upon pilots, upon workmen who deal with the commonest materials and hire themselves out by the day. In the noblest arts, however, those which either preserve or beautify our lives, a man would be ungrateful who thinks he owes the artist no more than he bargained for. Besides this, the teaching of such learning as we have spoken of blends mind with mind; now when this takes place, both in the case of the physician and of the teacher the price of his work is paid, but that of his mind remains owing.

XVIII.

Plato once crossed a river, and as the ferryman did not ask him for anything, he supposed that he had let him pass free out of respect, and said that the ferryman had laid Plato under an obligation. Shortly afterwards, seeing the ferryman take one person after another across the river with the same pains, and without charging anything, Plato declared that the ferryman had not laid him under an obligation. If you wish me to be grateful for what you give, you must not merely give it to me, but show that you mean it specially for me; you cannot make any claim upon one for having given him what you fling away broad-cast among the crowd. What then? shall I owe you nothing for it? Nothing, as an individual; I will pay, when the rest of mankind do, what I owe no more than they.

XIX.

“Do you say,” inquires my opponent, “that he who carries me gratis in a boat across the river Po, does not bestow any benefit upon me?” I do. He does me some good, but he does not bestow a benefit upon me; for he does it for his own sake, or at any rate not for mine; in short, he himself does not imagine that he is bestowing a benefit upon me, but does it for the credit of the State, or of the neighbourhood, or of himself, and expects some return for doing so, different from what he would receive from individual passengers. “Well,” asks my opponent, “if the emperor were to grant the franchise to all the Gauls, or exemption, from taxes to all the Spaniards, would each individual of them owe him nothing on that account?” Of course he would: but he would be indebted to him, not as having personally received a benefit intended for himself alone, but as a partaker in one conferred upon his nation. He would argue, “The emperor had no thought of me at the time when he benefited us all; he did not care to give me the franchise separately, he did not fix his attention upon me; why then should I be grateful to one who did not have me in his mind when he was thinking of doing what he did? In answer to this, I say that when he thought of doing good to all the Gauls, he thought of doing good to me also, for I was a Gaul, and he included me under my national, if not under my personal appellation. In like manner, I should feel grateful to him, not as for a personal, but for a general benefit; being only one of the people, I should regard the debt of gratitude as incurred, not by myself, but by my country, and should not pay it myself, but only contribute my share towards doing so. I do not call a man my creditor because he has lent money to my country, nor should I include that money in a schedule of my debts were I either a candidate for a public office, or a defendant in the courts; yet I would pay my share towards extinguishing such a debt. Similarly, I deny that I am laid under an obligation by a gift bestowed upon my entire nation, because although the giver gave it to me, yet he did not do so for my sake, but gave it without knowing whether he was giving it to me or not: nevertheless I should feel that I owed something for the gift, because

it did reach me, though not directly. To lay me under an obligation, a thing must be done for my sake alone.”

XX.

“According to this,” argues our opponent, “you are under no obligation to the sun or the moon; for they do not move for your sake alone.” No, but since they move with the object of preserving the balance of the universe, they move for my sake also, seeing that I am a fraction of the universe. Besides, our position and theirs is not the same, for he who does me good in order that he may by my means do good to himself, does not bestow a benefit upon me, because he merely makes use of me as an instrument for his own advantage; whereas the sun and the moon, even if they do us good for their own sakes, still cannot do good to us in order that by our means they may do good to themselves, for what is there which we can bestow upon them?

XXI.

“I should be sure,” replies he, “that the sun and the moon wished to do us good, if they were able to refuse to do so; but they cannot help moving as they do. In short, let them stop and discontinue their work.”

See now, in how many ways this argument may be refuted. One who cannot refuse to do a thing may nevertheless wish to do it; indeed there is no greater proof of a fixed desire to do anything, than not to be able to alter one’s determination. A good man cannot leave undone what he does: for unless he does it he will not be a good man. Is a good man, then, not able to bestow a benefit, because he does what he ought to do, and is not able not to do what he ought to do? Besides this, it makes a great difference whether you say, “He is not able not to do this, because he is forced to do it,” or “He is not able to wish not to do it;” for, if he could not help doing it, then I am not indebted for it to him, but to the person who forced him to do it; if he could not help wishing for it because he had nothing better to wish for, then it is he who forces himself to do it, and in this case the debt which as acting under compulsion he could not claim, is due to him as compelling himself.

“Let the sun and moon cease to wish to benefit us,” says our adversary. I answer, “Remember what has been said. Who can be so crazy as to refuse the name of free-will to that which has no danger of ceasing to act, and of adopting the opposite course, since, on the contrary, he whose will is fixed for ever, must be thought to wish more earnestly than any one else. Surely if he, who may at any moment change his mind, can be said to wish, we must not deny the existence of will in a being whose nature does not admit of change of mind.”

XXII.

“Well,” says he “let them stop, if it be possible.” What you say is this:— “Let all those heavenly bodies, placed as they are at vast distances from each other, and arranged to preserve the balance of the universe, leave their appointed posts: let sudden confusion arise, so that constellations may collide with constellations, that the established harmony of all things may be destroyed and the works of God be shaken into ruin; let the whole frame of the rapidly moving heavenly bodies abandon in mid career those movements which we were assured would endure for ages, and let those which now by their regular advance and retreat keep the world at a moderate temperature, be instantly consumed by fire, so that instead of the infinite variety of the seasons all may be reduced to one uniform condition; let fire rage everywhere, followed by dull night, and let the bottomless abyss swallow up all the gods.” Is it worth while to destroy all this merely in order to refute you? Even though you do not wish it, they do you good, and they wheel in their courses for your sake, though their motion may be due to some earlier and more important cause.

XXIII.

Besides this, the gods act under no external constraint, but their own will is a law to them for all time. They have established an order which is not to be changed, and consequently it is impossible that they should appear to be likely to do anything against their will, since they wish to continue doing whatever they cannot cease from doing, and they never regret their original decision. No doubt it is impossible for them to stop short, or to desert to the other side, but it is so for no other reason than that their own force holds them to their purpose. It is from no weakness that they persevere; no, they have no mind to leave the best course, and by this it is fated that they should proceed. When, at the time of the original creation, they arranged the entire universe, they paid attention to us as well as to the rest, and took thought about the human race; and for this reason we cannot suppose that it is merely for their own pleasure that they move in their orbits and display their work since we also are a part of that work. We are, therefore; under an obligation to the sun and moon and the rest of the heavenly host, because, although they may rise in order to bestow more important benefits than those which we receive from them, yet they do bestow these upon us as they pass on their way to greater things. Besides this, they assist us of set purpose, and, therefore, lay us under an obligation, because we do not in their case stumble by chance upon a benefit bestowed by one who knew not what he was doing, but they knew that we should receive from them the advantages which we do; so that, though they may have some higher aim, though the result of their movements may be something of greater importance than the preservation of the human race, yet from the beginning thought has been directed to our comforts, and the scheme of the world has been arranged in a fashion which proves that our interests were neither their least nor last concern. It is our duty to show filial love for our parents, although many of them had no thought of children when they married. Not so with the gods: they cannot but have known what they were doing when they furnished mankind with food and comforts. Those for whose advantage so much was created, could not have been created without design.

Nature conceived the idea of us before she formed us, and, indeed, we are no such trifling piece of work as could have fallen from her hands unheeded. See how great privileges she has bestowed upon us, how far beyond the human race the empire of mankind extends; consider how widely she allows us to roam, not having restricted us to the land alone, but permitted us to traverse every part of herself; consider, too, the audacity of our intellect, the only one which knows of the gods or seeks for them, and how we can raise our mind high above the earth, and commune with those divine influences: you will perceive that man is not a hurriedly put together, or an unstudied piece of work. Among her noblest products nature has none of which she can boast more than man, and assuredly no other which can comprehend her boast. What madness is this, to call the gods in question for their bounty? If a man declares that he has received nothing when he is receiving all the while, and from those who will always be giving without ever receiving anything in return, how will he be grateful to those whose kindness cannot be returned without expense? and how great a mistake is it not to be thankful to a giver, because he is good even to him who disowns him, or to use the fact of his bounty being poured upon us in an uninterrupted stream, as an argument to prove that he cannot help bestowing it. Suppose that such men as these say, "I do not want it," "Let him keep it to himself," "Who asks him for it?" and so forth, with all the other speeches of insolent minds: still, he whose bounty reaches you, although you say that it does not, lays you under an obligation nevertheless; indeed, perhaps the greatest part of the benefit which he bestows is that he is ready to give even when you are complaining against him.

XXIV.

Do you not see how parents force children during their infancy to undergo what is useful for their health? Though the children cry and struggle, they swathe them and bind their limbs straight lest premature liberty should make them grow crooked, afterwards instill into them a liberal education, threatening those who are unwilling to learn, and finally, if spirited young men do not conduct themselves frugally, modestly, and respectably, they compel them to do so. Force and harsh measures are used even to youths who have grown up and are their own masters, if they, either from fear or from insolence, refuse to take what is good for them. Thus the greatest benefits that we receive, we receive either without knowing it, or against our will, from our parents.

XXV.

Those persons who are ungrateful and repudiate benefits, not because they do not wish to receive them, but in order that they may not be laid under an obligation for them, are like those who fall into the opposite extreme, and are over grateful, who pray that some trouble or misfortune may befall their benefactors to give them an opportunity of proving how gratefully they remember the benefit which they have received. It is a question whether they are right, and show a truly dutiful feeling; their state of mind is morbid, like that of frantic lovers who long for their mistress to be exiled, that they may accompany her when she leaves her country forsaken by all her friends, or that she may be poor in order that she may the more need what they give her, or who long that she may be ill in order that they may sit by her bedside, and who, in short, out of sheer love form the same wishes as her enemies would wish for her. Thus the results of hatred and of frantic love are very nearly the same; and these lovers are very like those who hope that their friends may meet with difficulties which they may remove, and who thus do a wrong that they may bestow a benefit, whereas it would have been much better for them to do nothing, than by a crime to gain an opportunity of doing good service. What should we say of a pilot who prayed to the gods for dreadful storms and tempests, in order that danger might make his skill more highly esteemed? what of a general who should pray that a vast number of the enemy surround his camp, fill the ditches by a sudden charge, tear down the rampart round his panic-stricken army, and plant its hostile standards at the very gates, in order that he might gain more glory by restoring his broken ranks and shattered fortunes? All such men confer their benefits upon us by odious means, for they beg the gods to harm those whom they mean to help, and wish them to be struck down before they raise them up; it is a cruel feeling, brought about by a distorted sense of gratitude, to wish evil to befall one whom one is bound in honour to succour.

XXVI.

“My wish,” argues our opponent, “does him no harm, because when I wish for the danger I wish for the rescue at the same time.” What you mean by this is not that you do no wrong, but that you do less than if you wished that the danger might befall him, without wishing for the rescue. It is wicked to throw a man into the water in order that you may pull him out, to throw him down that you may raise him up, or to shut him up that you may release him. You do not bestow a benefit upon a man by ceasing to wrong him, nor can it ever be a piece of good service to anyone to remove from him a burden which you yourself imposed on him. True, you may cure the hurt which you inflict, but I had rather that you did not hurt me at all. You may gain my gratitude by curing me because I am wounded, but not by wounding me in order that you may cure me: no man likes scars except as compared with wounds, which he is glad to see thus healed, though he had rather not have received them. It would be cruel to wish such things to befall one from whom you had never received a kindness; how much more cruel is it to wish that they may befall one in whose debt you are.

XXVII.

“I pray,” replies he, “at the same time, that I may be able to help him.” In the first place, if I stop you short in the middle of your prayer, it shows at once that you are ungrateful: I have not yet heard what you wish to do for him; I have heard what you wish him to suffer. You pray that anxiety and fear and even worse evil than this may come upon him. You desire that he may need aid: this is to his disadvantage; you desire that he may need your aid: this is to your advantage. You do not wish to help him, but to be set free from your obligation to him: for when you are eager to repay your debt in such a way as this, you merely wish to be set free from the debt, not to repay it. So the only part of your wish that could be thought honourable proves to be the base and ungrateful feeling of unwillingness to lie under an obligation: for what you wish for is, not that you may have an opportunity of repaying his kindness, but that he may be forced to beg you to do him a kindness. You make yourself the superior, and you wickedly degrade beneath your feet the man who has done you good service. How much better would it be to remain in his debt in an honourable and friendly manner, than to seek to discharge the debt by these evil means! You would be less to blame if you denied that you had received it, for your benefactor would then lose nothing more than what he gave you, whereas now you wish him to be rendered inferior to you, and brought by the loss of his property and social position into a condition below his own benefits. Do you think yourself grateful? Just utter your wishes in the hearing of him to whom you wish to do good. Do you call that a prayer for his welfare, which can be divided between his friend and his enemy, which, if the last part were omitted, you would not doubt was pronounced, by one who opposed and hated him? Enemies in war have sometimes wished to capture certain towns in order to spare them, or to conquer certain persons in order to pardon, them, yet these were the wishes of enemies, and what was the kindest part of them began by cruelty. Finally, what sort of prayers do you think those can be which he, on whose behalf they are made, hopes more earnestly than any one else may not be granted? In hoping that the

gods may injure a man, and that you may help him, you deal most dishonourably with him, and you do not treat the gods themselves fairly, for you give them the odious part to play, and reserve the generous one for yourself: the gods must do him wrong in order that you may do him a service. If you were to suborn an informer to accuse a man, and afterwards withdrew him, if you engaged a man in a law suit and afterwards gave it up, no one would hesitate to call you a villain: what difference does it make, whether you attempt to do this by chicanery or by prayer, unless it be that by prayer you raise up more powerful enemies to him than by the other means? You cannot say "Why, what harm do I do him?" your prayer is either futile or harmful, indeed it is harmful even though nothing comes of it. You do your friend wrong by wishing him harm: you must thank the gods that you do him no harm. The fact of your wishing it is enough: we ought to be just as angry with you as if you had effected it.

XXVIII.

“If,” argues our adversary, “my prayers had any efficacy, they would also have been efficacious to save him from danger.” In the first place, I reply, the danger into which you wish me to fall is certain, the help which I should receive is uncertain. Or call them both certain; it is that which injures me that comes first. Besides, YOU understand the terms of your wish; *I* shall be tossed by the storm without being sure that I have a haven of rest at hand.

Think what torture it must have been to me, even if I receive your help, to have stood in need of it: if I escape safely, to have trembled for myself; if I be acquitted, to have had to plead my cause. To escape from fear, however great it may be, can never be so pleasant as to live in sound unassailable safety. Pray that you may return my kindnesses when I need their return, but do not pray that I may need them. You would have done what you prayed for, had it been in your power.

XXIX.

How far more honourable would a prayer of this sort be: "I pray that he may remain in such a position as that he may always bestow benefits and never need them: may he be attended by the means of giving and helping, of which he makes such a bountiful use; may he never want benefits to bestow, or be sorry for any which he has bestowed; may his nature, fitted as it is for acts of pity, goodness, and clemency, be stimulated and brought out by numbers of grateful persons, whom I trust he will find without needing to make trial of their gratitude; may he refuse to be reconciled to no one, and may no one require to be reconciled to him: may fortune so uniformly continue to favour him that no one may be able to return his kindness in any way except by feeling grateful to him."

How far more proper are such prayers as these, which do not put you off to some distant opportunity, but express your gratitude at once? What is there to prevent your returning your benefactor's kindness, even while he is in prosperity? How many ways are there by which we can repay what we owe even to the affluent — for instance, by honest advice, by constant intercourse, by courteous conversation, pleasing him without flattering him, by listening attentively to any subject which he may wish to discuss, by keeping safe any secret that he may impart to us, and by social intercourse. There is no one so highly placed by fortune as not to want a friend all the more because he wants nothing.

XXX.

The other is a melancholy opportunity, and one which we ought always to pray may be kept far from us: must the gods be angry with a man in order that you may prove your gratitude to him? Do you not perceive that you are doing wrong, from the very fact that those to whom you are ungrateful fare better? Call up before your mind dungeons, chains, wretchedness, slavery, war, poverty: these are the opportunities for which you pray; if any one has any dealings with you, it is by means of these that you square your account. Why not rather wish that he to whom you owe most may be powerful and happy? for, as I have just said, what is there to prevent your returning the kindness even of those who enjoy the greatest prosperity? to do which, ample and various opportunities will present themselves to you, What! do you not know that a debt can be paid even to a rich man? Nor will I trouble you with many instances of what you may do. Though a man's riches and prosperity may prevent your making him any other repayment, I will show you what the highest in the land stand in need of, what is wanting to those who possess everything. They want a man to speak the truth, to save them from the organized mass of falsehood by which they are beset, which so bewilders them with lies that the habit of hearing only what is pleasant instead of what is true, prevents their knowing what truth really is. Do you not see how such persons are driven to ruin by the want of candour among their friends, whose loyalty has degenerated into slavish obsequiousness? No one, when giving them his advice, tells them what he really thinks, but each vies with the other in flattery; and while the man's friends make it their only object to see who can most pleasantly deceive him, he himself is ignorant of his real powers, and, believing himself to be as great a man as he is told that he is, plunges the State in useless wars, which bring disasters upon it, breaks off a useful and necessary peace, and, through a passion of anger which no one checks, spills the blood of numbers of people, and at last sheds his own. Such persons assert what has never been investigated as certain facts, consider that to modify their opinion is as dishonourable as to be conquered, believe that

institutions which are just flickering out of existence will last for ever, and, thus overturn great States, to the destruction of themselves and all who are connected with them. Living as they do in a fool's paradise, resplendent with unreal and short-lived advantages, they forget that, as soon as they put it out of their power to hear the truth, there is no limit to the misfortunes which they may expect.

XXXI.

When Xerxes declared war against Greece, all his courtiers encouraged his boastful temper, which forgot how unsubstantial his grounds for confidence were. One declared that the Greeks would not endure to hear the news of the declaration of war, and would take to flight at the first rumour of his approach; another, that with such a vast army Greece could not only be conquered, but utterly overwhelmed, and that it was rather to be feared that they would find the Greek cities empty and abandoned, and that the panic flight of the enemy would leave them only vast deserts, where no use could be made of their enormous forces. Another told him that the world was hardly large enough to contain him, that the seas were too narrow for his fleets, the camps would not take in his armies, the plains were not wide enough to deploy his cavalry in, and that the sky itself was scarcely large enough to enable all his troops to hurl their darts at once. While much boasting of this sort was going on around him, raising his already overweening self-confidence to a frantic pitch, Demaratus, the Lacedaemonian, alone told him that the disorganized and unwieldy multitude in which he trusted, was in itself a danger to its chief, because it possessed only weight without strength; for an army which is too large cannot be governed, and one which cannot be governed, cannot long exist. "The Lacedaemonians," said he, "will meet you upon the first mountain in Greece, and will give you a taste of their quality. All these thousands of nations of yours will be held in check by three hundred men: they will stand firm at their posts, they will defend the passes entrusted to them with their weapons, and block them up with their bodies: all Asia will not force them to give way; few as they are, they will stop all this terrible invasion, attempted though it be by nearly the whole human race. Though the laws of nature may give way to you, and enable you to pass from Europe to Asia, yet you will stop short in a bypath; consider what your losses will be afterwards, when you have reckoned up the price which you have to pay for the pass of Thermopylae; when you learn that your march can be stayed, you will discover that you may be put to flight. The Greeks will yield up

many parts of their country to you, as if they were swept out of them by the first terrible rush of a mountain torrent; afterwards they will rise against you from all quarters and will crush you by means of your own strength. What people say, that your warlike preparations are too great to be contained in the countries which you intend to attack, is quite true; but this is to our disadvantage. Greece will conquer you for this very reason, that she cannot contain you; you cannot make use of the whole of your force. Besides this, you will not be able to do what is essential to victory — that is, to meet the manoeuvres of the enemy at once, to support your own men if they give way, or to confirm and strengthen them when their ranks are wavering; long before you know it, you will be defeated. Moreover, you should not think that because your army is so large that its own chief does not know its numbers, it is therefore irresistible; there is nothing so great that it cannot perish; nay, without any other cause, its own excessive size may prove its ruin.” What Demaratus predicted came to pass. He whose power gods and men obeyed, and who swept away all that opposed him, was bidden to halt by three hundred men, and the Persians, defeated in every part of Greece, learned how great a difference there is between a mob and an army. Thus it came to pass that Xerxes, who suffered more from the shame of his failure than from the losses which he sustained, thanked Demaratus for having been the only man who told him the truth, and permitted him to ask what boon he pleased. He asked to be allowed to drive a chariot into Sardis, the largest city in Asia, wearing a tiara erect upon his head, a privilege which was enjoyed by kings alone. He deserved his reward before he asked for it, but how wretched must the nation have been, in which there was no one who would speak the truth to the king except one man who did not speak it to himself.

XXXII.

The late Emperor Augustus banished his daughter, whose conduct went beyond the shame of ordinary immodesty, and made public the scandals of the imperial house.

Led away by his passion, he divulged all these crimes which, as emperor, he ought to have kept secret with as much care as he punished them, because the shame of some deeds asperses even him who avenges them. Afterwards, when by lapse of time shame took the place of anger in his mind, he lamented that he had not kept silence about matters which he had not learned until it was disgraceful to speak of them, and often used to exclaim, "None of these things would have happened to me, if either Agrippa or Maecenas had lived!" So hard was it for the master of so many thousands of men to repair the loss of two. When his legions were slaughtered, new ones were at once enrolled; when his fleet was wrecked, within a few days another was afloat; when the public buildings were consumed by fire, finer ones arose in their stead; but the places of Agrippa and Maecenas remained unfilled throughout his life. What am I to imagine? that there were not any men like these, who could take their place, or that it was the fault of Augustus himself, who preferred mourning for them to seeking for their likes? We have no reason for supposing that it was the habit of Agrippa or Maecenas to speak the truth to him; indeed, if they had lived they would have been as great dissemblers as the rest. It is one of the habits of kings to insult their present servants by praising those whom they have lost, and to attribute the virtue of truthful speaking to those from whom there is no further risk of hearing it.

XXXIII.

However, to return to my subject, you see how easy it is to return the kindness of the prosperous, and even of those who occupy the highest places of all mankind. Tell them, not what they wish to hear, but what they will wish that they always had heard; though their ears be stopped by flatteries, yet sometimes truth may penetrate them; give them useful advice. Do you ask what service you can render to a prosperous man? Teach him not to rely upon his prosperity, and to understand that it ought to be supported by the hands of many trusty friends. Will you not have done much for him, if you take away his foolish belief that his influence will endure for ever, and teach him that what we gain by chance passes away soon, and at a quicker rate than it came; that we cannot fall by the same stages by which we rose to the height of good fortune, but that frequently between it and ruin there is but one step? You do not know how great is the value of friendship, if you do not understand how much you give to him to whom you give a friend, a commodity which is scarce not only in men's houses, but in whole centuries, and which is nowhere scarcer than in the places where it is thought to be most plentiful. Pray, do you suppose that those books of names, which your nomenclator [Footnote: The nomenclator was a slave who attended his master in canvassing and on similar occasions, for the purpose of telling him the names of whom he met in the street.] can hardly carry or remember, are those of friends? It is not your friends who crowd to knock at your door, and who are admitted to your greater or lesser levees.

XXXIV.

To divide one's friends into classes is an old trick of kings and their imitators; it shows great arrogance to think that to touch or to pass one's threshold can be a valuable privilege, or to grant as an honour that you should sit nearer one's front door than others, or enter house before them, although within the house there are many more doors, which shut out even those who have been admitted so far. With us Gaius Gracchus, and shortly after him Livius Drusus, were the first to keep themselves apart from the mass of their adherents, and to admit some to their privacy, some to their more select, and others to their general receptions. These men consequently had friends of the first and second rank, and so on, but in none had they true friends. Can you apply the name of friend to one who is admitted in his regular order to pay his respects to you? or can you expect perfect loyalty from one who is forced to slip into your presence through a grudgingly-opened door? How can a man arrive at using bold freedom of speech with you, if he is only allowed in his proper turn to make use of the common phrase, "Hail to you," which is used by perfect strangers? Whenever you go to any of these great men, whose levees interest the whole city, though you find all the streets beset with throngs of people, and the passers-by hardly able to make their way through the crowd, you may be sure that you have come to a place where there are many men, but no friends of their patron. We must not seek our friends in our entrance hall, but in our own breast; it is there that he ought to be received, there retained, and hoarded up in our minds. Teach this, and you will have repaid your debt of gratitude.

XXXV.

If you are useful to your friend only when he is in distress, and are superfluous when all goes well with him, you form a mean estimate of your own value. As you can bear yourself wisely both in doubtful, in prosperous, and in adverse circumstances, by showing prudence in doubtful cases, courage in misfortune, and self-restraint in good fortune, so in all circumstances you can make yourself useful to your friend. Do not desert him in adversity, but do not wish that it may befall him: the various incidents of human life will afford you many opportunities of proving your loyalty to him without wishing him evil. He who prays that another may become rich, in order that he may share his riches, really has a view to his own advantage, although his prayers are ostensibly offered in behalf of his friend; and similarly he who wishes that his friend may get into some trouble from which his own friendly assistance may extricate him — a most ungrateful wish — prefers himself to his friend, and thinks it worthwhile that his friend should be unhappy, in order that he may prove his gratitude. This very wish makes him ungrateful, for he wishes to rid himself of his gratitude as though it were a heavy burden. In returning a kindness it makes a great difference whether you are eager to bestow a benefit, or merely to free yourself from a debt. He who wishes to return a benefit will study his friend's interests, and will hope that a suitable occasion will arise; he who only wishes to free himself from an obligation will be eager to do so by any means whatever, which shows very bad feeling. "Do you say," we may be asked, "that eagerness to repay kindness belongs to a morbid feeling of gratitude?" I cannot explain my meaning more clearly than by repeating what I have already said. You do not want to repay, but to escape from the benefit which you have received. You seem to say, "When shall I get free from this obligation? I must strive by any means in my power to extinguish my debt to him." You would be thought to be far from grateful, if you wished to pay a debt to him with his own money; yet this wish of yours is even more unjust; for you invoke curses upon him, and call down terrible imprecations upon the head of one who ought to be held sacred by

you. No one, I suppose, would have any doubt of your wickedness if you were openly to pray that he might suffer poverty, captivity, hunger, or fear; yet what is the difference between openly praying for some of these things, and silently wishing for them? for you do wish for some of these. Go, and enjoy your belief that this is gratitude, to do what not even an ungrateful man would do, supposing he confined himself to repudiating the benefit, and did not go so far as to hate his benefactor.

XXXVI.

Who would call Aeneas pious, if he wished that his native city might be captured, in order that he might save his father from captivity? Who would point to the Sicilian youths as good examples for his children, if they had prayed that Aetna might flame with unusual heat and pour forth a vast mass of fire in order to afford them an opportunity of displaying their filial affection by rescuing their parents from the midst of the conflagration? Rome owes Scipio nothing if he kept the Punic War alive in order that he might have the glory of finishing it; she owes nothing to the Decii if they prayed for public disasters, to give themselves an opportunity of displaying their brave self-devotion. It is the greatest scandal for a physician to make work for himself; and many who have aggravated the diseases of their patients that they may have the greater credit for curing them, have either failed to cure them, at all or have done so at the cost of the most terrible suffering to their victims.

XXXVII.

It is said (at any rate Hecaton tells us) that when Callistratus with many others was driven into exile by his factious and licentiously free country, some one prayed that such trouble might befall the Athenians that they would be forced to recall the exiles, on hearing which, he prayed that God might forbid his return upon such terms. When some one tried to console our own countryman, Rutilius, for his exile, pointing out that civil war was at hand, and that all exiles would soon be restored to Rome, he answered with even greater spirit, "What harm have I done you, that you should wish that I may return to my country more unhappily than I quit it? My wish is, that my country should blush at my being banished, rather than that she should mourn at my having returned." An exile, of which every one is more ashamed than the sufferer, is not exile at all. These two persons, who did not wish to be restored to their homes at the cost of a public disaster, but preferred that two should suffer unjustly than that all should suffer alike, are thought to have acted like good citizens; and in like manner it does not accord with the character of a grateful man, to wish that his benefactor may fall into troubles which he may dispel; because, even though he may mean well to him, yet he wishes him evil. To put out a fire which you yourself have lighted, will not even gain acquittal for you, let alone credit.

XXXVIII.

In some states an evil wish was regarded as a crime. It is certain that at Athens Demades obtained a verdict against one who sold furniture for funerals, by proving that he had prayed for great gains, which he could not obtain without the death of many persons. Yet it is a stock question whether he was rightly found guilty. Perhaps he prayed, not that he might sell his wares to many persons, but that he might sell them dear, or that he might procure what he was going to sell, cheaply. Since his business consisted of buying and selling, why should you consider his prayer to apply to one branch of it only, although he made profit from both? Besides this, you might find every one of his trade guilty, for they all wish, that is, secretly pray, as he did. You might, moreover, find a great part of the human race guilty, for who is there who does not profit by his neighbour's wants? A soldier, if he wishes for glory, must wish for war; the farmer profits by corn being dear; a large number of litigants raises the price of forensic eloquence; physicians make money by a sickly season; dealers in luxuries are made rich by the effeminacy of youth; suppose that no storms and no conflagrations injured our dwellings, the builder's trade would be at a standstill. The prayer of one man was detected, but it was just like the prayers of all other men. Do you imagine that Arruntius and Haterius, and all other professional legacy-hunters do not put up the same prayers as undertakers and grave-diggers? though the latter know not whose death it is that they wish for, while the former wish for the death of their dearest friends, from whom, on account of their intimacy, they have most hopes of inheriting a fortune. No one's life does the undertaker any harm, whereas these men starve if their friends are long about dying; they do not, therefore, merely wish for their deaths in order that they may receive what they have earned by a disgraceful servitude, but in order that they may be set free from a heavy tax. There can, therefore, be no doubt that such persons repeat with even greater earnestness the prayer for which the undertaker was condemned, for whoever is likely to profit such men by dying, does them an injury by living. Yet the wishes of all these are alike well known and unpunished. Lastly,

let every man examine his own self, let him look into the secret thoughts of his heart and consider what it is that he silently hopes for; how many of his prayers he would blush to acknowledge, even to himself; how few there are which we could repeat in the presence of witnesses!

XXXIX.

Yet we must not condemn every thing which we find worthy of blame, as, for instance, this wish about our friends which we have been discussing, arises from a misdirected feeling of affection, and falls into the very error which it strives to avoid, for the man is ungrateful at the very time when he hurries to prove his gratitude. He prays aloud, "May he fall into my power, may he need my influence, may not be able to be safe and respectable without my aid, may he be so unfortunate that whatever return I make to him may be regarded as a benefit." To the gods alone he adds, "May domestic treasons encompass him, which can be quelled by me alone; may some powerful and virulent enemy, some excited and armed mob, assail him; may he be set upon by a creditor or an informer."

XL.

See, how just you are; you would never have wished any of these misfortunes to befall him, if he had not bestowed a benefit upon you. Not to speak of the graver guilt which you incur by returning evil for good, you distinctly do wrong in not waiting for the fitting time for each action, for it is as wrong to anticipate this as it is not to take it when it comes. A benefit ought not always to be accepted, and ought not in all cases to be returned. If you were to return it to me against my will, you would be ungrateful, how much more ungrateful are you, if you force me to wish for it? Wait patiently; why are you unwilling to let my bounty abide with you? Why do you chafe at being laid under an obligation? why, as though you were dealing with a harsh usurer, are you in such a hurry to sign and seal an equivalent bond? Why do you wish me to get into trouble? Why do you call upon the gods to ruin me? If this is your way of returning a kindness, what would you do if you were exacting repayment of a debt?

XLI.

Above all, therefore, my Liberalis, let us learn to live calmly under an obligation to others, and watch for opportunities of repaying our debt without manufacturing them. Let us remember that this anxiety to seize the first opportunity of setting ourselves free shows ingratitude; for no one repays with good will that which he is unwilling to owe, and his eagerness to get it out of his hands shows that he regards it as a burden rather than as a favour. How much better and more righteous is it to bear in mind what we owe to our friends, and to offer repayment, not to obtrude it, nor to think ourselves too much indebted; because a benefit is a common bond which connects two persons. Say "I do not delay to repay your kindness to me; I hope that you will accept my gratitude cheerfully. If irresistible fate hangs over either of us, and destiny rules either that you must receive your benefit back again, or that I must receive a second benefit, why then, of us two, let him give that was wont to give. I am ready to receive it.

"'Tis not the part of Turnus to delay."

That is the spirit which I shall show whenever the time comes; in the meanwhile the gods shall be my witnesses.

XLII.

I have noted in you, my Liberalis, and as it were touched with my hand a feeling of fussy anxiety not to be behindhand in doing what is your duty. This anxiety is not suitable to a grateful mind, which, on the contrary, produces the utmost confidence in oneself, and which drives away all trouble by the consciousness of real affection towards one's benefactor. To say "Take back what you gave me," is no less a reproach than to say "You are in my debt." Let this be the first privilege of a benefit, that he who bestowed it may choose the time when he will have it returned. "But I fear that men may speak ill of me." You do wrong if you are grateful only for the sake of your reputation, and not to satisfy your conscience. You have in this matter two judges, your benefactor, whom you ought not, and yourself, whom you cannot deceive. "But," say you, "if no occasion of repayment offers, am I always to remain in his debt?" Yes; but you should do so openly, and willingly, and should view with great pleasure what he has entrusted to you. If you are vexed at not having yet returned a benefit, you must be sorry that you ever received it; but if he deserved that you should receive a benefit from him, why should he not deserve that you should long remain in his debt?

XLIII.

Those persons are much mistaken who regard it as a proof of a great mind to make offers to give, and to fill many men's pockets and houses with their presents, for sometimes these are due not to a great mind, but to a great fortune; they do not know how far more great and more difficult it sometimes is to receive than to lavish gifts. I must disparage neither act; it is as proper to a noble heart to owe as to receive, for both are of equal value when done virtuously; indeed, to owe is the more difficult, because it requires more pains to keep a thing safe than to give it away. We ought not therefore to be in a hurry to repay, nor need we seek to do so out of due season, for to hasten to make repayment at the wrong time is as bad as to be slow to do so at the right time. My benefactor has entrusted his bounty to me: I ought not to have any fears either on his behalf or on my own. He has a sufficient security; he cannot lose it except he loses me — nay, not even if he loses me. I have returned thanks to him for it — that is, I have requited him. He who thinks too much about repaying a benefit must suppose that his friend thinks too much about receiving repayment. Make no difficulty about either course. If he wishes to receive his benefit back again, let us return it cheerfully; if he prefers to leave it in our hands, why should we dig up his treasure? why should we decline to be its guardians? he deserves to be allowed to do whichever he pleases. As for fame and reputation, let us regard them as matters which ought to accompany, but which ought not to direct our actions.

BOOK VII.

I.

Be of good cheer, my Liberalis:

“Our port is close, and I will not delay,
Nor by digressions wander from the way.”

This book collects together all that has been omitted, and in it, having exhausted my subject, I shall consider not what I am to say, but what there is which I have not yet said. If there be anything superfluous in it, I pray you take it in good part, since it is for you that it is superfluous. Had I wished to set off my work to the best advantage, I ought to have added to it by degrees, and to have kept for the last that part which would be eagerly perused even by a sated reader. However, instead of this, I have collected together all that was essential in the beginning; I am now collecting together whatever then escaped me; nor, by Hercules, if you ask me, do I think that, after the rules which govern our conduct have been stated, it is very much to the purpose to discuss the other questions which have been raised more for the exercise of our intellects than for the health of our minds. The cynic Demetrius, who in my opinion was a great man even if compared with the greatest philosophers, had an admirable saying about this, that one gained more by having a few wise precepts ready and in common use than by learning many without having them at hand. “The best wrestler,” he would say, “is not he who has learned thoroughly all the tricks and twists of the art, which are seldom met with in actual wrestling, but he who has well and carefully trained himself in one or two of them, and watches keenly for an opportunity of practising them. It does not matter how many of them he knows, if he knows enough to give him the victory; and so in this subject of ours there are many points of interest, but few of importance. You need not know what is the system of the ocean tides, why each seventh year leaves its mark upon the human body, why the more distant parts of a long portico do not keep their true proportion, but seem to approach one another until at last the spaces between the columns disappear, how it can be that twins are conceived separately, though they are born together, whether both

result from one, or each from a separate act, why those whose birth was the same should have such different fates in life, and dwell at the greatest possible distance from one another, although they were born touching one another; it will not do you much harm to pass over matters which we are not permitted to know, and which we should not profit by knowing. Truths so obscure may be neglected with impunity. [Footnote: The old saying, 'Truth lurks deep in a well (or abyss).'] Nor can we complain that nature deals hardly with us, for there is nothing which is hard to discover except those things by which we gain nothing beyond the credit of having discovered them; whatever things tend to make us better or happier are either obvious or easily discovered. Your mind can rise superior to the accidents of life, if it can raise itself above fears and not greedily covet boundless wealth, but has learned to seek for riches within itself; if it has cast out the fear of men and gods, and has learned that it has not much to fear from man, and nothing to fear from God; if by scorning all those things which make life miserable while they adorn it, the mind can soar to such a height as to see clearly that death cannot be the beginning of any trouble, though it is the end of many; if it can dedicate itself to righteousness and think any path easy which leads to it; if, being a gregarious creature, and born for the common good, it regards the world as the universal home, if it keeps its conscience clear towards God and lives always as though in public, fearing itself more than other men, then it avoids all storms, it stands on firm ground in fair daylight, and has brought to perfection its knowledge of all that is useful and essential. All that remains serves merely to amuse our leisure; yet, when once anchored in safety, the mind may consider these matters also, though it can derive no strength, but only culture from their discussion."

II.

The above are the rules which my friend Demetrius bids him who would make progress in philosophy to clutch with both hands, never to let go, but to cling to them, and make them a part of himself, and by daily meditation upon them to bring himself into such a state of mind, that these wholesome maxims occur to him of their own accord, that wherever he may be, they may straightway be ready for use when required, and that the criterion of right and wrong may present itself to him without delay. Let him know that nothing is evil except what is base, and nothing good except what is honourable: let him guide his life by this rule: let him both act and expect others to act in accordance with this law, and let him regard those whose minds are steeped in indolence, and who are given up to lust and gluttony, as the most pitiable of mankind, no matter how splendid their fortunes may be. Let him say to himself, "Pleasure is uncertain, short, apt to pall upon us, and the more eagerly we indulge in it, the sooner we bring on a reaction of feeling against it; we must necessarily afterwards blush for it, or be sorry for it, there is nothing grand about it, nothing worthy of man's nature, little lower as it is than that of the gods; pleasure is a low act, brought about by the agency of our inferior and baser members, and shameful in its result. True pleasure, worthy of a human being and of a man, is, not to stuff or swell his body with food and drink, nor to excite lusts which are least hurtful when they are most quiet, but to be free from all forms of mental disturbance, both those which arise from men's ambitious struggles with one another, and those which come from on high and are more difficult to deal with, which flow from our taking the traditional view of the gods, and estimating them by the analogy of our own vices." This equable, secure, uncloying pleasure is enjoyed by the man now described; a man skilled, so to say, in the laws of gods and men alike. Such a man enjoys the present without anxiety for the future: for he who depends upon what is uncertain can rely confidently upon nothing. Thus he is free from all those great troubles which unhinge the mind, he neither hopes for, nor covets anything, and engages in no uncertain adventures, being satisfied

with what he has. Do not suppose that he is satisfied with a little; for everything is his, and that not in the sense in which all was Alexander's, who, though he reached the shore of the Red Sea, yet wanted more territory than that through which he had come. He did not even own those countries which he held or had conquered, while Onesicritus, whom he had sent on before him to discover new countries, was wandering about the ocean and engaging in war in unknown seas. Is it clear that he who pushed his armies beyond the bounds of the universe, who with reckless greed dashed headlong into a boundless and unexplored sea, must in reality have been full of wants? It matters not how many kingdoms he may have seized or given away, or how great a part of the world may pay him tribute; such a man must be in need of as much as he desires.

III.

This was not the vice of Alexander alone, who followed with a fortunate audacity in the footsteps of Bacchus and Hercules, but it is common to all those whose covetousness is whetted rather than appeased by good fortune. Look at Cyrus and Cambyses and all the royal house of Persia: can you find one among them who thought his empire large enough, or was not at the last gasp still aspiring after further conquests? We need not wonder at this, for whatever is obtained by covetousness is simply swallowed up and lost, nor does it matter how much is poured into its insatiable maw. Only the wise man possesses everything without having to struggle to retain it; he alone does not need to send ambassadors across the seas, measure out camps upon hostile shores, place garrisons in commanding forts, or manoeuvre legions and squadrons of cavalry. Like the immortal gods, who govern their realm without recourse to arms, and from their serene and lofty heights protect their own, so the wise man fulfils his duties, however far-reaching they may be, without disorder, and looks down upon the whole human race, because he himself is the greatest and most powerful member thereof. You may laugh at him, but if you in your mind survey the east and the west, reaching even to the regions separated from us by vast wildernesses, if you think of all the creatures of the earth, all the riches which the bounty of nature lavishes, it shows a great spirit to be able to say, as though you were a god, "All these are mine." Thus it is that he covets nothing, for there is nothing which is not contained in everything, and everything is his.

IV.

“This,” say you, “is the very thing that I wanted! I have caught you! I shall be glad to see how you will extricate yourself from the toils into which you have fallen of your own accord. Tell me, if the wise man possesses everything, how can one give anything to a wise man? for even what you give him is his already. It is impossible, therefore, to bestow a benefit upon a wise man, if whatever is given him comes from his own store; yet you Stoics declare that it is possible to give to a wise man. I make the same inquiry about friends as well: for you say that friends own everything in common, and if so, no one can give anything to his friend, for he gives what his friend owned already in common with himself.”

There is nothing to prevent a thing belonging to a wise man, and yet being the property of its legal owner. According to law everything in a state belongs to the king, yet all that property over which the king has rights of possession is parcelled out among individual owners, and each separate thing belongs to somebody: and so one can give the king a house, a slave, or a sum of money without being said to give him what was his already; for the king has rights over all these things, while each citizen has the ownership of them. We speak of the country of the Athenians, or of the Campanians, though the inhabitants divide them amongst themselves into separate estates; the whole region belongs to one state or another, but each part of it belongs to its own individual proprietor; so that we are able to give our lands to the state, although they are reckoned as belonging to the state, because we and the state own them in different ways. Can there be any doubt that all the private savings of a slave belong to his master as well as he himself? yet he makes his master presents. The slave does not therefore possess nothing, because if his master chose he might possess nothing; nor does what he gives of his own free will cease to be a present, because it might have been wrung from him against his will. As for how we are to prove that the wise man possesses all things, we shall see afterwards; for the present we are both agreed to regard this as true; we must gather together something to answer the question before us, which is, how

any means remain of acting generously towards one who already possesses all things? All things that a son has belong to his father, yet who does not know that in spite of this a son can make presents to his father? All things belong to the gods; yet we make presents and bestow alms even upon the gods. What I have is not necessarily not mine because it belongs to you; for the same thing may belong both to me and to you.

“He to whom courtezans belong,” argues our adversary, “must be a procurer: now courtezans are included in all things, therefore courtezans belong to the wise man. But he to whom courtezans belong is a procurer; therefore the wise man is a procurer.” Yes! by the same reasoning, our opponents would forbid him to buy anything, arguing, “No man buys his own property. Now all things are the property of the wise man; therefore the wise man buys nothing.” By the same reasoning they object to his borrowing, because no one pays interest for the use of his own money. They raise endless quibbles, although they perfectly well understand what we say.

V.

For, when I say that the wise man possesses everything, I mean that he does so without thereby impairing each man's individual rights in his own property, in the same way as in a country ruled by a good king, everything belongs to the king, by the right of his authority, and to the people by their several rights of ownership. This I shall prove in its proper place; in the mean time it is a sufficient answer to the question to declare that I am able to give to the wise man that which is in one way mine, and in another way his. Nor is it strange that I should be able to give anything to one who possesses everything. Suppose I have hired a house from you: some part of that house is mine, some is yours; the house itself is yours, the use of your house belongs to me. Crops may ripen upon your land, but you cannot touch them against the will of your tenant; and if corn be dear, or at famine price, you will

“In vain another's mighty store behold,”

grown upon your land, lying upon your land, and to be deposited in your own barns. Though you be the landlord, you must not enter my hired house, nor may you take away your own slave from me if I have contracted for his services; nay, if I hire a carriage from you, I bestow a benefit by allowing you to take your seat in it, although it is your own. You see, therefore, that it is possible for a man to receive a present by accepting what is his own.

VI.

In all the cases which I have mentioned, each party is the owner of the same thing. How is this? It is because the one owns the thing, the other owns the use of the thing. We speak of the books of Cicero. Dorus, the bookseller, calls these same books his own; the one claims them because he wrote them, the other because he bought them; so that they may quite correctly be spoken of as belonging to either of the two, for they do belong to each, though in a different manner. Thus Titus Livius may receive as a present, or may buy his own books from Dorus. Although the wise man possesses everything, yet I can give him what I individually possess; for though, king-like, he in his mind possesses everything, yet the ownership of all things is divided among various individuals, so that he can both receive a present and owe one; can buy, or hire things. Everything belongs to Caesar; yet he has no private property beyond his own privy purse; as Emperor all things are his, but nothing is his own except what he inherits. It is possible, without treason, to discuss what is and what is not his; for even what the court may decide not to be his, from another point of view is his. In the same way the wise man in his mind possesses everything, in actual right and ownership he possesses only his own property.

VII.

Bion is able to prove by argument at one time that everyone is sacrilegious, at another that no one is. When he is in a mood for casting all men down the Tarpeian rock, he says, "Whosoever touches that which belongs to the gods, and consumes it or converts it to his own uses, is sacrilegious; but all things belong to the gods, so that whatever thing any one touches belongs to them to whom all belongs; whoever, therefore, touches anything is sacrilegious." Again, when he bids men break open temples and pillage the Capitol without fear of the wrath of heaven, he declares that no one can be sacrilegious; because, whatever a man takes away, he takes from one place which belongs to the gods into another place which belongs to the gods. The answer to this is that all places do indeed belong to the gods, but all are not consecrated to them, and that sacrilege can only be done in places solemnly dedicated to heaven. Thus, also, the whole world is a temple of the immortal gods, and, indeed, the only one worthy of their greatness and splendour, and yet there is a distinction between things sacred and profane; all things which it is lawful to do under the sky and the stars are not lawful to do within consecrated walls. The sacrilegious man cannot do God any harm, for He is placed beyond his reach by His divine nature; yet he is punished because he seems to have done Him harm: his punishment is demanded by our feeling on the matter, and even by his own. In the same way, therefore, as he who carries off any sacred things is regarded as sacrilegious, although that which he stole is nevertheless within the limits of the world, so it is possible to steal from a wise man: for in that case it will be some, not of that universe which he possesses, but some of those things of which he is the acknowledged owner, and which are severally his own property, which will be stolen from him. The former of these possessions he will recognize as his own, the latter he will be unwilling, even if he be able to possess; he will say, as that Roman commander said, when, to reward his courage and good service to the state, he was assigned as much land as he could inclose in one day's ploughing. "You do not," said he, "want a citizen who wants more than is enough for one

citizen.” Do you not think that it required a much greater man to refuse this reward than to earn it? for many have taken away the landmarks of other men’s property, but no one sets up limits to his own.

VIII.

When, then, we consider that the mind of the truly wise man has power over all things and pervades all things, we cannot help declaring that everything is his, although, in the estimation of our common law, it may chance that he may be rated as possessing no property whatever. It makes a great difference whether we estimate what he owns by the greatness of his mind, or by the public register. He would pray to be delivered from that possession of everything of which you speak. I will not remind you of Socrates, Chrysippus, Zeno, and other great men, all the greater, however, because envy prevents no one from praising the ancients. But a short time ago I mentioned Demetrius, who seems to have been placed by nature in our times that he might prove that we could neither corrupt him nor be corrected by him; a man of consummate wisdom, though he himself disclaimed it, constant to the principles which he professed, of an eloquence worthy to deal with the mightiest subjects, scorning mere prettinesses and verbal niceties, but expressing with infinite spirit, the ideas which inspired it. I doubt not that he was endowed by divine providence with so pure a life and such power of speech in order that our age might neither be without a model nor a reproach. Had some god wished to give all our wealth to Demetrius on the fixed condition that he should not be permitted to give it away, I am sure that he would have refused to accept it, and would have said,

IX.

“I do not intend to fasten upon my back a burden like this, of which I never can rid myself, nor do I, nimble and lightly equipped as I am, mean to hinder my progress by plunging into the deep morass of business transactions. Why do you offer to me what is the bane of all nations? I would not accept it even if I meant to give it away, for I see many things which it would not become me to give. I should like to place before my eyes the things which fascinate both kings and peoples, I wish to behold the price of your blood and your lives. First bring before me the trophies of Luxury, exhibiting them as you please, either in succession, or, which is better, in one mass. I see the shell of the tortoise, a foul and slothful brute, bought for immense sums and ornamented with the most elaborate care, the contrast of colours which is admired in it being obtained by the use of dyes resembling the natural tints. I see tables and pieces of wood valued at the price of a senator’s estate, which are all the more precious, the more knots the tree has been twisted into by disease. I see crystal vessels, whose price is enhanced by their fragility, for among the ignorant the risk of losing things increases their value instead of lowering it, as it ought. I see murrhine cups, for luxury would be too cheap if men did not drink to one another out of hollow gems the wine to be afterwards thrown up again. I see more than one large pearl placed in each ear; for now our ears are trained to carry burdens, pearls are hung from them in pairs, and each pair has other single ones fastened above it. This womanish folly is not exaggerated enough for the men of our time, unless they hang two or three estates upon each ear. I see ladies’ silk dresses, if those deserve to be called dresses which can neither cover their body or their shame; when wearing which, they can scarcely with a good conscience, swear that they are not naked. These are imported at a vast expense from nations unknown even to trade, in order that our matrons may show as much of their persons in public as they do to their lovers in private.”

X.

What are you doing, Avarice? see how many things there are whose price exceeds that of your beloved gold: all those which I have mentioned are more highly esteemed and valued. I now wish to review your wealth, those plates of gold and silver which dazzle our covetousness. By Hercules, the very earth, while she brings forth upon the surface every thing that is of use to us, has buried these, sunk them deep, and rests upon them with her whole weight, regarding them as pernicious substances, and likely to prove the ruin of mankind if brought into the light of day. I see that iron is brought out of the same dark pits as gold and silver, in order that we may lack neither the means nor the reward of murder. Thus far we have dealt with actual substances; but some forms of wealth deceive our eyes and minds alike. I see there letters of credit, promissory notes, and bonds, empty phantoms of property, ghosts of sick Avarice, with which she deceives our minds, which delight in unreal fancies; for what are these things, and what are interest, and account books, and usury, except the names of unnatural developments of human covetousness? I might complain of nature for not having hidden gold and silver deeper, for not having laid over it a weight too heavy to be removed: but what are your documents, your sale of time, your blood-sucking twelve per cent. interest? these are evils which we owe to our own will, which flow merely from our perverted habit, having nothing about them which can be seen or handled, mere dreams of empty avarice. Wretched is he who can take pleasure in the size of the audit book of his estate, in great tracts of land cultivated by slaves in chains, in huge flocks and herds which require provinces and kingdoms for their pasture ground, in a household of servants, more in number than some of the most warlike nations, or in a private house whose extent surpasses that of a large city! After he has carefully reviewed all his wealth, in what it is invested, and on what it is spent, and has rendered himself proud by the thoughts of it, let him compare what he has with what he wants: he becomes a poor man at once. "Let me go: restore me to those riches of mine. I know the kingdom of wisdom, which is great and stable: I possess every

thing, and in such a manner that it belongs to all men nevertheless.”

XI.

When, therefore, Gaius Caesar offered him two hundred thousand sesterces, he laughingly refused it, thinking it unworthy of himself to boast of having refused so small a sum. Ye gods and goddesses, what a mean mind must the emperor have had, if he hoped either to honour or to corrupt him. I must here repeat a proof of his magnanimity. I have heard that when he was expressing his wonder at the folly of Gaius at supposing that he could be influenced by such a bribe, he said, "If he meant to tempt me, he ought to have tried to do so by offering his entire kingdom."

XII.

It is possible, then, to give something to the wise man, although all things belong to the wise man. Similarly, though we declare that friends have all things in common, it is nevertheless possible to give something to a friend: for I have not everything in common with a friend in the same manner as with a partner, where one part belongs to him, and another to me, but rather as a father and a mother possess their children in common when they have two, not each parent possessing one child, but each possessing both. First of all I will prove that any chance would-be partner of mine has nothing in common with me: and why? Because this community of goods can only exist between wise men, who are alone capable of friendship: other men can neither be friends nor partners one to another. In the next place, things may be owned in common in various ways. The knights' seats in the theatre belong to all the Roman knights; yet of these the seat which I occupy becomes my own, and if I yield it up to any one, although I only yield him a thing which we own in common, still I appear to have given him something. Some things belong to certain persons under particular conditions. I have a place among the knights, not to sell, or to let, or to dwell in, but simply to see the spectacle from, wherefore I do not tell an untruth when I say that I have a place among the knights' seats. Yet if, when I come into the theatre, the knights' seats are full, I both have a seat there by right, because I have the privilege of sitting there, and I have not a seat there, because my seat is occupied by those who share my right to those places. Suppose that the same thing takes place between friends; whatever our friend possesses, is common to us, but is the property of him who owns it; I cannot make use of it against his will. "You are laughing at me," say you; "if what belongs to my friend is mine, I am able to sell it." You are not able; for you are not able to sell your place among the knights' seats, and yet they are in common between you and the other knights. Consequently, the fact that you cannot sell a thing, or consume it, or exchange it for the better or the worse does not prove that it is not yours; for that which is yours under certain conditions is yours nevertheless.

XIII.

I have received, but certainly not less. Not to detain you longer than is necessary, a benefit can be no more than a benefit; but the means employed to convey benefits may be both greater and more numerous. I mean those things by which kindness expresses and gives vent to itself, like lovers, whose many kisses and close embraces do not increase their love but give it play.

XIV.

The next question which arises has been thoroughly threshed out in the former books, so here it shall only be touched on shortly; for the arguments which have been used for other cases can be transferred to it.

The question is, whether one who has done everything in his power to return a benefit, has returned it. "You may know," says our adversary, "that he has not returned it, because he did everything in his power to return it; it is evident, therefore, that he did not do that which he did not have an opportunity of doing. A man who searches everywhere for his creditor without finding him does not thereby pay him what he owes." Some are in such a position that it is their duty to effect something material; in the case of others to have done all in their power to effect it is as good as effecting it. If a physician has done all in his power to heal his patient he has performed his duty; an advocate who employs his whole powers of eloquence on his client's behalf, performs his duty even though his client be convicted; the generalship even of a beaten commander is praised if he has prudently, laboriously, and courageously exercised his functions. Your friend has done all in his power to return your kindness, but your good fortune stood in his way; no adversity befell you in which he could prove the truth of his friendship; he could not give you money when you were rich, or nurse you when you were in health, or help you when you were succeeding; yet he repaid your kindness, even though you did not receive a benefit from him. Moreover, this man, being always eager, and on the watch for an opportunity of doing this, as he has expended much anxiety and much trouble upon it, has really done more than he who quickly had an opportunity of repaying your kindness. The case of a debtor is not the same, for it is not enough for him to have tried to find the money unless he pays it; in his case a harsh creditor stands over him who will not let a single day pass without charging him interest; in yours there is a most kind friend, who seeing you busy, troubled, and anxious would say.

"Dismiss this trouble from thy breast;"

leave off disturbing yourself; I have received from you all that I wish; you wrong me, if you suppose that I want anything further; you have fully repaid me in intention.”

“Tell me,” says our adversary, “if he had repaid the benefit you would say that he had returned your kindness: is, then, he who repays it in the same position as he who does not repay it?”

On the other hand, consider this: if he had forgotten the benefit which he had received, if he had not even attempted to be grateful, you would say that he had not returned the kindness; but this man has laboured day and night to the neglect of all his other duties in his devoted care to let no opportunity of proving his gratitude escape him; is then he who took no pains to return a kindness to be classed with this man who never ceased to take pains? you are unjust, if you require a material payment from me when you see that I am not wanting in intention.

XV.

In short, suppose that when you are taken captive, I have borrowed money, made over my property as security to my creditor, that I have sailed in a stormy winter season along coasts swarming with pirates, that I have braved all the perils which necessarily attend a voyage even on a peaceful sea, that I have wandered through all wildernesses seeking for those men whom all others flee from, and that when I have at length reached the pirates, someone else has already ransomed you: will you say that I have not returned your kindness? Even if during this voyage I have lost by shipwreck the money that I had raised to save you, even if I myself have fallen into the prison from which I sought to release you, will you say that I have not returned your kindness? No, by Hercules! the Athenians call Harmodius and Aristogiton, tyrannicides; the hand of Mucius which he left on the enemy's altar was equivalent to the death of Porsena, and valour struggling against fortune is always illustrious, even if it falls short of accomplishing its design. He who watches each opportunity as it passes, and tries to avail himself of one after another, does more to show his gratitude than he whom the first opportunity enabled to be grateful without any trouble whatever. "But," says our adversary, "he gave you two things, material help and kindly feeling; you, therefore, owe him two." You might justly say this to one who returns your kindly feeling without troubling himself further; this man is really in your debt; but you cannot say so of one who wishes to repay you, who struggles and leaves no stone unturned to do so; for, as far as in him lies, he repays you in both kinds; in the next place, counting is not always a true test, sometimes one thing is equivalent to two; consequently so intense and ardent a wish to repay takes the place of a material repayment. Indeed, if a feeling of gratitude has no value in repaying a kindness without giving something material, then no one can be grateful to the gods, whom we can repay by gratitude alone. "We cannot," says our adversary, "give the gods anything else." Well, but if I am not able to give this man, whose kindness I am bound to return, anything beside my gratitude, why should that which is all that I can bestow on a god

be insufficient to prove my gratitude towards a man?

XVI.

If, however, you ask me what I really think, and wish me to give a definite answer, I should say that the one party ought to consider his benefit to have been returned, while the other ought to feel that he has not returned it; the one should release his friend from the debt, the other should hold himself bound to pay it; the one should say, "I have received;" the other should answer, "I owe." In our whole investigation, we ought to look entirely to the public good; we ought to prevent the ungrateful having any excuses in which they can take refuge, and under cover of which they can disown their debts. "I have done all in my power," say you. Well, keep on doing so still. Do you suppose that our ancestors were so foolish, as not to understand that it is most unjust that the man who has wasted the money which he received from his creditor on debauchery, or gambling, should be classed with one who has lost his own property as well as that of others in a fire, by robbery, or some sadder mischance? They would take no excuse, that men might understand that they were always bound to keep their word; it was thought better that even a good excuse should not be accepted from a few persons, than that all men should be led to try to make excuses. You say that you have done all in your power to repay your debt; this ought to be enough for your friend, but not enough for you. He to whom you owe a kindness, is unworthy of gratitude if he lets all your anxious care and trouble to repay it go for nothing; and so, too, if your friend takes your good will as a repayment, you are ungrateful if you are not all the more eager to feel the obligation of the debt which he has forgiven you. Do not snap up his receipt, or call witnesses to prove it; rather seek opportunities for repaying not less than before; repay the one man because he asks for repayment, the other because he forgives you your debt; the one because he is good, the other because he is bad. You, need not, therefore, think that you have anything to do with the question whether a man be bound to repay the benefit which he has received from a wise man, if that man has ceased to be wise and has turned into a bad man. You would return a deposit which you had received from a wise man; you would return a loan

even to a bad man; what grounds have you for not returning a benefit also? Because he has changed, ought he to change you? What? if you had received anything from a man when healthy, would you not return it to him when he was sick, though we always are more bound to treat our friends with more kindness when they are ailing? So, too, this man is sick in his mind; we ought to help him, and bear with him; folly is a disease of the mind.

XVII.

I think here we ought to make a distinction, in order to render this point more intelligible. Benefits are of two kinds: one, the perfect and true benefit, which can only be bestowed by one wise man upon another; the other, the common vulgar form which ignorant men like ourselves interchange. With regard to the latter, there is no doubt that it is my duty to repay it whether my friend turns out to be a murderer, a thief, or an adulterer. Crimes have laws to punish them; criminals are better reformed by judges than by ingratitude; a man ought not to make you bad by being so himself. I will fling a benefit back to a bad man, I will return it to a good man; I do so to the latter, because I owe it to him; to the former, that I may not be in his debt.

XVIII.

With regard to the other class of benefit, the question arises whether if I was not able to take it without being a wise man, I am able to return it, except to a wise man. For suppose I do return it to him, he cannot receive it, he is not any longer able to receive such a thing, he has lost the knowledge of how to use it. You would not bid me throw back [Footnote: i.e. in the game of ball.] a ball to a man who has lost his hand; it is folly to give any one what he cannot receive. If I am to begin to reply to the last argument, I say that I should not give him what he is unable to take; but I would return it, even though he is not able to receive it. I cannot lay him under an obligation unless he takes my bounty; but by returning it I can free myself from my obligations to him. You say, "he will not be able to use it." Let him see to that; the fault will lie with him, not with me.

XIX.

“To return a thing,” says our adversary, “is to hand it over to one who can receive it. Why, if you owed some wine to any man, and he bade you pour it into a net or a sieve, would you say that you had returned it? or would you be willing to return it in such a way that in the act of returning it was lost between you?” To return is to give that which you owe back to its owner when he wishes for it. It is not my duty to perform more than this; that he should possess what he has received from me is a matter for further consideration; I do not owe him the safe-keeping of his property, but the honourable payment of my debt, and it is much better that he should not have it, than that I should not return it to him. I would repay my creditor, even though he would at once take what I paid him to the market; even if he deputed an adulteress to receive the money from me, I would pay it to her; even if he were to pour the coins which he receives into a loose fold of his cloak, I would pay it. It is my business to return it to him, not to keep it and save it for him after I have returned it; I am bound to take care of his bounty when I have received it, but not when I have returned it to him. While it remains with me, it must be kept safe; but when he asks for it again I must give it to him, even though it slips out of his hands as he takes it. I will repay a good man when it is convenient; I will repay a bad man when he asks me to do so.

“You cannot,” argues our adversary, “return him a benefit of the same kind as that which you received; for you received it from a wise man, and you are returning it to a fool.” Do I not return to him such a benefit, as he is now able to receive? It is not my fault if I return it to him worse than I received it, the fault lies with him, and so, unless he regains his former wisdom, I shall return it in such a form as he in his fallen condition is able to receive. “But what,” asks he, “if he become not only bad, but savage and ferocious, like Apollodorus or Phalaris, would you return even to such a man as this a benefit which you had received from him?” I answer, Nature does not admit of so great a change in a wise man. Men do not change from the best to the worst; even in becoming bad, he would necessarily retain some traces of

goodness; virtue is never so utterly quenched as not to imprint on the mind marks which no degradation can efface. If wild animals bred in captivity escape into the woods, they still retain something of their original tameness, and are as remote from the gentlest in the one extreme as they are in the other from those which have always been wild, and have never endured to be touched by man's hand. No one who has ever applied himself to philosophy ever becomes completely wicked; his mind becomes so deeply coloured with it, that its tints can never be entirely spoiled and blackened. In the next place, I ask whether this man of yours be ferocious merely in intent, or whether he breaks out into actual outrages upon mankind? You have instanced the tyrants Apollodorus and Phalaris; if the bad man restrains their evil likeness within himself, why should I not return his benefit to him, in order to set myself free from any further dealings with him? If, however, he not only delights in human blood, but feeds upon it; if he exercises his insatiable cruelty in the torture of persons of all ages, and his fury is not prompted by anger, but by a sort of delight in cruelty, if he cuts the throats of children before the eyes of their parents; if, not satisfied with merely killing his victims, he tortures them, and not only burns but actually roasts them; if his castle is always wet with freshly shed blood; then it is not enough not to return his benefits. All connexion between me and such a man has been broken off by his destruction of the bonds of human society. If he had bestowed something upon me, but were to invade my native country, he would have lost all claim to my gratitude, and it would be counted a crime to make him any return; if he does not attack my country, but is the scourge of his own; if he has nothing to do with my nation, but torments and cuts to pieces his own, then in the same manner such depravity, though it does not render him my personal enemy, yet renders him hateful to me, and the duty which I owe to the human race is anterior to and more important than that which I owe to him as an individual.

XX.

However, although this be so, and although I am freed from all obligation towards him, from the moment when, by outraging all laws, he rendered it impossible for any man to do him a wrong, nevertheless, I think I ought to make the following distinction in dealing with him. If my repayment of his benefit will neither increase nor maintain his powers of doing mischief to mankind, and is of such a character that I can return it to him without disadvantage to the public, I would return it: for instance, I would save the life of his infant child; for what harm can this benefit do to any of those who suffer from his cruelty? But I would not furnish him with money to pay his bodyguard. If he wishes for marbles, or fine clothes, the trappings of his luxury will harm no one; but with soldiers and arms I would not furnish him. If he demands, as a great boon, actors and courtesans and such things as will soften his savage nature, I would willingly bestow them upon him. I would not furnish him with triremes and brass-beaked ships of war, but I would send him fast sailing and luxuriously-fitted vessels, and all the toys of kings who take their pleasure on the sea. If his health was altogether despaired of, I would by the same act bestow a benefit on all men and return one to him; seeing that for such characters death is the only remedy, and that he who never will return to himself, had best leave himself. However, such wickedness as this is uncommon, and is always regarded as a portent, as when the earth opens, or when fires break forth from caves under the sea; so let us leave it, and speak of those vices which we can hate without shuddering at them. As for the ordinary bad man, whom I can find in the marketplace of any town, who is feared only by individuals, I would return to him a benefit which I had received from him. It is not right that I should profit by his wickedness; let me return what is not mine to its owner. Whether he be good or bad makes no difference; but I would consider the matter most carefully, if I were not returning but bestowing it.

XXI.

This point requires to be illustrated by a story. A certain Pythagorean bought a fine pair of shoes from a shoemaker; and as they were an expensive piece of work, he did not pay ready money for them. Some time afterwards he came to the shop to pay for them, and after he had long been knocking at the closed door, some one said to him, "Why do you waste your time? The shoemaker whom you seek has been carried out of his house and buried; this is a grief to us who lose our friends for ever, but by no means so to you, who know that he will be born again," jeering at the Pythagorean. Upon this our philosopher not unwillingly carried his three or four denarii home again, shaking them every now and then; afterwards, blaming himself for the pleasure which he had secretly felt at not paying his debt, and perceiving that he enjoyed having made this trifling gain, he returned to the shop, and saying, "the man lives for you, pay him what you owe," he passed four denarii into the shop through the crack of the closed door, and let them fall inside, punishing himself for his unconscionable greediness that he might not form the habit of appropriating that which is not his own.

XXII.

If you owe anything, seek for some one to whom you may repay it, and if no one demands it, dun your own self; whether the man be good or bad is no concern of yours; repay him, and then blame him. You have forgotten, how your several duties are divided: it is right for him to forget it, but we have bidden you bear it in mind. When, however, we say that he who bestows a benefit ought to forget it, it is a mistake to suppose that we rob him of all recollection of the business, though it is most creditable to him; some of our precepts are stated over strictly in order to reduce them to their true proportions. When we say that he ought not to remember it, we mean he ought not to speak publicly, or boast of it offensively. There are some, who, when they have bestowed a benefit, tell it in all societies, talk of it when sober, cannot be silent about it when drunk, force it upon strangers, and communicate it to friends; it is to quell this excessive and reproachful consciousness that we bid him who gave it forget it, and by commanding him to do this, which is more than he is able, encourage him to keep silence.

XXIII.

When you distrust those whom you order to do anything, you ought to command them to do more than enough in order that they may do what is enough. The purpose of all exaggeration is to arrive at the truth by falsehood. Consequently, he who spoke of horses as being:

“Whiter than snows and swifter than the winds,”

said what could not possibly be in order that they might be thought to be as much so as possible. And he who said:

“More firm than crags, more headlong than the stream,”

did not suppose that he should make any one believe that a man could ever be as firm as a crag. Exaggeration never hopes all its daring flights to be believed, but affirms what is incredible, that thereby it may convey what is credible. When we say, “let the man who has bestowed a benefit, forget it,” what we mean is, “let him be as though he had forgotten it; let not his remembrance of it appear or be seen.” When we say that repayment of a benefit ought not to be demanded, we do not utterly forbid its being demanded; for repayment must often be extorted from bad men, and even good men require to be reminded of it. Am I not to point out a means of repayment to one who does not perceive it? Am I not to explain my wants to one who does not know them? Why should he (if a bad man) have the excuse, or (if a good man) have the sorrow of not knowing them? Men ought sometimes to be reminded of their debts, though with modesty, not in the tone of one demanding a legal right.

XXIV.

Socrates once said in the hearing of his friends: "I would have bought a cloak, if I had had the money for it." He asked no one for money, but he reminded them all to give it. There was a rivalry between them, as to who should give it; and how should there not be? Was it not a small thing which Socrates received? Yes, but it was a great thing to be the man from whom Socrates received it. Could he blame them more gently? "I would," said he, "have bought a cloak if I had had the money for it." After this, however eager any one was to give, he gave too late; for he had already been wanting in his duty to Socrates. Because some men harshly demand repayment of debts, we forbid it, not in order that it may never be done, but that it may be done sparingly.

XXV.

Aristippus once, when enjoying a perfume, said: "Bad luck to those effeminate persons who have brought so nice a thing into disrepute." We also may say, "Bad luck to those base extortioners who pester us for a fourfold return of their benefits, and have brought into disrepute so nice a thing as reminding our friends of their duty." I shall nevertheless make use of this right of friendship, and I shall demand the return of a benefit from any man from whom I would not have scrupled to ask for one, such a man as would regard the power of returning a benefit as equivalent to receiving a second one. Never, not even when complaining of him, would I say,

"A wretch forlorn upon the shore he lay,
His ship, his comrades, all were swept away;
Fool that I was, I pitied his despair,
And even gave him of my realm a share."

This is not to remind, but to reproach; this is to make one's benefits odious to enable him, or even to make him wish to be ungrateful. It is enough, and more than enough, to remind him of it gently and familiarly:

"If aught of mine hath e'er deserved thy thanks."

To this his answer would be, "Of course you have deserved my thanks; you took me up, 'a wretch forlorn upon the shore.'"

XXVI.

“But,” says our adversary, “suppose that we gain nothing by this; suppose that he pretends that he has forgotten it, what ought I to do?” You now ask a very necessary question, and one which fitly concludes this branch of the subject, how, namely, one ought to bear with the ungrateful. I answer, calmly, gently, magnanimously. Never let any one’s discourtesy, forgetfulness, or ingratitude, enrage you so much that you do not feel any pleasure at having bestowed a benefit upon him; never let your wrongs drive you into saying, “I wish I had not done it.” You ought to take pleasure even in the ill-success of your benefit; he will always be sorry for it, even though you are not even now sorry for it. You ought not to be indignant, as if something strange had happened; you ought rather to be surprised if it had not happened. Some are prevented by difficulties, some by expense, and some by danger from returning your bounty; some are hindered by a false shame, because by returning it, they would confess that they had received it; with others ignorance of their duty, indolence, or excess of business, stands in the way. Reflect upon the insatiability of men’s desires. You need not be surprised if no one repays you in a world in which no one ever gains enough. What man is there of so firm and trustworthy a mind that you can safely invest your benefits in him? One man is crazed with lust, another is the slave of his belly, another gives his whole soul to gain, caring nothing for the means by which he amasses it; some men’s minds are disturbed by envy, some blinded by ambition till they are ready to fling themselves on the sword’s point. In addition to this, one must reckon sluggishness of mind and old age; and also the opposites of these, restlessness and disturbance of mind, also excessive self-esteem and pride in the very things for which a man ought to be despised. I need not mention obstinate persistence in wrong-doing, or frivolity which cannot remain constant to one point; besides all this, there is headlong rashness, there is timidity which never gives us trustworthy counsel, and the numberless errors with which we struggle, the rashness of the most cowardly, the quarrels of our best friends, and that most common evil of trusting in what is most uncertain, and of

undervaluing, when we have obtained it, that which we once never hoped to possess. Amidst all these restless passions, how can you hope to find a thing so full of rest as good faith?

XXVII.

If a true picture of our life were to rise before your mental vision, you would, I think, behold a scene like that of a town just taken by storm, where decency and righteousness were no longer regarded, and no advice is heard but that of force, as if universal confusion were the word of command. Neither fire nor sword are spared; crime is unpunished by the laws; even religion, which saves the lives of suppliants in the very midst of armed enemies, does not check those who are rushing to secure plunder. Some men rob private houses, some public buildings; all places, sacred or profane, are alike stripped; some burst their way in, others climb over; some open a wider path for themselves by overthrowing the walls that keep them out, and make their way to their booty over ruins; some ravage without murdering, others brandish spoils dripping with their owner's blood; everyone carries off his neighbours' goods. In this greedy struggle of the human race surely you forget the common lot of all mankind, if you seek among these robbers for one who will return what he has got. If you are indignant at men being ungrateful, you ought also to be indignant at their being luxurious, avaricious and lustful; you might as well be indignant with sick men for being ugly, or with old men for being pale. It is, indeed, a serious vice, it is not to be borne, and sets men at variance with one another; nay, it rends and destroys that union by which alone our human weakness can be supported; yet it is so absolutely universal, that even those who complain of it most are not themselves free from it.

XXVIII.

Consider within yourself, whether you have always shown gratitude to those to whom you owe it, whether no one's kindness has ever been wasted upon you, whether you constantly bear in mind all the benefits which you have received. You will find that those which you received as a boy were forgotten before you became a man; that those bestowed upon you as a young man slipped from your memory when you became an old one. Some we have lost, some we have thrown away, some have by degrees passed out of our sight, to some we have wilfully shut our eyes. If I am to make excuses for your weakness, I must say in the first place that human memory is a frail vessel, and is not large enough to contain the mass of things placed in it; the more it receives, the more it must necessarily lose; the oldest things in it give way to the newest. Thus it comes to pass that your nurse has hardly any influence with you, because the lapse of time has set the kindness which you received from her at so great a distance; thus it is that you no longer look upon your teacher with respect; and that now when you are busy about your candidature for the consulate or the priesthood, you forget those who supported you in your election to the quaestorship. If you carefully examine yourself, perhaps you will find the vice of which you complain in your own bosom; you are wrong in being angry with a universal failing, and foolish also, for it is your own as well; you must pardon others, that you may yourself be acquitted. You will make your friend a better man by bearing with him, you will in all cases make him a worse one by reproaching him. You can have no reason for rendering him shameless; let him preserve any remnants of modesty which he may have. Too loud reproaches have often dispelled a modesty which might have borne good fruit. No man fears to be that which all men see that he is; when his fault is made public, he loses his sense of shame.

XXIX.

You say, "I have lost the benefit which I bestowed." Yet do we say that we have lost what we consecrate to heaven, and a benefit well bestowed, even though we get an ill return for it, is to be reckoned among things consecrated. Our friend is not such a man as we hoped he was; still, let us, unlike him, remain the same as we were. The loss did not take place when he proved himself so; his ingratitude cannot be made public without reflecting some shame upon us, since to complain of the loss of a benefit is a sign that it was not well bestowed. As far as we are able we ought to plead with ourselves on his behalf: "Perhaps he was not able to return it, perhaps he did not know of it, perhaps he will still do so." A wise and forbearing creditor prevents the loss of some debts by encouraging his debtor and giving him time. We ought to do the same, we ought to deal tenderly with a weakly sense of honour.

XXX.

“I have lost,” say you, “the benefit which I bestowed.” You are a fool, and do not understand when your loss took place; you have indeed lost it, but you did so when you gave it, the fact has only now come to light. Even in the case of those benefits which appear to be lost, gentleness will do much good; the wounds of the mind ought to be handled as tenderly as those of the body. The string, which might be disentangled by patience, is often broken by a rough pull. What is the use of abuse, or of complaints? why do you overwhelm him with reproaches? why do you set him free from his obligation? even if he be ungrateful he owes you nothing after this. What sense is there in exasperating a man on whom you have conferred great favours, so as out of a doubtful friend to make a certain enemy, and one, too, who will seek to support his own cause by defaming you, or to make men say, “I do not know what the reason is that he cannot endure a man to whom he owes so much; there must be something in the background?” Any man can asperse, even if he does not permanently stain the reputation of his betters by complaining of them; nor will any one be satisfied with imputing small crimes to them, when it is only by the enormity of his falsehood that he can hope to be believed.

XXXI.

What a much better way is that by which the semblance of friendship, and, indeed, if the other regains to his right mind, friendship itself is preserved! Bad men are overcome by unwearying goodness, nor does any one receive kindness in so harsh and hostile a spirit as not to love good men even while he does them wrong, when they lay him under the additional obligation of requiring no return for their kindness. Reflect, then, upon this: you say, "My kindness has met with no return, what am I to do? I ought to imitate the gods, those noblest disposers of all events, who begin to bestow their benefits on those who know them not, and persist in bestowing them on those who are ungrateful for them. Some reproach them with neglect of us, some with injustice towards us; others place them outside of their own world, in sloth and indifference, without light, and without any functions; others declare that the sun itself, to whom we owe the division of our times of labour and of rest, by whose means we are saved from being plunged in the darkness of eternal night; who, by his circuit, orders the seasons of the year, gives strength to our bodies, brings forth our crops and ripens our fruits, is merely a mass of stone, or a fortuitous collection of fiery particles, or anything rather than a god. Yet, nevertheless, like the kindest of parents, who only smile at the spiteful words of their children, the gods do not cease to heap benefits upon those who doubt from what source their benefits are derived, but continue impartially distributing their bounty among all the peoples and nations of the earth. Possessing only the power of doing good, they moisten the land with seasonable showers, they put the seas in movement by the winds, they mark time by the course of the constellations, they temper the extremes of heat and cold, of summer and winter, by breathing a milder air upon us; and they graciously and serenely bear with the faults of our erring spirits. Let us follow their example; let us give, even if much be given to no purpose, let us, in spite of this, give to others; nay, even to those upon whom our bounty has been wasted. No one is prevented by the fall of a house from building another; when one home has been destroyed by fire, we lay the foundations of

another before the site has had time to cool; we rebuild ruined cities more than once upon the same spots, so untiring are our hopes of success. Men would undertake no works either on land or sea if they were not willing to try again what they have failed in once.”

XXXII. Suppose a man is ungrateful, he does not injure me, but himself; I had the enjoyment of my benefit when I bestowed it upon him. Because he is ungrateful, I shall not be slower to give but more careful; what I have lost with him, I shall receive back from others. But I will bestow a second benefit upon this man himself, and will overcome him even as a good husbandman overcomes the sterility of the soil by care and culture; if I do not do so my benefit is lost to me, and he is lost to mankind. It is no proof of a great mind to give and to throw away one’s bounty; the true test of a great mind is to throw away one’s bounty and still to give.

ON TRANQUILLITY OF MIND



Translated by Aubrey Stewart

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I.

[Serenus]

WHEN I examine myself, Seneca, some vices appear on the surface, and so that I can lay my hands upon them, while others are less distinct and harder to reach, and some are not always present, but recur at intervals: and these I should call the most troublesome, being like a roving enemy that assails one when he sees his opportunity, and who will neither let one stand on one's guard as in war, nor yet take one's rest without fear as in peace. The position in which I find myself more especially (for why should I not tell you the truth as I would to a physician), is that of neither being thoroughly set free from the vices which I fear and hate, nor yet quite in bondage to them: my state of mind, though not the worst possible, is a particularly discontented and sulky one: I am neither ill nor well. It is of no use for you to tell me that all virtues are weakly at the outset, and that they acquire strength and solidity by time, for I am well aware that even those which do but help our outward show, such as grandeur, a reputation for eloquence, and everything that appeals to others, gain power by time. Both those which afford us real strength and those which do but trick us out in a more attractive form, require long years before they gradually are adapted to us by time. But I fear that custom, which confirms most things, implants this vice more and more deeply in me. Long acquaintance with both good and bad people leads one to esteem them all alike. What this state of weakness really is, when the mind halts between two opinions without any strong inclination towards either good or evil, I shall be better able to show you piecemeal than all at once. I will tell you what befalls me, you must find out the name of the disease. I have to confess the greatest possible love of thrift: I do not care for a bed with gorgeous hangings, nor for clothes brought out of a chest, or pressed under weights and made glossy by frequent manglings, but for common and cheap ones, that require no care either to keep them or to put them on. For food I do not want what needs whole troops of servants to prepare it and admire it, nor what is ordered many days

before and served up by many hands, but something handy and easily come at, with nothing far-fetched or costly about it, to be had in every part of the world, burdensome neither to one's fortune nor one's body, not likely to go out of the body by the same path by which it came in. I like a rough and unpolished homebred servant, I like my servant born in my house: I like my country-bred father's heavy silver plate stamped with no maker's name: I do not want a table that is beauteous with dappled spots, or known to all the town by the number of fashionable people to whom it has successively belonged, but one which stands merely for use, and which causes no guest's eye to dwell upon it with pleasure or to kindle at it with envy. While I am well satisfied with this, I am reminded of the clothes of a certain schoolboy, dressed with no ordinary care and splendour, of slaves bedecked with gold and a whole regiment of glittering attendants. I think of houses too, where one treads on precious stones, and where valuables lie about in every corner, where the very roof is brilliantly painted, and a whole nation attends and accompanies an inheritance on the road to ruin. What shall I say of waters, transparent to the very bottom, which flow round the guests, and banquets worthy of the theatre in which they take place? Coming as I do from a long course of dull thrift, I find myself surrounded by the most brilliant luxury, which echoes around me on every side: my sight becomes a little dazzled by it: I can lift up my heart against it more easily than my eyes. When I return from seeing it I am a sadder, though not a worse man, I cannot walk amid my own paltry possessions with so lofty a step as before, and silently there steals over me a feeling of vexation, and a doubt whether that way of life may not be better than mine. None of these things alter my principles, yet all of them disturb me. At one time I would obey the maxims of our school and plunge into public life, I would obtain office and become consul, not because the purple robe and lictor's axes attract me, but in order that I may be able to be of use to my friends, my relatives, to, all my countrymen, and indeed to all mankind. Ready and determined, I follow the advice of Zeno, Cleanthes, and Chrysippus, all of whom. bid one take part in public affairs, though none of them ever did so himself: and then, as soon as something disturbs my mind, which is not used to receiving shocks,

as soon as something occurs which is either disgraceful, such as often occurs in all men's lives, or which does not proceed quite easily, or when subjects of very little importance require me to devote a great deal of time to them, I go back to my life of leisure, and, just as even tired cattle go faster when they are going home, I wish to retire and pass my life within the walls of my house. "No one," I say, "that will give me no compensation worth such a loss shall ever rob me of a day. Let my mind be contained within itself and improve itself: let it take no part with other men's affairs, and do nothing which depends on the approval of others: let me enjoy a tranquility undisturbed by either public or private troubles." But whenever my spirit is roused by reading some brave words, or some noble example spurs me into action, I want to rush into the law courts, to place my voice at one man's disposal, my services at another's, and to try to help him even though I may not succeed, or to quell the pride of some lawyer who is puffed up by ill-deserved success: but I think, by Hercules, that in philosophical speculation it is better to view things as they are, and to speak of them on their own account, and as for words, to trust to things for them, and to let one's speech, simply follow whither they lead. "Why do you want to construct a fabric that will endure for ages? Do you not wish to do this in order that posterity may talk of you: yet you were born to die, and a silent death is the least wretched. Write something therefore in a simple style, merely to pass the time, for your own use, and not for publication. Less labour is needed when one does not look beyond the present." Then again, when the mind is elevated by the greatness of its thoughts, it becomes ostentatious in its use of words, the loftier its aspirations, the more loftily it desires to express them, and its speech rises to the dignity of its subject. At such times I forget my mild and moderate determination and soar higher than is my wont, using a language that is not my own. Not to multiply examples, I am in all things attended by this weakness of a well-meaning mind, to whose level I fear that I shall be gradually brought down, or what is even more worrying, that I may always hang as though about to fall, and that there may be more the matter with me than I myself perceive: for we take a friendly view of our own private affairs, and partiality always obscures our judgment. I fancy that many men

would have arrived at wisdom had they not believed themselves to have arrived there already, had they not purposely deceived themselves as to some parts of their character, and passed by others with their eyes shut: for you have no grounds for supposing that other people's flattery is more ruinous to us than our own. Who dares to tell himself the truth? Who is there, by however large a troop of caressing courtiers he may be surrounded, who in spite of them is not his own greatest flatterer? I beg you, therefore, if you have any remedy by which you could stop this vacillation of mine, to deem me worthy to owe my peace of mind to you. I am well aware that these oscillations of mind are not perilous and that they threaten me with no serious disorder: to express what I complain of by an exact simile, I am not suffering from a storm, but from sea-sickness. Take from me, then, this evil, whatever it may be, and help one who is in distress within sight of land.

II.

[Seneca]

I have long been silently asking myself, my friend Serenus, to what I should liken such a condition of mind, and I find that nothing more closely resembles it than the conduct of those who, after having recovered from a long and serious illness, occasionally experience slight touches and twinges, and, although they have passed through the final stages of the disease, yet have suspicions that it has not left them, and though in perfect health yet hold out their pulse to be felt by the physician, and whenever they feel warm suspect that the fever is returning. Such men, Serenus, are not unhealthy, but they are not accustomed to being healthy; just as even a quiet sea or lake nevertheless displays a certain amount of ripple when its waters are subsiding after a storm. What you need, therefore, is, not any of those harsher remedies to which allusion has been made, not that you should in some cases check yourself, in others be angry with yourself, in others sternly reproach yourself, but that you should adopt that which comes last in the list, have confidence in yourself, and believe that you are proceeding on the right path, without being led aside by the numerous divergent tracks of wanderers which cross it in every direction, some of them circling about the right path itself. What you desire, to be undisturbed, is a great thing, nay, the greatest thing of all, and one which raises a man almost to the level of a god. The Greeks call this calm steadiness of mind *euthymia*, and Democritus's treatise upon it is excellently written: I call it peace of mind: for there is no necessity for translating so exactly as to copy the words of the Greek idiom: the essential point is to mark the matter under discussion by a name which ought to have the same meaning as its Greek name, though perhaps not the same form. What we are seeking, then, is how the mind may always pursue a steady, unruffled course, may be pleased with itself, and look with pleasure upon its surroundings, and experience no interruption of this joy, but abide in a peaceful condition without being ever either elated or depressed: this will be "peace of mind." Let us now consider in a

general way how it may be attained: then you may apply as much as you choose of the universal remedy to your own case. Meanwhile we must drag to light the entire disease, and then each one will recognize his own part of it: at the same time you will understand how much less you suffer by your self-depreciation than those who are bound by some showy declaration which they have made, and are oppressed by some grand title of honour, so that shame rather than their own free will forces them to keep up the pretence. The same thing applies both to those who suffer from fickleness and continual changes of purpose, who always are fondest of what they have given up, and those who merely yawn and dawdle: add to these those who, like bad sleepers, turn from side to side, and settle themselves first in one manner and then in another, until at last they find rest through sheer weariness: in forming the habits of their lives they often end by adopting some to which they are not kept by any dislike of change, but in the practice of which old age, which is slow to alter, has caught them living: add also those who are by no means fickle, yet who must thank their dullness, not their consistency for being so, and who go on living not in the way they wish, but in the way they have begun to live. There are other special forms of this disease without number, but it has but one effect, that of making people dissatisfied with themselves. This arises from a distemperature of mind and from desires which one is afraid to express or unable to fulfill, when men either dare not attempt as much as they wish to do, or fail in their efforts and depend entirely upon hope: such people are always fickle and changeable, which is a necessary consequence of living in a state of suspense: they take any way to arrive at their ends, and teach and force themselves to use both dishonourable and difficult means to do so, so that when their toil has been in vain they are made wretched by the disgrace of failure, and do not regret having longed for what was wrong, but having longed for it in vain. They then begin to feel sorry for what they have done, and afraid to begin again, and their mind falls by degrees into a state of endless vacillation, because they can neither command nor obey their passions, of hesitation, because their life cannot properly develop itself, and of decay, as the mind becomes stupefied by disappointments. All these symptoms become aggravated when their dislike of a laborious misery has driven them

to idleness and to secret studies, which are unendurable to a mind eager to take part in public affairs, desirous of action and naturally restless, because, of course, it finds too few resources within itself: when therefore it loses the amusement which business itself affords to busy men, it cannot endure home, loneliness, or the walls of a room, and regards itself with dislike when left to itself. Hence arises that weariness and dissatisfaction with oneself, that tossing to and fro of a mind which can nowhere find rest, that unhappy and unwilling endurance of enforced leisure. In all cases where one feels ashamed to confess the real cause of one's suffering, and where modesty leads one to drive one's sufferings inward, the desires pent up in a little space without any vent choke one another. Hence comes melancholy and drooping of spirit, and a thousand waverings of the unsteadfast mind, which is held in suspense by unfulfilled hopes, and saddened by disappointed ones: hence comes the state of mind of those who loathe their idleness, complain that they have nothing to do, and view the progress of others with the bitterest jealousy: for an unhappy sloth favours the growth of envy, and men who cannot succeed themselves wish everyone else to be ruined. This dislike of other men's progress and despair of one's own produces a mind angered against fortune, addicted to complaining of the age in which it lives to retiring into corners and brooding over its misery, until it becomes sick and weary of itself: for the human mind is naturally nimble and apt at movement: it delights in every opportunity of excitement and forgetfulness of itself, and the worse a man's disposition the more he delights in this, because he likes to wear himself out with busy action, just as some sores long for the hands that injure them and delight in being touched, and the foul itch enjoys anything that scratches it. Similarly I assure you that these minds over which desires have spread like evil ulcers, take pleasure in toils and troubles, for there are some things which please our body while at the same time they give it a certain amount of pain, such as turning oneself over and changing one's side before it is wearied, or cooling oneself in one position after another. It is like Homer's Achilles lying first upon its face, then upon its back, placing itself in various attitudes, and, as sick people are wont, enduring none of them for long, and using changes as though they were remedies. Hence men

undertake aimless wanderings, travel along distant shores, and at one time at sea, at another by land, try to soothe that fickleness of disposition which always is dissatisfied with the present. "Now let us make for Campania: now I am sick of rich cultivation: let us see wild regions, let us thread the passes of Bruttii and Lucania: yet amid this wilderness one wants some thing of beauty to relieve our pampered eyes after so long dwelling on savage wastes: let us seek Tarentum with its famous harbour, its mild winter climate, and its district, rich enough to support even the great hordes of ancient times. Let us now return to town: our ears have too long missed its shouts and noise: it would be pleasant also to enjoy the sight of human bloodshed." Thus one journey succeeds another, and one sight is changed for another. As Lucretius says: —

"Thus every mortal from himself doth flee ;"

but what does he gain by so doing if he does not escape from himself? he follows himself and weighs himself down by his own most burdensome companionship. We must understand, therefore, that what we suffer from is not the fault of the places but of ourselves: we are weak when there is anything to be endured, and cannot support either labour or pleasure, either one's own business or anyone else's for long. This has driven some men to death, because by frequently altering their purpose they were always brought back to the same point, and had left themselves no room for anything new. They had become sick of life and of the world itself, and as all indulgences palled upon them they began to ask themselves the question, "How long are we to go on doing the same thing?"

III.

You ask me what I think we had better make use of to help us to support this ennui. "The best thing," as Athenodorus says, "is to occupy oneself with business, with the management of affairs of state and the duties of a citizen: for as some pass the day in exercising themselves in the sun and in taking care of their bodily health, and athletes find it most useful to spend the greater part of their time in feeding up the muscles and strength to whose cultivation they have devoted their lives; so too for you who are training your mind to take part in the struggles of political life, it is far more honourable to be thus at work than to be idle. He whose object is to be of service to his countrymen and to all mortals, exercises himself and does good at the same time when he is engrossed in business and is working to the best of his ability both in the interests of the public and of private men. But," continues he, "because innocence is hardly safe among such furious ambitions and so many men who turn one aside from the right path, and it is always sure to meet with more hindrance than help, we ought to withdraw ourselves from the forum and from public life, and a great mind even in a private station can find room wherein to expand freely. Confinement in dens restrains the springs of lions and wild creatures, but this does not apply to human beings, who often effect the most important works in retirement. Let a man, however, withdraw himself only in such a fashion that wherever he spends his leisure his wish may still be to benefit individual men and mankind alike, both with his intellect, his voice, and his advice. The man that does good service to the state is not only he who brings forward candidates for public office, defends accused persons, and gives his vote on questions of peace and war, but he who encourages young men in well-doing, who supplies the present dearth of good teachers by instilling into their minds the principles of virtue, who seizes and holds back those who are rushing wildly in pursuit of riches and luxury, and, if he does nothing else, at least checks their course — such a man does service to the public though in a private station. Which does the most good, he who decides between foreigners and citizens (as praetor peregrinus), or, as praetor urbanus,

pronounces sentence to the suitors in his court at his assistant's dictation, or he who shows them what is meant by justice, filial feeling, endurance, courage, contempt of death and knowledge of the gods, and how much a man is helped by a good conscience? If then you transfer to philosophy the time which you take away from the public service, you will not be a deserter or have refused to perform your proper task. A soldier is not merely one who stands in the ranks and defends the right or the left wing of the army, but he also who guards the gates — a service which, though less dangerous, is no sinecure — who keeps watch, and takes charge of the arsenal: though all these are bloodless duties, yet they count as military service. As soon as you have devoted yourself to philosophy, you will have overcome all disgust at life: you will not wish for darkness because you are weary of the light, nor will you be a trouble to yourself and useless to others: you will acquire many friends, and all the best men will be attracted towards you: for virtue, in however obscure a position, cannot be hidden, but gives signs of its presence: anyone who is worthy will trace it out by its footsteps: but if we give up all society, turn our backs upon the whole human race, and live communing with ourselves alone, this solitude without any interesting occupation will lead to a want of something to do: we shall begin to build up and to pull down, to dam out the sea, to cause waters to flow through natural obstacles, and generally to make a bad disposal of the time which Nature has given us to spend: some of us use it grudgingly, others wastefully; some of us spend it so that we can show a profit and loss account, others so that they have no assets remaining: than which nothing can be more shameful. Often a man who is very old in years has nothing beyond his age by which he can prove that he has lived a long time.”

IV.

To me, my dearest Serenus, Athenodorus seems to have yielded too completely to the times, to have fled too soon: I will not deny that sometimes one must retire, but one ought to retire slowly, at a foot's pace, without losing one's ensigns or one's honour as a soldier: those who make terms with arms in their hands are more respected by their enemies and more safe in their hands. This is what I think ought to be done by virtue and by one who practises virtue: if Fortune get the upper hand and deprive him of the power of action, let him not straightway turn his back to the enemy, throw away his arms, and run away seeking for a hiding-place, as if there were any place whither Fortune could not pursue him, but let him be more sparing in his acceptance of public office, and after due deliberation discover some means by which he can be of use to the state. He is not able to serve in the army: then let him become a candidate for civic honours: must he live in a private station? then let him be an advocate: is he condemned to keep silence? then let him help his countrymen with silent counsel. Is it dangerous for him even to enter the forum? then let him prove himself a good comrade, a faithful friend, a sober guest in people's houses, at public shows, and at wine-parties. Suppose that he has lost the status of a citizen; then let him exercise that of a man: our reason for magnanimously refusing to confine ourselves within the walls of one city, for having gone forth to enjoy intercourse with all lands and for professing ourselves to be citizens of the world is that we may thus obtain a wider theatre on which to display our virtue. Is the bench of judges closed to you, are you forbidden to address the people from the hustings, or to be a candidate at elections? then turn your eyes away from Rome, and see what a wide extent of territory, what a number of nations present themselves before you. Thus, it is never possible for so many outlets to be closed against your ambition that more will not remain open to it: but see whether the whole prohibition does not arise from your own fault. You do not choose to direct the affairs of the state except as consul or prytanis or meddix or sufes: what should we say if you refused to serve in the army save as general or military tribune? Even

though others may form the first line, and your lot may have placed you among the veterans of the third, do your duty there with your voice, encouragement, example, and spirit: even though a man's hands be cut off, he may find means to help his side in a battle, if he stands his ground and cheers on his comrades. Do something of that sort yourself: if Fortune removes you from the front rank, stand your ground nevertheless and cheer on your comrades, and if somebody stops your mouth, stand nevertheless and help your side in silence. The services of a good citizen are never thrown away: he does good by being heard and seen, by his expression, his gestures, his silent determination, and his very walk. As some remedies benefit us by their smell as well as by their taste and touch, so virtue even when concealed and at a distance sheds usefulness around. Whether she moves at her ease and enjoys her just rights, or can only appear abroad on sufferance and is forced to shorten sail to the tempest, whether it be unemployed, silent, and pent up in a narrow lodging, or openly displayed, in whatever guise she may appear, she always does good. What? do you think that the example of one who can rest nobly has no value? It is by far the best plan, therefore, to mingle leisure with business, whenever chance impediments or the state of public affairs forbid one's leading an active life: for one is never so cut off from all pursuits as to find no room left for honourable action.

V.

Could you anywhere find a miserable city than that of Athens when it was being torn to pieces by the thirty tyrants? they slew thirteen hundred citizens, all the best men, and did not leave off because they had done so, but their cruelty became stimulated by exercise. In the city which possessed that most reverend tribunal, the Court of the Areopagus, which possessed a Senate, and a popular assembly which was like a Senate, there met daily a wretched crew of butchers, and the unhappy Senate House was crowded with tyrants. A state, in which there were so many tyrants that they would have been enough to form a bodyguard for one, might surely have rested from the struggle; it seemed impossible for men's minds even to conceive hopes of recovering their liberty, nor could they see any room for a remedy for such a mass of evil: for whence could the unhappy state obtain all the Harmodiuses it would need to slay so many tyrants? Yet Socrates was in the midst of the city, and consoled its mourning Fathers, encouraged those who despaired of the republic, by his reproaches brought rich men, who feared that their wealth would be their ruin, to a tardy repentance of their avarice, and moved about as a great example to those who wished to imitate him, because he walked a free man in the midst of thirty masters. However, Athens herself put him to death in prison, and Freedom herself could not endure the freedom of one who had treated a whole band of tyrants with scorn: you may know, therefore, that even in an oppressed state a wise man can find an opportunity for bringing himself to the front, and that in a prosperous and flourishing one wanton insolence, jealousy, and a thousand other cowardly vices bear sway. We ought therefore, to expand or contract ourselves according as the state presents itself to us, or as Fortune offers us opportunities: but in any case we ought to move and not to become frozen still by fear: nay, he is the best man who, though peril menaces him on every side and arms and chains beset his path, nevertheless neither impairs nor conceals his virtue: for to keep oneself safe does not mean to bury oneself. I think that Curius Dentatus spoke truly when he said that he would rather be dead than alive: the worst evil of all is to leave the

ranks of the living before one dies; yet it is your duty, if you happen to live in an age when it is not easy to serve the state, to devote more time to leisure and to literature. Thus, just as though you were making a perilous voyage, you may from time to time put into harbour, and set yourself free from public business without waiting for it to do so.

VI.

We ought, however, first to examine our own selves, next the business which we propose to transact, next those for whose sake or in whose company we transact it.

It is above all things necessary to form a true estimate of oneself, because as a rule we think that we can do more than we are able: one man is led too far through confidence in his eloquence, another demands more from his estate than it can produce, another burdens a weakly body with some toilsome duty. Some men are too shamefaced for the conduct of public affairs, which require an unblushing front: some men's obstinate pride renders them unfit for courts: some cannot control their anger, and break into unguarded language on the slightest provocation: some cannot rein in their wit or resist making risky jokes: for all these men leisure is better than employment: a bold, haughty and impatient nature ought to avoid anything that may lead it to use a freedom of speech which will bring it to ruin. Next we must form an estimate of the matter which we mean to deal with, and compare our strength with the deed we are about to attempt: for the bearer ought always to be more powerful than his load: indeed, loads which are too heavy for their bearer must of necessity crush him: some affairs also are not so important in themselves as they are prolific and lead to much more business, which employments, as they involve us in new and various forms of work, ought to be refused. Neither should you engage in anything from which you are not free to retreat: apply yourself to something which you can finish, or at any rate can hope to finish: you had better not meddle with those operations which grow in importance, while they are being transacted, and which will not stop where you intended them to stop.

VII.

In all cases one should be careful in one's choice of men, and see whether they be worthy of our bestowing a part of our life upon them, or whether we shall waste our own time and theirs also: for some even consider us to be in their debt because of our services to them. Athenodorus said that "he would not so much as dine with a man who would not be grateful to him for doing so": meaning, I imagine, that much less would he go to dinner with those who recompense the services of their friends by their table, and regard courses of dishes as donatives, as if they overate themselves to do honour to others. Take away from these men their witnesses and spectators: they will take no pleasure in solitary gluttony. You must decide whether your disposition is better suited for vigorous action or for tranquil speculation and contemplation, and you must adopt whichever the bent of your genius inclines you for. Isocrates laid hands upon Ephorus and led him away from the forum, thinking that he would be more usefully employed in compiling chronicles; for no good is done by forcing one's mind to engage in uncongenial work: it is vain to struggle against Nature. Yet nothing delights the mind so much as faithful and pleasant friendship: what a blessing it is when there is one whose breast is ready to receive all your secrets with safety, whose knowledge of your actions you fear less than your own conscience, whose conversation removes your anxieties, whose advice assists your plans, whose cheerfulness dispels your gloom, whose very sight delights you! We should choose for our friends men who are, as far as possible, free from strong desires: for vices are contagious, and pass from a man to his neighbour, and injure those who touch them. As, therefore, in times of pestilence we have to be careful not to sit near people who are infected and in whom the disease is raging, because by so doing, we shall run into danger and catch the plague from their very breath; so, too, in choosing our friends' dispositions, we must take care to select those who are as far as may be unspotted by the world; for the way to breed disease is to mix what is sound with what is rotten. Yet I do not advise you to follow after or draw to yourself no one except a wise man: for where

will you find him whom for so many centuries we have sought in vain? in the place of the best possible man take him who is least bad. You would hardly find any time that would have enabled you to make a happier choice than if you could have sought for a good man from among the Platos and Xenophons and the rest of the produce of the brood of Socrates, or if you had been permitted to choose one from the age of Cato: an age which bore many men worthy to be born in Cato's time (just as it also bore many men worse than were ever known before, planners of the blackest crimes: for it needed both classes in order to make Cato understood: it wanted both good men, that he might win their approbation, and bad men, against whom he could prove his strength): but at the present day, when there is such a dearth of good men, you must be less squeamish in your choice. Above all, however, avoid dismal men who grumble at whatever happens, and find something to complain of in everything. Though he may continue loyal and friendly towards you, still one's peace of mind is destroyed by a comrade whose mind is soured and who meets every incident with a groan.

VIII.

Let us now pass on to the consideration of property, that most fertile source of human sorrows: for if you compare all the other ills from which we suffer — deaths, sicknesses, fears, regrets, endurance of pains and labours — with those miseries which our money inflicts upon us, the latter will far outweigh all the others. Reflect, then, how much less a grief it is never to have had any money than to have lost it: we shall thus understand that the less poverty has to lose, the less torment it has with which to afflict us: for you are mistaken if you suppose that the rich bear their losses with greater spirit than the poor: a wound causes the same amount of pain to the greatest and the smallest body. It was a neat saying of Bion's, "that it hurts bald men as much as hairy men to have their hairs pulled out": you may be assured that the same thing is true of rich and poor people, that their suffering is equal: for their money clings to both classes, and cannot be torn away without their feeling it: yet it is more endurable, as I have said, and easier not to gain property than to lose it, and therefore you will find that those upon whom Fortune has never smiled are more cheerful than those whom she has deserted. Diogenes, a man of infinite spirit, perceived this, and made it impossible that anything should be taken from him. Call this security from loss poverty, want, necessity, or any contemptuous name you please: I shall consider such a man to be happy, unless you find me another who can lose nothing. If I am not mistaken, it is a royal attribute among so many misers, sharpers, and robbers, to be the one man who cannot be injured. If any one doubts the happiness of Diogenes, he would doubt whether the position of the immortal gods was one of sufficient happiness, because they have no farms or gardens, no valuable estates let to strange tenants, and no large loans in the money market. Are you not ashamed of yourself, you who gaze upon riches with astonished admiration? Look upon the universe: you will see the gods quite bare of property, and possessing nothing though they give everything. Do you think that this man who has stripped himself of all fortuitous accessories is a pauper, or one like to the immortal gods? Do you call Demetrius, Pompeius's

freedman, a happier man, he who was not ashamed to be richer than Pompeiius, who was daily furnished with a list of the number of his slaves, as a general is with that of his army, though he had long deserved that all his riches should consist of a pair of underlings, and a roomier cell than the other slaves? But Diogenes's only slave ran away from him, and when he was pointed out to Diogenes, he did not think him worth fetching back. "It is a shame," he said, "that Manes should be able to live without Diogenes, and that Diogenes should not be able to live without Manes." He seems to me to have said, "Fortune, mind your own business: Diogenes has nothing left that belongs to you. Did my slave run away? nay, he went away from me as a free man." A household of slaves requires food and clothing: the bellies of so many hungry creatures have to be filled: we must buy raiment for them, we must watch their most thievish hands, and we must make use of the services of people who weep and execrate us. How far happier is he who is indebted to no man for anything except for what he can deprive himself of with the greatest ease! Since we, however, have not such strength of mind as this, we ought at any rate to diminish the extent of our property, in order to be less exposed to the assaults of fortune: those men whose bodies can be within the shelter of their armour, are more fitted for war than those whose huge size everywhere extends beyond it, and exposes them to wounds: the best amount of property to have is that which is enough to keep us from poverty, and which yet is not far removed from it.

IX.

We shall be pleased with this measure of wealth if we have previously taken pleasure in thrift, without which no riches are sufficient, and with which none are insufficient, especially as the remedy is always at hand, and poverty itself by calling in the aid of thrift can convert itself into riches. Let us accustom ourselves to set aside mere outward show, and to measure things by their uses, not by their ornamental trappings: let our hunger be tamed by food, our thirst quenched by drinking, our lust confined within needful bounds; let us learn to use our limbs, and to arrange our dress and way of life according to what was approved of by our ancestors, not in imitation of new-fangled models: let us learn to increase our continence, to repress luxury, to set bounds to our pride, to assuage our anger, to look upon poverty without prejudice, to practise thrift, albeit many are ashamed to do so, to apply cheap remedies to the wants of nature, to keep all undisciplined hopes and aspirations as it were under lock and key, and to make it our business to get our riches from ourselves and not from Fortune. We never can so thoroughly defeat the vast diversity and malignity of misfortune with which we are threatened as not to feel the weight of many gusts if we offer a large spread of canvas to the wind: we must draw our affairs into a small compass, to make the darts of Fortune of no avail. For this reason, sometimes slight mishaps have turned into remedies, and more serious disorders have been healed by slighter ones. When the mind pays no attention to good advice, and cannot be brought to its senses by milder measures, why should we not think that its interests are being served by poverty, disgrace, or financial ruin being applied to it? one evil is balanced by another. Let us then teach ourselves to be able to dine without all Rome to look on, to be the slaves of fewer slaves, to get clothes which fulfill their original purpose, and to live in a smaller house. The inner curve is the one to take, not only in running races and in the contests of the circus, but also in the race of life; even literary pursuits, the most becoming thing for a gentleman to spend money upon, are only justifiable as long as they are kept within bounds. What is the use of possessing numberless books and

libraries, whose titles their owner can hardly read through in a lifetime? A student is over-whelmed by such a mass, not instructed, and it is much better to devote yourself to a few writers than to skim through many. Forty thousand books were burned at Alexandria: some would have praised this library as a most noble memorial of royal wealth, like Titus Livius, who says that it was “a splendid result of the taste and attentive care of the kings.” It had nothing to do with taste or care, but was a piece of learned luxury, nay, not even learned, since they amassed it, not for the sake of learning, but to make a show, like many men who know less about letters than a slave is expected to know, and who uses his books not to help him in his studies but to ornament his dining-room. Let a man, then, obtain as many books as he wants, but none for show. “It is more respectable,” say you, “to spend one’s money on such books than on vases of Corinthian brass and paintings.” Not so: everything that is carried to excess is wrong. What excuses can you find for a man who is eager to buy bookcases of ivory and citrus wood, to collect the works of unknown or discredited authors, and who sits yawning amid so many thousands of books, whose backs and titles please him more than any other part of them? Thus in the houses of the laziest of men you will see the works of all the orators and historians stacked upon bookshelves reaching right up to the ceiling. At the present day a library has become as necessary an appendage to a house as a hot and cold bath. I would excuse them straightway if they really were carried away by an excessive zeal for literature ; but as it is, these costly works of sacred genius, with all the illustrations that adorn them, are merely bought for display and to serve as wall-furniture.

X.

Suppose, however, that your life has become full of trouble, and that without knowing what you were doing you have fallen into some snare which either public or private Fortune has set for you, and that you can neither untie it nor break it: then remember that fettered men suffer much at first from the burdens and clogs upon their legs: afterwards, when they have made up their minds not to fret themselves about them, but to endure them, necessity teaches them to bear them bravely, and habit to bear them easily. In every station of life you will find amusements, relaxations, and enjoyments; that is, provided you be willing to make light of evils rather than to hate them. Knowing to what sorrows we were born, there is nothing for which Nature more deserves our thanks than for having invented habit as an alleviation of misfortune, which soon accustoms us to the severest evils. No one could hold out against misfortune if it permanently exercised the same force as at its first onset. We are all chained to Fortune: some men's chain is loose and made of gold, that of others is tight and of meaner metal: but what difference does this make? we are all included in the same captivity, and even those who have bound us are bound themselves, unless you think that a chain on the left side is lighter to bear: one man may be bound by public office, another by wealth: some have to bear the weight of illustrious, some of humble birth: some are subject to the commands of others, some only to their own: some are kept in one place by being banished thither, others by being elected to the priesthood. All life is slavery: let each man therefore reconcile himself to his lot, complain of it as little as possible, and lay hold of whatever good lies within his reach. No condition can be so wretched that an impartial mind can find no compensations in it. Small sites, if ingeniously divided, may be made use of for many different purposes, and arrangement will render ever so narrow a room habitable. Call good sense to your aid against difficulties: it is possible to soften what is harsh, to widen what is too narrow, and to make heavy burdens press less severely upon one who bears them skillfully. Moreover, we ought not to allow our desires to wander far afield, but we must make them confine

themselves to our immediate neighbourhood, since they will not endure to be altogether locked up. We must leave alone things which either cannot come to pass or can only be effected with difficulty, and follow after such things as are near at hand and within reach of our hopes, always remembering that all things are equally unimportant, and that though they have a different outward appearance, they are all alike empty within. Neither let us envy those who are in high places: the heights which look lofty to us are steep and rugged. Again, those whom unkind fate has placed in critical situations will be safer if they show as little pride in their proud position as may be, and do all they are able to bring down their fortunes to the level of other men's. There are many who must needs cling to their high pinnacle of power, because they cannot descend from it save by falling headlong: yet they assure us that their greatest burden is being obliged to be burdensome to others, and that they are nailed to their lofty post rather than raised to it: let them then, by dispensing justice, clemency, and kindness with an open and liberal hand, provide themselves with assistance to break their fall, and looking forward to this maintain their position more hopefully. Yet nothing sets as free from these alternations of hope and fear so well as always fixing some limit to our successes, and not allowing Fortune to choose when to stop our career, but to halt of our own accord long before we apparently need do so. By acting thus certain desires will rouse up our spirits, and yet being confined within bounds, will not lead us to embark on vast and vague enterprises.

XI.

These remarks of mine apply only to imperfect, commonplace, and unsound natures, not to the wise man, who needs not to walk with timid and cautious gait: for he has such confidence in himself that he does not hesitate to go directly in the teeth of Fortune, and never will give way to her. Nor indeed has he any reason for fearing her, for he counts not only chattels, property, and high office, but even his body, his eyes, his hands, and everything whose use makes life dearer to us, nay, even his very self, to be things whose possession is uncertain; he lives as though he had borrowed them, and is ready to return them cheerfully whenever they are claimed. Yet he does not hold himself cheap, because he knows that he is not his own, but performs all his duties as carefully and prudently as a pious and scrupulous man would take care of property left in his charge as trustee. When he is bidden to give them up, he will not complain of Fortune, but will say, "I thank you for what I have had possession of: I have managed your property so as largely to increase it, but since you order me, I give it back to you and return it willingly and thankfully. If you still wish me to own anything of yours, I will keep it for you if you have other views, I restore into your hands and make restitution of all my wrought and coined silver, my house and my household. Should Nature recall what she previously entrusted us with, let us say to her also: 'Take back my spirit, which is better than when you gave it me: I do not shuffle or hang back. Of my own free will I am ready to return what you gave me before I could think: take me away.'" What hardship can there be in returning to the place from whence one came? a man cannot live well if he knows not how to die well. We must, therefore, take away from this commodity its original value, and count the breath of life as a cheap matter. "We dislike gladiators," says Cicero, "if they are eager to save their lives by any means whatever: but we look favourably upon them if they are openly reckless of them." You may be sure that the same thing occurs with us: we often die because we are afraid of death. Fortune, which regards our lives as a show in the arena for her own enjoyment, says, "Why should I spare you, base and cowardly

creature that you are? you will be pierced and hacked with all the more wounds because you know not how to offer your throat to the knife: whereas you, who receive the stroke without drawing away your neck or putting up your hands to stop it, shall both live longer and die more quickly.” He who fears death will never act as becomes a living man: but he who knows that this fate was laid upon him as soon as he was conceived will live according to it, and by this strength of mind will gain this further advantage, that nothing can befall him unexpectedly: for by looking forward to everything which can happen as though it would happen to him, he takes the sting out of all evils, which can make no difference to those who expect it and are prepared to meet it: evil only comes hard upon those who have lived without giving it a thought and whose attention has been exclusively directed to happiness. Disease, captivity, disaster, conflagration, are none of them unexpected: I always knew with what disorderly company Nature had associated me. The dead have often been wailed for in my neighbourhood: the torch and taper have often been borne past my door before the bier of one who has died before his time: the crash of falling buildings has often resounded by my side: night has snatched away many of those with whom I have become intimate in the forum, the Senate-house, and in society, and has sundered the hands which were joined in friendship: ought I to be surprised if the dangers which have always been circling around me at last assail me? How large a part of mankind never think of storms when about to set sail? I shall never be ashamed to quote a good saying because it comes from a bad author. Publilius, who was a more powerful writer than any of our other playwrights, whether comic or tragic, whenever he chose to rise above farcical absurdities and speeches addressed to the gallery, among many other verses too noble even for tragedy, let alone for comedy, has this one : —

“What one bath suffered may befall us all.”

If a man takes this into his inmost heart and looks upon all the misfortunes of other men, of which there is always a great plenty, in this spirit, remembering that there is nothing to prevent their coming upon him also, he will arm himself against them long before they attack him. It is too late to school the mind to endurance of peril after peril has done. “I did not think this would happen,” and “Would you

ever have believed that this would have happened?" say you. But why should it not? Where are the riches after which want, hunger, and beggary do not follow? what office is there whose purple robe, augur's staff, and patrician reins have not as their accompaniment rags and banishment, the brand of infamy, a thousand disgraces, and utter reprobation? what kingdom is there for which ruin, trampling under foot, a tyrant and a butcher are not ready at hand? nor are these matters divided by long periods of time, but there is but the space of an hour between sitting on the throne ourselves and clasping the knees of someone else as suppliants. Know then that every station of life is transitory, and that what has ever happened to anybody may happen to you also. You are wealthy: are you wealthier than Pompeius? Yet when Gaius, his old relative and new host, opened Caesar's house to him in order that he might close his own, he lacked both bread and water: though he owned so many rivers which both rose and discharged themselves within his dominions, yet he had to beg for drops of water: he perished of hunger and thirst in the palace of his relative, while his heir was contracting for a public funeral for one who was in want of food. You have filled public offices: were they either as important, as unlooked for, or as all-embracing as those of Sejanus? Yet on the day on which the Senate disgraced him, the people tore him to pieces: the executioner could find no part left large enough to drag to the Tiber, of one upon whom gods and men had showered all that could be given to man. You are a king: I will not bid you go to Croesus for an example, he who while yet alive saw his funeral pile both lighted and extinguished, being made to outlive not only his kingdom but even his own death, nor to Jugurtha, whom the people of Rome beheld as a captive within the year in which they had feared him. We have seen Ptolemaeus King of Africa, and Mithridates King of Armenia, under the charge of Gaius's guards: the former was sent into exile, the latter chose it in order to make his exile more honourable. Among such continual topsy-turvy changes, unless you expect that whatever can happen will happen to you, you give adversity power against you, a power which can be destroyed by anyone who looks at it beforehand.

XII.

The next point to these will be to take care that we do not labour for what is vain, or labour in vain: that is to say, neither to desire what we are not able to obtain, nor yet, having obtained our desire too late, and after much toil to discover the folly of our wishes: in other words, that our labour may not be without result, and that the result may not be unworthy of our labour: for as a rule sadness arises from one of these two things, either from want of success or from being ashamed of having succeeded. We must limit the running to and fro which most men practise, rambling about houses, theatres, and marketplaces. They mind other men's business, and always seem as though they themselves had something to do. If you ask one of them as he comes out of his own door, "Whither are you going?" he will answer, "By Hercules, I do not know: but I shall see some people and do something." They wander purposelessly seeking for something to do, and do, not what they have made up their minds to do, but what has casually fallen in their way. They move uselessly and without any plan, just like ants crawling over bushes, which creep up to the top and then down to the bottom again without gaining anything. Many men spend their lives in exactly the same fashion, which one may call a state of restless indolence. You would pity some of them when you see them running as if their house was on fire: they actually jostle all whom they meet, and hurry along themselves and others with them, though all the while they are going to salute someone who will not return their greeting, or to attend the funeral of someone whom they did not know: they are going to hear the verdict on one who often goes to law, or to see the wedding of one who often gets married: they will follow a man's litter, and in some places will even carry it: afterwards returning home weary with idleness, they swear that they themselves do not know why they went out, or where they have been, and on the following day they will wander through the same round again. Let all your work, therefore, have some purpose, and keep some object in view: these restless people are not made restless by labour, but are driven out of their minds by mistaken ideas: for even they do not put themselves in

motion without any hope: they are excited by the outward appearance of something, and their crazy mind cannot see its futility. In the same way every one of those who walk out to swell the crowd in the streets, is led round the city by worthless and empty reasons; the dawn drives him forth, although he has nothing to do, and after he has pushed his way into many men's doors, and saluted their nomenclators one after the other, and been turned away from many others, he finds that the most difficult person of all to find at home is himself. From this evil habit comes that worst of all vices, tale-bearing and prying into public and private secrets, and the knowledge of many things which it is neither safe to tell nor safe to listen to.

XIII.

It was, I imagine, following out this principle that Democritus taught that “he who would live at peace must not do much business either public or private,” referring of course to unnecessary business: for if there be any necessity for it we ought to transact not only much but endless business, both public and private; in cases, however, where no solemn duty invites us to act, we had better keep ourselves quiet: for he who does many things often puts himself in Fortune’s power, and it is safest not to tempt her often, but always to remember her existence, and never to promise oneself anything on her security. I will set sail unless anything happens to prevent me, I shall be praetor, if nothing hinders me, my financial operations will succeed, unless anything goes wrong with them. This is why we say that nothing befalls the wise man which he did not expect — we do not make him exempt from the chances of human life, but from its mistakes, nor does everything happen to him as he wished it would, but as he thought it would: now his first thought was that his purpose might meet with some resistance, and the pain of disappointed wishes must affect a man’s mind less severely if he has not been at all events confident of success.

XIV.

Moreover, we ought to cultivate an easy temper, and not become over fond of the lot which fate has assigned to us, but transfer ourselves to whatever other condition chance may lead us to, and fear no alteration, either in our purposes or our position in life, provided that we do not become subject to caprice, which of all vices is the most hostile to repose: for obstinacy, from which Fortune often wrings some concession, must needs be anxious and unhappy, but caprice, which can never restrain itself, must be more so. Both of these qualities, both that of altering nothing, and that of being dissatisfied with everything, are enemies to repose. The mind ought in all cases to be called away from the contemplation of external things to that of itself: let it confide in itself, rejoice in itself, admire its own works ; avoid as far as may be those of others, and devote itself to itself ; let it not feel losses, and put a good construction even upon misfortunes. Zeno, the chief of our school, when he heard the news of a shipwreck, in which all his property had been lost, remarked, "Fortune bids me follow philosophy in lighter marching order." A tyrant threatened Theodorus with death, and even with want of burial. "You are able to please yourself," he answered, "my half pint of blood is in your power: for, as for burial, what a fool you must be if you suppose that I care whether I rot above ground or under it." Julius Kanus, a man of peculiar greatness, whom even the fact of his having been born in this century does not prevent our admiring, had a long dispute with Gaius, and when as he was going away that Phalaris of a man said to him, "That you may not delude yourself with any foolish hopes, I have ordered you to be executed," he answered, "I thank you, most excellent prince." I am not sure what he meant: for many ways of explaining his conduct occur to me. Did he wish to be reproachful, and to show him how great his cruelty must be if death became a kindness? or did he upbraid him with his accustomed insanity? for even those whose children were put to death, and whose goods were confiscated, used to thank him: or was it that he willingly received death, regarding it as freedom? Whatever he meant, it was a magnanimous answer. Someone may

say, "After this Gaius might have let him live." Kanus had no fear of this: the good faith with which Gaius carried out such orders as these was well known. Will you believe that he passed the ten intervening days before his execution without the slightest despondency? it is marvellous how that man spoke and acted, and how peaceful he was. He was playing at draughts when the centurion in charge of a number of those who were going to be executed bade him, join them: on the summons he counted his men and said to his companion, "Mind you do not tell a lie after my death, and say that you won;" then, turning to the centurion, he said "You will bear me witness that I am one man ahead of him." Do you think that Kanus played upon that draught-board? nay, he played with it. His friends were sad at being about to lose so great a man: "Why," asked he, "are you sorrowful? you are enquiring whether our souls are immortal, but I shall presently know." Nor did he up to the very end cease his search after truth, and raised arguments upon the subject of his own death. His own teacher of philosophy accompanied him, and they were not far from the hill on which the daily sacrifice to Caesar our god was offered, when he said, "What are you thinking of now, Kanus? or what are your ideas?" "I have decided," answered Kanus, "at that most swiftly-passing moment of all to watch whether the spirit will be conscious of the act of leaving the body." He promised, too, that if he made any discoveries, he would come round to his friends and tell them what the condition of the souls of the departed might be. Here was peace in the very midst of the storm: here was a soul worthy of eternal life, which used its own fate as a proof of truth, which when at the last step of life experimented upon his fleeting breath, and did not merely continue to learn until he died, but learned something even from death itself. No man has carried the life of a philosopher further. I will not hastily leave the subject of a great man, and one who deserves to be spoken of with respect: I will hand thee down to all posterity, thou most noble heart, chief among the many victims of Gaius.

XV.

Yet we gain nothing by getting rid of all personal causes of sadness, for sometimes we are possessed by hatred of the human race. When you reflect how rare simplicity is, how unknown innocence, how seldom faith is kept, unless it be to our advantage, when you remember such numbers of successful crimes, so many equally hateful losses and gains of lust, and ambition so impatient even of its own natural limits that it is willing to purchase distinction by baseness, the mind seems as it were cast into darkness, and shadows rise before it as though the virtues were all overthrown and we were no longer allowed to hope to possess them or benefited by their possession. We ought therefore to bring ourselves into such a state of mind that all the vices of the vulgar may not appear hateful to us, but merely ridiculous, and we should imitate Democritus rather than Heraclitus. The latter of these, whenever he appeared in public, used to weep, the former to laugh: the one thought all human doings to be follies, the other thought them to be miseries. We must take a higher view of all things, and bear with them more easily: it better becomes a man to scoff at life than to lament over it. Add to this that he who laughs at the human race deserves better of it than he who mourns for it, for the former leaves it some good hopes of improvement, while the latter stupidly weeps over what he has given up all hopes of mending. He who after surveying the universe cannot control his laughter shows, too, a greater mind than he who cannot restrain his tears, because his mind is only affected in the slightest possible degree, and he does not think that any part of all this apparatus is either important, or serious, or unhappy. As for the several causes which render us happy or sorrowful, let everyone describe them for himself, and learn the truth of Bion's saying, "That all the doings of men were very like what he began with, and that there is nothing in their lives which is more holy or decent than their conception." Yet it is better to accept public morals and human vices calmly without bursting into either laughter or tears; for to be hurt by the sufferings of others is to be forever miserable, while to enjoy the sufferings of others is an inhuman pleasure, just as it is a useless piece of

humanity to weep and pull a long face because someone is burying his son. In one's own misfortunes, also, one ought so to conduct oneself as to bestow upon them just as much sorrow as reason, not as much as custom requires: for many shed tears in order to show them, and whenever no one is looking at them their eyes are dry, but they think it disgraceful not to weep when everyone does so. So deeply has this evil of being guided by the opinion of others taken root in us, that even grief, the simplest of all emotions, begins to be counterfeited.

XVI.

There comes now a part of our subject which is wont with good cause to make one sad and anxious: I mean when good men come to bad ends; when Socrates is forced to die in prison, Rutilius to live in exile, Pompeius and Cicero to offer their necks to the swords of their own followers, when the great Cato, that living image of virtue, falls upon his sword and rips up both himself and the republic, one cannot help being grieved that Fortune should bestow her gifts so unjustly: what, too, can a good man hope to obtain when he sees the best of men meeting with the worst fates. Well, but see how each of them endured his fate, and if they endured it bravely, long in your heart for courage as great as theirs; if they died in a womanish and cowardly manner, nothing was lost: either they deserved that you should admire their courage, or else they did not deserve that you should wish to imitate their cowardice: for what can be more shameful than that the greatest men should die so bravely as to make people cowards. Let us praise one who deserves such constant praises, and say, "The braver you are the happier you are! You have escaped from all accidents, jealousies, diseases: you have escaped from prison: the gods have not thought you worthy of ill-fortune, but have thought that fortune no longer deserved to have any power over you": but when any one shrinks back in the hour of death and looks longingly at life, we must lay hands upon him. I will never weep for a man who dies cheerfully, nor for one who dies weeping: the former wipes away my tears, the latter by his tears makes himself unworthy that any should be shed for him. Shall I weep for Hercules because he was burned alive, or for Regulus because he was pierced by so many nails, or for Cato because he tore open his wounds a second time? All these men discovered how at the cost of a small portion of time they might obtain immortality, and by their deaths gained eternal life.

XVII.

It also proves a fertile source of troubles if you take pains to conceal your feelings and never show yourself to any one undisguised, but, as many men do, live an artificial life, in order to impose upon others: for the constant watching of himself becomes a torment to a man, and he dreads being caught doing something at variance with his usual habits, and, indeed, we never can be at our ease if we imagine that everyone who looks at us is weighing our real value: for many things occur which strip people of their disguise, however reluctantly they may part with it, and even if all this trouble about oneself is successful, still life is neither happy nor safe when one always has to wear a mask. But what pleasure there is in that honest straight-forwardness which is its own ornament, and which conceals no part of its character? Yet even this life, which hides nothing from any one runs some risk of being despised; for there are people who disdain whatever they come close to: but there is no danger of virtue's becoming contemptible when she is brought near our eyes, and it is better to be scorned for one's simplicity than to bear the burden of unceasing hypocrisy. Still, we must observe moderation in this matter, for there is a great difference between living simply and living slovenly. Moreover, we ought to retire a great deal into ourselves: for association with persons unlike ourselves upsets all that we had arranged, rouses the passions which were at rest, and rubs into a sore any weak or imperfectly healed place in our minds. Nevertheless we ought to mix up these two things, and to pass our lives alternately in solitude and among throngs of people; for the former will make us long for the society of mankind, the latter for that of ourselves, and the one will counteract the other: solitude will cure us when we are sick of crowds, and crowds will cure us when we are sick of solitude. Neither ought we always to keep the mind strained to the same pitch, but it ought sometimes to be relaxed by amusement. Socrates did not blush to play with little boys, Cato used to refresh his mind with wine after he had wearied it with application to affairs of state, and Scipio would move his triumphal and soldierly limbs to the sound of music, not with a feeble and halting gait, as is

the fashion now-a-days, when we sway in our very walk with more than womanly weakness, but dancing as men were wont in the days of old on sportive and festal occasions, with manly bounds, thinking it no harm to be seen so doing even by their enemies. Men's minds ought to have relaxation: they rise up better and more vigorous after rest. We must not force crops from rich fields, for an unbroken course of heavy crops will soon exhaust their fertility, and so also the liveliness of our minds will be destroyed by unceasing labour, but they will recover their strength after a short period of rest and relief: for continuous toil produces a sort of numbness and sluggishness. Men would not be so eager for this, if play and amusement did not possess natural attractions for them, although constant indulgence in them takes away all gravity and all strength from the mind: for sleep, also, is necessary for our refreshment, yet if you prolong it for days and nights together it will become death. There is a great difference between slackening your hold of a thing and letting it go. The founders of our laws appointed festivals, in order that men might be publicly encouraged to be cheerful, and they thought it necessary to vary our labours with amusements, and, as I said before, some great men have been wont to give themselves a certain number of holidays in every month, and some divided every day into play-time and work-time. Thus, I remember that great orator Asinius Pollio would not attend to any business after the tenth hour: he would not even read letters after that time for fear some new trouble should arise, but in those two hours used to get rid of the weariness which he had contracted during the whole day. Some rest in the middle of the day, and reserve some light occupation for the afternoon. Our ancestors, too, forbade any new motion to be made in the Senate after the tenth hour. Soldiers divide their watches, and those who have just returned from active service are allowed to sleep the whole night undisturbed. We must humour our minds and grant them rest from time to time, which acts upon them like food, and restores their strength. It does good also to take walks out of doors, that our spirits may be raised and refreshed by the open air and fresh breeze: sometimes we gain strength by driving in a carriage, by travel, by change of air, or by social meals and a more generous allowance of wine: at times we ought to drink even to intoxication, not so as to drown, but merely to

dip ourselves in wine: for wine washes away troubles and dislodges them from the depths of the mind, and acts as a remedy to sorrow as it does to some diseases. The inventor of wine is called Liber, not from the licence which he gives to our tongues, but because he liberates the mind from the bondage of cares, and emancipates it, animates it, and renders it more daring in all that it attempts. Yet moderation is wholesome both in freedom and in wine. It is believed that Solon and Arcesilaus used to drink deep. Cato is reproached with drunkenness: but whoever casts this in his teeth will find it easier to turn his reproach into a commendation than to prove that Cato did anything wrong: however, we ought not to do it often, for fear the mind should contract evil habits, though it ought sometimes to be forced into frolic and frankness, and to cast off dull sobriety for a while. If we believe the Greek poet, “it is sometimes pleasant to be mad “; again, Plato always knocked in vain at the door of poetry when he was sober; or, if we trust Aristotle, no great genius has ever been without a touch of insanity. The mind cannot use lofty language, above that of the common herd, unless it be excited. When it has spurned aside the commonplace environments of custom, and rises sublime, instinct with sacred fire, then alone can it chant a song too grand for mortal lips: as long as it continues to dwell within itself it cannot rise to any pitch of splendour: it must break away from the beaten track, and lash itself to frenzy, till it gnaws the curb and rushes away bearing up its rider to heights whither it would fear to climb when alone.

I have now, my beloved Serenus, given you an account of what things can preserve peace of mind, what things can restore it to us, what can arrest the vices which secretly undermine it: yet be assured, that none of these is strong enough to enable us to retain so fleeting a blessing, unless we watch over our vacillating mind with intense and unremitting care.

ON PROVIDENCE



Translated by Aubrey Stewart

Composed shortly before the philosopher's forced suicide, the short essay *De Providentia* is composed in the form of a dialogue of six sections and concerns the problem of the co-existence of the Stoic design of providence with the inherent evil of the world. The dialogue is opened by Lucilius complaining to his friend Seneca that adversities and misfortunes can happen to good men too, asking "How can this fit with the goodness connected with the design of providence?" Seneca answers according to the Stoic point of view, arguing that nothing actually bad can happen to the good man (the wise man) as opposites cannot mix. What looks like adversity is in fact a means by which the man exerts his virtues. As such, he can come out of the ordeal stronger than before. Seneca goes on to explain that the truly wise man can never surrender in the face of misfortunes, but will always go through them and even if he should fall, he will continue fighting on his knees. The wise man understands destiny and its design, and therefore he has nothing to fear from the future. Neither does he hope for anything, because he already has everything he needs — his virtuous conduct.

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I.

YOU have asked me, Lucilius, why, if the world be ruled by providence, so many evils befall good men? The answer to this would be more conveniently given in the course of this work, after we have proved that providence governs the universe, and that God is amongst us: but, since you wish me to deal with one point apart from the whole, and to answer one replication before the main action has been decided, I will do what is not difficult, and plead the cause of the gods. At the present time it is superfluous to point out that it is not without some guardian that so great a work maintains its position, that the assemblage and movements of the stars do not depend upon accidental impulses, or that objects whose motion is regulated by chance often fall into confusion and soon stumble, whereas this swift and safe movement goes on, governed by eternal law, bearing with it so many things both on sea and land, so many most brilliant lights shining in order in the skies; that this regularity does not belong to matter moving at random, and that particles brought together by chance could not arrange themselves with such art as to make the heaviest weight, that of the earth, remain unmoved, and behold the flight of the heavens as they hasten round it, to make the seas pour into the valleys and so temper the climate of the land, without any sensible increase from the rivers which flow into them, or to cause huge growths to proceed from minute seeds. Even those phenomena which appear to be confused and irregular, I mean showers of rain and clouds, the rush of lightning from the heavens, fire that pours from the riven peaks of mountains, quakings of the trembling earth, and everything else which is produced on earth by the unquiet element in the universe, do not come to pass without reason, though they do so suddenly: but they also have their causes, as also have those things which excite our wonder by the strangeness of their position, such as warm springs amidst the waves of the sea, and new islands that spring up in the wide ocean. Moreover, anyone who has watched how the shore is laid bare by the retreat of the sea into itself, and how within a short time it is again covered, will believe that it is in obedience to some hidden law of change that the

waves are at one time contracted and driven inwards, at another burst forth and regain their bed with a strong current, since all the while they wax in regular proportion, and come up at their appointed day and hour greater or less, according as the moon, at whose pleasure the ocean flows, draws them. Let these matters be set aside for discussion at their own proper season, but I, since you do not doubt the existence of providence but complain of it, will on that account more readily reconcile you to gods who are most excellent to excellent men: for indeed the nature of things does not ever permit good to be injured, by good. Between good men and the gods there is a friendship which is brought about by virtue — friendship do I say? nay, rather relationship and likeness, since the good man differs from a god in time alone, being his pupil and rival and true offspring, whom his glorious parent trains more severely than other men, insisting sternly on virtuous conduct, just as strict fathers do. When therefore you see men who are good and acceptable to the gods toiling, sweating, painfully struggling upwards, while bad men run riot and are steeped in pleasures, reflect that modesty pleases us in our sons, and forwardness in our house-born slave-boys; that the former are held in check by a somewhat stern rule, whereas the boldness of the latter is encouraged. Be thou sure that God acts in like manner: He does not pet the good man: He tries him, hardens him, and fits him for Himself.

II.

Why do many things turn out badly for good men? Why, no evil can befall a good man; contraries cannot combine. Just as so many rivers, so many showers of rain from the clouds, such a number of medicinal springs, do not alter the taste of the sea, indeed, do not so much as soften it, so the pressure of adversity does not affect the mind of a brave man; for the mind of a brave man maintains its balance and throws its own complexion over all that takes place, because it is more powerful than any external circumstances. I do not say that he does not feel them, but he conquers them, and on occasion calmly and tranquilly rises superior to their attacks, holding all misfortunes to be trials of his own firmness. Yet who is there who, provided he be a man and have honourable ambition, does not long for due employment, and is not eager to do his duty in spite of danger? Is there any hard-working man to whom idleness is not a punishment? We see athletes, who study only their bodily strength, engage in contests with the strongest of men, and insist that those who train them for the arena should put out their whole strength when practising with them: they endure blows and maltreatment, and, if they cannot find any single person who is their match, they engage with several at once: their strength and courage droop without an antagonist: they can only prove how great and how mighty it is by proving how much they can endure. You should know that good men ought to act in like manner, so as not to fear troubles and difficulties, nor to lament their hard fate, to take in good part whatever befalls them, and force it to become a blessing to them. It does not matter what you bear, but how you bear it. Do you not see how differently fathers and mothers indulge their children? How the former urge them to begin their tasks betimes, will not suffer them to be idle even on holidays, and exercise them till they perspire, and sometimes till they shed tears — while their mothers want to cuddle them in their laps, and keep them out of the sun, and never wish them to be vexed, or to cry, or to work. God bears a fatherly mind towards good men, and loves them in a manly spirit. “Let them,” says He, “be exercised by labours, sufferings, and losses, that so they may gather

true strength.” Those who are surfeited with ease break down not only with labour, but with mere motion and by their own weight. Unbroken prosperity cannot bear a single blow; but he who has waged an unceasing strife with his misfortunes has gained a thicker skin by his sufferings, yields to no disaster, and even though he fall yet fights on his knee. Do you wonder that God, who so loves the good, who would have them attain the highest goodness and preeminence, should appoint fortune to be their adversary? I should not be surprised if the gods sometimes experience a wish to behold great men struggling with some misfortune. We sometimes are delighted when a youth of steady courage receives on his spear the wild beast that attacks him; or when he meets the charge of a lion without flinching; and the more eminent the man is who acts thus, the more attractive is the sight: yet these are not matters which can attract the attention of the gods, but are mere pastime and diversions of human frivolity. Behold a sight worthy to be viewed by a god interested in his own work, behold a pair worthy of a god, a brave man matched with evil fortune, especially if he himself has given the challenge. I say, I do not know what nobler spectacle Jupiter could find on earth, should he turn his eyes thither, than that of Cato, after his party had more than once been defeated, still standing upright amid the ruins of the commonwealth. Quoth he, “What though all be fallen into one man’s power, though the land be guarded by his legions, the sea by his fleets, though Caesar’s soldiers beset the city gate? Cato has a way out of it: with one hand he will open a wide path to freedom; his sword, which he has borne unstained by disgrace and innocent of crime even in a civil war, will still perform good and noble deeds; it will give to Cato that freedom which it could not give to his country. Begin, my soul, the work which thou so long hast contemplated, snatch thyself away from the world of man. Already Petreius and Juba have met and fallen, each slain by the other’s hand — a brave and noble compact with fate, yet not one befitting my greatness: it is as disgraceful for Cato to beg his death of any one as it would be for him to beg his life.”

It is clear to me that the gods must have looked on with great joy, while that man, his own most ruthless avenger, took thought for the safety of others and arranged the escape of those who departed, while

even on his last night he pursued his studies, while he drove the sword into his sacred breast, while he tore forth his vitals and laid his hand upon that most holy life which was unworthy to be defiled by steel. This, I am inclined to think, was the reason that his wound was not well-aimed and mortal: the gods were not satisfied with seeing Cato die once: his courage was kept in action and recalled to the stage, that it might display itself in a more difficult part: for it needs a greater mind to return a second time to death. How could they fail to view their pupil with interest when leaving his life by such a noble and memorable departure? Men are raised to the level of the gods by a death which is admired even by those who fear them.

III.

However, as my argument proceeds, I shall prove that what appear to be evils are not so; for the present I say this, that what you call hard measure, misfortunes, and things against which we ought to pray, are really to the advantage, firstly, of those to whom they happen, and secondly, of all mankind, for whom the gods care more than for individuals; and next, that these evils befall them with their own good will, and that men deserve to endure misfortunes, if they are unwilling to receive them. To this I shall add, that misfortunes proceed thus by destiny, and that they befall good men by the same law which makes them good. After this, I shall prevail upon you never to pity any good man; for though he may be called unhappy, he cannot be so.

Of all these propositions that which I have stated first appears the most difficult to prove, I mean, that the things which we dread and shudder at are to the advantage of those to whom they happen. "Is it," say you, "to their advantage to be driven into exile, to be brought to want, to carry out to burial their children and wife, to be publicly disgraced, to lose their health?" Yes! if you are surprised at these being to any man's advantage, you will also be surprised at any man being benefited by the knife and cautery, or by hunger and thirst as well. Yet if you consider that some men, in order to be cured, have their bones scraped, and pieces of them extracted, that their veins are pulled out, and that some have limbs cut off, which could not remain in their place without ruin to the whole body, you will allow me to prove to you this also, that some misfortunes are for the good of those to whom they happen, just as much, by Hercules, as some things which are praised and sought after are harmful to those who enjoy them, like indigestions and drunkenness and other matters which kill us through pleasure. Among many grand sayings of our Demetrius is this, which I have but just heard, and which still rings and thrills in my ears: "No one," said he, "seems to me more unhappy than the man whom no misfortune has ever befallen." He never has had an opportunity of testing himself; though everything has happened to him according to his wish, nay, even before he has

formed a wish, yet the gods have judged him unfavourably; he has never been deemed worthy to conquer ill fortune, which avoids the greatest cowards, as though it said, "Why should I take that man for my antagonist? He will straightway lay down his arms: I shall not need all my strength against him: he will be put to flight by a mere menace: he dares not even face me; let me look around for some other with whom I may fight hand to hand: I blush to join battle with one who is prepared to be beaten." A gladiator deems it a disgrace to be matched with an inferior, and knows that to win without danger is to win without glory. Just so doth Fortune; she seeks out the bravest to match herself with, passes over some with disdain, and makes for the most unyielding and upright of men, to exert her strength against them. She tried Mucius by fire, Fabricius by poverty, Rutilius by exile, Regulus by torture, Socrates by poison, Cato by death: it is ill fortune alone that discovers these glorious examples. Was Mucius unhappy, because he grasped the enemy's fire with his right hand, and of his own accord paid the penalty of his mistake? because he overcame the King with his hand when it was burned, though he could not when it held a sword? Would he have been happier, if he had warmed his hand in his mistress's bosom; Was Fabricius unhappy, because when the state could spare him, he dug his own land? because he waged war against riches as keenly as against Pyrrhus? because he supped beside his hearth off the very roots and herbs which he himself, though an old man, and one who had enjoyed a triumph, had grubbed up while clearing his field of weeds? What then? would he have been happier if he had gorged himself with fishes from distant shores, and birds caught in foreign lands? if he had roused the torpor of his queasy stomach with shellfish from the upper and the lower sea? if he had piled a great heap of fruits round game of the first head, which many huntsmen had been killed in capturing? Was Rutilius unhappy, because those who condemned him will have to plead their cause for all ages? because he endured the loss of his country more composedly than that of his banishment? because he was the only man who refused anything to Sulla the dictator, and when recalled from exile all but went further away and banished himself still more. "Let those," said he, "whom thy fortunate reign catches at Rome, see to the Forum drenched with

blood, and the heads of Senators above the Pool of Servilius — the place where the victims of Sulla's proscriptions were stripped — the bands of assassins roaming at large through the city, and many thousands of Roman citizens slaughtered in one place, after, nay, by means of a promise of quarter. Let those who are unable to go into exile behold these things." Well! is Lucius Sulla happy, because when he comes down into the Forum, room is made for him with sword-strokes, because he allows the heads of consulars to be shown to him, and counts out the price of blood through the quaestor and the state exchequer? And this, this was the man who passed the Lex Cornelia! Let us now come to Regulus: what injury did fortune do him when she made him an example of good faith, an example of endurance? They pierce his skin with nails: wherever he leans his weary body, it rests on a wound; his eyes are fixed for ever open; the greater his sufferings, the greater is his glory. Would you know how far he is from regretting that he valued his honour at such a price? Heal his wounds and send him again into the senate-house; he will give the same advice. So, then, you think Maecenas a happier man, who when troubled by love, and weeping at the daily repulses of his ill-natured wife, sought for sleep by listening to distant strains of music? Though he drug himself with wine, divert himself with the sound of falling waters, and distract his troubled thoughts with a thousand pleasures, yet Maecenas will no more sleep on his down cushions than Regulus on the rack. Yet it consoles the latter that he suffers for the sake of honour, and he looks away from his torments to their cause: whilst the other, jaded with pleasures and sick with over-enjoyment, is more hurt by the cause of his sufferings than by the sufferings themselves. Vice has not so utterly taken possession of the human race that, if men were allowed to choose their destiny, there can be any doubt but that more would choose to be Reguluses than to be Maecenases: or if there were any one who dared to say that he would prefer to be born Maecenas than Regulus, that man, whether he says so or not, would rather have been Terentia (than Cicero).

Do you consider Socrates to have been badly used, because he took that draught which the state assigned to him as though it were a charm to make him immortal, and argued about death until death

itself? Was he ill treated, because his blood froze and the current of his veins gradually stopped as the chill of death crept over them? How much more is this man to be envied than he who is served on precious stones, whose drink a creature trained to every vice, a eunuch or much the same, cools with snow in a golden cup? Such men as these bring up again all that they drink, in misery and disgust at the taste of their own bile, while Socrates cheerfully and willingly drains his poison. As for Cato, enough has been said, and all men must agree that the highest happiness was reached by one who was chosen by Nature herself as worthy to contend with all her terrors: "The enmity," says she, "of the powerful is grievous, therefore let him be opposed at once by Pompeius, Caesar, and Crassus: it is grievous, when a candidate for public offices, to be defeated by one's inferiors; therefore let him be defeated by Vatinius: it is grievous to take part in civil wars, therefore let him fight in every part of the world for the good cause with equal obstinacy and ill-luck: it is grievous to lay hands upon one's self, therefore let him do so. What shall I gain by this? That all men may know that these things, which I have deemed Cato worthy to undergo, are not real evils."

IV.

Prosperity comes to the mob, and to low-minded men as well as to great ones; but it is the privilege of great men alone to send under the yoke the disasters and terrors of mortal life: whereas to be always prosperous, and to pass through life without a twinge of mental distress, is to remain ignorant of one half of nature. You are a great man; but how am I to know it, if fortune gives you no opportunity of showing your virtue? You have entered the arena of the Olympic games, but no one else has done so: you have the crown, but not the victory: I do not congratulate you as I would a brave man, but as one who has obtained a consulship or praetorship. You have gained dignity. I may say the same of a good man, if troublesome circumstances have never given him a single opportunity of displaying the strength of his mind. I think you unhappy because you never have been unhappy: you have passed through your life without meeting an antagonist: no one will know your powers, not even you yourself." For a man cannot know himself without a trial; no one ever learnt what he could do without putting himself to the test; for which reason many have of their own free will exposed themselves to misfortunes which no longer came in their way, and have sought for an opportunity of making their virtue, which otherwise would have been lost in darkness, shine before the world. Great men, I say, often rejoice at crosses of fortune just as brave soldiers do at wars. I remember to have heard Triumphus, who was a gladiator in the reign of Tiberius Caesar, complaining about the scarcity of prizes. "What a glorious time," said he, "is past." Valour is greedy of danger, and thinks only of whither it strives to go, not of what it will suffer, since even what it will suffer is part of its glory. Soldiers pride themselves on their wounds, they joyously display their blood flowing over their breastplate. Though those who return unwounded from battle may have done as bravely, yet he who returns wounded is more admired. God, I say, favours those whom He wishes to enjoy the greatest honours, whenever He affords them the means of performing some exploit with spirit and courage, something which is not easily to be accomplished: you can judge of a pilot in a storm, of a soldier in a

battle. How can I know with how great a spirit you could endure poverty, if you overflow with riches? How can I tell with how great firmness you could bear up against disgrace, dishonour, and public hatred, if you grow old to the sound of applause, if popular favour cannot be alienated from you, and seems to flow to you by the natural bent of men's minds? How can I know how calmly you would endure to be childless, if you see all your children around you? I have heard what you said when you were consoling others: then I should have seen whether you could have consoled yourself, whether you could have forbidden yourself to grieve. Do not, I beg you, dread those things which the immortal gods apply to our minds like spurs: misfortune is virtue's opportunity. Those men may justly be called unhappy who are stupified with excess of enjoyment, whom sluggish contentment keeps as it were becalmed in a quiet sea: whatever befalls them will come strange to them. Misfortunes press hardest on those who are unacquainted with them: the yoke feels heavy to the tender neck. The recruit turns pale at the thought of a wound: the veteran, who knows that he has often won the victory after losing blood, looks boldly at his own flowing gore. In like manner God hardens, reviews, and exercises those whom He tests and loves: those whom He seems to indulge and spare, He is keeping out of condition to meet their coming misfortunes: for you are mistaken if you suppose that any one is exempt from misfortune: he who has long prospered will have his share some day; those who seem to have been spared them have only had them put off. Why does God afflict the best of men with ill-health, or sorrow, or other troubles? Because in the army the most hazardous services are assigned to the bravest soldiers: a general sends his choicest troops to attack the enemy in a midnight ambushade, to reconnoitre his line of march, or to drive the hostile garrisons from their strong places. No one of these men says as he begins his march, "The general has dealt hardly with me," but "He has judged well of me." Let those who are bidden to suffer what makes the weak and cowardly weep, say likewise, "God has thought us worthy subjects on whom to try how much suffering human nature can endure." Avoid luxury, avoid effeminate enjoyment, by which men's minds are softened, and in which, unless something occurs to remind them of the common lot of

humanity, they lie unconscious, as though plunged in continual drunkenness. He whom glazed windows have always guarded from the wind, whose feet are warmed by constantly renewed fomentations, whose dining-room is heated by hot air beneath the floor and spread through the walls, cannot meet the gentlest breeze without danger. While all excesses are hurtful, excess of comfort is the most hurtful of all; it affects the brain; it leads men's minds into vain imaginings; it spreads a thick cloud over the boundaries of truth and falsehood. Is it not better, with virtue by one's side, to endure continual misfortune, than to burst with an endless surfeit of good things? It is the overloaded stomach that is rent asunder: death treats starvation more gently. The gods deal with good men according to the same rule as schoolmasters with their pupils, who exact most labour from those of whom they have the surest hopes. Do you imagine that the Lacedaemonians, who test the mettle of their children by public flogging, do not love them? Their own fathers call upon them to endure the strokes of the rod bravely, and when they are torn and half dead, ask them to offer their wounded skin to receive fresh wounds. Why then should we wonder if God tries noble spirits severely? There can be no easy proof of virtue. Fortune lashes and mangles us: well, let us endure it: it is not cruelty, it is a struggle, in which the oftener we engage the braver we shall become. The strongest part of the body is that which is exercised by the most frequent use: we must entrust ourselves to fortune to be hardened by her against herself: by degrees she will make us a match for herself. Familiarity with danger leads us to despise it. Thus the bodies of sailors are hardened by endurance of the sea, and the hands of farmers by work; the arms of soldiers are powerful to hurl darts, the legs of runners are active: that part of each man which he exercises is the strongest: so by endurance the mind becomes able to despise the power of misfortunes. You may see what endurance might effect in us if you observe what labour does among tribes that are naked and rendered stronger by want. Look at all the nations that dwell beyond the Roman Empire: I mean the Germans and all the nomad tribes that war against us along the Danube. They suffer from eternal winter, and a dismal climate, the barren soil grudges them sustenance, they keep off the rain with leaves or thatch, they bound across frozen

marshes, and hunt wild beasts for food. Do you think them unhappy? There is no unhappiness in what use has made part of one's nature: by degrees men find pleasure in doing what they were first driven to do by necessity. They have no homes and no resting-places save those which weariness appoints them for the day; their food, though coarse, yet must be sought with their own hands; the harshness of the climate is terrible, and their bodies are unclothed. This, which you think a hardship, is the mode of life of all these races: how then can you wonder at good men being shaken, in order that they may be strengthened? No tree which the wind does not often blow against is firm and strong; for it is stiffened by the very act of being shaken, and plants its roots more securely: those which grow in a sheltered valley are brittle: and so it is to the advantage of good men, and causes them to be undismayed, that they should live much amidst alarms, and learn to bear with patience what is not evil save to him who endures it ill.

V.

Add to this that it is to the advantage of every one that the best men should, so to speak, be on active service and perform labours: God has the same purpose as the wise man, that is, to prove that the things which the herd covets and dreads are neither good nor bad in themselves. If, however, He only bestows them upon good men, it will be evident that they are good things, and bad, if He only inflicts them upon bad men. Blindness would be execrable if no one lost his eyes except those who deserve to have them pulled out; therefore let Appius and Metellus be doomed to darkness. Riches are not a good thing: therefore let Elius the pander possess them, that men who have consecrated money in the temple, may see the same in the brothel: for by no means can God discredit objects of desire so effectually as by bestowing them upon the worst of men, and removing them from the best." But," you say, "it is unjust that a good man should be enfeebled, or transfixed, or chained, while bad men swagger at large with a whole skin." What! is it not unjust that brave men should bear arms, pass the night in camps, and stand on guard along the rampart with their wounds still bandaged, while within the city eunuchs and professional profligates live at their ease? what? is it not unjust that maidens of the highest birth should be roused at night to perform Divine service, while fallen women enjoy the soundest sleep? Labour calls for the best men: the senate often passes the whole day in debate, while at the same time every scoundrel either amuses his leisure in the Campus Martius, or lurks in a tavern, or passes his time in some pleasant society. The same thing happens in this great commonwealth (of the world): good men labour, spend and are spent, and that too of their own free will; they are not dragged along by fortune, but follow her and take equal steps with her; if they knew how, they would outstrip her. I remember, also, to have heard this spirited saying of that stoutest-hearted of men, Demetrius. "Ye immortal Gods," said he, "the only complaint which I have to make of you is that you did not make your will known to me earlier; for then I would sooner have gone into that state of life to which I now have been called. Do you wish to take my children? it was for you

that I brought them up. Do you wish to take some part of my body? take it: it is no great thing that I am offering you, I shall soon have done with the whole of it. Do you wish for my life? why should I hesitate to return to you what you gave me? whatever you ask you shall receive with my good will: nay, I would rather give it than be forced to hand it over to you: what need had you to take away what you did? you might have received it from me: yet even as it is you cannot take anything from me, because you cannot rob a man unless he resists.”

I am constrained to nothing, I suffer nothing against my will, nor am I God’s slave, but his willing follower, and so much the more because I know that everything is ordained and proceeds according to a law that endures forever. The fates guide us, and the length of every man’s days is decided at the first hour of his birth: every cause depends upon some earlier cause: one long chain of destiny decides all things, public or private. Wherefore, everything must be patiently endured, because events do not fall in our way, as we imagine, but come by a regular law. It has long ago been settled at what you should rejoice and at what you should weep, and although the lives of individual men appear to differ from one another in a great variety of particulars, yet the sum total comes to one and the same thing: we soon perish, and the gifts which we receive soon perish. Why, then, should we be angry? why should we lament? we are prepared for our fate: let nature deal as she will with her own bodies; let us be cheerful whatever befalls, and stoutly reflect that it is not anything of our own that perishes. What is the duty of a good man? To submit himself to fate: it is a great consolation -to be swept away together with the entire universe: whatever law is laid upon us that thus we must live and thus we must die, is laid upon the gods also: one unchangeable stream bears along men and gods alike: the creator and ruler of the universe himself, though he has given laws to the fates, yet is guided by them: he always obeys, he only once commanded. “But why was God so unjust in His distribution of fate, as to assign poverty, wounds, and untimely deaths to good men?” The workman cannot alter his materials: this is their nature. Some qualities cannot be separated from some others: they cling together; are indivisible. Dull minds, tending to sleep or to a waking state exactly like sleep,

are composed of sluggish elements: it requires stronger stuff to form a man meriting careful description. His course will not be straightforward; he must go upwards and downwards, be tossed about, and guide his vessel through troubled waters: he must make his way in spite of fortune: he will meet with much that is hard which he must soften, much that is rough that he must make smooth. Fire tries gold, misfortune tries brave men. See how high virtue has to climb: you may be sure that it has no safe path to tread.

“Steep is the path at first: the steeds, though strong,
Fresh from their rest, can hardly crawl along;
The middle part lies through the topmost sky,
Whence oft, as I the earth and sea descry,
I shudder, terrors through my bosom thrill.
The ending of the path is sheer down hill,
And needs the careful guidance of the rein,
For ever when I sink beneath the main,
Old Tethys trembles in her depths below
Lest headlong down upon her I should go.”

When the spirited youth heard this, he said, “I have no fault to find with the road: I will mount it, it is worthwhile to go through these places, even though one fall.” His father did not cease from trying to scare his brave spirit with terrors: —

“Then, too, that thou may’st hold thy course aright,
And neither turn aside to left nor right,
Straight through the Bull’s fell horns thy path must go,
Through the fierce Lion, and the Archer’s bow.”

After this Phaethon says: —

“Harness the chariot which you yield to me,

I am encouraged by these things with which you think to scare me: I long to stand where the Sun himself trembles to stand.” It is the part of grovellers and cowards to follow the, safe track; courage

loves a lofty path.

VI.

“Yet, why does God permit evil to happen to good men?” He does not permit it: he takes away from them all evils, such as crimes and scandalous wickedness, daring thoughts, grasping schemes, blind lusts, and avarice coveting its neighbour’s goods. He protects and saves them. Does anyone besides this demand that God should look after the baggage of good men also? Why, they themselves leave the care of this to God: they scorn external accessories. Democritus forswore riches, holding them to be a burden to a virtuous mind: what wonder then, if God permits that to happen to a good man, which a good man sometimes chooses should happen to himself? Good men, you say, lose their children: why should they not, since sometimes they even put them to death? They are banished: why should they not be, since sometimes they leave their country of their own free will, never to return? They are slain: why not, since sometimes they choose to lay violent hands on themselves? Why do they suffer certain miseries? it is that they may teach others how to do so. They are born as patterns. Conceive, therefore, that God says: — “You, who have chosen righteousness, what complaint can you make of me? I have encompassed other men with unreal good things, and have deceived their inane minds as it were by a long and misleading dream: I have bedecked them with gold, silver, and ivory, but within them there is no good thing. Those men whom you regard as fortunate, if you could see, not their outward show, but their hidden life, are really unhappy, mean, and base, ornamented on the outside like the walls of their houses: that good fortune of theirs is not sound and genuine: it is only a veneer, and that a thin one. As long, therefore, as they can stand upright and display themselves as they choose, they shine and impose upon one; when something occurs to shake and unmask them, we see how deep and real a rottenness was hidden by that factitious magnificence. To you I have given sure and lasting good things, which become greater and better the more one turns them over and views them on every side: I have granted to you to scorn danger, to disdain passion. You do not shine outwardly, all your good qualities are turned inwards; even so does

the world neglect what lies without it, and rejoices in the contemplation of itself. I have placed every good thing within your own breasts: it is your good fortune not to need any good fortune. 'Yet many things befall you which are sad, dreadful, hard to be borne.' Well, as I have not been able to remove these from your path, I have given your minds strength to combat all: bear them bravely. In this you can surpass God himself; He is beyond suffering evil; you are above it. Despise poverty; no man lives as poor as he was born: despise pain; either it will cease or you will cease: despise death; it either ends you or takes you elsewhere: despise fortune; I have given her no weapon that can reach the mind. Above all, I have taken care that no one should hold you captive against your will: the way of escape lies open before you: if you do not choose to fight, you may fly. For this reason, of all those matters which I have deemed essential for you, I have made nothing easier for you than to die. I have set man's life as it were on a mountain side: it soon slips down. Do but watch, and you will see how short and how ready a path leads to freedom. I have not imposed such long delays upon those who quit the world as upon those who enter it: were it not so, fortune would hold a wide dominion over you, if a man died as slowly as he is born. Let all time, let every place teach you, how simple it is to renounce nature, and to fling back her gifts to her: before the altar itself and during the solemn rites of sacrifice, while life is being prayed for, learn how to die. Fat oxen fall dead with a tiny wound; a blow from a man's hand fells animals of great strength: the sutures of the neck are severed by a thin blade, and when the joint which connects the head and neck is cut, all that great mass falls. The breath of life is not deep seated, nor only to be let forth by steel — the vitals need not be searched throughout by plunging a sword among them to the hilt: death lies near the surface. I have not appointed any particular spot for these blows — the body may be pierced wherever you please. That very act which is called dying, by which the breath of life leaves the body, is too short for you to be able to estimate its quickness: whether a knot crushes the windpipe, or water stops your breathing: whether you fall headlong from a height and perish upon the hard ground below, or a mouthful of fire checks the drawing of your breath — whatever it is, it acts swiftly. Do you not blush to

spend so long a time in dreading what takes so short a time to do?”

The Latin Texts



Ruins of the Domus Transitoria, Nero's palace on Palatine Hill, destroyed by the Great Fire of Rome in 64 AD. From 54 to 62, Seneca acted as Nero's advisor, with the praetorian prefect Sextus Afranius Burrus. Seneca's influence was said to be especially strong in the early years.

LIST OF LATIN TEXTS



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ON PROVIDENCE — De Providentia

The Tragedies

THE MADNESS OF HERCULES — Hercules Furens

Iuno

Soror Tonantis (hoc enim solum mihi
nomen relictum est) semper alienum Iovem
ac templa summi vidua deserui aetheris
locumque caelo pulsa paelicibus dedi;
5 tellus colenda est: paelices caelum tenent,
hinc Arctos alta parte glacialis poli
sublime classes sidus Argolicas agit;
hinc, qua tepenti vere labatur dies,
Tyriae per undas vector Europae nitet;
10 illinc timendum ratibus ac ponto gregem
passim vagantes exerunt Atlantides.
ferro minax hinc terret Orion deos
suasque Perseus aureus stellas habet;
hinc clara gemini signa Tyndaridae micant
15 quibusque natis mobilis tellus stetit.
nec ipse tantum Bacchus aut Bacchi parens
adiere superos: ne qua pars probro vacet,
mundus puellae sarta Gnosiaca gerit,
sed vetera sero querimur ...
... una me dira ac fera
20 Thebana tellus nuribus a! sparsa impiis
quotiens novercam fecit! escendat licet
meumque victrix teneat Alcmene locum,
pariterque natus astra promissa occupet,
in cuius ortus mundus impendit diem
25 tardusque Eoo Phoebus effulsit mari
retinere mersum iussus Oceano iubar.
non sic abibunt odia; vivaces aget
violentus iras animus et saevus dolor
aeterna bella pace sublata geret.
30 Quae bella? quicquid horridum tellus creat

inimica, quicquid pontus aut aer tulit
terribile dirum pestilens atrox ferum,
fractum atque domitum est. superat et crescit malis
iraque nostra fruitur; in laudes suas
35 mea vertit odia: dum nimis saeva impero,
patrem probavi, gloriae feci locum,
qua Sol reducens quaque deponens diem
binos propinqua tinguunt Aethiopas face,
indomita virtus colitur et toto deus
40 narratur orbe. monstra iam desunt mihi
minorque labor est Herculi iussa exequi,
quam mihi iubere: laetus imperia excipit,
quae fera tyranni iura violenta queant
nocere iuveni? nempe pro telis gerit
45 quae timuit et quae fudit: armatus venit
leone et hydra, nec satis terrae patent:
effregit ecce limen inferni Iovis
et opima victi regis ad superos refert,
parum est reverti, foedus umbrarum perit:
50 vidi ipsa, vidi nocte discussa inferum
et Dite domito spolia iactantem patri
fraterna, cur non Tinctum et oppressum trahit
ipsum catenis paria sortitum Iovi
Ereboque capto potitur et retegunt Styga?
55 patefacta ab imis manibus retro via est
et sacra dirae mortis in aperto iacent.
at ille, rupto carcere umbrarum ferox,
de me triumphat et superbifica manu
atrum per urbes ducit Argolicas canem.
60 viso labantem Cerbero vidi diem
pavidumque Solem; me quoque invasit tremor,
et terna monstri colla devicti intuens
timui imperasse. levia sed nimium queror;
caelo timendum est, regna ne summa occupet
65 qui vicit ima: sceptrum praeripiet patri.
nec in astra lenta veniet ut Bacchus via:
iter ruina quaeret et vacuo volet

regnare mundo, robore experto tumet,
et posse caelum viribus vinci suis
70 didicit ferendo; subdidit mundo caput
nec flexit umeros molis immensae labor
meliusque collo sedit Herculeo polus.
immota cervix sidera et caelum tulit
et me prementem: quaerit ad superos viam.
75 Perge ira, perge et magna meditantem opprime,
congrederere, manibus ipsa dilacera tuis:
quid tanta mandas odia? discedant ferae,
ipse imperando fessus Eurystheus vacet.
Titanas ausos rumpere imperium Iovis
80 emitte, Siculi verticis laxa specum,
tellus gigante Doris excusso tremens
supposita monstri colla terrifici levet —
sublimis alias Luna concipiat feras
sed vicit ista. quaeris Alcidae parem?
85 nemo est nisi ipse: bella iam secum gerat.
adsint ab imo Tartari fundo excitae
Eumenides, ignem flammeae spargant comae,
viperea saevae verbera incutiant manus,
i nunc, superbe, caelitum sedes pete,
90 humana temne. iam Styga et manes ferox
fugisse credis? hic tibi ostendam inferos,
revocabo in alta conditam caligine,
ultra nocentum exilia, discordem deam
quam munit ingens montis oppositi specus;
95 educam et imo Ditis e regno extraham
quicquid relictum est: veniet invisum Scelus
suumque lambens sanguinem Impietas ferox
Errorque et in se semper armatus Furor —
hoc hoc ministro noster utatur dolor.
100 Incipite, famulae Ditis, ardentem citae
concutite pinum et agmen horrendum anguibus
Megaera ducat atque luctifica manu
vastam rogo flagrante corripit trabem,
hoc agite, poenas petite vitiatae Stygis.

105 concutite pectus, acrior mentem excoquat
quam qui caminis ignis Aetnaeis furit:
ut possit animo captus Alcides agi,
magno furore percitus, vobis prius
insaniendum est. Iuno, cur nondum furis?
110 me me, sorores, mente deiectam mea
versate primam, facere si quicquam apparo
dignum noverca; vota mutantur mea:
natos reversus videat incolumes precor
manuque fortis redeat, inveni diem,
115 invisa quo nos Herculis virtus iuvet.
me vicit: et se vincat et cupiat mori
ab inferis reversus, hic prosit mihi
Iove esse genitum, stabo at, ut certo exeant
emissa nervo tela, librabo manu,
120 regam furentis arma, pugnanti Herculi
tandem favebo — scelere perfecto licet
admittat illas genitor in caelum manus.
Movenda iam sunt bella: clarescit dies
ortuque Titan lucidus croceo subit.

Chorus

125 Iam rara micant sidera prono
languida mundo; nox victa vagos
contrahit ignes luce renata,
cogit nitidum Phosphoros agmen:
signum celsi glaciale poli
130 septem stellis Arcados ursae
lucem verso temone vocat.
Iam caeruleis evectus equis
Titan summa prospicit Oeta;
iam Cadmeis incluta Bacchis
135 aspersa die dumeta rubent
Phoebique fugit reditura soror.
labor exoritur durus et omnis
agitat curas aperitque domos.
Pastor gelida cana pruina

140 grege dimisso pabula carpit;
ludit prato liber aperto
nondum rupta fronte iuventus,
vacuae reparant ubera matres;
errat cursu levis incerto
145 molli petulans haedus in herba.
Pendet summo stridula ramo
pinnaeque novo tradere soli
gestit querulos inter nidos
Thracia paelex,
150 turbaeque circa confusa sonat
murmure mixto testata diem.
Carbasa ventis credit dubius
navita vitae,
laxos aura complente sinus,
155 hic exesis pendens scopulis
aut deceptos instruit hamos
aut suspensus spectat pressa
praemia dextra:
sentit tremulum linea piscem.
160 Haec, innocuae quibus est vitae
tranquilla quies
et laeta suo parvoque domus;
spes immanis
urbibus errant trepidique metus.
Ille superbos aditus regum
165 duraeque fores expers somni
colit, hic nullo fine beatas
componit opes gazis inhians
et congesto pauper in auro.
Illum populi favor attonitum
170 fluctuque magis mobile vulgus
aura tumidum tollit inani;
hic clamosi rabiosa fori
iurgia vendens
improbis iras et. verba locat.
175 Novit paucos secreta quies,

qui velocis memores aevi
tempora numquam reditura tenent,
dum fata sinunt, vivite laeti:
properat cursu vita citato
volucrique die
180 rota praecipitis vertitur anni;
durae peragunt pensa sorores
nec sua retro fila revolvunt.
At gens hominum fertur rapidis
obvia fati incerta sui:
185 Stygias ultro quaerimus undas.
nimium, Alcide, pectore forti
properas maestos visere manes:
certo veniunt tempore Parcae,
nulli iusso cessare licet,
190 nulli scriptum proferre diem:
recipit populos urna citatos.
Alium multis gloria terris
tradat et omnes fama per urbes
garrula laudet
195 caeloque parem tollat et astris;
alius curru sublimis eat:
me mea tellus
lare secreto tutoque tegat.
venit ad pigros cana senectus,
humilique loco sed certa sedet
200 sordida parvae fortuna domus:
alte virtus animosa cadit. —
Sed maesta venit crine soluto
Megara parvum comitata gregem,
tardusque senio graditur Alcidae parens.

Amphitryon Megara Lycus

205 O magne Olympi rector et mundi arbiter,
iam statue tandem gravibus aerumnis modum
finemque cladi. nulla lux umquam mihi
secura fulsit: finis alterius mali

gradus est futuri, protinus reduci novus
210 paratur hostis; antequam laetam domum
contingat, aliud iussus ad bellum meat;
nec ulla requies tempus aut ullum vacat,
nisi dum iubetur. sequitur a primo statim
infesta Iuno: numquid immunis fuit
215 infantis aetas? monstra superavit prius
quam nosse posset, gemina cristati caput
angues ferebant ora, quos contra obvius
reptabat infans igneos serpentium
oculos remisso lumine ac placido intuens;
220 artos serenis vultibus nodos tulit,
et tumida tenera guttura elidens manu
prolusit hydrae. Maenali pernix fera,
multo decorum praeferens auro caput,
deprensa cursu; maximus Nemeae timor
225 pressus lacertis gemuit Herculeis leo.
quid stabula memorem dira Bistonii gregis
suisque regem pabulum armentis datum,
solitumque densis hispidum Erymanthi iugis
Arcadia quater nemora Maenalium suem,
230 taurumque centum non levem populis metum?
inter remotos gentis Hesperiae greges
pastor triformis litoris Tartesii
peremptus, acta est praeda ab occasu ultimo;
notum Cithaeron pavit Oceano pecus.
235 penetrare iussus solis aestivi plagas
et adusta medius regna quae torret dies
utrimque montes solvit ac rupto obice
latam ruenti fecit Oceano viam.
post haec adortus nemoris opulenti domos
240 aurifera vigilis spolia serpentis tulit;
quid? saeva Lernae monstra, numerosum malum,
non igne demum vicit et docuit mori,
solitasque pinnis condere obductis diem
petit ab ipsis nubibus Stympthalidas ?
245 non vicit illum caelibis semper tori

regina gentis vidua Thermodontiae,
nec ad omne clarum facinus audaces manus
stabuli fugavit turpis Augei labor.

Quid ista prosunt? orbe defenso caret,
250 sensere terrae pacis auctorem suae
abesse tristes: prosperum ac felix scelus
virtus vocatur; sontibus parent boni.
ius est in armis, opprimit leges timor,
ante ora vidi nostra truculenta manu
255 gnatos paterni cadere regni vindices
ipsumque, Cadini nobilis stirpem ultimam,
occidere, vidi regium capitis decus
cum capite raptum, quis satis Thebas fleat?
ferax deorum terra, quem dominum tremis?
260 e cuius arvis eque fecundo sinu
stricto iuventus orta cum ferro stetit
cuiusque muros natus Amphion Iove
struxit canoro saxa modulatu trahens,
in cuius urbem non semel divum parens
265 caelo relicto venit, haec quae caelites
recepit et quae fecit et (fas sit loqui)
fortasse faciet, sordido premitur iugo.
Cadmica proles atque Ophionium genus,
quo reccidistis? tremitis ignavum exulem,
270 suis carentem finibus, nostris gravem.
qui scelera terra quique persequitur mari
ac saeva iusta sceptris confringit manu
nunc servit absens fertque quae fieri vetat,
tenetque Thebas exul Herculeas Lycus,
275 sed non tenebit, aderit et poenas petet
subitusque ad astra emerget; inveniet viam
aut faciet, adsis sospes et remees precor
tandemque venias victor ad victam domum.

Meg.

Emerge, coniunx, atque dispulsas manu
280 abrumpe tenebras; nulla si retro via

iterque clusum est, orbe diducto redi
et quicquid atra nocte possessum latet
emitte tecum, dirutis qualis iugis
praeceps citato flumini quaerens iter
285 quondam stetisti, scissa cum vasto impetu
patuere Tempe; pectore impulsus tuo
huc mons et illuc cessit et rupto aggere
nova cucurrit Thessalus torrens via:
talis, parentes liberos patriam petens,
290 erumpe rerum terminos tecum efferens,
et quicquid avida tot per annorum gradus
abscondit aetas redde et oblitos sui
lucisque pavidos ante te populos age.
indigna te sunt spolia, si tantum refers
295 quantum imperatum est. magna sed nimium loquor
ignara nostrae sortis, unde illum mihi
quo te tuamque dexteram amplectar diem
reditusque lentos nec mei memores querar?
tibi, o deorum ductor, indomiti ferent
300 centena tauri colla; tibi, frugum potens,
secreta reddam sacra: tibi muta fide
longas Eleusin tacita iactabit faces,
tum restitutas fratribus rebor meis
animas et ipsum regna moderantem sua
305 florere patrem, si qua te maior tenet
clausum potestas, sequimur: aut omnes tuo
defende reditu sospes aut omnes trahe.
trahes nec ullus eriget fractos deus.

Amph.

O socia nostri sanguinis, casta fide
310 servans torum natosque magnanimi Herculis,
meliora mente concipe atque animum excita.
aderit profecto, qualis ex omni solet
labore, maior.

Meg.

Quod nimis miseri volunt
hoc facile credunt,

Amph.

Immo quod metuunt nimis
315 numquam moveri posse nec tolli putant:
prona est timori semper in peius fides.

Meg.

Demersus ac defossus et toto insuper
oppressus orbe quam viam ad superos habet?

Amph.

Quam tunc habebat, cum per arentem plagam
320 et fluctuantes more turbati maris
adit harenas bisque discedens fretum
et bis recurrens, cumque deserta rate
depressus haesit Syrtium brevibus vadis
et puppe fixa maria superavit pedes.

Meg.

325 Iniqua raro maximis virtutibus
fortuna parcit; nemo se tuto diu
periculis offerre tam crebris potest:
quem saepe transit casus, aliquando invenit.
Sed ecce saevus ac minas vultu gerens
330 et qualis animo est, talis incessu venit
aliena dextra sceptrum concutiens Lycus.

Lyc.

Urbis regens opulenta Thebanae loca
et omne quicquid uberi cingit solo
obliqua Phocis, quicquid Ismenos rigat,
335 quicquid Cithaeron vertice excelso videt,
et bina findens Isthmos exilis freta
non vetera patriae iura possideo domus
ignavus heres; nobiles non sunt mihi

avi nec altis inclitum titulis genus.
340 sed clara virtus: qui genus iactat suum.
aliena laudat, rapta sed trepida manu
sceptra obtinentur; omnis in ferro est salus:
quod civibus tenere te invitis scias.
strictus tuetur ensis, alieno in loco
345 haut stabile regnum est; una sed nostras potest
fundare vires iuncta regali face
thalamisque Megara: ducet e genere inclito
novitas colorem nostra, non equidem reor
fore ut recuset ac meos spernat toros;
350 quod si impotenti pertinax animo abnuet,
stat tollere omnem penitus Herculeam domum.
invidia factum ac sermo popularis premet?
ars prima regni est posse ... invidiam pati.
temptemus igitur, fors dedit nobis locum.
355 namque ipsa, tristi vestis obtentu caput
velata, iuxta praesides adstat deos
laterique adhaeret verus Alcidae sator.

Meg.

Quidnam iste, nostri generis exitium ac lues,
novi parat? quid temptat?

Lyc.

O clarum trahens
360 a stirpe nomen regia, facilis mea
parumper aure verba patienti excipe.
si aeterna semper odia mortales gerant
nec coeptus umquam cedat ex animis furor,
sed arma felix teneat infelix paret,
365 nihil relinquent bella; tum vastis ager
squalebit arvis, subdita tectis face
altus sepultas obruet gentes cinis.
pacem reduci velle victori expedit,
victo necesse est. particeps regno veni;
370 sociemur animis, pignus hoc fidei cape:

continge dextram, quid truci vultu siles?

Meg.

Egone ut parentis sanguine aspersam manum
fratrumque gemina caede contingam? prius
extinguet ortus, referet occasus diem,
375 pax ante fida nivibus et flammis erit
et Scylla Siculum iunget Ausonio latus,
priusque multo vicibus alternis fugax
Euripus unda stabit Euboica piger.
patrem abstulisti, regna, germanos, larem
380 patrium — quid ultra est? una res superest mihi
fratre ac parente carior, regno ac lare:
odium tui, quod esse cum populo mihi
commune doleo: pars quota ex illo mea est?
dominare tumidus, spiritus altos gere:
385 sequitur superbos ultor a tergo deus.
Thebana novi regna: quid matres loquar
passas et ausas scelera? quid geminum nefas
mixtumque nomen coniugis nati patris?
quid bina fratrum castra? quid totidem rogos?
390 riget superba Tantalus luctu parens
maestusque Phrygio manat in Sipylo lapis.
quin ipse torvum subrigens crista caput
Illyrica Cadmus regna permensus fuga
longas reliquit corporis tracti notas.
395 haec te manent exempla: dominare ut libet,
dum solita regni fata te nostri vocent

Lyc.

Agedum efferatas rabida voces amove
et disce regum imperia ab Alcide pati
ego rapta quamvis sceptrum victrici geram
400 dextra regamque cuncta sine legum metu
quas arma vincunt, pauca pro causa loquar
nostra, cruento cecidit in bello pater?
cecidere fratres? arma non servant modum;

nec temperari facile nec reprimi potest
405 stricti ensis ira, bella delectat cruor.
sed ille regno pro suo, nos improba
cupidine acti? quaeritur belli exitus,
non causa, sed nunc pereat omnis memoria:
cum victor arma posuit, et victum decet
410 deponere odia. non ut inflexo genu
regnantem adores petimus: hoc ipsum placet
animo ruinas quod capis magno tuas;
es rege coniunx digna: sociemus toros.

Meg.

Gelidus per artus vadit exanguis tremor.
415 quod facinus aures pepulit? haut equidem horrui,
cum pace rupta bellicus muros fragor
circumsonaret, pertuli intrepide omnia:
thalamos tremesco; capta nunc videor mihi.
gravent catenae corpus et longa fame
420 mors protrahatur lenta: non vincet fidem
vis ulla nostram; moriar, Alcide, tua.

Lyc.

Animosne mersus inferis coniunx facit?

Meg.

Inferna tetigit, posset ut supera assequi.

Lyc.

Telluris illum pondus immensae premit.

Meg.

425 Nullo premetur onere, qui caelum tulit.

Lyc.

Cogere.

Meg.

Cogi qui potest nescit mori.

Lyc.

Effare potius, quod novis thalamis parem
Regale munus.

Meg.

Aut tuam mortem aut meam.

Lyc.

Moriere demens,

Meg.

Coniugi occurram meo.

Lyc.

430 Sceptrone nostro famulus est potior tibi?

Meg.

Quot iste famulus tradidit reges neci.

Lyc.

Cur ergo regi servit et patitur iugum?

Meg.

Imperia dura tolle: quid virtus erit?

Lyc.

Obici feris monstrisque virtutem putas?

Meg.

435 Virtutis est domare quae cuncti pavent.

Lyc.

Tenebrae loquentem magna Tartareae premunt.

Meg.

Non est ad astra mollis e terris via.

Lyc.

Quo patre genitus caelitum sperat domos? i

Amph.

Miseranda coniunx Herculis magni, sile:

440 partes meae sunt reddere Alcidae patrem

genusque verum, post tot ingentis viri

memoranda facta postque pacatum manu

quodcumque Titan ortus et labens videt,

post monstra tot perdomita, post Phlegram impio

445 sparsam cruore postque defensos deos

nondum liquet de patre? mentimur Iovem:

Iunonis odio crede.

Lyc.

Quid violas Iovem?

mortale caelo non potest iungi genus.

Amph.

Communis ista pluribus causa est deis.

Lyc.

450 Famuline fuerant ante quam fierent dei?

Amph.

Pastor Pheraeos Delius pavit greges.

Lyc.

Sed non per omnes exul erravit plagas.

Amph.

Quem profuga terra mater errante edidit?

Lyc.

Num monstra saeva Phoebus aut timuit feras?

Amph.

455 Primus sagittas imbuit Phoebi draco.

Lyc.

Quam gravia parvus tulerit ignoras mala?

Amph.

E matris utero fulmine eiectus puer
mox fulminanti proximus patri stetit.
quid? qui gubernat astra, qui nubes quatit,
460 non latuit infans rupis Idaeae specu?
sollicita tanti pretia natales habent
semperque magno constitit nasci deum.

Lyc.

Quemcumque miserum videris, hominem scias.

Amph.

Quemcumque fortem videris, miserum neges.

Lyc.

465 Fortem vocemus cuius ex umeris leo,
donum puellae factus, et clava excidit
fulsitque pictum veste Sidonia latus?
fortem vocemus cuius horrentes comae
maduere nardo, laude qui notas manus
470 ad non virilem tympani movit sonum,
mitra ferocem barbara frontem premens?

Amph.

Non erubescit Bacchus effusos tener
sparsisse crines nec manu molli levem
vibrare thyrsus, cum parum forti gradu
475 auro decorum syrma barbaricum trahit:
post multa virtus opera laxari solet.

Lyc.

Hoc Euryti fatetur eversi domus
pecorumque ritu virginum oppressi greges:
hoc nulla Iuno, nullus Eurystheus iubet:
480 ipsius haec sunt opera.

Amph.

Non nosti omnia:

ipsius opus est caestibus fractus suis
Eryx et Eryci iunctus Antaeus Libys,
et qui hospitali caede manantes foci
bibere iustum sanguinem Busiridis;

485 ipsius opus est vulneri et ferro iuvius
mortem coactus integer Cynus pati
nec unus una Geryon victus manu.
eris inter istos — qui tamen nullo stupro
laesere thalamos,

Lyc.

Quod Iovi hoc regi licet:

490 Iovi dedisti coniugem, regi dabis;
et te magistro non novum hoc discet nurus,
etiam viro probante meliorem sequi.
sin copulari pertinax taedis negat,
vel ex coacta nobilem partum feram.

Meg.

495 Vmbrae Creontis et penates Labdaci
et nuptiales impii Oedipodae faces,
nunc solita nostro fata coniugio date.
nunc, nunc, cruentae regis Aegypti nurus,
adeste multo sanguine infectae manus.
500 dest una numero Danaïs: explebo nefas.

Lyc.

Coniugia quoniam pervicax nostra abnuis
regemque terres, sceptrum quid possint scies.
complectere aras: nullus eripiet deus
te mihi, nec orbe si remolito queat
505 ad supera victor numina Alcides vehi.
congerite silvas: templa supplicibus suis
iniecta flagrent, coniugem et totum gregem
consumat unus igne subiecto rogos.

Amph.

Hoc munus a te genitor Alcidae peto,
510 rogare quod me deceat, ut primus cadam.

Lyc.

Qui morte cunctos luere supplicium iubet
nescit tyrannus esse: diversa inroga;
miserum veta perire, felicem iube.
ego, dum cremandis trabibus accrescit rogas,
515 sacro regentem maria votivo colam.

Amph.

Pro numinum vis summa, pro caelestium
rektor parensque, cuius excussis tremunt
humana telis, impiam regis feri
compesce dextram! quid deos frustra precor?
520 ubicumque es, audi, nate. cur subito labant
agitata motu templa? cur mugit solum?
infernus imo sonuit e fundo fragor
audimur! est est sonitus Herculei gradus.

Chorus

O Fortuna viris invida fortibus,
525 quam non aequa bonis praemia dividis.
Eurystheus facili regnet in otio:
Alcmena genitus bella per omnia
monstris exagitet caeliferam manum:
serpentis resecet colla feracia,
530 deceptis referat mala sororibus,
cum somno dederit pervigiles genu*
pomis divitibus praepositus draco.
Intravit Scythiae multivagas domos
et gentes patriis sedibus hospites,
535 calcavitque freti terga rigentia
et mutis tacitum litoribus mare.
illic dura carent aequora fluctibus,

et qua plena rates carbasa tenderent,
intonsis teritur semita Sarmatis,
540 stat pontus, vicibus mobilis annuis,
navem nunc facilis nunc equitem pati.
illic quae viduis gentibus imperat,
aurato religans ilia balteo,
detraxit ^ spoliū nobile corpori
545 et peltam et nivei vincula pectoris.
victorem posito suspiciens genu.
Qua spe praecipites actus ad inferos,
audax ire vias inremeabiles,
vidisti Siculae regna Proserpinae?
550 illic nulla noto nulla favonio
consurgunt tumidis fluctibus aequora:
non illic geminum Tyndaridae genus
succurrunt timidis sidera navibus:
stat pigro pelagus gurgite languidum,
555 et cum Mors avidis pallida dentibus
gentes innumeras manibus intulit,
uno tot populi remige transeunt.
Evincas utinam iura ferae Stygis
Parcarumque colos non revocabiles.
560 hic qui rex populis pluribus imperat,
bello cum peteres Nestoream Pylon,
tecum conseruit pestiferas manus
telum tergemina cuspide praeferens:
effugit tenui vulnere saucius
565 et mortis dominus pertimuit mori.
fatum rumpe manu, tristibus inferis
prospectus pateat lucis et invius
limes det faciles ad superos vias.
Immites potuit flectere cantibus
570 umbrarum dominos et prece supplici
Orpheus, Eurydicen dum repetit suam.
quae silvas et aves saxaque traxerat
ars, quae praebuerat fluminibus moras,
ad cuius sonitum constiterant ferae,

575 mulcet non solitis vocibus inferos
et surdis resonat clarius in locis,
deflent Eurydicen Threiciae nurus,
deflent et lacrimis difficiles dei,
et qui fronte nimis crimina tetrica
580 quaerunt ac veteres excutiunt reos
flentes Eurydicen iuridici sedent,
tandem mortis ait 'vincimur' arbiter,
'evade ad superos, lege tamen data:
tu post terga tui perge viri comes,
585 tu non ante tuam respice coniugem,
quam cum clara deos obtulerit dies
Spartam que aderit ianua Taenari.'
odit verus amor nec patitur moras:
munus dum properat cernere, perdidit.
590 Quae vinci potuit regia carmine.
haec vinci poterit regia viribus.

Hercules

O lucis almae rector et caeli decus,
qui alterna curru spatia flammifero ambiens
inlustre latis exeris terris caput,
595 da, Phoebe, veniam, si quid illicitum tui
videre vultus: iussus in lucem extuli
arcana mundi, tuque, caelestum arbiter
parensque, visus fulmine opposito tege;
et tu, secundo maria qui sceptro regis,
600 imas pete undas, quisquis ex alto aspicit
terrena, facie pollui metuens nova,
aciem reflectat oraque in caelum erigat
portenta fugiens: hoc nefas cernant duo,
qui advexit et quae iussit, in poenas meas
605 atque in labores non satis terrae patent
Iunonis odio: vidi inaccessa omnibus,
ignota Phoebos quaeque deterior polus
obscura diro spatia concessit Iovi;
et, si placerent tertiae sortis loca,

610 regnare potui: noctis aeternae chaos
et nocte quiddam gravius et tristes deos
et fata vidi, morte contempta redi.
quid restat aliud? vidi et ostendi inferos.
da si quid ultra est, iam diu pateris manus
615 cessare nostras, Iuno; quae vinci iubes?
Sed templa quare miles infestus tenet
limenque, sacrum terror armorum obsidet?

Amphitryon Hercules Theseus

Vtrumne visus vota decipiunt meos.
an ille domitor orbis et Graium decus
620 tristi silentem nubilo liquit domum?
estne ille natus? membra laetitia stupent.
o nate. certa at sera Thebarum salus,
teneone in auras editum an vana fruor
deceptus umbra? tune es? agnosco toros
625 umerosque et alto nobilem trunco manum.

Herc.

Vnde iste, genitor, squalor et lugubribus
amicta coniunx? unde tam foedo obsiti
paedore nati? quae domum clades gravat?

Amph.

Socer est peremptus, regna possedit Lycus,
630 natos parentem coniugem leto petit.

Herc.

Ingrata tellus, nemo ad Herculeae domus
auxilia venit? vidit hoc tantum nefas
defensus orbis? cur diem questu tero?
mactetur hostia, hanc ferat virtus notam
635 fiatque summus hostis Alcidae Lycus.
ad hauriendum sanguinem inimicum feror:
Theseu, resiste, ne qua vis subita ingruat.

me bella poscunt, differ amplexus, parens,
coniunxque differ, nuntiet Diti Lycus
me iam redisse.

Thes.

640 Flebilem ex oculis fuga,
regina, vultum, tuque nato sospite
lacrimas cadentes reprime: si novi Herculem,
Lycus Creonti debitas poenas dabit,
lentum est dabit: dat; hoc quoque est lentum: dedit.

Amph.

645 Votum secundet qui potest nostrum deus
rebusque lassis adsit. O magni comes
magnanime nati. pande virtutum ordinem,
quam longa maestos ducat ad manes via,
ut vincla tulerit dura Tartareus canis.

Thes.

650 Memorare cogis acta securae quoque
horrenda menti. vix adhuc certa est fides
vitalis aurae, torpet acies luminum
hebetesque visus vix diem insuetum ferunt.

Amph.

Pervince, Theseu, quicquid alto in pectore
655 remanet pavoris neve te fructu optimo
frauda laborum: quae fuit durum pati,
meminisse dulce est fare casus horridos.

Thes.

Fas omne mundi teque dominantem precor
regno capaci teque quam amotam inrita
660 quaesivit Enna mater, ut iura abdita
et operta terris liceat impune eloqui.
Spartana tellus nobile attollit iugum,

densis ubi aequor Taenarus silvis premit;
hic ora solvit Ditis invisi domus
665 hiatque rupes alta et immenso specu
ingens vorago faucibus vastis patet
latumque pandit omnibus populis iter.
non caeca tenebris incipit. primo via;
tenuis relictæ lucis a tergo nitor
670 fulgorque dubius solis afflicti cadit
et ludit aciem:- nocte sic mixta solet
præbere lumen primus aut serus dies.
hinc ampla vacuis spatia laxantur locis,
in quæ omne mersum penetrat humanum genus.
675 nec ire labor est; ipsa deducit via:
ut sæpe puppes aestus invitas rapit,
sic pronus aer urguet atque avidum chaos,
gradumque retro flectere haut umquam sinunt
umbræ tenaces. intus immensi sinus
680 placido quieta labitur Lethe vado
demitque curas, neve remeandi amplius
pateat facultas, flexibus multis gravem
involvit amnem: qualis incertis vagus
Maeander undis ludit et cedit sibi
685 instatque dubius litus an fontem petat.
palus inertis foeda Cocyti iacet;
hic vultur, illic luctifer bubo gemit
omenque triste resonat infaustæ strigis.
horrent opaca fronde nigrantes comæ,
690 taxo imminente quam tenet segnis Sopor,
Famesque maesta tabido rictu iacet
Pudorque serus conscios vultus tegit.
Metus Pavorque + Funus et frendens Dolor
aterque Luctus sequitur et Morbus tremens
695 et cincta ferro Bella; in extremo abdita
iners Senectus adiuvat baculo gradum.

Amph.

Estne aliqua tellus Cereris aut Bacchi ferax?

Thes.

Non prata viridi laeta facie germinant
nec adulta leni fluctuat Zephyro seges;
700 non ulla ramos silva pomiferos habet:
sterilis profundi vastitas squallet soli
et foeda tellus torpet aeterno situ.
rerumque maestus finis et mundi ultima
immotus aer haeret et pigro sedet
705 nox atra mundo: cuncta maerore horrida
ipsaque morte peior est mortis locus.

Amph.

Quid ille opaca qui regit sceptro loca,
qua sede positus temperat populos leves?

Thes.

Est in recessu Tartari obscuro locus,
710 quem gravibus umbris spissa caligo alligat.
a fonte discors manat hinc uno latex,
alter quieto similis (hunc iurant dei)
tacente sacram devehens fluvio Styga;
at hic tumultu rapitur ingenti ferox
715 et saxa fluctu volvit Acheron invius
renavigari. cingitur duplici vado
* adversa Ditis regia, atque ingens domus
umbrante luco tegitur, hic vasto specu
pendent tyranni limina, hoc umbris iter,
720 haec porta regni, campus hanc circa iacet,
in quo superbo digerit vultu sedens
animas recentes dira maiestas dei.
frons torva, fratrum quae tamen speciem gerat
gentisque tantae, vultus est illi Iovis,
725 sed fulminantis: magna pars regni trucis
est ipse dominus, cuius aspectus timet
' quicquid timetur.

Amph.

Verane est fama inferis
tam sera reddi iura et oblitos sui
sceleris nocentes debitas poenas dare?
730 quis iste veri rector atque aequi arbiter?

Thes.

Non unus alta sede quaesitor sedens
iudicia trepidis sera sortitur reis.
aditur illo Gnosius Minos foro,
Rhadamanthus illo, Thetidis hoc audit socer.
735 quod quisque fecit, patitur; auctorem scelus
repetit suoque premitur exemplo nocens:
vidi cruentos carcere includi duces
et impotentis terga plebeia manu
scindi tyranni, quisquis est placide potens
740 dominusque vitae servat innocuas manus
et incruentum mitis imperium regit
animoque parcit, longa permensus diu
felicitis aevi spatia vel caelum petit
vel laeta felix nemoris Elysii loca,
745 iudex futurus, sanguine humano abstine
quicumque regnas: scelera taxantur modo
maiore vestra,

Amph.

Certus inclusos tenet
locus nocentes? utque fert fama. impios
supplicia vinclis saeva perpetuis domant?

Thes.

750 Rapitur volucris tortus Ixion rota;
cervice saxum grande Sisyphia sedet;
in amne medio faucibus siccis senex
sectatur undas, alluit mentum latex.
fidemque cum iam saepe decepto dedit.
755 perit unda in ore; poma destituunt famem.
praebet volucris Tityos aeternas dapes

urnasque frustra Danaides plenas gerunt;
errant furentes impiae Cadmeides
terretque mensas avida Phineas avis.

Amph.

760 Nunc ede nati nobilem pugnam mei.
patruī volentis munus an spoliū refert?

Thes.

Ferale tardis imminet saxum vadis.
stupent ubi undae, segne torpescit fretum.
hunc servat amnem cultu et aspectu horridus
765 pavidosque manes squalidus vectat senex.
impexa pendet barba, deformem sinum
nodus coercet, concavae lucent genae;
regit ipse longo portitor conto ratem.
hic onere vacuam litori puppem applicans
770 repetebat umbras; poscit Alcides viam
cedente turba; dirus exclamat Charon:
'quo pergis, audax? siste properantem gradum.'
non passus ullas natus Alcmena moras
ipso coactum navitam conto domat
775 scanditque puppem. cumba populorum capax
succubuit uni: sedit et gravior ratis
utrimque Lethen latere titubanti bibit.
tum victa trepidant monstra, Centauri truces
Lapithaeque multo in bella succensi mero;
780 Stygiae paludis ultimos quaerens sinus
fecunda mergit capita Lernaeus labor.
post haec avari Ditis apparet domus:
hic saevus umbras territat Stygius canis,
qui terna vasto capita concutiens sono
785 regnum tuetur, sordidum tabo caput
lambunt colubrae, viperis horrent iubae
longusque torta sibilat cauda draco.
par ira formae: sensit ut motus pedum,
attollit hirtas angue vibrato comas

790 missumque captat aure subrecta sonum,
sentire et umbras solitus, ut propior stetit
Iove natus, antro sedit incertus canis
leviterque timuit, ecce latratu gravi
loca muta terret; sibilat totos minax
795 serpens per armos, vocis horrendae fragor
per ora missus terna felices quoque
exterret umbras, solvit a laeva feros
tunc ipse rictus et Cleonaeum caput
opponit ac se tegmine ingenti tegit,
800 victrice magnum dextera robur gerens.
huc nunc et illuc verbere assiduo rotat,
ingeminat ictus, domitus infregit minas
et cuncta lassus capita summisit canis
antroque toto cessit, extimuit sedens
805 uterque solio dominus et duci iubet;
me quoque petenti munus Alcidae dedit.
Tum gravia monstri colla permulcens manu
adamante texto vincit; oblitus sui
custos opaci pervigil regni canis
810 componit aures timidus et patiens trahi
eramque fassus, ore summisso obsequens,
utrumque cauda pulsat anguifera latus.
postquam est ad oras Taenari ventum et nitor
percussit oculos lucis ignotae novus,
815 resumat animos victus et vastas furens
quassat catenas; paene victorem abstulit
pronusque retro vexit et movit gradu.
tunc et meas respexit Alcides manus;
geminis uterque viribus tractum canem
820 ira furentem et bella temptantem inrita
intulimus orbi. vidit ut clarum diem
et pura nitidi spatia conspexit poli,
oborta nox est, lumina in terram dedit
compressit oculos et diem invisum expulit
825 faciemque retro flexit atque omni petit
cervice terram; tum sub Herculeas caput

abscondit umbras, densa sed laeto venit
clamore turba frontibus laurum gerens
magnique meritas Herculis laudes canit.

830 Natus Eurystheus properante partu
iusserat mundi penetrare fundum:
derat hoc solum numero laborum,
tertiaie regem spoliare sortis.

ausus es caecos aditus inire,
835 ducit ad manes via qua remotos
tristis et nigra metuenda silva,
sed frequens magna comitante turba.

Quantus incedit populus per urbes
ad novi ludos avidus theatri,

840 quantus Eleum ruit ad Tonantem,
quinta cum sacrum revocavit aestas;
quanta, cum longae redit hora nocti
crescere et somnos cupiens quietos
libra Phoebeos tenet aequa currus,

845 turba secretam Cererem frequentat
et citi tectis properant relictis

Attici noctem celebrare mystae :

tanta per campos agitur silentes
turba; pars tarda graditur senecta,

850 tristis et longa satiata vita:

pars adhuc currit melioris aevi:

virgines nondum thalamis iugatae

et comis nondum positis ephebi

matris et nomen modo doctus infans,

855 his datum solis, minus ut timerent,

igne praelato relevare noctem;

ceteri vadunt per opaca tristes.

qualis est vobis animus, remota

luce cum maestus sibi quisque sensit

860 obrutum tota caput esse terra?

stat chaos densum tenebraeque turpes

et color noctis malus ac silentis

otium mundi vacuaeque nubes.

Sera nos illo referat senectus:
nemo ad' id sero venit, unde numquam.
cum semel venit, potuit reverti;
quid iuvat durum properare fatum?
omnis haec magnis vaga turba terris
ibit ad manes facietque inerti
870 vela Cocyto: tibi crescit omne,
et quod occasus videt et quod ortus,
parce Venturis: tibi, mors, paramur.
sis licet segnis, properamus ipsi:
prima quae vitam dedit hora, carpit.
875 Thebis laeta dies adest.
aras tangite supplices,
pingues caedite victimas;
permixtae maribus nurus
sollemnes agitent choros;
880 cessent deposito iugo
arvi fertilis incolae.
Pax est Herculea manu
Auroram inter et Hesperum,
et qua sol medium tenens
885 umbras corporibus negat;
quodcumque alluitur solum
longo Tethyos ambitu,
Alcidae domuit labor.
Transvectus vada Tartari
890 pacatis redit inferis.
iam nullus superest timor:
nil ultra iacet inferos,
stantes sacrificus comas
dilecta tege populo.

Hercvles Theseus Amphitryon Megara

895 Victrice dextra fusus adverso Lycus
terram cecidit ore; tum quisquis comes
fuerat tyranni iacuit et poenae comes,
nunc sacra patri victor et superis feram

caesisque meritis victimis aras colam.
900 Te te laborum socia et adiutrix precor.
belligera Pallas, cuius in laeva ciet
aegis feroces ore saxifico minas;
adsit Lycurgi domitor et rubri maris,
tectam virente cuspidem thyrsos gerens,
905 geminumque numen Phoebus et Phoebi soror:
soror sagittis aptior, Phoebus lyrae;
fraterque quisquis incolit caelum meus
non ex noverca frater, huc appellite
greges opimos; quicquid ludorum seges
910 Arabesque odoris quicquid arboribus legunt
conferte in aras, pinguis exundet vapor,
populea nostras arbor exornet comas,
te ramus oleae fronde gentili tegat,
Theseu; Tonantem nostra adorabit manus,
915 tu conditores urbis et silvestria
trucis antra Zethi. nobilis Dircen aquae
laremque regis advenae Tyrium coles.
date tura flammis,

Amph.

Nate, manantes prius
manus cruenta caede et hostili expia.

Herc.

920 Vtinam cruore capitis invisi deis
libare possem: gratior nullus liquor
tinxisset aras; victima haut ulla amplior
potest magisque opima mactari Iovi,
quam rex iniquus,

Amph.

Finiat genitor tuos
925 opta labores, detur aliquando otium
quiesque fessis,

Herc.

Ipse concipiam preces

Iove meque dignas, stet suo caelum loco
tellusque et aequor; astra inoffensos agant
aeterna cursus, alta pax gentes alat:

930 ferrum omne teneat raris innocui labor
ensesque lateant, nulla tempestas fretum
violenta turbet, nullus irato Iove
exiliat ignis, nullus hiberna nive
nutritus agros amnis eversos trahat.

935 venena cessent, nulla nocituro gravis
suo tumescat herba, non saevi ac truces
regnent tyranni; si quod etiamnum est scelus
latura tellus, properet, et si quod parat
monstrum, meum sit. — sed quid hoc? medium diem

940 cinxere tenebrae. Phoebus obscuro meat
sine nube vultu, quis diem retro fugat
agitque in ortus? unde nox atram caput
ignota profert? unde tot stellae polum
implent diurnae? primus en noster labor

945 caeli refulget parte non minima leo
iraque totus fervet et morsus parat.
iam rapiet aliquod sidus: ingenti minax
stat' ore et ignes efflat et rutila iubam

cervice iactans quicquid autumnus gravis
950 hiemsque gelido frigida spatio refert
uno impetu transiliet et verni petet
frangetque tauri colla.

Amph.

Quod subitum hoc malum est?

quo, nate, vultus huc et huc acres refers
acieque falsum turbida caelum vides?

Herc.

955 Perdomita tellus, tumida cesserunt freta,
inferna nostros regna sensere impetus:

immune caelum est, dignus Alcide labor.
in alta mundi spatia sublimis ferar,
petatur aether: astra promittit pater.
960 quid, si negaret? non capit terra Herculem
tandemque superis reddit, en ultro vocat
omnis deorum coetus et laxat fores,
una vetante. recipis et reseras polum?
an contumacis ianuam mundi traho?
965 dubitatur etiam? vincla Saturno exuam
contraque patris impii regnum impotens
avum resolvam; bella Titanes parent,
me duce furentes; saxa cum silvis feram
rapiamque dextra plena Centauris iuga.
970 iam monte gemino limitem ad superos agam:
videat sub Ossa Pelion Chiron suum,
in caelum Olympus tertio positus gradu
perveniet aut mittetur,

Amph.

Infandos procul
averte sensus; pectoris sani parum
975 magni tamen compesce dementem impetum.

Herc.

Quid hoc? Gigantes arma pestiferi movent.
profugit umbras Tityos ac lacerum gerens
et inane pectus quam prope a caelo stetit.
labat Cithaeron, alta Pellene tremit
980 marcentque Tempe. rapuit hic Pindi iuga,
hic rapuit Oeten, saevit horrendum Mimans.
flammiifera Erinys verbere excusso sonat
rogisque adustas propius ac propius sudes
in ora tendit; saeva Tisiphone, caput
985 serpentibus vallata, post raptum canem
portam vacantem clausit opposita face.
sed ecce proles regis inimici latet.
Lyci nefandum semen: invisio patri

haec dextra iam vos reddet, excutiat levis
990 nervus sagittas, tela sic mitti decet
Herculea,

Amph.

Quo se caecus impegit furor?
vastum coactis flexit arcum cornibus
pharetramque solvit, stridet emissa impetu
harundo — medio spiculum collo fugit
995 vulnere relicto,

Herc.

Ceteram prolem emam
omnisque latebras, quid moror? maius mihi
bellum Mycenis restat, ut Cyclopia
eversa manibus saxa nostris concidant.
huc eat et illuc valva deiecto obice
1000 rumpatque postes; culmen impulsum labet.
perlucet omnis regia: hic video abditum
gnatum scelesti patris,

Amph.

En blandas manus
ad genua tendens voce miseranda rogat:
scelus nefandum, triste et aspectu horridum!
1005 dextra precantem rapuit et circa furens
bis ter rotatum misit; ast illi caput
sonuit, cerebro tecta disperso madent.
at misera, parvum protegens gnatum sinu,
Megara furenti similis e latebris fugit.

Herc.

1010 Licet tonantis profuga condaris sinu,
petet undecumque temet haec dextra et feret.

Amph.

Quo misera pergis? quam fugam aut latebram petis?

nullus salutis Hercule infesto est locus.
amplectere ipsum potius et blanda prece
1015 lenire tempta,

Meg.

Parce iam, coniunx, precor,
agnosce Megaram. gnatus hic vultus tuos
habitusque reddit; cernis, ut tendat manus?

Herc.

Teneo novercam. sequere, da poenas mihi
iugoque pressum libera turpi Iovem;
1020 sed ante matrem parvulum hoc monstrum occidat.

Meg.

Quo tendis amens? sanguinem fundes tuum?

Amph.

Pavefactus infans igneo vultu patris
perit ante vulnus, spiritum eripuit timor.
in coniugem nunc clava libratur gravis:
1025 perfregit ossa, corpori trunco caput
abest nec usquam est. cernere hoc audes, nimis
vivax senectus? si piget luctus, habes
mortem paratam: pectus in tela indue,
vel stipitem istuc caede nostrorum inlitum
1030 converte, falsum ac nomini turpem tuo
remove parentem, ne tuae laudi obstrepat. —
quo te ipse, senior, obvium morti ingeris?
quo pergis amens? profuge et obtectas late
unumque manibus aufer Herculeis scelus.

Herc.

1035 Bene habet, pudendi regis excisa est domus.
tibi hunc dicatum, maximi coniunx Iovis,
gregem cecidi; vota persolvi libens
te digna, et Argos victimas alias dabit.

Amph.

Nondum litasti, nate: consumma sacrum.

1040 stat ecce ad aras hostia, expectat manum

cervice prona; praebeo occurro insequor:

macta — quid hoc est? errat acies luminum

visusque maeror hebetat? an video Herculis

manus trementes? vultus in somnum cadit

1045 et fessa cervix capite summisso labat;

flexo genu iam totus ad terram ruit,

ut caesa silvis ornus aut portum mari

datura moles, vivis an leto dedit

idem tuos qui misit ad mortem furor?

1050 sopor est: reciprocos spiritus motus agit.

detur quieti tempus, ut somno gravi

vis victa morbi pectus oppressum levet.

removete, famuli, tela, ne repetat furens.

Chorus

Lugeat aether magnusque parens

1055 aetheris alti tellusque ferax

et vaga ponti mobilis unda,

tuque ante omnis qui per terras

tractusque maris fundis radios

noctemque fugas ore decoro,

1060 fervide Titan: obitus pariter

tecum Alcides vidit et ortus

novitque tuas utrasque domos.

Solvite tantis animum monstris,

solvite superi,

1065 rectam in melius flectite mentem.

tuque, o domitor Somne malorum,

requies animi,

pars humanae melior vitae,

volucre o matris genus Astraeae,

frater durae languide Mortis,

1070 veris miscens falsa, futuri

certas et idem pessimus auctor,

pater o rerum, portus vitae,
lucis requies noctisque comes,
qui par regi famuloque venis,
1075 pavidum leti genus humanum
cogis longam discere noctem:
placidus fessum lenisque fove,
preme de victum torpore gravi;
sopor indomitos alliget artus
1080 nec torva prius pectora linquat,
quam mens repetat pristina cursum.
En fusus humi saeva feroci
corde volutat somnia
(nondum est
tanti pestis superata mali
1085 clavaeque gravi lassum solitus
mandare caput
quaerit vacua pondera dextra,
motu iactans brachia vano)
nec adhuc omnis expulit aestus,
1090 sed ut ingenti vexata noto
servat longos unda tumultus
et iam vento cessante tumet.
pelle insanos fluctus animi,
redeat pietas virtusque viro.
vel sit potius
1095 mens vesano concita motu:
error caecus qua coepit eat;
solus te iam praestare potest
furor insontem: proxima puris
sors est manibus nescire nefas.
1100 Nunc Herculeis percussa sonent
pectora palmis,
mundum solitos ferre lacertos
verbera pulsant victrice manu;
gemitus vastos audiat aether,
1105 audiat atri regina poli
vastisque ferox

qui colla gerit vincta catenis
imo latitans Cerberus antro.

Resonet maesto clamore chaos
lateque patens unda profundis:
1110 et qui medius tua tela tamen
senserat aer.

pectora tantis obsessa malis
non sunt ictu ferienda levi:
uno planctu tria regna sonent.
1115 Et tu collo decus ac telum
suspensa diu,
fortis harundo, pharetraeque graves,
date saeva fero verbera tergo;
caedantumeros robora fortes
stipesque potens

1120 duris oneret pectora nodis:
plangant tantos arma dolores.

1135 Ite infaustum genus, o pueri,
noti per iter triste laboris,
non vos patriae laudis comites
ulti saevos vulnere reges,
non Argiva membra palaestra

1125 flectere docti fortes caestu
fortesque manu, iam tamen ausi
telum Scythicis leve corytis
missum certa librare manu
tutosque fuga figere cervos:

1130 nondumque ferae terga iubatae
ite ad Stygios, umbrae, portus
ite, innocuae,
quas in primo limine vitae
scelus oppressit patriusque furor,
ite, iratos visite reges.

Hercules Amphitryon Theseus

Quis hic locus, quae regio, quae mundi plaga?
ubi sum? sub ortu solis, an sub cardine

1140 glacialis ursae? numquid Hesperii maris
extrema tellus hunc dat Oceano modum?
quas trahimus auras? quod solum fesso subest?
certe redimus, unde prostrata ad domum
video cruenta corpora? an nondum exuit
1145 simulacra mens inferna? post reditus quoque
oberrat oculis turba feralis meis?
pudet fateri: paveo; nescio quod mihi,
nescio quod animus grande praesagit malum,
ubi es, parens? ubi illa natorum grege
1150 animosa coniunx? cur latus laevum vacat
spolio leonis? quonam abit tegimen meum
idemque somno mollis Herculeo torus?
ubi tela? ubi arcus? arma quis vivo mihi
detrahere potuit? spolia quis tanta abstulit
1155 ipsumque quis non Herculis somnum horruit?
libet meum videre victorem, libet
(exurge, virtus) quem novum caelo pater
genuit relicto, cuius in fetu stetit
nox longior quam nostra, quod cerno nefas?
1160 nati cruenta caede confecti iacent,
perempta coniunx, quis Lycus regnum obtinet
quis tanta Thebis scelera moliri ausus est
Hercule reverso? quisquis Ismeni loca,
Actaea quisquis arva, qui gemino mari
1165 pulsata Pelopis regna Dardanii colis,
succurre, saevae cladis auctorem indica.
ruat ira in omnis: hostis est quisquis mihi
non monstrat hostem, victor Alcidae, lates?
procede, seu tu vindicas currus truces
1170 Thracis cruenti sive Geryonae pecus
Libyaeve dominos, nulla pugnandi mora est.
en nudus asto; vel meis armis licet
petas inermem, cur meos Theseus fugit
paterque vultus? ora cur condunt sua?
1175 differte fletus; quis meos dederit neci
omnis simul, profare. quid, genitor, siles?

at tu ede, Theseu, sed tua, Theseu, fide.
uterque tacitus ora pudibunda obtegit
furtimque lacrimas fundit, in tantis malis
1180 quid est pudendum? numquid Argivae impotens
dominator urbis, numquid infestum Lyci
pereuntis agmen clade nos tanta obruit?
per te meorum facinorum laudem precor,
genitor, tuique nominis semper mihi
1185 numen secundum, fare, quis fudit domum?
cui praeda iacui?

Amph.

Tacita sic abeant mala.

Herc.

Vt inultus ego sim?

Amph.

Saepe vindicta obfuit.

Herc.

Quisquamne segnis tanta toleravit mala?

Amph.

Maiora quisquis timuit.

Herc.

His etiam, pater,

1190 quicquam timeri maius aut gravius potest?

Amph.

Cladis tuae pars ista quam nosti quota est?

Herc.

Miserere, genitor, supplices tendo manus.

quid hoc? manus refugit, hic errat scelus.

unde hic cruor? quid illa puerili madens

1195 harundo leto? tincta Lernaean nece

iam tela video nostra, non quaero manum.
quis potuit arcum flectere aut quae dextera
sinuare nervum rite cedentem mihi?
ad vos revertor; genitor, hoc nostrum est scelus?
1200 tacuere? nostrum est.

Amph.

Luctus est istic tuus,
crimen novercae: casus hic culpa caret.

Herc.

Nunc parte ab omni, genitor, iratus tona,
oblite nostri vindica sera manu
saltem nepotes. stelliger mundus sonet
1205 flammisque et hic et ille iaculetur polus:
rupes ligatum Caspiae corpus trahant
atque ales avida — cur Promethei vacant
scopuli? vacat cur vertice immenso feras
volucresque pascens Caucasi abruptum latus
1210 nudumque silvis? illa quae pontum Scythen
Symplegas artat hinc et hinc vinctas manus
distendat alto, cumque revocata vice
in se coibunt saxaque in caelum expriment
actis utrimque rupibus medium mare,
1215 ego inquieta montium iaceam mora.
quin structum acervans nemore congesto aggerem
cruore corpus impio sparsum cremo?
sic, sic agendum est: inferis reddam Herculem.

Amph.

Nondum tumultu pectus attonito carens
1220 mutavit iras quodque habet proprium furor,
in se ipse saevit,

Herc.

Dira Furiarum loca
et inferorum carcer et sonti plaga

decreta turbae — si quod exilium latet
ulterius Erebo, Cerbero ignotum et mihi:
1225 hoc me abde, tellus; Tartari ad finem ultimum
mansurus ibo. pectus o nimium ferum! —
quis vos per omnem, liberi, sparsos domum
deflere digne poterit? hic durus malis
lacrimare vultus nescit, huc arcum date,
1230 date huc sagittas, stipitem huc vastum date.
tibi tela frangam nostra, tibi nostros, puer,
rumpemus arcus; at tuis stipes gravis
ardebit umbris; ipsa Lernaëis frequens
pharetra telis in tuos ibit rogos:
1235 dent arma poenas, vos quoque infaustas meis
cremabo telis, o novercales manus.

Amph.

Quis nomen usquam sceleris errori addidit?

Herc.

Saepe error ingens sederis obtinuit locum.

Amph.

Nunc Hercule opus est: perfer hanc molem mali.

Herc.

1240 Non sic furore cessit extinctus pudor,
populos ut omnes impio aspectu fugem.
arma, arma, Theseu, flagito propere mihi
subtracta reddi, sana si mens est mihi,
referte manibus tela; si remanet furor,
1245 pater, recede: mortis inveniam viam.

Amph.

Per sancta generis sacra, per ius nominis
utrumque nostri, sive me altorem vocas
seu tu parentem, perque venerandos piis
canos, senectae parce desertae, precor,

1250 annisque fessis; unicum lapsae domus
firmamen, unum lumen afflicto malis
temet reserva. nullus ex te contigit
fructus laborum; semper aut dubium mare
aut monstra timui; quisquis in toto furit
1255 rex saevus orbe, manibus aut aris nocens,
a me timetur: semper absentis pater
fructum tui factumque et aspectum peto.

Herc.

Cur animam in ista luce detineam amplius
morerque nihil est: cuncta iam amisi bona,
1260 mentem arma famam coniugem gnatos manus,
etiam furorem, nemo polluto queat
animo mederi: morte sanandum est scelus.

Amph.

Perimes parentem,

Herc.

Facere ne possim,
occidam.

Amph.

Genitore coram?

Herc.

Cernere hunc docui
nefas.

Amph.

1265 Memoranda potius omnibus facta intuens
unius a te criminis veniam pete.

Herc.

Veniam dabit sibi ipse, qui nulli dedit?
laudanda feci iussus: hoc unum meum est.
succurre, genitor; sive te pietas movet

1270 seu triste fatum sive violatum decus
virtutis: effer arma; vincatur mea
fortuna dextra,

Thes.

Sunt quidem patriae preces
satis efficaces, sed tamen nostro quoque
movere fletu, surge et adversa impetu
1275 perfringe solito, nunc tuum nulli imparem
animum malo resume, nunc magna tibi
virtute agendum est: Herculem irasci veta.

Herc.

Si vivo, feci scelera; si morior, tuli.
purgare terras propero, iamdudum mihi
1280 monstrum impium saevumque et immite ac ferum
oberrat: agendum dextra, conare aggredi
ingens opus, labore bis seno amplius.
ignava cessas, fortis in pueros modo
pavidasque matres? arma nisi dantur mihi,
1285 aut omne Pindi Thracis excidam nemus
Bacchique lucos et Cithaeronis iuga
mecum cremabo, aut tota cum domibus suis
dominisque tecta, cum deis templa omnibus
Thebana supra corpus excipiam meum
1290 atque urbe versa condar, et, si fortibus
leve pondus umeris moenia immissa incident
septemque opertus non satis portis premar,
onus omne media parte quod mundi sedet
dirimitque superos, in meum vertam caput.

Amph.

Reddo arma.

Herc.

Vox est digna genitore
1295 Herculis.

hoc en peremptus spiculo cecidit puer —

Amph.

Hoc Iuno telum manibus immisit tuis.

Herc.

Hoc nunc ego utar.

Amph.

Ecce quam miserum

cor palpitat pectusque sollicitum ferit. metu

Herc.

Aptata harundo est.

Amph.

Ecce iam facies

1300 scelus

volens sciensque.

Herc.

Pande, quid fieri iubes?

Amph.

Nihil rogamus: noster in tuto est dolor.

natum potes servare tu solus mihi,

eripere nec tu; maximum evasi metum:

1305 miserum haut potes me facere, felicem potes.

sic statue, quicquid statuis, ut causam tuam

famamque in arto stare et ancipiti scias:

aut vivis aut occidis, hanc animam levem

fessamque senio nec minus fessam malis

1310 in ore primo teneo, tam tarde patri

vitam dat aliquis? non feram ulterius moram,

laetare! ferro pectus impresso induam:

hic, hic iacebit Herculis sani scelus.

Herc.

Iam parce, genitor, parce, iam revoca manum.
1315 succumbe, virtus, perfer imperium patris.
eat ad labores hic quoque Herculeos labor:
vivamus, artus alleva afflictos solo,
Theseu, parentis, dextra contactus pios
scelerata refugit,

Amph.

Hanc manum amplector libens,
1320 hac nisus »ibo, pectori hanc aegro admovens
pellam dolores,

Herc.

Quem locum profugus petam?
ubi me recondam quave tellure obruar?
quis Tanais aut quis Nilus aut quis Persica
violentus unda Tigris aut Rhenus ferox
1325 Tagusve Hibera turbidus gaza fluens
abluere dextram poterit? Arctoum licet
Maeotis in me gelida transfundat mare
et tota Tethys per meas currat manus,
haerebit altum facinus, in quas impius
1330 terras recedes? ortum an occasum petes?
ubique notus perdidit exilio locum.
me refugit orbis, astra transversos agunt
obliqua cursus, ipse Titan Cerberum
meliore vultu vidit, o fidum caput,
1335 Theseu, latebram quaere longinquam abditam;
quoniamque semper sceleris alieni arbiter
amas nocentes, gratiam meritis refer
vicemque nostris: redde me infernis precor
umbris reductum, meque subiectum tuis
1340 constitue vinclis: ille me abscondet locus.
sed et ille novit.

Thes.

Nostra te tellus manet.

illic solutam caede Gradivus manum
restituit armis: illa te, Alcide, vocat,
facere innocentes terra quae superos solet.

THE TROJAN WOMEN — Troades

Hecvba

Quicumque regno fidit et magna potens
dominatur aula nec leves metuit deos
animumque rebus credulum laetis dedit,
me videat et' te, Troia: non umquam tulit
5 documenta fors maiora, quam fragili loco
starent superbi, columen eversum occidit
pollentis Asiae, caelitum egregius labor;
ad cuius arma venit et qui frigidum
septena Tanain ora pandentem bibit,
et quae vagos vicina prospiciens Scythas
ripam catervis Ponticam viduis ferit,
10 et qui renatum primus excipiens diem
tepidum rubenti Tigrin inmiscet freto,
excisa ferro est, Pergamum incubuit sibi.
15 en alta muri decora congesti iacent
tectis adustis; regiam flammae ambiunt
omnisque late fumat Assaraci domus.
non prohibet avidas flamma victoris manus:
diripitur ardens Troia, nec caelum patet
20 undante fumo: nube ceu densa obsitus
ater favilla squallet Iliaca dies.
stat avidus irae victor et lentum Ilium
metitur oculis ac decem tandem ferus
ignoscit annis; horret afflictam quoque,
25 victamque quamvis videat, haut credit sibi
potuisse vinci, spolia populator rapit
Dardania; praedam mille non capiunt rates.
Testor deorum numen adversum mihi,
patriaeque cineres teque rectorem Phrygum
30 quem Troia toto conditum regno tegit,
tuosque manes quo stetit stante Ilium,
et vos meorum liberam magni greges,
umbrae minores: quicquid adversi accidit,

quaecumque Phoebas ore lymphato furens
35 credi deo vetante praedixit mala,
prior Hecuba vidi. gravida nec tacui metus
et vana vates ante Cassandram fui.
non cautus ignes Ithacus aut Itbaci comes
nocturnus in vos sparsit aut fallax Sinon:
40 meus ignis iste est, facibus ardetis meis.
sed quid ruinas urbis eversae gemis,
vivax senectus? respice infelix ad hos
luctus recentes: Troia iam vetus est malum,
vidi execrandum regiae caedis nefas
45 ipsasque ad aras maius admissum scelus
Aeacidis armis, cum ferox, scaeva manu
coma reflectens regium torta caput,
alto nefandum vulneri ferrum abdedit;
quod. penitus actum cum recepisset, libens
50 ensis senili siccus e iugulo redit.
placare quem non potuit a caede effera
mortalis aevi cardinem extremum premens
superique testes sceleris et quoddam sacrum
regni iacentis? ille tot regum parens
55 caret sepulcro Priamus et flamma indiget
ardente Troia, non tamen superis sat est:
dominum ecce Priami nuribus et natis legens
sortitur urna praedaque en vilis sequar.
hic Hectoris coniugia despondet sibi.
60 hic optat Heleni coniugem. hic Antenoris;
nec dest tuos. Cassandra, qui thalamos petat.
mea sors timetur, sola sum Danaïs metus.
Lamenta cessant? turba captivae mea,
ferite palmis pectora et planctus date
65 et iusta Troiae facite, iamdudum sonet
fatalis Ide, iudicis diri domus.

Chorus Troadum Hecuba

Non rude vulgus lacrimisque a ovum
lugere iubes:

hoc continuis egimus annis,
ex quo tetigit
70 Phrygius Graias hospes Amyclas
securique fretum
pinus matri sacra Cybebae.
deciens nivibus canuit Ide,
deciens nostris nudata rogis,
75 et Sigeis trepidus campis
decumas secuit messor aristas,
ut nulla dies maerore caret.
sed nova fletus causa ministrat:
ite ad planctus,
80 miseramque leva, regina, manum.
vulgus dominam vile sequemur:
non indociles lugere sumus.

Hec.

Fidae casus nostri comites,
solve crinem,
85 per colla fluant maesta capilli
tepido Troiae pulvere turpes:
complete manus,
hoc ex Troia sumpsisse licet.
paret exertos turba lacertos;
veste remissa substringe sinus
utroque tenus pateant artus.
90 cui coniugio
pectora velas, captive pudor?
cingat tunicas palla solutas,
vacet ad crebri verbera planctus
furibunda manus — placet hic habitus,
95 placet: agnosco Troada turbam.
iterum luctus redeant veteres,
solitum flendi vincite morem:
Hectora flemus.

Chor.

Solvimus omnes lacerum multo
100 funere crinem;
coma demissa est libera nodo
sparsitque cinis fervidus ora.
cadit ex umeris vestis apertis
105 imumque tegit suffulta latus;
iam nuda vocant pectora dextras:
nunc, nunc viles exprome, dolor.
Rhoetea sonent litora planctus,
habitantque cavis montibus Echo
110 non, ut solita est, extrema brevis
verba remittat,
totos reddat Troiae gemitus:
audiat omnis pontus et aether.
saevite, manus,
pulsu pectus tundite vasto,
115 non sum solito contenta sono:
Hectora flemus.
HEC Tibi nostra ferit dextra lacertos
umerosque ferit tibi sanguineos,
tibi nostra caput dextera pulsat,
120 tibi maternis ubera palmis
laniata iacent:
fluat et multo sanguine manet
quamcumque tuo
funere feci rapta cicatrix.
columen patriae, mora factorum,
125 tu praesidium Phrygibus fessis,
tu murus eras umerisque tuis
stetit illa decem fulta per annos:
tecum cecidit summusque dies
Hectoris idem patriaeque fuit.
130 Vertite planctus: Priamo vestros
fundite fletus, satis Hector habet.

Chor.

Accipe, rector Phrygiae, planctus,

accipe fletus, bis capte senex,
nil Troia semel te rege tulit,
135 bis pulsari Dardana Graio
moenia ferro
bisque pharetras passa Herculeas.
post elatos
Hecubae partus regumque gregem
postrema pater funera cludis
140 magnoque Iovi victima caesus
Sigea, premis litora truncus.

Hec.

Alio lacrimas flectite vestras:
non est Priami miseranda mei
mors, Iliades.
145 felix Priamus dicite cunctae:
liber manes vadit ad imos,
nec feret umquam victa Graium
cervice iugum;
non ille duos videt Atridas
nec fallacem cernit Vlixen;
150 non Argolici praeda triumph
subiecta feret colla tropaeis;
non adsuetas ad sceptrum manus
posterga dabit
currusque sequens Agamemnonios
155 aurea dextra vincula gestans
latis fiet pompa Mycenis.

Chor.

Felix Priamus dicimus omnes:
secum excedens sua regna tulit;
nunc Elysii nemoris tutis
160 errat in umbris interque pias
felix animas Hectora quaerit.
felix Priamus,
felix quisquis bello moriens

omnia secum consumpta tulit.

Talthybius Chorus

O longa Danaïs semper in portu mora,
165 seu petere bellum, petere seu patriam volunt.

Chor.

Quae causa ratibus faciat et Danaïs moram,
effare, reduces quis deus claudat vias.

Tal.

Pavet animus, artus horridus quassat tremor,
maiora veris monstra (vix capiunt fidem)
170 vidi ipse, vidi. summa iam Titan iuga
stringebat ortu, vicerat noctem dies,
cum subito caeco terra mugitu fremens
concussa totos traxit ex imo sinus;
movere silvae capita et excelsum nemus
fragore vasto tonuit et lucus sacer:
175 Idaea ruptis saxa ceciderunt iugis.
nec terra solum tremuit: et pontus suum
adesse Achillen sensit ac stravit vada.
tum scissa vallis aperit immensos specus
et hiatus Erebi pervium ad superos iter
180 tellure fracta praebet ac tumultum levat.
emicuit ingens umbra Thessalici ducis,
Threicia qualis arma proludens tuis
iam, Troia, fatis stravit aut Neptunium
cana nitentem perculit iuvenem coma,
185 aut cum inter acies Marte violento furens
corporibus amnes clusit et quaerens iter
tardus cruento Xanthus erravit vado,
aut cum superbo victor in curru stetit
egitque habenas Hectorem et Troiam trahens.
190 implevit omne litus irati sonus:
cite, ite inertes, manibus meis debitos
auferte honores, solvite ingratas rates

per nostra ituri maria, non parvo luit
iras Achillis Graecia et magno luet:
195 desponsa nostris cineribus Polyxene
Pyrrhi manu mactetur et tumulum riget.
haec fatus alta nocte demersit diem
repetensque Ditem rursus ingentem specum
coeunte terra iunxit, immoti iacent
200 tranquilla pelagi, ventus abiecit minas
placidumque fluctu murmurat leni mare,
Tritonum ab alto cecinit hymenaeum chorus.

Pyrrhus Agamemnon Calchas

Cum laeta pelago vela rediturus dares,
excidit Achilles, cuius unius manu
205 impulsa Troia, quicquid accessit morae
illo remoto, dubia quo caderet stetit,
velis licet quod petitur ac properes dare,
sero es daturus: iam suum cuncti duces
tulere pretium, quae minor merces potest
210 tantae dari virtutis? an meruit parum
qui, fugere bellum iussus et longa sedens
aevum senecta ducere ac Pylii senis
transcendere annos, exuit matris dolos
falsasque vestes, fassus est armis virum?
215 inhospitali Telephus regno impotens,
dum Mysiae ferocis introitus negat,
rudem cruore regio dextram imbuit
fortemque eandem sensit et mitem manum.
cecidere Thebae, vidit Eetion capi
220 sua regna victus; clade subversa est pari
apposita celso parva Lyrnesos iugo,
captaque tellus nobilis Briseide
et causa litis regibus Chryse iacet
et nota fama Tenedos et quae pascuo
225 fecunda pingui Thracios nutrit greges
Scyros fretumque Lesbos Aegaeum secans
et cara Phoebos Cilla; quid quas alluit

vernīs Caycus gurgitem attollens aquis?
haec tanta clades gentium ac tantus pavor,
230 sparsae tot urbes turbinis vasti modo
alterius esset gloria ac summum decus:
iter est Achiilis; sic meus venit pater
et tanta gessit bella, dum bellum parat.
ut alia sileam merita, non unus satis
235 Hector fuisset? Ilium vicit pater,
vos diruistis. inclitas laudes iuvat
et facta magni clara genitoris sequi:
iacuit peremptus Hector ante oculos patris
patruique Memnon, cuius ob luctum parens
240 pallente maestum protulit vultu diem;
suique victor operis exemplum horruit
didicitque Achilles et dea natos mori.
tum saeva Amazon ultimus cecidit metus.
debes Achilli, merita si digne aestimas,
245 et si ex Mycenis virginem atque Argis petat.
dubitatur et iam placita nunc subito improbas
Priamique natam Pelei nato ferum
mactare credis? at tuam natam parens
Helenae immolasti: solita iam et facta expeto.

Agam.

250 Iuvenile vitium est regere non posse impetum;
aetatis alios fervor hic primus rapit,
Pyrrhum paternus, spiritus quondam trucidis
minasque tumidi lentus Aeacidae tuli:
quo plura possis, plura patienter feras.
255 Quid caede dira nobiles clari ducis
aspergis umbras? noscere hoc primum decet,
quid facere victor debeat, victus pati.
violenta nemo imperia continuit diu,
moderata durant: quoque Fortuna altius
260 evexit ac levavit humanas opes,
hoc se magis suppressere felicem decet
variosque casus tremere metuentem deos

nimum faventes. magna momento obrui
vincendo didici. Troia nos tumidos facit
265 nimum ac feroces? stamus hoc Danai loco,
unde illa cecidit, fateor, aliquando impotens
regno ac superbus altius memet tuli;
sed fregit illos spiritus haec quae dare
potuisset aliis causa, Fortunae favor,
270 tu me superbum, Priame, tu timidum facis.
ego esse quicquam sceptrum nisi vano putem
fulgore tectum nomen et falso comam
vinclo decentem? casus haec rapiet brevis,
nec mille forsitan ratibus aut annis decem:
275 non omnibus fortuna tam lenta imminet.
equidem fatebor (pace dixisse hoc tua,
Argiva tellus, liceat) affligi Phrygas
vinci que volui: ruere et aequari solo
utinam arcuissem. sed regi frenis nequit
280 et ira et ardens hostis et victoria
commissa nocti quicquid indignum aut ferum
cuiquam videri potuit, hoc fecit dolor
tenebraeque, per quas ipse se inritat furor,
gladiisque felix, cuius infecti semel
285 vecors libido est. quicquid eversae potest
superesse Troiae, maneat: exactum satis
poenarum et ultra est. regia ut virgo occidat
tumuloque donum detur et cineres riget
et facinus atrox caedis ut thalamos vocent?
290 non patiar, in me culpa cunctorum redit:
qui non vetat peccare, cum possit, iubet.

Pyrrh.

Nullumne Achillis praemium manes ferent? 1

Agam.

Ferent, et illum laudibus cuncti canent
magnumque terrae nomen ignotae audient.
295 quod si levatur sanguine infuso cinis,

opima Phrygii colla caedantur greges
fluatque nulli flebilis matri cruor.
quis iste mos est, quando in inferias homo est
impensus hominis? detrahe invidiam tuo
300 odiumque patri, quem coli poena iubes.

Pyrrh.

O tumide, rerum dum secundarum status
extollit animos, timide cum increpuit metus,
regum tyranne! etiamne flammatum geris
amoris aestu pectus ac veneris novae?
305 solusne totiens spolia de nobis feres?
hac dextra Achilli victimam reddam suam.
quam si negas retinesque, maiorem dabo
dignamque quam det Pyrrhus; et nimium diu
a caede nostra regia cessat manus
310 paremque poscit Priamus,

Agam.

Haud equidem nego
hoc esse Pyrrhi maximum in bello decus,
saevo peremptus ense quod Priamus iacet,
supplex paternus,

Pyrrh.

Supplices nostri patris
hostesque eosdem novimus. Priamus tamen
315 praesens rogavit; tu gravi pavidus metu,
nec ad rogandum fortis, Aiaci preces
Ithacoque mandas clausus atque hostem tremens.

Agam.

At non timebat tunc tuus, fateor, parens,
interque caedes Graeciae atque ustas rates
320 segnis iacebat belli et armorum immemor,
levi canoram verberans plectro chelyn.

Pyrrh.

Tunc magnus Hector, arma contemnens tua,
cantus Achillis timuit, et tanto in metu
navalibus pax alta Thessalicis fuit.

Agam.

325 Nempe isdem in istis Thessalis navalibus
pax alta rursus Hectoris patri fuit.

Pyrrh.

Est regis alti spiritum regi dare.

Agam.

Cur dextra regi spiritum eripuit tua?

Pyrrh.

Mortem misericors saepe pro vita dabit.

Agam.

330 Et nunc misericors virginem busto petis?

Pyrrh.

Iamne immolari virgines credis nefas?

Agam.

Praeferre patriam liberis regem decet.

Pyrrh.

Lex nulla capto parcit aut poenam impedit.

Agam.

Quod non vetat lex, hoc vetat fieri pudor.

Pyrrh.

335 Quodcumque libuit facere victori licet.

Agam.

Minimum decet libere cui multum licet.

Pyrrh.

His ista iactas, quos decem annorum gravi
regno subactos Pyrrhus exsolvit iugo? caret.

Agam.

Hos Scyrus animos?

Pyrrh.

Scelere quae fratrum

Agam.

³⁴⁰ Inclusa fluctu —

Pyrrh.

Nempe cognati maris:
Atrei et Thyestae nobilem novi domum.

Agam.

EX virginis concepte furtivo stupro
et ex Achilles nate, sed nondum viro —

Pyrrh.

Illo ex Achille, genere qui mundum suo
³⁴⁵ sparsus per omne caelitem regnum tenet:
Thetide aequor, umbras Aeaco, caelum Iove.

Agam.

Illo ex Achille, qui manu Paridis iacet.

Pyrrh.

. Quem nec deorum comminus quisquam petit.

Agam.

Compescere equidem verba et audacem malo
³⁵⁰ * poteram domare: sed meus captis quoque
scit parcere ensis, potius interpretes deum
Calchas vocetur: fata si poscent, dabo.

Tu qui Pelasgae vincla solvisti rati
morasque bellis, arte qui reseras polum,
355 cui viscerum secreta, cui mundi fragor
et stella longa semitam flamina trahens
dant signa fati, cuius ingenti mihi
mercede constant ora: quid iubeat deus
effare, Calchas, nosque consilio rege.

Cal.

360 Dant fata Danaïs quo solent pretio viam:
mactanda virgo est Thessali busto ducis;
sed quo iugari Thessalae cultu solent
Ionidesve vel Mycenaeae nurus,
Pyrrhus parenti coniugem tradat suo:
365 sic rite dabitur, non tamen nostras tenet
haec una puppes causa: nobilior tuo,
Polyxene, cruore debetur cruor,
quem fata quaerunt, turre de summa cadat
Priami nepos Hectoreus et letum oppetat.
370 tum mille velis impleat classis freta.

Chorus

Verum est an timidos fabula decipit
umbras corporibus vivere conditis,
cum coniunx oculis imposuit manum
supremusque dies solibus obstitit
375 et tristis cineres urna cohercuit?
non prodest animam tradere funeri,
sed restat miseris vivere longius?
an toti morimur nullaque pars manet
nostri, cum profugo spiritus halitu
380 immixtus nebulis cessit in aera
et nudum tetigit subdita fax latus?
Quicquid sol oriens, quicquid et occidens
novit, caeruleis Oceanus fretis
quicquid bis veniens et fugiens lavat, ,
385 aetas Pegaseo corripit gradu.

quo bis sena volant sidera turbine,
quo cursu properat volvere saecula
astrorum dominus, quo properat modo
obliquis Hecate currere flexibus:
390 hoc omnes petimus fata nec amplius,
iuratos superis qui tetigit lacus,
usquam est: ut calidis fumus ab ignibus
vanescit, spatium per breve sordidus,
ut nubes, gravidas quas modo vidimus,
395 arctoi Boreae dissicit impetus:
sic hic, quo regimur, spiritus effluet.
post mortem nihil est ipsaque mors nihil,
velocis spatii meta novissima;
spem ponant avidi, solliciti metum:
400 tempus nos avidum devorat et chaos.
mors individua est, noxia corpori
nec parcens animae: Taenara et aspero
regnum sub domino limen et obsidens
custos non facili Cerberus ostio
405 rumores vacui verbaque inania
et par sollicito fabula somnio.
quaeris quo iaceas post obitum loco?
quo non nata iacent. —
Andromacha Senex Astyanax

Andromacha

Quid, maesta Phrygiae turba, laceratis comas
410 miseramque tunsae pectus effuso genas
fletu rigatis? levia perpessae sumus,
si flenda patimur. Ilium vobis modo,
mihi cecidit olim. cum ferus curru incito
mea membra raperet et gravi gemeret sono
415 Peliacus axis pondere Hectoreo tremens.
tunc obruta atque eversa quodcumque accidit
torpens malis rigensque sine sensu fero.
iam erepta Danaïs coniugem sequerer meum,
nisi hic teneret: hic meos animos domat

420 morique prohibet; cogit hic aliquid deos
adhuc rogare — tempus aeramnae addidit,
hic mihi malorum maximum fructum abstulit,
nihil timere: prosperis rebus locus
ereptus omnis, dira qua veniant habent,
425 miserrimum est timere, cum speres nihil.

Sen.

Quis te repens commovit afflictam metus?

Andr.

Exoritur aliquod maius ex magno malum,
nondum mentis Ilii fatum stetit.

Sen.

Et quas reperiet, ut velit, clades deus?

Andr.

430 Stygis profundae claustra et obscuri specus
laxantur et, ne desit e versis metus,
hostes ab imo conditi Dite exeunt —
solisne retro pervium est Danais iter?
certe aequa mors est — turbat atque agitat Phrygas
435 communis iste terror, hic proprie meum
exterret animum, noctis horrendae sopor.

Sen.

Quae visa portas? effer in medium metus.

Andr.

Partes fere nox alma transierat duas
clarumque septem verterant stellae iugum;
440 ignota tandem venit afflictae quies
brevisque fessis somnus obrepsit genis,
si somnus ille est mentis attonitae stupor:
cum subito nostros Hector ante oculos stetit,
non qualis ultro bella in Argivos ferens

445 Graias petebat facibus Idaeis rates,
nec caede multa qualis in Danaos furens
vera ex Achille spolia simulato tulit,
non ille vultus flammeum intendens iubar,
sed fessus ac deiectus et fletu gravis
450 similisque maesto, squalida obtectus coma.
iuvat tamen vidisse; tum quassans caput:
'dispelle somnos' inquit ... et natum eripe,
o fida coniunx: lateat, haec una est salus.
omitte fletus — Troia quod cecidit gemis?
455 utinam iaceret tota. festina, amove
quocumque nostrae parvulam stirpem domus.'
mihi gelidus horror ac tremor somnum expulit,
oculosque nunc huc pavida, nunc illuc ferens
oblita nati misera quaesivi Hectorem:
460 fallax per ipsos umbra complexus abit.
O nate, magni certa progenies patris,
spes una Phrygibus, unica adflictae domus,
veterisque suboles sanguinis nimium inclita
nimiumque patri similis: hos vultus meus
465 habebat Hector, talis incessu fuit
habituque talis, sic tulit fortes manus,
Sic celsus umeris, fronte sic torva minax
cervice fusam dissipans iacta comam —
o nate sero Phrygibus, o matri cito,
470 eritne tempus illud ac felix dies
quo Troici defensor et vindex soli
recidiva ponas Pergama et sparsos fuga
cives reducas, nomen et patriae suum
Phrygibusque reddas? sed mei fati memor
475 tam magna timeo vota — quod captis sat est,
vivamus, heu me, quis locus fidus meo
erit timori quave te sede occulam?
arx illa pollens opibus et muris deum,
gentes per omnes clara et invidiae gravis,
480 nunc pulvis altus, strata sunt flamma omnia
superestque vasta ex urbe ne tantum quidem,

quo lateat infans, quem locum fraudi legam,1?
est tumulus ingens coniugis cari sacer,
verendus hosti, mole quem immensa parens
485 opibusque magnis struxit, in luctus suos
rex non avarus: optime credam patri,
sudor per artus frigidus totos cadit:
omen tremesco misera feralis loci.

Sen.

Miser occupet praesidia, securus legat.

Andr.

Quid quod latere sine metu magno nequit?

Sen.

Ne prodatur aliquis, amove testes doli. ,

Andr.

Si quaeret hostis?

Sen.

Vrbe in eversa perit.

haec causa multos una ab interitu arcuit:

490 credi perisse,

Andr.

Vix spei quicquam est super:

quid proderit latuisse redituro in manus?

Sen.

495 Victor feroces impetus primos habet.

Andr.

Grave pondus illum magna nobilitas premit;

quis te locus, quae regio seducta, invia

tuto reponet? quis feret trepidis opem?

500 quis proteget? qui semper, etiam nunc tuos,

Hector, tuere: coniugis furtum piae
serva et fideli cinere victurum excipe,
succede tumulo, nate — quid retro fugis?
turpisne latebras spernis? agnosco indolem:
505 pudet timere, spiritus magnos fuga
animosque veteres, sume quos casus dedit,
en intuere, turba quae simus super:
tumulus, puer, captiva: cedendum est malis,
sanctas parentis conditi sedes age
510 aude subire, fata si miseros iuvant,
habes salutem; fata si vitam negant,
habes sepulchrum.

Sen.

Claustra commissum tegunt;
quem ne tuus producat in medium timor,
procul hinc recede teque diversam amove.

Andr.

515 Levius solet timere, qui propius timet;
sed, si placet, referamus hinc alio pedem.

Sen.

Cohibe parumper ora questusque opprime:
gressus nefandos dux Cephallanum admovet.

Andr.

Dehisce tellus tuque, coniunx, ultimo
520 specu revulsam scinde tellurem et Stygis
sinu profundo conde depositum meum.
adest Vlixes, et quidem dubio gradu
vultuque: nectit pectore astus callido.

Ulixes Andromacha

Durae minister sortis hoc primum peto.
525 ut, ore quamvis verba dicantur meo,
non esse credas nostra: Graiorum omnium

procerumque vox est, petere quos seras domos
Hectorea suboles prohibet: hanc fata expetunt.
sollicita Danaos pacis incertae fides
530 semper tenebit, semper a tergo timor
respicere coget arma nec poni sinet,
dum Phrygibus animos natus eversis dabit,
Andromacha, † vester, augur haec Calchas canit;
et, si taceret augur haec Calchas, tamen
535 dicebat Hector, cuius et stirpem horreo.
generosa in ortus semina exsurgunt suos:
sic ille magni parvus armenti comes
primisque nondum cornibus findens cutem
cervice subito celsus et fronte arduus
540 gregem paternum ducit ac pecori imperat;
quae tenera caeso virga de trunco stetit,
par ipsa matri tempore exiguo subit
umbrasque terris reddit et caelo nemus;
sic male relictus igne de magno cinis
545 vires resumit. est quidem iniustus dolor
rerum aestimator: si tamen tecum exigas,
veniam dabis, quod bella post hiemes decem
totidemque messes iam senex miles timet
aliasque clades rursus ac numquam bene
550 Troiam iacentem, magna res Danaos movet,
futurus Hector: libera Graios metu.
haec una naves causa deductas tenet,
hac classis haeret, neve crudelem putes,
quod sorte iussus Hectoris natum petam:
555 petissem Oresten. patere quod victor tulit.

Andr.

Vtinam quidem esses, nate, materna in manu,
nossemque quis te casus ereptum mihi
teneret, aut quae regio — non hostilibus
confossa telis pectus aut vinclis manus
560 secantibus praestricta, non acri latus
utrumque flamma cincta maternam fidem

umquam exuissem. nate, quis te nunc locus,
fortuna quae possedit? errore avio
vagus arva lustras? vastus an patriae vapor
565 corripuit artus? saevus an victor tuo
lusit cruore? numquid immanis ferae
morsu peremptus pascis Idaeas aves?

Vlix.

Simulata remove verba; non facile est tibi
decipere Vlixen: vicinus matrum dolos
570 etiam dearum. cassa consilia amove;
ubi natus est?

Andr.

Vbi Hector? ubi cuncti Phryges?
ubi Priamus? unum quaeris: ego quaero omnia.
VLBL Coacta dices sponte quod fari abnuis.

Andr.

Tuta est, perire quae potest debet cupit.

Vlix.

575 Magnifica verba mors prope admota excutit.

Andr.

Si vis, Vlix, cogere Andromacham metu,
vitam minare: nam mori votum est mihi.

Vlix.

Verberibus igni t morte cruciatu eloqui
quodcumque celas adiget invitam dolor
580 et pectore imo condita arcana eruet:
necessitas plus posse quam pietas solet.

Andr.

Propone flammās, vulnera et diras mali
doloris artes et famem et saevam sitim
variasque pestes undique, et ferrum inditum
585 visceribus istis, carceris caeci luum,
et quicquid audet victor iratus timens:
VLIX. Stulta est fides celare quod prodas statim.
animosa nullos mater admittit metus.

Vlix.

Hic ipse, quo nunc contumax perstas, amor
590 consulere parvis liberis Danaos monet.
post arma tam longinqua, post annos decem
minus timerem quos facit Calchas metus,
si mihi timerem: bella Telemacho paras.

Andr.

Invita, Vlixē, gaudium Danaīs dabo:
595 dandum est; fatere quos premis luctus, dolor.
gaudete, Atridae, tuque laetifica, ut soles,
refer Pelasgis: Hectoris proles obit.

Vlix.

Et esse verum hoc qua probas Danaīs fide?

Andr.

Ita quod minari maximum victor potest
600 contingat et me fata maturo exitu
facilique solvant ac meo condant solo
et patria tellus Hectorem leviter premat,
ut luce caruit: inter extinctos iacet
datumque tumulo debita exanimis tulit.

Vlix.

605 Expleta fata stirpe sublata Hectoris

solidamque pacem laetus ad Danaos feram —
quid agis, Vlīx? Danaīdae credent tibi:
tu cui? parenti — fingit an quisquam hoc parens,
nec abominandae mortis auspicium pavet?
610 auspicia metuunt qui nihil maius timent.
fidem alligavit iure iurando suam —
si peierat, timere quid gravius potest?
nunc advoca astus, anime, nunc fraudes, dolos.
nunc totum Vlīxen; veritas numquam perit.
615 scrutare matrem, maeret, illacrimat, gemit;
sed et huc et illuc anxios gressus refert
missasque voces aure sollicita excipit:
magis haec timet, quam maeret. ingenio est onus.
Alios parentes alioqui in luctu decet:
620 tibi gratulandum est. misera, quod nato cares.
quem mors manebat saeva praecipitem datum
e turre, lapsis sola quae muris manet.

Andr.

Reliquit animus membra, quatiuntur, labant
torpetque vinctus frigido sanguis gelu.

Vlīx.

625 Intremuit: hac, hac parte quaerenda est mihi;
matrem timor detexit: iterabo metum. —
ite, ite celeres, fraude materna abditum
hostem, Pelasgi nominis pestem ultimam,
ubicumque latitat, erutam in medium date.
630 bene est: tenetur, perge, festina, attrahe —
quid respicis trepidasque? iam certe perit.

Andr.

Vtinam timerem, solitus ex longo est metus:
dediscit animus †scire quod didicit diu.

Vlīx.

Lustrale quoniam debitum muris puer
635 sacrum antecessit nec potest vatem sequi
meliore fato raptus, hoc Calchas ait
modo piari posse redituras rates,
si placet undas Hectoris sparsi cinis
ac tumulus imo totus aequetur solo.
640 nunc ille quoniam debitam effugit necem,
erit admovenda sedibus sacris manus.

Andr.

Quid agimus? animum distrahit geminus timor:
hinc natus, illinc coniugis sacri cinis,
pars utra vincet? testor immites deos,
645 deosque veros coniugis manes mei:
non aliud, Hector, in meo nato mihi
placere quam te. vivat, ut possit tuos
referre vultus — prorutus tumulo cinis
mergetur? ossa fluctibus spargi sinam
650 disiecta vastis? potius hic mortem oppetat. —
poteris nefandae deditum mater neci
videre? poteris celsa per fastigia
missum rotari? potero, perpetiar, feram,
dum non meus post fata victoris manu
655 iactetur Hector. — hic suam poenam potest
sentire, at illum fata iam in tuto locant —
quid fluctuaris? statue, quem poenae extrahas.
ingrata, dubitas? Hector est illinc tuus —
erras: utrimque est Hector; hic sensus potens,
660 forsan futurus ultor extincti patris —
utrique parci non potest: quid iam facis?
serva e duobus, anime, quem Danaï timent.

Vlix.

Responsa peragam: funditus busta eruam.

Andr.

Quae vendidistis?

Vlix.

Pergam et e summo
aggere
665 traham sepulchra,

Andr.

Caelitum appello fidem
fidemque Achillis: Pyrrhe, genitoris tui
munus tuere.

Vlix.

Tumulus hic campo statim
toto iacebit.

Andr.

Fuerat hoc prorsus nefas
Danais inausum. templa violastis, deos
670 etiam faventes: busta transierat furor.
resistam, inermis offeram armatis manus,
dabit ira vires, qualis Argolicas ferox
turmas Amazon stravit, aut qualis deo
percussa Maenas entheo silvas gradu
675 armata thyrsos terret atque expers sui
vulnus dedit nec sensit, in medios ruam.
tumuloque cineris socia defenso cadam.

Vlix.

Cessatis .et vos flebilis clamor movet
furorque cassus feminae? iussa ocus
680 peragite.

Andr.

Me, me sternite hic ferro prius.

repellor, heu me. rumpe fatorum moras,
molire terras, Hector: ut Vlixen domes,
vel umbra satis es — arma concussit manu,
iaculatur ignes — cernitis, Danaï, Hectorem?
685 an sola video?

Vlix.

Funditus cuncta eruam.

Andr.

Quid agis? ruina pariter et natum et virum
prosternis una? forsitan Danaos prece
placare poteris, conditum illidet statim :
immane busti pondus — intereat miser
690 ubicumque potius, ne pater natum obruat
prematque patrem natus. — Ad genua accido
supplex, Vlix, quamque nullius pedes
novere dextram pedibus admoveo tuis.
miserere matris et preces placidus pias
695 patiensque recipe, quoque te celsum altius
superi levarunt, mitius lapsos preme:
misero datur quodcumque, fortunae datur.
sic te revisat coniugis sanctae torus,
annosque, dum te recipit, extendat suos
700 Laerta; sic te iuvenis excipiat tuus,
et vota vincens vestra felici indole
aetate avum transcendat, ingenio patrem.
miserere matris: unicum adflictae mihi
solamen hic est.

Vlix.

Exhibe natum et roga.

Andr.

705 Huc e latebris procede tuis,
flebile matris furtum miserae.

hic est, hic est terror, Vlixē,
mille carinis. submitte manus
dominique pedes supplice dextra
710 stratus adora nec turpe puta
quicquid miseros fortuna iubet.
pone ex animo reges atavos
magnique senis iura per omnis
incluta terras j excidat Hector,
715 gere captivum positoque genu,
si tua nondum funera sentis,
matris fletus imitare tuae.
Vidit pueri regis lacrimas
et Troia prior, parvusque minas
720 trucidis Alcidae flexit Priamus.
ille, ille ferox, cuius vastis
viribus omnes cessere ferae,
qui perfracto limine Ditis
caecum retro patefecit iter,
725 hostis parvi victus lacrimis:
'suscipe' dixit 'rector habenas
patrioque sede celsus solio;
sed sceptrā fide meliore tene.'
hoc fuit illo victore capi:
730 discite mites Herculis iras.
an sola placent Herculis arma?
iacet ante pedes non minor illo
supplice supplex vitamque petit —
regnum Troiae
735 quocumque volet Fortuna ferat.

Vlix.

Matris quidem me maeror attonitae movet,
magis Pelasgae me tamen matres movent,
quarum iste magnos crescit in luctus puer.

Andr.

Has, has ruinas urbis in cinerem datae
740 hic excitabit? hae manus Troiam erigent?
nullas habet spes Troia, si tales habet.
non sic iacemus Troes, ut cuiquam metus
possimus esse. spiritus genitor fecit?
sed nempe tractus, ipse post Troiam pater
745 posuisset animos, magna quos frangunt mala.
si poena petitur, (quae peti gravior potest?)
famulare collo nobili subeat iugum,
servire liceat, aliquis hoc regi negat?

Vlix.

Non hoc Vlixes, sed negat Calchas tibi.

Andr.

750 O machinator fraudis et scelerum artifex,
virtute cuius bellica nemo occidit,
dolis et astu maleficae mentis iacent
etiam Pelasgi, vatem et insontes deos
praetendis? hoc est pectoris facinus tui.
755 nocturne miles, fortis in pueri necem
iam solus audes aliquid et claro die.

Vlix.

Virtus Vlixis Danaidis nota est satis
nimisque Phrygibus. non vacat vanis diem
conterere verbis: ancoras classis legit.

Andr.

760 Brevem moram largire, dum officium parens
nato supremum reddo et amplexu ultimo
avidos dolores satio.

Vlix.

Misereri tui

utinam liceret, quod tamen solum licet,
tempus moramque dabimus, arbitrio tuo
765 implere lacrimis: fletus aerumnas levat.

Andr.

O dulce pignus, o decus lapsae domus
summumque Troiae funus, o Danaum timor,
genetricis o spes vana, cui demens ego
laudes parentis bellicas, annos avi

770 demens precabar, vota destituit deus.

775 non arma tenera patria tractabis manu
sparsasque passim saltibus latis feras

audax sequeris nec stato lustris die,
solemne referens Troici lusus sacrum,
puer citatas nobilis turmas ages;

780 non inter aras mobili velox pede,
reboante flexo concitos cornu modos,
barbarica prisco templa saltatu coles.

Iliaca non tu sceptris regali potens
gestabis aula, iura nec populis dabis
victasque gentes sub tuum mittes iugum,
non Graia caedes terga, non Pyrrhum trahes.
o Marte diro tristius leti genus!

785 flebilius aliquid Hectoris magni nece
muri videbunt,

Vlix.

Rumpe iam fletus, parens:
magnus sibi ipse non facit finem dolor.

Andr.

Lacrimis, Vlix, parva quam petimus mora est;
concede patiens, ut mea condamnata manu
viventis oculos, occidis parvus quidem,
790 sed iam timendus. Troia te expectat tua:
i, vade liber, liberos Troas vide.

Astyan.

Miserere, mater.

Andr.

Quid meos retines sinus
manusque matris cassa praesidia occupas?
fremitu leonis qualis audito tener
795 timidum iuventus applicat matri latus,
at ille saevus matre summoti loco
praedam minorem morsibus vastis tenens
frangit venitque: talis e nostro sinu
te rapiet hostis, oscula et fletus, puer,
800 lacerosque crines excipe et plenus mei
occurre patri; pauca maternae tamen
perfer querelae verba: 'si manes habent
curas priores nec perit flammis amor,
servire Graio pateris Andromachen viro,
805 crudelis Hector? lentus et segnis iaces?
redit Achilles.' sume nunc iterum comas
et sume lacrimas, quicquid e misero viri
funere relictum est, sume quae reddas tuo
Oscula parenti, matris hanc solacio
810 relinque vestem: tumulus hanc tetigit meus
manesque cari. si quid hic cineris latet,
scrutabor ore.

Vlix.

Nullus est flendi modus:
abripite propere classis Argolicae moram.

Chorus

Quae vocat sedes habitanda captas?
815 Thessali montes et opaca Tempe,
an maris vasti domitrix Iolcos?
parva Gortynis sterilisque Tricce,
an frequens rivis levibus Mothone,

an viros tellus dare militares
aptior Phthie meliorque fetu
fortis armenti lapidosa Trachin,
quae sub Oetaeis latebrosa silvis
misit infestos Troiae ruinis

825 non semel arcus?

Olenos tectis habitata raris,
virgini Pleuron inimica divae,
an maris lati sinuosa Troezen?

Pelion regnum Prothoi superbum,
830 tertius caelo gradus? (hic recumbens
montis exesi spatiosus antro
iam trucis Chiron pueri magister,
tinnulas plectro feriente chordas,
tunc quoque ingentes acuebat iras
835 bella canendo)

An ferax varii lapidis Carystos,
820 urbibus centum spatiosa Crete,
an premens litus maris inquieti
semper Euripo properante Chalcis?
quolibet vento faciles Calydnæ,
840 an carens numquam Gonoessa vento
quaeque formidat Borean Enispe?
Attica pendens Peparethos ora,
an sacris gaudens tacitis Eleusin?

* ...

numquid Aiakis Salamina veram
845 aut fera notam Calydonæ saeva,
quasque perfundit subiturus aequor
segnibus terras Titaessos undis?
Bessan et Scarphen, Pylon an senilem?
Pharin an Pisas Iovis et coronis
850 Elida claram?

Quolibet tristis miseræ procella
mittat et donet cuicumque terræ,
dum luem tantam Troiae atque Achivis
quae tulit, Sparte, procul absit, absit

855 Argos et saevi Pelopis Mycenae,
Neritos parva brevior Zacyntho
et nocens saxis Ithace dolosis.
Quod manet fatum dominusque quis te,
aut quibus terris, Hecuba, videndam
860 ducet? in cuius moriere regno?

Helena Andromacha Hecuba

Quicumque hymen funestas, inlaetabilis
lamenta caedes sanguinem gemitus habet
est auspice Helena dignus, eversis quoque
nocere cogor Phrygibus: ego Pyrrhi toros
865 narrare falsos iubeor, ego cultus dare
habitusque Graios. arte capietur mea
meaque fraude concidet Paridis soror,
fallatur; ipsi levius hoc equidem reor:
optanda mors est sine metu mortis mori.
870 quid iussa cessas agere? ad auctorem redit
sceleris coacti culpa. — Dardaniae domus
generosa virgo, melior afflictos deus
respicere coepit teque felici parat
dotare thalamo; tale coniugium tibi
875 non ipsa sospes Troia, non Priamus daret.
nam te Pelasgae maximum gentis decus,
cui regna campi lata Thessalici patent,
ad sancta lecti iura legitimi petit.
te magna Tethys teque tot pelagi deae
880 placidumque numen aequoris tumidi Thetis
suam vocabunt, te datam Pyrrho socer
Peleus nurum vocabit et Nereus nurum.
depone cultus squalidos, festos cape.
dedisce captam; deprime horrentis comas
885 crinemque docta patere distingui manu.
hic forsitan te casus excelso magis
solio reponet. profuit multis capi.

Andr.

Hoc derat unum Phrygibus eversis malum,
gaudere — flagrant strata passim Pergama:
890 o coniugale tempus! an quisquam audeat
negare? quisquam dubius ad thalamos eat.
quos Helena suadet? pestis exitium lues
utriusque populi, cernis hos tumulos ducum
et nuda totis ossa quae passim iacent
895 inhumata campis? haec hymen sparsit tuus.
tibi fluxit Asiae, fluxit Europae cruor,
cum dimicantes lenta prospiceres viros,
incerta voti — perge, thalamos appara.
taedis quid opus est quidve solemni face?
900 quid igne? thalamis Troia praelucet novis.
celebrate Pyrrhi, Troades, conubia,
celebrate digne: planctus et gemitus sonet.

Hel.

Ratione quamvis careat et flecti neget
magnus dolor sociosque nonnumquam sui
905 maeroris ipsos oderit: causam tamen
possum tueri iudice infesto meam,
graviora passa, luget Andromacha Hectorem
et Hecuba Priamum: solus occulte Paris
lugendus Helenae est. dirum et invisum et grave est
910 servitia ferre? patior hoc olim iugum,
annis decem captiva, prostratum Ilium est,
versi penates? perdere est patriam grave,
gravius timere, vos levat tanti mali
comitatus: in me victor et victus furit,
915 quam quisque famulam traheret incerto diu
casu pependit, me meus traxit statim
sine sorte dominus, causa bellorum fui
tantaeque Teucris cladis? hoc Verum puta.
Spartana puppis vestra si secuit freta;
920 sin rapta Phrygiis praeda remigibus fui
deditque donum iudici victrix dea.
ignosce raptae, iudicem iratum mea

habitura causa est: ista Menelaum manent
arbitria, nunc hanc luctibus paulum tuis,
925 Andromacha, omissis flecto — vix lacrimas queo
retinere,

Andr.

Quantum est Helena quod lacrimat
malum.

cur lacrimat autem? fare quos Ithacus dolos,
quae scelera nectat; utrum ab Idaeis iugis
iactanda virgo est, arcis an celsae edito
930 mittenda saxo? num per has vastum in mare
volvenda rupes, latere quas scisso levat
altum vadoso Sigeon spectans sinu?
dic, fare, quicquid subdolo vultu tegis.
leviora mala sunt cuncta, quam Priami gener
935 Hecubaeque Pyrrhus, fare, quam poenam pares
exprome et unum hoc deme nostris cladibus
falli: paratas perpeti mortem vides.

Hel.

Vtinam iuberet me quoque interpretes deum
abrumpere ense lucis invisae moras
940 vel Achillis ante busta furibunda manu
occidere Pyrrhi, fata comitantem tua,
Polyxene miseranda, quam tradi sibi
cineremque Achilles ante mactari suum, ,
campo maritus ut sit Elysio, iubet.

Andr.

945 Vide ut animus ingens laetus audierit necem.
cultus decoros regiae vestis petit
et admoveri crinibus patitur manum.
mortem putabat illud, hoc thalamos putat.
at misera luctu mater audito stupet;
950 labefacta mens succubuit. assurge, alleva
animum et cadentem, misera, firma spiritum.

quam tenuis anima vinculo pendet levi —
minimum est quod Hecubam facere felicem potest.
spirat, revixit, prima mors miseros fugit.

Hec.

955 Adhuc Achilles vivit in poenas Phrygum?
adhuc rebellat? o manum Paridis levem,
cinis ipse nostrum sanguinem ac tumulus sitit,
modo turba felix latera cingebat mea,
lassabar in tot oscula et tantum gregem
960 dividere matrem; sola nunc haec est super
votum, comes, levamen, afflictae quies;
haec totus Hecubae fetus, hac sola vocor
iam voce mater, dura et infelix age
elabere anima, denique hoc unum mihi
965 remitte funus, inrigat fletus genas
imberque victo subitus e vultu cadit.

Andr.

Nos Hecuba, nos, nos, Hecuba, lugendae sumus,
970 quas mota classis huc et huc sparsas feret;
hanc cara tellus sedibus patriis teget.

Hel.

Magis invidetis, si tuam sortem scies.

Andr.

An aliqua poenae pars meae ignota est mihi?

Hel.

Versata dominos urna captivis dedit.

Andr.

975 Cui famula traditor? ede; quem dominum voco?

Hel.

Te sorte prima Scyrius iuvenis tulit.

Andr.

Cassandra felix, quam furor sorti exim it
Phoebusque.

Hel.

Regum hanc maximus rector tenet.

Hec.

Laetare, gaude, nata. quam vellet tuos
Cassandra thalamos, vellet Andromache tuos.
estne aliquis, Hecubam qui suam dici velit?

Hel.

980 Ithaco obtigisti praeda nolenti brevis.

Hec.

Quis tam impotens ac durus et iniquae ferus
sortitor urnae regibus reges dedit?

quis tam sinister dividit captas deus?

quis arbiter crudelis et miseris gravis

985 eligere dominos nescit et saeva manu

dat iniqua miseris fata? quis matrem Hectoris
armis Achillis miscet? ad Vlixen vocor:

nunc victa, nunc captiva, nunc cunctis mihi

obsessa videor cladibus — domini pudet,

990 non servitutis. Hectoris spoliū feret

qui tulit Achillis? sterilis et saevis fretis

inclusa tellus non capit tumulos meos —

duc, duc, Vlixē, nil moror, dominum sequor;

me mea sequentur fata: non pelago quies

995 tranquilla veniet, saevi et ventis mare,

* ...

et bella et ignes et mea et Priami mala.

dumque ista veniant, interim hoc poenae loco est:

sortem occupavi, praemium eripui tibi. —

Sed en citato Pyrrhus accurrit gradu

1000 vultuque torvo. Pyrrhe, quid cessas? age

recludo ferro pectus et Achillis tui
coniunge soceros, perge, mactator senum,
et hic decet te sanguis: abreptam trabe.
maculate superos caede funesta deos,
1005 maculate manes — quid precer vobis? precor
his digna sacris aequora: hoc classi accidat
toti Pelasgae, ratibus hoc mille accidat
meae precabor, cum vehar, quicquid rati.

Chorus

Dulce maerenti populus dolentium,
1010 dulce lamentis resonare gentes;
lenius luctus lacrimaeque mordent,
turba quas fletu similis frequentat.
semper a semper dolor est malignus:
gaudet in multos sua fata mitti
1015 seque non solum placuisse poenae.
ferre quam sortem patiuntur omnes,
nemo recusat.

Tolle felices: miseram, licet sit,
nemo se credet; removete multo
1020 divites auro, removete centum
* rura qui scindunt opulenta bubus:
pauperi surgent animi iacentes —
est miser nemo nisi comparatus.
dulce in immensis posito ruinis,
1025 nemiuem laetos habuisse vultus:
ille deplorat queriturque fatum,
qui secans fluctum rate singulari
nudus in portus cecidit petitos;
aequior casum tulit et procellas,
1030 mille qui ponto pariter carinas
obruī vidit tabulaque latus
naufra, terris mare dum coactis
fluctibus Coras prohibet, revertit.
questus est Hellen cecidisse Phrixus,
1035 cum gregis ductor radiante villo

aureo fratrem simul ac sororem
sustulit tergo medioque iactum
fecit in ponto; tenuit querelas
et vir et Pyrrha, mare cum viderent,
1040 et nihil praeter mare cum viderent
unici terris homines relictī.
Solvēt hunc ‘questum lacrimasque nostras
sparget huc illuc agitata classis,
cum tuba iussi dare vela nautae
1045 et simul ventis properante remo
prenderint altum fugietque litus,
quis status mentis miseris, ubi omnis
terra decrescet pelagusque crescet,
celsa cum longe latitabit Ide?
1050 tum puer matri genetrixque nato,
Troia qua flagret regione, monstrans
dicet et longe digito notabit:
Ilium est illic, ubi fumus alte
serpit in caelum nebulaeque turpes.’
1055 Troes hoc signo patriam videbunt.

Nuntius Hecuba Andromacha

O dura fata, saeva miseranda horrida!
quod tam ferum, tam triste bis quinīs scelus
Mars vidit annis? quid prius referens gemam,
tuosne potius, an tuos luctus, anus?

Hec.

1060 Quoscumque luctus fleveris, flebis meos:
sua quemque tantum, me omnium clades premit;
mihi cuncta pereunt: quisquis est Hecubae est miser.

Nvnt.

Mactata virgo est, missus e muris puer;
sed uterque letum mente generosa tulit.

Andr.

1065 Expone seriem caedis, et duplex nefas
persequere: gaudet magnus aerumnas dolor
tractare totas, ede et enarra omnia.

Nvnt.

Est una magna turris e Troia super,
assueta Priamo, cuius e fastigio
1070 summisque pinnis arbiter belli sedens
regebat acies, turre in hac blando sinu
fovens nepotem, cum metu versos gravi
Danaos fugaret Hector et ferro et face,
paterna puero bella monstrabat senex
1075 haec nota quondam turris et muri decus,
nunc saeva «cautes, undique adfusa dueum
plebisque turba cingitur; totum coit
ratibus relictis vulgus, his collis procul
aciem patenti liberam praebet loco,
1080 his alta rupes, cuius in cacumine
erecta summos turba libravit pedes.
hunc pinus, illum laurus, hunc fagus gerit
et tota populo silva suspensio tremit.
extrema montis ille praerupti petit,
1085 semusta at ille tecta vel saxum imminens
muri cadentis pressit, atque aliquis (nefas)
tumulo ferus spectator Hectoreo sedet.
per spatia late plena sublimi gradu
incedit Ithacus parvulum dextra trahens
1090 Priami nepotem, nec gradu segni puer
ad alta pergit moenia, ut summa stetit
pro turre, vultus huc et huc acres tulit
intrepidus animo, qualis ingentis ferae
parvus tenerque fetus et nondum potens
1095 saevire dente — iam tamen tollit minas
morsusque inanes temptat atque animis tumet:
sic ille dextra pressus hostili puer
ferox t superbe, moverat vulgum ac duces
ipsumque Vlixen. non fiet e turba omnium

1100 qui fletur; ac, dum verba fatidici et preces :
concipit Vlixes vatis et saevos ciet
ad sacra superos, sponte desiluit sua
in media Priami regna. — ...

Andr.

Quis Colchus hoc, quis sedis incertae Scythia
1105 commisit, aut quae Caspium tangens mare
gens iuris expers ausa? non Busiridis
puerilis aras sanguis aspersit feri,
nec parva gregibus membra Diomedes suis
epulanda posuit, quis tuos artus leget
1110 tumuloque tradet?

Nvnt.

Quos enim praeceps locus
reliquit artus? ossa disiecta et gravi
elisa casu; signa clari corporis,
et ora et illas nobiles patris notas,
confudit imam pondus ad terram datum;
1115 soluta cervix silicis impulsu, caput,
raptum cerebro penitus expresso — iacet
deforme corpus,

Andr.

Sic quoque est similis patri.

Nvnt.

Praeceptis ut altis cecidit e muris puer
flevitque Achivum turba quod fecit nefas,
1120 idem ille populus aliud ad facinus redit
tumulumque Achillis. cuius extremum Litus
Rhoetea leni verberant fluctu vada;
adversa cingit campus et clivo levi
erecta medium vallis includens locum
1125 crescit theatri more. concursus frequens
implevit omne litus :n hi classis moram

hac morte solvi rentur, hi stirpem hostium
gaudent recidi. magna pars vulgi levis
odit scelus spectatque; nec Troes minus
1130 suum frequentant funus et pavidī metu
partem mentis ultimam Troiae vident:
cum subito thalami more praecedunt faces
et pronuba illi Tyndaris, maestum caput
demissa. ‘tali n̄bat Hermione modo’
1135 Phryges precantur ?sic viro turpis suo
reddatur Helena.’ terror attonitos tenet
utrosque populos, ipsa deiectos gerit
vultus pudore, sed tamen fulgent genae
magisque solito splendet extremus decor,
1140 ut esse Phoebi dulcius lumen solet
iamiam cadentis, astra cum repetunt vices
premiturque dubius nocte vicina dies.
stupet omne vulgus — et fere cuncti magis
peritura laudant, hos movet formae decus,
1145 hos mollis aetas, hos vagae rerum vices;
mover animus omnes fortis et leto obviis.
Pyr̄rum antecedit; omnium mentes tremunt,
mirantur ac miserantur, ut primum ardui
sublime montis tetigit atque alte edito
1150 iuvenis paterni, vertice in busti stetit,
audax virago non tulit retro gradum;
conversa ad ictum stat truci vultu ferox.
tam fortis animus omnium mentes ferit,
novumque monstrum est Pyr̄rus ad caedem piger.
1155 ut dextra ferrum penitus exactum abdidit,
subitus recepta morte prorupit cruor
per vulnus ingens, nec tamen moriens adhuc
deponit animos: cecidit, ut Achilli gravem
factura terram, prona et irato impetu.
1160 uterque flevit coetus; at timidum Phryges
misere gemitum, clarius victor gemit.
hic ordo sacri, non stetit fusus cruor
humove summa fluxit: obduxit statim

saevasque totum sanguinem tumulus bibit.

Hec.

1165 Ite, ite, Danai, petite iam tuti domos;
optata velis maria diffusis secet
secura classis: concidit virgo ac puer;
bellum peractum est. quo meas lacrimas feram?
ubi hanc anilis expuam leti moram?
1170 natam an nepotem, coniugem an patriam fleam?
an omnia an me sola? Mors votum meum,
infantibus violenta virginibus venis,
ubique properas, saeva: me solam times
vitasque, gladios inter ac tela et faces
1175 quaesita tota nocte, cupientem fugis. ,
non hostis aut ruina, non ignis meos
absumpsit artus: quam prope a Priamo steti.

Nvnt.

Repetite celeri maria, captivae, gradu:
iam vela puppis laxat et classis movet.

THE PHOENICIAN WOMEN — *Phoenissae*

ACTUS PRIMUS

OEDIPUS, ANTIGONE

Oedipus Caeci parentis regimen, ac fessi unicum
Lateris leuamen, nata, quam tanti est mihi
Genuisse uel sic, desere infaustum patrem.
In recta quid deflectis errantem gradum?
Permitte labi: melius inueniam uiam, 5
Quam quaero; solus, quae me ab hac uita extrahat,
Et hoc nefandi capitis aspectu leuet
Coelum atque terras. Quantulum hac egi manu!
Non uideo noxae conscium nostrae diem;
Sed uideor. Hinc iam solue inhaerentem manum, 10
Et patere caecum, qua uolet, ferri pedem.
Ibo, ibo, qua praeupta protendit iuga
Meus Cithaeron; qua peragrato celer
Per saxa monte iacuit Actaeon, suis
Noua praeda canibus; qua per obscurum nemus, 15
Siluamque opacae uallis instinctas deo
Egit sorores mater, et gaudens malo,
Vibrante fixum praetulit thyrsos caput;
Vel qua cucurrit corpus inuisum trahens
Zethi iuuenis, qua per horrentes rubos 20
Tauri ferocis sanguis ostendit fugas;
Vel qua alta maria uertice immenso premit
Inoa rupes, qua scelus fugiens sui,
Nouumque faciens, mater insiluit freto
Mersura natum seque. Felices, quibus 25
Fortuna melior tam bonas matres dedit!

Est alius istis noster in siluis locus,
Qui me reposcit; hanc petam cursu incito;
Non haesitabit gressus; huc omni duce

Spoliatus ibo. Quid moror sedes meas? 30
Montem, Cithaeron, redde, et hospitium mihi
Illud meum restitue, ut expirem senex,
Ubi debui infans. Recipe supplicium uetus
Semper cruenta, saeue, crudelis, ferox,
Quum occidis, et quum parcis: olim iam tuum 35
Est hoc cadauer: perage mandatum patris,
Iam et matris: animus gestit antiqua exsequi
Supplicia. Quid me, nata, pestifero tenes
Amore uinctum? quid tenes? genitor uocat.
Sequor, sequor: iam parce - sanguineum gerens 40
Insigne regni Laius rapti fuit;
Et ecce inanes manibus infestis petit
Foditque uultus. Nata, genitorem uides?
Ego uideo — . Tandem spiritum inimicum exspue,
Desertor anime, fortis in partem tui; 45
Omitte poenas languidas longae morae,
Mortemque totam recipe. Quid segnis traho
Quod uiuo? nullum facere iam possum scelus -
Possum miser! praedico, discede a patre;
Discede, uirgo: timeo post matrem omnia. 50

Antigone Vis nulla, genitor, a tuo nostram manum
Corpore resoluet: nemo me comitem tibi
Eripiet unquam. Labdaci claram domum,
Opulenta ferro regna germani petant;
Pars summa magni patris e regno mea est 55
Pater ipse: non hunc auferet frater mihi,
Thebana rapto sceptrum qui regno tenet;
Non hunc cateruas alter Argolicas agens.
Non si reuulso Iupiter mundo tonet,
Mediumque nostros fulmen in nexus cadat, 60
Manum hanc remittam: prohibeas, genitor, licet,
Regam abnuentem; dirigam inuiti gradum.
In plana tendis? uado: praerupta appetis?
Non obsto, sed praecedo: quouis utere
Duce me; duobus omnis eligitur uia 65

Perire sine me non potes; mecum potes.
Hic alta rupes arduo surgit iugo,
Spectatque longe spatia subiecti maris.
Vis hanc petamus? Nudus hic pendet silex;
Hic scissa tellus faucibus ruptis hiat: 70
Vis hanc petamus? Hic rapax torrens cadit,
Partesque lapsi montis exesas rotat;
In hunc ruamus. Dum prior, quo uis, eo.
Non deprecor, non hortor. Exstingui cupis,
Votumque, genitor, maximum mors est tibi? 75

Si moreris, antecedo: si uiuis, sequor.
Sed flecte mentem; pectus antiquum aduoca,
Victasque magno robore aerumnas doma.
Resiste: tantis in malis uinci malum est.

Oedipus Unde in nefanda specimen egregium domo? 80
Unde ista generi uirgo dissimilis suo?
Fortuna, credis? aliquis est ex me pius?
Non esset umquam, fata benenoui mea,
Nisi ut noceret. Ipsa se in leges nouas
Natura uertet, regeret in fontem citas 85
Reuolutus undas amnis, et noctem afferet
Phoebea lampas, Hesperus faciet diem.
Ut ad miserias aliquid accedat meas,
Pii quoque erimus. Unica Oedipodae est salus,
Non esse saluum. Liceat ulcisci patrem 90
Adhuc inultum. Dextra quid cessas iners
Exigere poenas? quidquid exactum est adhuc,
Matri dedisti. Mitte genitoris manum,
Animosa uirgo: funus extendis meum,
Longasque uiui ducis exsequias patris. 95
Aliquando terra corpus inuisum tege.
Peccas honesta mente: pietatem uocas,
Patrem insepultum trahere. Qui cogit mori
Nolentem, in aequo est, quique properantem impedit.
Occidere est, uetare cupientem mori. 100

Nec tamen in aequo est: alterum grauius reor:
Malo imperari, quam eripi mortem mihi.
Desiste coepto, uirgo: ius uitae ac necis
Meae penes me est. Regna deserui libens;
Regnum mei retineo. Si fida es comes, 105
Ensem parenti trade, sed notum nece
Ensem paterna. Tradis? an nati tenent
Cum regno et illum? faciet, ubicunque est, scelus.
Ibi sit; relinquo: natus hunc habeat meus,
Sed uterque. Flammas potius et uastum aggerem 110
Compone: in altos ipse me immittam rogos.
Erectam ad ignes funebrem escendam struem,
Pectusque soluam durum, et in cineres dabo
Hoc quidquid in me uiuit. Ubi saeuum est mare?
Duc, ubi sit altis prorutum saxis iugum, 115
Ubi torta rapidus ducat Ismenos uada:
Duc, ubi ferae sint, ubi fretum, ubi praeceps locus,
Si dux es. Illuc ire morituro placet,
Ubi sedit alta rupe semifero dolos
Sphinx ore nectens: dirige huc gressus pedum, 120
Hic siste patrem: dira ne sedes uacet,
Monstrum repone maius. Hoc saxum insidens
Obscura nostrae uerba fortunae loquar,
Quae nemo soluat. Quisquis Assyrio loca
Possessa regi scindis, et Cadmi nemus 125
Serpente notum, sacra quo Dirce latet,
Supplex adoras, quisquis Eurotam bibis,
Spartenque fratre nobilem gemino colis,
Quique Elin et Parnason, et Boeotios
Colonus agros uberis tondes soli, 130
Aduerte mentem: saeua Thebarum lues
Luctifica caecis uerba committens modis,
Quid simile posuit? quid tam inextricabile?
Aui gener, patrisque riuales sui,
Frater suorum liberum, et fratrum parens; 135
Uno auia partu liberos peperit uiro,
Sibi et nepotes. Monstra quis tanta explicet?

Ego ipse, uictae spolia qui Sphingis tuli,
Haerebo, fati tardus interpret mei.
Quid perdis ultra uerba? quid pectus ferum 140
Mollire tentas precibus? hoc animo sedit,
Effundere hanc cum morte luctantem diu
Animam, et tenebras petere: nam sceleri haec meo
Parum alta nox est. Tartaro condi iuuat,
Et si quid ultra Tartarum est. Tandem libet, 145
Quod olim oportet. Morte prohiberi haud queo.
Ferrum negabis? noxias lapso uias
Cludes? et arctis colla laqueis inseri
Prohibebis? herbas, quae feront letum, auferes?
Quid ista tandem cura proficiet tua? 150
Ubique mors est. Optime hoc cauit deus.
Eripere uitam nemo non homini potest;
At nemo mortem: mille ad hanc aditus patent.
Nil quaero: dextra noster et nuda solet
Bene animus uti. Dextra, nunc toto impetu, 155
Toto dolore, uiribus totis ueni.
Non destino unum uulneri nostro locum.
Totus nocens sum: qua uoles, mortem exige.
Effringe corpus, corque tot scelerum capax
Euellat; totos uiscerum nuda sinus. 160
Fractum incitatis ictibus guttur sonet;
Laceraeue fixis unguibus uenae fluant.
Aut dirige iras, quo soles: haec uulnera
Rescissa multo sanguine ac tabe irriga.
Hac extrahe animam, duram, inexpugnabilem. 165
Et tu, parens, ubicunque poenarum arbiter
Adstas mearum non ego hoc tantum scelus
Ulla expiari credidi poena satis
Unquam, nec ista morte contentus fui,
Nec me redemi parte: membratim tibi 170
Volui perire, debitum tandem exige:
Nunc soluo poenas; tunc tibi inferias dedi.
Ades, atque inertem dexteram introrsus preme,
Magisque merge: timida tum paruo caput

Libavit haustu, uixque cupientes sequi 175
Eduxit oculos. Haeret etiam nunc mihi
Ille animus, haeret, cum recusantem manum
pressere uultus. Audies uerum, Oedipe:
Minus eruiisti lumina audacter tua,
Quam praestitisti. Nunc manum cerebro indue. 180
Hac parte mortem perage, qua coepit mori.

Antigone Pauca, o parens magnanime, miserandae precor
Ut uerba natae mente placata audias.
Non te ut reducam ueteris ad specimen domus,
Habitumque regni flore pollentem inclito; 185
Peto; ast ut iras, tempore aut ipsa mora
Fractas, remisso pectore ac placido feras.
Et hoc decebat roboris tanti uirum,
Non esse sub dolore, nec uictum malis
Dare terga. Non est, ut putas, uirtus, pater, 190
Timere uitam, sed malis ingentibus
Obstare, nec se uertere, ac retro dare.
Qui fata proculcauit, ac uitae bona
Proiecit, atque abcidit, et casus suos
Onerauit ipse, cui deo nullo est opus, 195
Quare ille mortem cupiat, aut quare petat?
Utrumque timidi est.: nemo contempsit mori,
Qui concupiuit. Cuius haud ultra mala
Exire possunt, in loco tuto est situs.

Quis iam deorum, uelle fac, quidquam potest 200
Malis tuis adiicere? iam nec tu potes,
Nisi hoc, ut esse te putes dignum nece.
Non es; nec ulla pectus hoc culpa attigit.
Et hoc magis te, genitor, insontem uoca,
Quod innocens es, diis quoque inuitis. Quid est 205
Quod te efferarit, quod nouos suffixerit
Stimulos dolori? quid te ad infernas agit
Sedes? quid ex his pellit? ut careas die?
Cares; ut altis nobilem muris domum,

Patriamque fugias? patria tibi uiuo periit. 210
Natos fugis, matremque? ab aspectu omnium
Fortuna te submouit, et quidquid potest
Auferre cuiquam mors, tibi haec uita abstulit.
Regni tumultus, turba fortunae prior
Abscessit a te iussa. Quem, genitor, fugis? 215

Oedipus Me fugio; fugio conscium scelerum omnium
Pectus, manumque hanc fugio, et hoc caelum, et deos:
Et dira fugio scelera, quae feci nocens.
Ego hoc solum, frugifera quo surgit Ceres,
Premo? has ego auras ore pestifero traho? 220
Ego laticis haustu satior? aut ullo fruor
Almae parentis munere? ego castam manum
Nefandus, incestificus, execrabilis
Attrecto? ego ullos aure concipio sonos,
Per quos parentis nomen, aut nati audiam? 225
Utinam quidem rescindere has quirem uias,
Manibusque adactis omne, qua uoces meant,
Aditusque uerbis tramite angusto patet,
Eruere possem, nata: iam sensum tui,
Quae pars meorum es criminum, infelix pater 230
Fugissem. Inhaeret ac recrudescit nefas
Subinde; et aures ingerunt, quidquid mihi
Donastis, oculi. Cur caput tenebris graue
Non mitto ad umbras Ditis aeternas? quid hic
Manes meos detineo? quid terram grauo? 235
Mixtusque superis erro? quid restat mali?
Regnum, parentes, liberi, uirtus quoque,
Et ingenii solertis eximium decus
Periere: cuncta sors mihi infesta abstulit.
Lacrimae supererant; has quoque eripuit mihi. 240

Absiste: nullas animus admittit preces,
Nouamque poenam sceleribus quaerit parem.
Et esse par quae poterit? Infanti quoque
Decreta mors est. Fata quis tam tristia

Sortitus unquam? uideram nondum diem, 245
Uterique nondum solueram clusi moras;
Et iam timebar. Protinus quosdam editos
Nox occupauit, et nouae luci abstulit.
Mors me antecessit. Aliquis intra uiscera

Materna letum praecoquis fati tulit: 250
Sed numquid et peccauit? Abstrusum, abditum,
Dubiumque an essem, sceleris infandi reum
Deus egit. Illo teste damnauit parens,
Calidoque teneros transuit ferro pedes,
Et in alta nemora pabulum misit feris, 255
Auibisque saeuis, quas Cithaeron noxius
Cruore saepe regio tinctas alit.
Sed quem deus damnauit, abiecit pater,
Mors quoque refugit. Praestiti Delphis fidem
Genitorem adortus impia strauit nece. 260
Hoc alia pietas redimet: occidi patrem,
Sed matrem amaui. Proloqui hymenaeum pudet.
Taedasque nostras: has quoque inuitum pati
Te toge poenas; facinus ignotum, efferum,
Inusitatum effare, quod populi horreant, 265
Quod esse factum nulla non aetas negat,
Quod patricidam pudeat. In patrios toros
Tuli paterno sanguine aspersas manus,
Scelerisque pretium maius accepi scelus.

Leue est paternum facinus: in thalamos meos 270
Deducta mater, ne parum scelerum foret,
Foecunda. Nullum crimen hoc maius potest
Natura ferre. Si quod etiamnum est tamen,
Qui facere possent, dedimus: abieci necis
Pretium paternae sceptrum, et hoc iterum manus 275
Armauit alias. Optime regni mei
Fatum ipse noui: nemo sine sacro feret
Illud cruore. Magna praesagit mala
Paternus animus. Iacta iam sunt semina

Cladis futurae: spernitur pacti fides: 280
Hic occupato cedere imperio negat;
Ius ille, et icti foederis testes deos
Inuocat, et Argos exsul alque urbes mouet
Graias in arma. Non leuis fessis uenit
Ruina Thebis: tela, flammae, uulnera 285
Instant, et istis si quod est maius malum,
Ut esse genitos nemo non ex me sciat.

Antigone Si nulla, genitor, causa uiuendi tibi est.
Haec una abunde est, ut pater natos regas
Grauiter furentes. Tu impii belli minas 290
Auertere unus, tuque uecordes potes
Inhibere iuuenes, ciuibus pacem dare,
Patriae quietem, foederi laeso fidem.
Vitam tibi ipse si negas, multis negas.

Oedipus Illis parentis ullus aut aequi est amor, 295
Auidis cruoris, imperii, armorum, doli,
Diris, scelestis, breuiter ut dicam, meis?
Certant in omne facinus, et pensi nihil
Ducunt, ubi illos ira praecipites agat,
Nefasque nullum, per nefas nati, putant. 300
Non patris illos tangit afflictus pudor,
Non patria; regno pectus attonitum furit.
Selo, quo ferantur, quanta moliri parent;
Ideoque leti quaero maturi uiam,
Morique propero, dam in domo nemo est mea 305
Nocentior me — . Nata, quid genibus meis
Fies aduoluta? quid prece indomitum domas?
Unum hoc habet fortuna, quo possim capi,
Inuictus aliis: sola tu affectus potes
Mollire duos, sola pietatem in domo 310
Docere nostra. Nil graue aut miserum est mihi,
Quod te sciam uoluisse. Tu tantum impera.
Hic Oedipus Aegaea tranabit freta,
Iubente te, flammasque, quas Siculo uomit

De monte tellus igneos uoluens globos, 315
Excipiet oue, seque serpenti offeret,
Quae saeua furto nemoris Herculeo furit;
Iubente te, praebebit alitibus iecur;
Iubente te, uel uiuet — .

ACTUS SECUNDUS

NUNTIUS, OEDIPUS, ANTIGONE

Nuntius Exemplum in ingens regia stirpe edite, 320
Thebae, pauentes arma fraterna, inuocant,
Rogantque tectis arceas patriis faces.
Non sunt minae: iam propius accessit malum.
Nam regna repetens frater, et pactas uices,
In bella cunctos Graeciae populos agit; 325
Septena muros castra Thebanos premunt.
Succurre; prohibe pariter et bellum et nefas.

Oedipus Ego ille sum, qui scelera committi uetem
Et abstinere sanguine a caro manus
Doceam? magister iuris et amoris pii 330
Ego sum? Meorum facinorum exempla appetunt:
Me nunc sequuntur; laudo, et agnosco libens.
Exhortor, aliquid ut patre hoc dignum gerant.
Agite, o propago clara, generosam indolem
Probate factis; gloriam ac laudes meas 335
Superate, et aliquid facite; propter quod patrem
Adhuc iuuat uixisse. Facietis, scio:
Sic estis orti. Scelere defungi haud leui,
Haud usitato, tanta nobilitas potest.

Ferte arma: facibus petite penetrales deos, 340
Frugemque flamma metite natalis soli.
Miscete cuncta: rapite in exitium omnia:
Disiicite passim moenia, in planum date.
Templis deos obruite: maculatos lares

Conflate: ab imo tota considat domus: 345
Urbs concremetur: primus a thalamis meis
Incipiat ignis.

Antigone Mitte uiolentum impetum
Doloris, ac te publica exorent mala,
Auctorque placidae liberis pacis ueni.

Oedipus Vides modestae deditum menti senem, 350
Placidaeque amantem pacis ad partes uotas?
Tumet animus ira, feruet immensum dolor,
Maiusque, quam quod casus et iuuenum furor
Conatur, aliquid cupio. Non satis est adhuc
Ciuite bellum: frater in fratrem ruat. 355
Nec hoc sat est: quod debet, ut fiat nefas
De more nostro, quod meos deceat toros,
Date arma patri. Nemo me ex his eruat
Siluis: latebo rupis exesae cauo,

Aut sepe densa corpus abstrusum tegam. 360
Hinc aucupabor uerba rumoris uagi,
Et saeua fratrum bella, quod possum, audiam.

ACTUS TERTIUS

IOCASTA, ANTIGONE, NUNTIUS

Iocasta Felix Agaue, facinus horrendum, manu
Qua fecerat, gestauit, et spoliū tulit
Cruenta nati Maenas in partes dati. 365
Fecit scelus; sed misera non ultra suum
Scelus hoc cucurrit. Hoc leue est, quod sum nocens;
Feci nocentes. Hoc quoque etiamnum leue est;
Peperi nocentes. Deerat aerumnis meis,

Ut et hostem amarem. Bruma ter posuit niues, 370
Et tertia iam falce decubuit Ceres,
Ut exsul errat natus et patria caret,

Profugusque regum auxilia Graiorum rogat.
Gener est Adrasti, cuius imperio mare,
Quod cingit Isthmon, regitur: hic gentes suas, 375
Septemque secum regna ad auxilium trahit
Generi. Quid optem, quidue decernam, haud scio
Regnum reposit: causa repetentis bona est;
Mala, sic petentis. Vota quae faciam parens?
Utrumque natum uideo: nil possum pie 380
Pietate salua facere: quodcumque alteri
Optabo nato, fiet alterius malo.
Sed utrumque quamuis diligam affectu pari,
Quo causa melior, sorsque deterior trahit,
Inclinat animus, semper infirmo fauens. 385
Miseros magis fortuna conciliat suis.

Nuntius Regina, dum tu flebiles questus cies,
Terisque tempus, tota nudatis stetit
Acies in armis: aera iam bellum cient,
Aquilaque pugnam signifer mota uocat. 390
Septena reges bella dispositi parant:
Animo pari Cadmea progenies subit:
Cursu citato miles hinc illinc ruit.
Vide, ut atra nubes puluere abscondat diem;
Fumoque similes campus in caelum erigat 395
Nebulas, equestri fracta quas tellus pede
Submittit: et, si uera metuentes uident,
Infesta fulgent signa: subrectis adest
Frons prima telis: aurea clarum nota
Nomen ducum uexilla praescriptum ferunt. 400
I, redde amorem fratribus, pacem omnibus,
Et impia arma mater opposita impedi.

Antigone Perge, o parens, et concita celerem gradum;
Compesce tela, fratribus ferrum excute.
Nudum inter enses pectus infestos tene; 405
Aut solue bellum, mater, aut prima excipe.

Iocasta Ibo, ibo et armis obuium opponam caput.
Stabo inter arma: petere qui fratrem uolet,
Petat ante matrem: tela, qui fuerit plus,
Rogante ponat matre; qui non est pius, 410
Incipiat, a me. Feruidos iuuenes anus
Tenebo: nullum teste me fiet nefas;
Aut si aliquod et me teste committi potest,
Non fiet unum.

Antigone Signa collatis mitant
Vicina signis; clamor hostilis fremit: 415
Scelus in propinquo est; occupa, mater, preces.
Et ecce motos fletibus credas meis;
Sic agmen armis segne compositis uenit.
Procedit acies tarda, sed properant duces.

Iocasta Quis me procellae turbine insanae uehens 420
Volucer per auras uentus aetherias aget?
Quae Sphinx, uel atra nube subtexens diem
Stymphalis, auidis praepetem pennis feret?
Aut quae per altas aeris rapiet uias
Harpyia, saeui regis obseruans famem, 425
Et inter acies proiiciet raptam duas?

Nuntius. Vadit furenti similis, aut etiam furit.
Sagitta qualis Parthica uelox manu
Excussa fertur; qualis insano ratis

Premente uento rapitur; aut qualis cadit 430
Delapsa caelo stella, cum stringens polum
Rectam citatis ignibus rumpit uiam;
Attonita cursu fugit, et binas statim
Diduxit acies. Victa materna prece
Haesere bella, iamque in alternam necem 435
Illinc et hinc miscere cupientes manum,
Librata dextra tela suspensa tenent.
Paci fauetur: omnium ferrum latet

Cessatque tectum; uibrat in fratrum manu.
Laniata canas mater ostendit comas; 440
Rogat abnuentes: irrigat fletugenas.
Negare matri, qui diu dubitat, potest.

ACTUS QUARTUS

IOCASTA, POLYNICES, ETEOCLES

Iocasta In me arma et ignes uertite: in me omnis ruat
Unam iuuentus, quaeque ab Inachio uenit
Animosa muro, quaeque Thebana ferox 445
Descendit arce: ciuis atque hostis simul
Hunc petite uentrem, qui dedit fratres uiro.
Mea membra passim spargite ac diuellite:
Ego utrumque peperit. Ponitis ferrum ocus?
An dico et ex quo? Dexteras matri date; 450
Date, dum pia sunt. Error inuitos adhuc
Fecit nocentes: omne Fortunae fuit
Peccantis in nos crimen: hoc primum nefas
Inter scientes geritur. In uestra manu est,
Utrum uetitis. Sancta si pietas placet, 455
Donate matrem pace: si placuit scelus,
Maius paratum est: media se opponit parens.
Proinde bellum tollite, aut belli moram.
Sollicita nunc cui mater alterna prece
Verba admouebo? misera quem amplectar prius? 460
In utramque partem ducor affectu pari.
Hic abfuit: sed pacta si fratrum ualent,
Nunc alter aberit. Ergo iam numquam duos,
Nisi sic, uidebo? iunge complexus prior,
Qui tot labores totque perpessus mala, 465
Longo parentem fessus exsilio uides.
Accede propius: clude uagina impium
Ensem, et trementem iamque cupientem excuti
Hastam solo defige: maternum tuo
Coire pectus pectori clypeus uetat; 470

Hunc quoque repone. Vinculo frontem exue,
Tegimenque capitis triste belligeri leua,
Et ora matri redde. Quo uultus refers,
Acieque puida fratris obseruas manum?
Affusa totum corpus amplexu tegam: 475
Tuo cruori per meum fiet uia.
Quid dubius haeres? an times matris fidem?

Polynices Timeo: nihil iam iura naturae ualent.
Post ista fratrum exempla, ne matri quidem
Fides habenda est.

Iocasta Redde iam capulo manum, 480
Adstringe galeam, laeua se clypeo ingerat;
Dum frater exarmatur, armatus mane.
Tu pone ferrum, causa qui es ferri prior.
Si pacis odium est, furere si bello placet,
Inducias te mater exiguas rogat, 485
Ferat ut reuerso post fugam nato oscula,
Vel prima, uel suprema. Dum pacem peto,
Audite inermes: ille te, tu illum times:
Ego utrumque, sed pro utroque. Quid strictum abnuis
Recondere ensem? qualibet gaude mora; 490
Id gerere bellum cupitis, in quo est optimum
Vinci: uereris fratris infesti dolos?
Quoties necesse est fallere, aut falli a suis;
Patiare potius ipse, quam facias, scelus.
Sed ne uerere: mater insidias et hinc, 495
Et rursus illinc abiget. Exoro, an patri
Inuideo uestro? ueni, ut arcerem nefas,
An ut uiderem propius? hic ferrum abdidit
Reclinis hastae, et arma defixa incubat.
Ad te preces nunc, nate, maternas feram, 500
Sed ante lacrimas. Teneo longo tempore
Petita uotis ora. Te, profugum solo
Patrio, penates regis externi tegunt:
Te maria tot diuersa, tot casus uagum

Egere: non te duxit in thalamos parens 505
Comitata primos, nec sua festas manu
Ornauit aedes, nec sua laetas faces
Vitta reuinxit: dona non auro graues
Gazas socer, non arua, non urbes dedit;
Dotale bellum est. Hostium es factus gener, 510
Patria remotus, hospes alieni laris, .
Externa consecutus, expulsas tuis,
Sine crimine exsul. Ne quid e fatis tibi
Deesset paternis, hoc quoque ex illis habes,
Errasse thalamis. Nate, post multos mihi 515
Remisse soles, rate, sollicitae metus
Et spes parentis, cuius aspectum deos
Semper rogavi, cum tuus reditus mihi
Tantum esset erepturus aduentu tuo,
Quantum daturas, quando pro te desinam, 520
Dixi, timere? dixit irridens deus,
Ipsum timebis. Nempe, nisi bellum foret,
Ego te carerem: nempe, si tu non fores,
Bello carerem. Triste conspectus datur
Pretium tui durumque; sed matri placet 525
Hinc modo recedant arma, dum nullum nefas
Mars saeuus audet. Hoc quoque est magnum nefas,
Tam prope fuisse. Stupeo, et exsanguis tremo,
Cum stare fratres hinc et hinc uideo duos
Sceleris sub ictu: membra quassantur metu. 530
Quam paene mater maius aspexi nefas,
Quam quod miser uidere non potuit pater !
Licet timore facinoris tanti uacem,
Videamque iam nil tale. sum infelix tamen,
Quod paene uidi. Per decem mensium graues 535
Uteri labores, perque pietate inclitas
Precor sorores, et per irati sibi
Genas parentis, scelere quas nullo nocens,
Erroris a se dira supplicia exigens,
Hausit, nefandas moenibus patriis faces 540
Auerte; signa bellici retro agminis

Flecte. Ut recedas, magna pars sceleris tamen
Vestri peracta est: uidit hostili grege
Campos repleti patria, fulgentes procul
Armis cateruas: uidit equitatu leui 545
Cadmea frangi prata, et excelsos rotis
Volitare proceres; igne flagrantibus trabes
Fumare, cineri quae petunt nostras domos;
Fratresque **facinus quod nouum et Thebis fuit**
In se ruentes. Tutus hoc exercitus, 550
Et populus omnis, et utraque hoc uidit soror,
Genitrixque uidit: nam pater debet sibi,
Quod ista non spectauit. Occurrat tibi
Nunc Oedipus, quo iudice, erroris quoque
Poenae petuntur. Ne, precor, ferro erue 555
Patriam ac penates; neue, quas regere expetis,
Euerte Thebas. Quis tenet mentem furor?
Patriam petendo perdis: ut fiat tua,
Vis esse nullam? Quin tuae causae nocet
Ipsum hoc, quod armis uris infestis solum, 560
Segetesque adultas sternis, et totos fugam
Edis per agros: nemo sic uastat sua.
Quae corripui igne, quae meti gladio iubes,
Aliena credis? Rex sit e uobis uter,
Manente regno, quaerite. Haec telis petes 565
Flammisque tecta? poteris has Amphionis
Quassare moles? nulla quas struxit manus,
Stridente tardum machina ducens onus;
Sed conuocatus uocis et citharae sono
Per se ipse turre uenit in summas lapidis. 570
Haec saxa franges uictor? hinc spolia auferes,
Vinctosque duces patris aequales tui?
Matres ab ipso coniugum raptas sinu
Saeuus catena miles imposita trahet?
Ut adulta uirgo mixta captiuo gregi 575
Thebana nuribus munis Argolicis eat?
An et ipsa palmas uincta post tergum datas
Mater triumphus praeda fraterni uehar?

Potesne ciues laetus exitio datos
Videre passim? moenibus caris potes 580
Hostem admouere? sanguine et flamma potes
Implere Thebas? tam ferum et durum geris
Saeuumque in iras pectus, et nondum imperas!
Quid sceptrum facient? pone uesanos, precor,
Animi tumores, teque pietati refer. 585

Polynices Ut profugus errem semper? ut patria arcear,
Opemque gentis hospes externae sequar?
Quid paterer aliud, si fefelissem fidem,
Si peierassem? fraudis alienae dabo
Poenas; at ille praemium scelerum feret? 590
Iubes abire: matris imperio obsequor;
Da, quo reuertar. Regia frater mea
Habitet superbus; parua me abscondat casa:
Hanc da repulso: liceat exiguo lare
Pensare regnum. Coniugi donum datus 595
Arbitria thalami dura felicitis feram,
Humilisque socerum lixa dominantem sequar?
In seruitutem cadere de regno, graue est.

Iocasta Si regna quaeris, nec potest scepro manus
Vacare saeuo, multa, quae possunt peti 600
In orbe toto, quaelibet tellus dabit.
Hinc nota Baccho Tmolus attollit iuga,
Qua lata terris spatia frugiferis iacent,
Et qua trahens opulenta Pactolus uada
Inundat auro rura: nec laetis minus 605
Maeandros aruis flectit errantes aquas,
Rapidusque campos fertiles Hebrus secat.
Hinc grata Cereri Gargara, et diues solum
Quod Xanthus ambit niuibus Idaeis tumens:
[610] Hinc, qua relinquit nomen, Ionii maris 610
Fauces Abydo Sestos opposita premit;
Aut, qua latus iam propius Orienti dedit,
Tutamque crebris portubus Lyciam uidet:

Haec regna ferro quaere: in hos populos ferat
Socer arma fortis: has paret sceptro tuo 615
Tradatque gentes. Hoc adhuc regnum puta
Tenere patrem. Melius exsilium est tibi,
Quam reditus iste: crimine alieno exsulas,
Tuo redibis. Melius istis uiribus
Noua regna nullo scelere maculata appetes. 620
Quin ipse frater, arma comitatus tua,
Tibi militabit. Vade, et id bellum gere,
In quo pater materque pugnanti tibi
Fauere possint: regna cum scelere omnibus
Sunt exsiliis grauiora. Nunc belli mala 625
Propone, dubias Martis incerti uices.
Licet omne tecum Graeciae robur trahas,
Licet arma longe miles ac late explicet,
Fortuna belli semper ancipiti in loco est,
Quodcumque Mars decernit: exaequat duos, 630
Licet impares sint, gladius; et spes et metus
Fors caeca uersat. Praemium incertum petis,
Certum scelus. Fauisse fac uotis deos
Omnes tuis: cessere, et auersi fugam
Petiere ciues: clade funesta iacent: 635
Obtexit agros miles. Exsultes licet,
Victorque fratris spolia deiecti geras,
Frangenda palma est. Quale tu id bellum putas,
In quo execrandum uictor admittit nefas,
Si gaudet? Hunc, quem uincere infelix cupis, 640
Cum uiceris, lugebis. Infaustas, age,
Dimitte pugas: libera patriam metu,
Luctu parentes. **Polynices** Sceleris et fraudis suae
Poenas nefandus frater ut nullas ferat?

Iocasta Ne metue: poenas, et quidem soluet graues; 645
Regnabit. **Polynices** Haecne est poena? **Iocasta** Si dubitas, auo
Patrique crede: Cadmus hoc dicet tibi,
Cadmique proles. Sceptra Thebarum fuit
Impune nulli gerere; nec quisquam fide

Rupta tenebat illa. Iam numeres, licet, 650
Fratrem inter istos.

Polynices Numero: et est tanti mihi
Cum regibus iacere.

Eteocles Te turbae exsulum
Adscribo.

Polynices Regna, dummodo inuisus tuis.

Eteocles Regnare non uult, esse qui inuisus timet.
Simul ista mundi conditor posuit deus, 655
Odium atque regnum. Regis hoc magni reor,
Odia ipsa premere. Multa dominantem uetat
Amor suorum; plus in iratos licet.
Qui uult amari, languida regnat manu.

Polynices Inuisa nunquam imperia retinentur diu. 660

Eteocles Praecepta melius imperii reges dabunt;
Exsilia tu dispone. Pro regno uelim
Patriam, penates, coniugem flammis dare.
Imperia pretio quolibet constant bene.

PHAEDRA

Hippolytus Ite, umbrosas cingite siluas

summaque montis iuga Cecropii!

celeri planta lustrate uagi

quae saxoso loca Parnetho

subiecta iacent,

quae Thriasiis uallibus amnis 5

rapida currens uerberat unda;

scandite colles semper canos

niue Rhiphaea.

Hac, hac alii qua nemus alta

textitur alno, qua prata patent 10

quae rorifera mulcens aura

Zephyrus uernas euocat herbas,

ubi per graciles breuis Ilisos

labitur agros piger et steriles

amne maligno radit harenas. 15

Vos qua Marathon tramite laeuo

saltus aperit,

qua comitatae gregibus paruis

nocturna petunt pabula fetae;

uos qua tepidis subditus austris 20

frigora mollit durus Acharneus.

Alius rupem dulcis Hymetti,

~paruas alius calcet Aphidnas;

pars illa diu uacat immunis,

qua curuati litora ponti 25

Sunion urget.

si quem tangit gloria siluae,

uocat hunc ~flius:

hic uersatur, metus agricolis,

uulnere multo iam notus aper. 30

At uos laxas canibus tacitis

mittite habenas;

teneant acres lora Molossos

et pugnaces tendant Cretes
fortia trito uincula collo.
at Spartanos (genus est audax 35
audumque ferae) nodo cautus
 propiore liga:
ueniet tempus, cum latratu
 caua saxa sonent.
nunc demissi nare sagaci
captent auras lustraue presso 40
quaerant rostro, dum lux dubia est,
dum signa pedum roscida tellus
 impressa tenet.
 Alius raras ceruice graui
 portare plagas,
alius teretes properet laqueos. 45
picta rubenti linea pinna
uano cludat terrore feras.
Tibi libretur missile telum,
tu graue dextra laeuaque simul
robur lato derige ferro; 50
tu praecipites clamore feras
 subsessor ages;
tu iam uictor curuo solues
 uiscera cultro.
 Ades en comiti, diua uirago,
cuius regno pars terrarum 55
 secreta uacat,
cuius certis petitur telis
fera quae gelidum potat Araxen
et quae stanti ludit in Histro.
tua Gaetulos dextra leones, 60
tua Cretaeas sequitur ceruas;
nunc ueloces figis dammas
 leuiore manu.
tibi dant uariae pectora tigres,
tibi uillosi terga bisontes
latisque feri cornibus uri. 65

quidquid solis pascitur aruis,
siue illud Arabs diuite silua,
siue illud inops nouit Garamans
uacuisue uagus Sarmata campis, 71
siue ferocis iuga Pyrenes 69
siue Hyrcani celant saltus,
arcus metuit, Diana, tuos. 72
Tua si gratus numina cultor
tulit in saltus,
retia uinctas tenuere feras, 75
nulli laqueum rupere pedes:
fertur plaustro praeda gementi.
tum rostra canes sanguine multo
rubicunda gerunt,
repetitque casas rustica longo
turba triumpho. 80
En, diua, faue! signum arguti
misere canes: uocor in siluas.
hac, hac pergam qua uia longum
compensat iter.

Phaedra O magna uasti Creta dominatrix freti, 85
cuius per omne litus innumerae rates
tenuere pontum, quidquid Assyria tenus
tellure Nereus peruium rostris secat,
cur me in penates obsidem inuisos datam
hostique nuptam degere aetatem in malis 90
lacrimisque cogis? profugus en coniunx abest
praestatque nuptae quam solet Theseus fidem.
fortis per altas inuii retro lacus
uadit tenebras miles audacis proci,
solio ut reuulsam regis inferni abstrahat; 95
pergit furoris socius, haud illum timor
pudorue tenuit: stupra et illicitos toros
Acheronte in imo quaerit Hippolyti pater.
Sed maior alius incubat maestae dolor.
non me quies nocturna, non altus sopor 100

soluere curis: alitur et crescit malum
et ardet intus qualis Aetnaeo uapor
exundat antro. Palladis telae uacant
et inter ipsas pensa labuntur manus;
non colere donis templa uotiuus libet, 105
non inter aras, Atthidum mixtam choris,
iactare tacitis conscias sacris faces,
nec adire castis precibus aut ritu pio
adiudicatae praesidem terrae deam:
iuuat excitatas consequi cursu feras 110
et rigida molli gaesa iaculari manu.

Quo tendis, anime? quid furens saltus amas?
fatale miserae matris agnosco malum:
peccare noster nouit in siluis amor.
genetrix, tui me miseret? infando malo 115
correpta pecoris efferum saeui ducem
audax amasti; toruus, impatiens iugi
adulter ille, ductor indomiti gregis —
sed amabat aliquid. quis meas miserae deus
aut quis iuuare Daedalus flammam queat? 120
non si ille remeet, arte Mopsopia potens,
qui nostra caeca monstra conclusit domo,
promittat ullam casibus nostris opem.
stirpem perosa Solis inuisi Venus
per nos catenas uindicat Martis sui 125
suasque, probris omne Phoebeum genus
onerat nefandis: nulla Minois leui
defuncta amore est, iungitur semper nefas.

Nvtrix Thesea coniunx, clara progenies Iouis,
nefanda casto pectore exturba ocuis, 130
extingue flammam neue te dirae spei
praebe obsequentem: quisquis in primo obstitit
pepulitque amorem, tutus ac uictor fuit;
qui blandiendo dulce nutriuit malum,
sero recusat ferre quod subiit iugum. 135
nec me fugit, quam durus et ueri insolens

ad recta flecti regius nolit tumor.
quemcumque dederit exitum casus feram:
fortem facit uicina libertas senem.

Honesta primum est uelle nec labi uia, 140
pudor est secundus nosse peccandi modum.
quo, misera, pergis? quid domum infamem aggrauas
superasque matrem? maius est monstro nefas:
nam monstra fato, moribus scelera imputes.
Si, quod maritus supera non cernit loca, 145
tutum esse facinus credis et uacuum metu,
erras; teneri crede Lethaeo abditum
Thesea profundo et ferre perpetuam Styga:
quid ille, lato maria qui regno premit
populisque reddit iura centenis, pater? 150
latere tantum facinus occultum sinet?
sagax parentum est cura. Credamus tamen
astu doloque tegere nos tantum nefas:
quid ille rebus lumen infundens suum,
matris parens? quid ille, qui mundum quatit 155
uibrans corusca fulmen Aetnaeum manu,
sator deorum? credis hoc posse effici,
inter uidentes omnia ut lateas auos?
Sed ut secundus numinum abscondat fauor
coitus nefandos utque contingat stupro 160
negata magnis sceleribus semper fides:
quid poena praesens, conscius mentis pauor
animusque culpa plenus et semet timens?
scelus aliqua tutum, nulla securum tulit.

Compesce amoris impii flammas, precor, 165
nefasque quod non ulla tellus barbara
commisit umquam, non uagi campis Getae
nec inhospitalis Taurus aut sparsus Scythes;
expelle facinus mente castifica horridum
memorque matris metue concubitus nouos. 170
miscere thalamos patris et gnati apparas
uteroque prolem capere confusam impio?
perge et nefandis uerte naturam ignibus.

cur monstra cessant? aula cur fratris uacat?
prodigia totiens orbis insueta audiet, 175
natura totiens legibus cedit suis,
quotiens amabit Cressa? **Ph.** Quae memoras scio
uera esse, nutrix; sed furor cogit sequi
peiora. uadit animus in praeceps sciens
remeatque frustra sana consilia appetens. 180
sic, cum grauata nauita aduersa ratem
propellit unda, cedit in uanum labor
et uicta prono puppis aufertur uado.
quid ratio possit? uicit ac regnat furor,
potensque tota mente dominatur deus. 185
hic uolucer omni pollet in terra impotens
ipsumque flammis torret indomitis Iouem;
Gradius istas belliger sensit faces,
opifex trisulci fulminis sensit deus,
et qui furentis semper Aetnaeis iugis 190
uersat caminos igne tam paruo calet;
ipsumque Phoebum, tela qui neruo regit,
figit sagitta certior missa puer
uolitatque caelo pariter et terris grauis.

Nvt. Deum esse amorem turpis et uitio fauens 195
finxit libido, quoque liberior foret
titulum furori numinis falsi addidit.
natum per omnis scilicet terras uagum
Erycina mittit, ille per caelum uolans
proterua tenera tela molitur manu 200
regnumque tantum minimus e superis habet:
uana ista demens animus asciuit sibi
Venerisque numen finxit atque arcus dei.
Quisquis secundis rebus exultat nimis
fluitque luxu, semper insolita appetit. 205
tunc illa magnae dira fortunae comes
subit libido: non placent suetae dapes,
non texta sani moris aut uilis scyphus.
cur in penates rarius tenues subit

haec delicatas eligens pestis domos? 210
cur sancta paruis habitat in tectis Venus
mediumque sanos uulgus affectus tenet
et se coercent modica, contra diuites
regnoque fulti plura quam fas est petunt?
quod non potest uult posse qui nimium potest. 215
quid deceat alto praeditam solio uide:
metue ac uerere sceptrā remeantis uiri.

Ph. Amoris in me maximum regnum reor
reditusque nullos metuo: non umquam amplius
conuexa tetigit supera qui mersus semel 220
adiit silentem nocte perpetua domum.

Nvt. Ne crede Diti. clausurit regnum licet,
canisque diras Stygius obseruet fores:
solus negatas inuenit Theseus uias.

Ph. Veniam ille amorī forsitan nostro dabit. 225

Nvt. Immitis etiam coniugi castae fuit:
experta saeuam est barbara Antiope manum.
sed posse flecti coniugem iratum puta:
quis huius animum flectet intractabilem?
exosus omne feminae nomen fugit, 230
immitis annos caelibī uitae dicat,
conubia uitat: genus Amazonium scias.

Ph. Hunc in niuosi collis haerentem iugis,
et aspera agili saxa calcantem pede
sequi per alta nemora, per montes placet. 235

Nvt. Resistet ille seque mulcendum dabit
castosque ritus Venere non casta exuet?
tibi ponet odium, cuius odio forsitan
persequitur omnes? **Ph.** Precibus haud uinci potest?

Nvt. Ferus est. **Ph.** Amore didicimus uinci ferus. 240

Nvt. Fugiet. **Ph.** Per ipsa maria si fugiat, sequar.

Nvt. Patris memento. **Ph.** Meminimus matris simul.

Nvt. Genus omne profugit. **Ph.** Paelicis careo metu.

Nvt. Aderit maritus. **Ph.** Nempe Pirithoi comes?

Nvt. Aderitque genitor. **Ph.** Mitis Ariadnae pater. 245

Nvt. Per has senectae splendidae simplex comas
fessumque curis pectus et cara ubera
precor, furorem siste teque ipsa adiuua:
pars sanitatis uelle sanari fuit.

Ph. Non omnis animo cessit ingenuo pudor. 250
paremus, altrix. qui regi non uult amor,
uincatur. haud te, fama, maculari sinam.
haec sola ratio est, unicum effugium mali:
uirum sequamur, morte praeuertam nefas.

Nvt. Moderare, alumna, mentis effrenae impetus, 255
animos coerce. dignam ob hoc uitam reor
quod esse temet autumas dignam nece.

Ph. Decreta mors est: quaeritur fati genus.
laqueone uitam finiam an ferro incubem?
an missa praeceps arce Palladia cadam? 260

Nvt. Sic te senectus nostra praecipiti sinat 262
perire leto? siste furibundum impetum.
[haud quisquam ad uitam facile reuocari potest]

Ph. Prohibere nulla ratio peritum potest, 265
ubi qui mori constituit et debet mori.
proin castitatis uindicem armemus manum. 261

Nvt. Solamen annis unicum fessis, era, 267

si tam proteruus incubat menti furor,
contemne famam: fama uix uero fauet,
peius merenti melior et peior bono. 270
temptemus animum tristem et intractabilem.
meus iste labor est aggredi iuuenem ferum
mentemque saeuam flectere immitis uiri.

Chorvs Diua non miti generata ponto,
quam uocat matrem geminus Cupido: 275
impotens flammis simul et sagittis
iste lasciuus puer et renidens
tela quam certo moderatur arcu!
[labitur totas furor in medullas
igne furtiuo populante uenas.] 280
non habet latam data plaga frontem,
sed uorat tectas penitus medullas.
nulla pax isti puero: per orbem
spargit effusas agilis sagittas;
quaeque nascentem uidet ora solem, 285
quaeque ad Hesperias iacet ora metas,
si qua feruenti subiecta cancro est,
si qua Parrhasiae glacialis ursae
semper errantes patitur colonos,
nouit hos aestus: iuuenum feroces 290
conciat flammis senibusque fessis
rursus extinctos reuocat calores,
uirginum ignoto ferit igne pectus —
et iubet caelo superos relicto
uultibus falsis habitare terras. 295

Thessali Phoebus pecoris magister
egit armentum positoque plectro
impari tauros calamo uocauit.
Induit formas quotiens minores
ipse qui caelum nebulasque ducit! 300
candidas ales modo mouit alas,
dulcior uocem moriente cygno;
fronte nunc torua petulans iuuenus

uirginum strauit sua terga ludo,
perque fraternos, noua regna, fluctus 305
ungula lentos imitante remos
pectore aduerso domuit profundum,
pro sua uector timidus rapina.
Arsit obscuri dea clara mundi
nocte deserta nitidosque fratri 310
tradidit currus aliter regendos:
ille nocturnas agitare bigas
discit et gyro breuiore flecti,
nec suum tempus tenuere noctes
et dies tardo remeauit ortu, 315
dum tremunt axes grauiore curru.

Natus Alcmena posuit pharetras
et minax uasti spolium leonis,
passus aptari digitis smaragdus
et dari legem rudibus capillis; 320
crura distincto religauit auro,
luteo plantas cohibente socco;
et manu, clauam modo qua gerebat,
fila deduxit properante fuso.

Vidit Persis ditique ferax 325

Lydia harena
deiecta feri terga leonis
umerisque, quibus sederat alti
regia caeli,
tenuem Tyrio stamine pallam.

Sacer est ignis (credite laesis) 330

nimumque potens:
qua terra salo cingitur alto
quaque per ipsum candida mundum
sidera currunt,
hac regna tenet puer immitis,
spicula cuius sentit in imis 335
caerulus undis grex Nereidum
flammamque nequit releuare mari.
Ignes sentit genus aligerum;

Venere instinctus suscipit audax
grege pro toto bella iuuenus; 340
si coniugio timuere suo,
poscunt timidi proelia cerui
et mugitu dant concepti
signa furoris;
tunc uulnificos acuit dentes 346
aper et toto est spumeus ore:
tunc silua gemit murmure saeuo. 350
Poeni quatiunt colla leones, 348
cum mouit amor;
tunc uirgatas India tigres 345
decolor horret.
amat insani belua ponti 351
Lucaeque boues: uindicat omnes
natura sibi, nihil immune est,
odiumque perit, cum iussit amor;
ueteres cedunt ignibus irae. 355
quid plura canam? uincit saeuas
cura nouercas.
Altrix, profare quid feras; quonam in loco est
regina? saeuus ecquis est flammis modus?

Nvtrix Spes nulla tantum posse leniri malum, 360
finisque flammis nullus insanis erit.
torretur aestu tacito et inclusus quoque,
quamuis tegatur, proditur uultu furor;
erumpit oculis ignis et lassae genae
lucem recusant; nil idem dubiae placet, 365
artusque uarie iactat incertus dolor:
nunc ut soluto labitur marcens gradu
et uix labante sustinet collo caput,
nunc se quieti reddit et, somni immemor,
noctem querelis ducit; attolli iubet 370
iterumque poni corpus et solui comas
rursusque fingi: semper impatiens sui
mutatur habitus. nulla iam Cereris subit

cura aut salutis; uadit incerto pede,
iam uiribus defecta: non idem uigor, 375
non ora tinguens nitida purpureus rubor;
[populatur artus cura, iam gressus tremunt,
tenerque nitidi corporis cecidit decor.]
et qui ferebant signa Phoebeae facis
oculi nihil gentile nec patrium micant. 380
lacrimae cadunt per ora et assiduo genae
rore irrigantur, qualiter Tauri iugis
tepido madescunt imbre percussae niues.

Sed en, patescunt regiae fastigia:
reclinis ipsa sedis auratae toro 385
solitos amictus mente non sana abnuat.

Phaedra Remouete, famulae, purpura atque auro inlitas
uestes, procul sit muricis Tyrii rubor,
quae fila ramis ultimi Seres legunt:
breuis expeditos zona constringat sinus, 390
ceruix monili uacua, nec niueus lapis
deducat auris, Indici donum maris;
odore crinis sparsus Assyrio uacet.
sic temere iactae colla perfundant comae
umerosque summos, cursibus motae citis 395
uentos sequantur. laeua se pharetrae dabit,
hastile uibret dextra Thessalicum manus:
[talīs seueri mater Hippolyti fuit.]
qualis relictis frigidi Ponti plagis
egit cateruas Atticum pulsans solum 400
Tanaitis aut Maeotis et nodo comas
coegit emisitque, lunata latus
protecta pelta, talis in siluas ferar.

Cho. Sepone questus: non leuat miseros dolor;
agreste placa uirginis numen deae. 405

Nvt. Regina nemorum, sola quae montes colis
et una solis montibus coleris dea,

conuerte tristes ominum in melius minas.
o magna siluas inter et lucos dea,
clarumque caeli sidus et noctis decus, 410
cuius relucet mundus alterna uice,
Hecate triformis, en ades coeptis fauens.
animum rigentem tristis Hippolyti doma:
det facilis aures; mitiga pectus ferum:
amare discat, mutuos ignes ferat. 415
innecte mentem: toruus auersus ferox
in iura Veneris redeat. huc uires tuas
intende: sic te lucidi uultus ferant
et nube rupta cornibus puris eas,
sic te regentem frena nocturni aetheris 420
detrahere numquam Thessali cantus queant
nullusque de te gloriam pastor ferat.

Ades inuocata, iam faue uotis, dea:
ipsum intuo sollemne uenerantem sacrum
nullo latus comitante — quid dubitas? dedit 425
tempus locumque casus: utendum artibus.
trepidamus? haud est facile mandatum scelus
audere, uerum iusta qui reges timet
deponat, omne pellat ex animo decus:
malus est minister regii imperii pudor. 430

Hippolytus Quid huc seniles fessa moliris gradus,
o fida nutrix, turbidam frontem gerens
et maesta uultu? sospes est certe parens
sospesque Phaedra stirpis et geminae iugum?

Nvt. Metus remitte, prospero regnum in statu est 435
domusque florens sorte felici uiget.
sed tu beatis mitior rebus ueni:
namque anxiam me cura sollicitat tui,
quod te ipse poenis grauib. infestus domas.
quem fata cogunt, ille cum uenia est miser; 440
at si quis ultro se malis offert uolens
seque ipse torquet, perdere est dignus bona

quis nescit uti. potius annorum memor
mentem relaxa: noctibus festis facem
attolle, curas Bacchus exoneret graues; 445
aetate frui: mobili cursu fugit.
nunc facile pectus, grata nunc iuueni Venus:
exultet animus. cur toro uiduo iaces?
tristem iuuentam solue; nunc cursus rape,
effunde habenas, optimos uitae dies 450
effluere prohibe. propria descripsit deus
officia et aeuum per suos ducit gradus:
laetitia iuuenem, frons decet tristis senem.
Quid te coerces et necas rectam indolem?
seges illa magnum fenus agricolae dabit 455
quaecumque laetis tenera luxuriat satis,
arborque celso uertice euincet nemus
quam non maligna caedit aut resecat manus:
ingenia melius recta se in laudes ferunt,
si nobilem animum uegeta libertas alit. 460
truculentus et siluester ac uitae inscius
tristem iuuentam Venere deserta coles?
hoc esse munus credis indictum uiris,
ut dura tolerant, cursibus domitent equos
et saeua bella Marte sanguineo gerant? 465

Prouidit ille maximus mundi parens,
cum tam rapaces cerneret Fati manus,
ut damna semper subole repararet noua.
excedat agedum rebus humanis Venus,
quae supplet ac restituit exhaustum genus: 470
orbis iacebit squalido turpis situ,
uacuum sine ullis piscibus stabit mare,
alesque caelo derit et siluis fera,
solis et aer peruius uentis erit.
quam uaria leti genera mortalem trahunt 475
carpuntque turbam, pontus et ferrum et doli!
sed fata credas desse: sic atram Styga
iam petimus ultro. caelibem uitam probet
sterilis iuuentus: hoc erit, quidquid uides,

unius aevi turba et in semet ruet. 480
proinde uitae sequere naturam ducem:
urbem frequenta, ciuium coetus cole.

Hi. Non alia magis est libera et uitio carens
ritusque melius uita quae priscos colat,
quam quae relictis moenibus siluas amat. 485
non illum auarae mentis inflamat furor
qui se dicauit montium insontem iugis,
non aura populi et uulguis infidum bonis,
non pestilens inuidia, non fragilis fauor;
non ille regno seruit aut regno imminens 490
uanos honores sequitur aut fluxas opes,
spei metusque liber, haud illum niger
edaxque liuor dente degeneri petit;
nec scelera populos inter atque urbes sata
nouit nec omnes conscius strepitus pauet 495
aut uerba fingit; mille non quaerit tegi
diues columnis nec trabes multo insolens
suffigit auro; non cruor largus pias
inundat aras, fruge nec sparsi sacra
centena niuei colla summittunt boues: 500
sed rure uacuo potitur et aperto aethere
innocuus errat. callidas tantum feris
struxisse fraudes nouit et fessus graui
labore niueo corpus Iliso fouet;
nunc ille ripam celeris Alphei legit, 505
nunc nemoris alti densa metatur loca,
ubi Lerna puro gelida perlucet uado,
solesque uitat. hinc aues querulae fremunt
ramique uentis lene percussi tremunt

* 509a

ueteresque fagi. iuuat <et> aut amnis uagi
pressisse ripas, caespitem aut nudo leues
duxisse somnos, siue fons largus citas
defundit undas, siue per flores novos
fugiente dulcis murmurat riuo sonus.

excussa siluis poma compescunt famem 515
et fraga paruis uulsa dumetis cibos
faciles ministrant. regios luxus procul
est impetus fugisse: sollicito bibunt
auro superbi; quam iuuat nuda manu
captasse fontem! certior somnus premit 520
secura duro membra laxantem toro.
non in recessu furta et obscuro improbus
quaerit cubili seque multiplici timens
domo recondit: aethera ac lucem petit
et teste caelo uiuit. Hoc equidem reor 525
uixisse ritu prima quos mixtos deis
profudit aetas. nullus his auri fuit
caecus cupido, nullus in campo sacer
diuisit agros arbiter populis lapis;
nondum secabant credulae pontum rates: 530
sua quisque norat maria; non uasto aggere
crebraque turre cinxerant urbes latus;
non arma saeua miles aptabat manu
nec torta clausas fregerat saxo graui
ballista portas, iussa nec dominum pati 535
iuncto ferebat terra seruitium boue:
sed arua per se feta poscentes nihil
pauere gentes, silua natiuas opes
et opaca dederant antra natiuas domos.

Rupere foedus impius lucri furor 540
et ira praeceps quaeque succensas agit
libido mentes; uenit imperii sitis
cruenta, factus praeda maiori minor:
pro iure uires esse. tum primum manu
bellare nuda saxaque et ramos rudes 545
uertere in arma: non erat gracili leuis
armata ferro cornus aut longo latus
mucrone cingens ensis aut crista procul
galeae micantes: tela faciebat dolor.
inuenit artes bellicus Mauors nouas 550
et mille formas mortis. hinc terras cruor

infecit omnis fusus et rubuit mare.
tum scelera dempto fine per cunctas domos
iere, nullum caruit exemplo nefas:
a fratre frater, dextera gnati parens 555
cecidit, maritus coniugis ferro iacet
perimuntque fetus impiae matres suos;
taceo nouercas: mitius nil est feris.

Sed dux malorum femina: haec scelerum artifex
obsedit animos, huius incestae stupris 560
fumant tot urbes, bella tot gentes gerunt
et uersa ab imo regna tot populos premunt.
sileantur aliae: sola coniunx Aegei,
Medea, reddet feminas dirum genus.

Nvt. Cur omnium fit culpa paucarum scelus? 565

Hi. Detestor omnis, horreo fugio execror.
sit ratio, sit natura, sit dirus furor:
odisse placuit. ignibus iunges aquas
et amica ratibus ante promittet uada
incerta Syrtis, ante ab extremo sinu 570
Hesperia Tethys lucidum attollet diem
et ora dammis blanda praebebunt lupi,
quam uictus animum feminae mitem geram.

Nvt. Saepe obstinatis induit frenos Amor
et odia mutat. regna materna aspice: 575
illae feroces sentiunt Veneris iugum;
testaris istud unicus gentis puer.

Hi. Solamen unum matris amissae fero,
odisse quod iam feminas omnis licet.

Nvt. Vt dura cautes undique intractabilis 580
resistit undis et lacescentes aquas
longe remittit, uerba sic spernit mea.

Sed Phaedra praeceps graditur, impatiens morae.

quo se dabit fortuna? quo uerget furor?
terrae repente corpus exanimum accidit 585
et ora morti similis obduxit color.
attolle uultus, dimoue uocis moras:
tuus en, alumna, temet Hippolytus tenet.

Phaedra Quis me dolori reddit atque aestus graues
reponit animo? quam bene excideram mihi! 590

Hi. Cur dulce munus redditae lucis fugis?

Ph. Aude, anime, tempta, perage mandatum tuum.
intrepida constent uerba: qui timide rogat
docet negare. magna pars sceleris mei
olim peracta est; serus est nobis pudor: 595
admouimus nefanda. si coepta exequor,
forsan iugali crimen abscondam face:
honestam quaedam scelera successus facit.
en, incipe, anime! — Commodos paulum, precor,
secretus aures. si quis est abeat comes. 600

Hi. En locus ab omni liber arbitrio uacat.

Ph. Sed ora coeptis transitum uerbis negant;
uis magna uocem mittit et maior tenet.
uos testor omnis, caelites, hoc quod uolo
me nolle. 605

Hi. Animusne cupiens aliquid effari nequit?

Ph. Curae leues locuntur, ingentes stupent.

Hi. Committe curas auribus, mater, meis.

Ph. Matris superbum est nomen et nimium potens:
nostros humiliter nomen affectus decet; 610
me uel sororem, Hippolyte, uel famulam uoca,
famulamque potius: omne seruitium feram.

non me per altas ire si iubeas niues
pigeat gelatis ingredi Pindi iugis;
non, si per ignes ire et infesta agmina, 615
cuncter paratis ensibus pectus dare.
mandata recipe sceptrā, me famulam accipe:
[te imperia regere, me decet iussa exequi]
muliebre non est regna tutari urbium.
tu qui iuuentae flore primaevō uiges, 620
ciues paterno fortis imperio rege;
sinu receptam supplicem ac seruam tege:
miserere uiduae. **Hi.** Summus hoc omen deus
auertat. aderit sospes actutum parens.

Ph. Regni tenacis dominus et tacitae Stygis 625
nullam relictos fecit ad superos uiam:
thalami remittet ille raptorem sui?
nisi forte amor placidus et Pluton sedet.

Hi. Illum quidem aequi caelites reducem dabunt.
sed dum tenebit uota in incerto deus, 630
pietate caros debita fratres colam,
et te merebor esse ne uiduam putes
ac tibi parentis ipse supplebo locum.

Ph. O spes amantum credula, o fallax Amor!
satisne dixi? — precibus admotis agam. 635
Miserere, pauidae mentis exaudi preces —
libet loqui pigetque. **Hi.** Quodnam istud malum est?

Ph. Quod in nouercam cadere uix credas malum.

Hi. Ambigua uoce uerba perplexa iacis:
effare aperte. **Ph.** Pectus insanum uapor 640
amorque torret. intimis saeuit ferus
[penitus medullas atque per uenas meat]
uisceribus ignis mersus et uenas latens
ut agilis altas flamma percurrit trabes.

Hi. Amore nempe Thesei casto furis? 645

Ph. Hippolyte, sic est: Thesei uultus amo
illos priores, quos tulit quondam puer,
cum prima puras barba signaret genas
monstrique caecam Gnosii uidit domum
et longa curua fila collegit uia. 650
quis tum ille fulsit! presserant uittae comam
et ora flauus tenera tinguebat pudor;
inerant lacertis mollibus fortes tori,
tuaque Phoebe uultus aut Phoebi mei,
tuusue potius — talis, en talis fuit 655
cum placuit hosti, sic tulit celsum caput.
in te magis refulget incomptus decor:
est genitor in te totus et toruae tamen
pars aliqua matris miscet ex aequo decus:
in ore Graio Scythicus apparet rigor. 660
si cum parente Creticum intrasses fretum,
tibi fila potius nostra neuisset soror.
Te te, soror, quacumque siderei poli
in parte fulges, inuoco ad causam parem:
domus sorores una corripuit duas, 665
te genitor, at me gnatus. — en supplex iacet
adlapsa genibus regiae proles domus.
respersa nulla labe et intacta, innocens
tibi mutor uni. certa descendi ad preces:
finem hic dolori faciet aut uitae dies. 670
miserere amantis. — **Hi.** Magne regnator deum,
tam lentus audis scelera? tam lentus uides?
et quando saeua fulmen emittes manu,
si nunc serenum est? omnis impulsus ruat
aether et atris nubibus condat diem, 675
ac uersa retro sidera obliquos agant
retorta cursus. tuque, sidereum caput,
radiate Titan, tu nefas stirpis tuae
speculare? lucem merge et in tenebras fuge.
cur dextra, diuum rector atque hominum, uacat 680

tua, nec trisulca mundus ardescit face?
in me tona, me fige, me uelox cremet
transactus ignis: sum nocens, merui mori:
placui nouercae. dignus en stupris ego?
scelerique tanto uisus ego solus tibi 685
materia facilis? hoc meus meruit rigor?
o scelere uincens omne femineum genus,
o maius ausa matre monstrifera malum
genetrice peior! illa se tantum stupro
contaminauit, et tamen tacitum diu 690
crimen biformi partus exhibuit nota,
scelusque matris arguit uultu truci
ambiguus infans — ille te uenter tulit.
o ter quaterque prospero fato dati
quos hausit et peremit et leto dedit 695
odium dolusque — genitor, inuideo tibi:
Colchide nouerca maius hoc, maius malum est.

Ph. Et ipsa nostrae fata cognosco domus:
fugienda petimus; sed mei non sum potens.
te uel per ignes, per mare insanum sequar 700
rupesque et amnes, unda quos torrens rapit;
quacumque gressus tuleris hac amens agar —
iterum, superbe, genibus aduoluor tuis.

Hi. Procul impudicos corpore a casto amoue
tactus — quid hoc est? etiam in amplexus ruit? 705
stringatur ensis, merita supplicia exigat.
en impudicum crine contorto caput
laeua reflexi: iustior numquam focis
datus tuis est sanguis, arquitenens dea.

Ph. Hippolyte, nunc me compotem uoti facis; 710
sanas furem. maius hoc uoto meo est,
saluo ut pudore manibus immoriar tuis.

Hi. Abscede, uiue, ne quid exores, et hic

contactus ensis deserat castum latus.
quis eluet me Tanais aut quae barbaris 715
Maeotis undis Pontico incumbens mari?
non ipse toto magnus Oceano pater
tantum expiarit sceleris. o siluae, o ferae!

Nvt. Deprensa culpa est. anime, quid segnis stupes?
regeramus ipsi crimen atque ultro impiam 720
Venerem arguamus: scelere uelandum est scelus;
tutissimum est inferre, cum timeas, gradum.
ausae priores simus an passae nefas,
secreta cum sit culpa, quis testis sciet?

Adeste, Athenae! fida famulorum manus, 725
fer opem! nefandi raptor Hippolytus stupri
instat premitque, mortis intentat metum,
ferro pudicam terret — en praeceps abit
ensemque trepida liquit attonitus fuga.
pignus tenemus sceleris. hanc maestam prius 730
recreate. crinis tractus et lacerae comae
ut sunt remaneant, facinoris tanti notae.
perferte in urbem! — Recipe iam sensus, era.
quid te ipsa lacerans omnium aspectus fugis?
mens impudicam facere, non casus, solet. 735

Chorvs Fugit insanae similis procellae,
ocior nubes glomerante Coro,
ocior cursum rapiente flamma,
stella cum uentis agitata longos
porrigit ignes. 740

Conferat tecum decus omne priscum
fama miratrix senioris aeui:
pulcrrior tanto tua forma lucet,
clarior quanto micat orbe pleno
cum suos ignes coeunte cornu 745
iunxit et curru properante pernox
exerit uultus rubicunda Phoebe
nec tenent stellae faciem minores;

talis est, primas referens tenebras,
nuntius noctis, modo lotus undis 750
Hesperus, pulsus iterum tenebris

Lucifer idem.

Et tu, thyrsigera Liber ab India,
intonsa iuuenis perpetuum coma,
tigres pampinea cuspide temperans 755
ac mitra cohibens cornigerum caput,
non uinces rigidas Hippolyti comas.
ne uultus nimium suspicias tuos:
omnis per populos fabula distulit,
Phaedrae quem Bromio praetulerit soror. 760

Anceps forma bonum mortalibus,
exigui donum breue temporis,
ut uelox celeri pede laberis!
non sic prata nouo uere decentia
aestatis calidae despoliat uapor 765
(saeuit solstitio cum medius dies
et noctes breuibus praecipitat rotis),
languescunt folio lilia pallido
et gratae capiti deficiunt rosae,
ut fulgor teneris qui radiat genis 770
momento rapitur nullaque non dies
formosi spoliū corporis abstulit.
res est forma fugax: quis sapiens bono
confidat fragili? dum licet, utere.
tempus te tacitum subruit, horaque 775
semper praeterita deterior subit.

Quid deserta petis? tutior auis
non est forma locis: te nemore abdito,
cum Titan medium constituit diem,
cingent, turba licens, Naidēs improbae, 780
formosos solitae claudere fontibus,
et somnis facient insidias tuis
lasciuae nemorum deae
montiuagiue Panes.

Aut te stellifero despiciens polo 785

sidus post ueteres Arcadas editum
currus non poterit flectere candidos.
en nuper rubuit, nullaue lucidis
nubes sordidior uultibus obstitit;
at nos solliciti numine turbido, 790
tractam Thessalicis carminibus rati,
tinnitus dedimus: tu fueras labor
et tu causa morae, te dea noctium
dum spectat celeres sustinuit uias.

Vexent hanc faciem frigora parcius, 795
haec solem facies rarius appetat:
lucebit Pario marmore clarius.
quam grata est facies torua uiriliter
et pondus ueteris triste supercili!
Phoebo colla licet splendida compares: 800
illum caesaries nescia colligi
perfundens umeros ornat et integit;
te frons hirta decet, te breuior coma
nulla lege iacens; tu licet asperos
pugnacesque deos uiribus audeas 805
et uasti spatio uincere corporis:
aequas Herculeos nam iuuenis toros,
Martis belligeri pectore latior.
si dorso libeat cornipedis uehi,
frenis Castorea mobilior manu 810
Spartanum poteris flectere Cyllaron.
Ammentum digitis tende prioribus
et totis iaculum derige uiribus:
tam longe, dociles spicula figere,
non mittent gracilem Cretes harundinem. 815
aut si tela modo spargere Parthico
in caelum placeat, nulla sine alite
descendent, tepido uiscere condita
praedam de mediis nubibus afferent.

Raris forma uiris (saecula perspice) 820
impunita fuit. te melior deus
tutum praetereat formaque nobilis

deformis senii monstret imaginem.

Quid sinat inausum feminae praeceps furor?
nefanda iuueni crimina insonti apparat. 825
en scelera! quaerit crine lacerato fidem,
decus omne turbat capitis, umectat genas:
instruitur omni fraude feminea dolus.

Sed iste quisnam est regium in uultu decus
gerens et alto uertice attollens caput? 830
ut ora iuueni paria Pittheo gerit,
ni languido pallore canderent genae
staretque recta squalor incultus coma!
en ipse Theseus redditus terris adest.

Thesevs Tandem profugi noctis aeternae plagam 835
uastoque manes carcere umbrantem polum,
et uix cupitum sufferunt oculi diem.
iam quarta Eleusin dona Triptolemi secat
paremque totiens libra composuit diem,
ambiguus ut me sortis ignotae labor 840
detinuit inter mortis et uitae mala.
pars una uitae mansit extincto mihi,
sensus malorum; finis Alcides fuit,
qui cum reuulsum Tartaro abstraheret canem,
me quoque supernas pariter ad sedes tulit. 845
sed fessa uirtus robore antiquo caret
trepidantque gressus. heu, labor quantus fuit
Phlegethonte ab imo petere longinquum aethera
pariterque mortem fugere et Alciden sequi.

Quis fremitus aures flebilis pepulit meas? 850
expromat aliquis. luctus et lacrimae et dolor,
in limine ipso maesta lamentatio?
hospitia digna prorsus inferno hospite.

Nvtrix Tenet obstinatum Phaedra consilium necis
fletusque nostros spernit ac morti imminet. 855

Th. Quae causa leti? reduce cur moritur uiro?

Nvt. Haec ipsa letum causa maturum attulit.

Th. Perplexa magnum uerba nescioquid tegunt.
effare aperte, quis grauet mentem dolor.

Nvt. Haut pandit ulli; maesta secretum occulit 860
statuitque secum ferre quo moritur malum.
iam perge, quaeso, perge: properato est opus.

Th. Reserate clausos regii postes laris.

O socia thalami, sicine aduentum uiri
et expetiti coniugis uultum excipis? 865
quin ense uiduas dexteram atque animum mihi
restituis et te quidquid e uita fugat
expromis? **Ph.** Eheu, per tui sceptrum imperi,
magnanime Theseu, perque natorum indolem
tuosque reditus perque iam cineres meos, 870
permitte mortem. **Th.** Causa quae cogit mori?

Ph. Si causa leti dicitur, fructus perit.

Th. Nemo istud alius, me quidem excepto, audiet.

Ph. Aures pudica coniugis solas timet.

Th. Effare: fido pectore arcana occulam. 875

Ph. Alium silere quod uoles, primus sile.

Th. Leti facultas nulla continget tibi.

Ph. Mori uolenti desse mors numquam potest.

Th. Quod sit luendum morte delictum indica.

Ph. Quod uiuo. **Th.** Lacrimae nonne te nostrae mouent? 880

Ph. Mors optima est perire lacrimandum suis.

Th. Silere pergit. — uerbere ac uinclis anus
altrixque prodet quidquid haec fari abnuat.
Vincite ferro. uerberum uis extrahat
secreta mentis. **Ph.** Ipsa iam labor, mane. 885

Th. Quidnam ora maesta auertis et lacrimas genis
subito coortas ueste praetenta optegis?

Ph. Te te, creator caelitem, testem inuoco,
et te, coruscum lucis aetheriae iubar,
ex cuius ortu nostra dependet domus: 890
temptata precibus restiti; ferro ac minis
non cessit animus: uim tamen corpus tulit.
labem hanc pudoris eluet noster cruor.

Th. Quis, ede, nostri decoris euersor fuit?

Ph. Quem rere minime. **Th.** Quis sit audire expeto. 895

Ph. Hic dicet ensis, quem tumultu territus
liquit stuprator ciuium accursum timens.

Th. Quod facinus, heu me, cerno? quod monstrum intuo?
regale patriis asperum signis ebur
capulo refulget, gentis Actaeae decus. 900
sed ipse quonam euasit? **Ph.** Hi trepidum fuga
uidere famuli concitum celeri pede.

Th. Pro sancta Pietas, pro gubernator poli
et qui secundum fluctibus regnum moues,
unde ista uenit generis infandi lues? 905
hunc Graia tellus aluit an Taurus Scythes
Colchusque Phasis? reddit ad auctores genus
stirpemque primam degener sanguis refert.
est prorsus iste gentis armiferae furor,
odisse Veneris foedera et castum diu 910
uulgare populis corpus. o taetrum genus
nullaque uictum lege melioris soli!

ferae quoque ipsae Veneris euitant nefas,
generisque leges inscius seruat pudor.

Vbi uultus ille et ficta maiestas uiri 915
atque habitus horrens, prisca et antiqua appetens,
morumque senium triste et affectus graues?
o uita fallax, abditos sensus geris
animisque pulcram turpibus faciem induis:
pudor impudentem celat, audacem quies, 920
pietas nefandum; uera fallaces probant
simulantque molles dura. siluarum incola
ille efferatus castus intactus rudis,
mihi te reseruas? a meo primum toro
et scelere tanto placuit ordiri uirum? 925
iam iam superno numini grates ago,
quod icta nostra cecidit Antiope manu,
quod non ad antra Stygia descendens tibi
matrem reliqui. Profugus ignotas procul
percorre gentes: te licet terra ultimo 930
summota mundo dirimat Oceani plagis
orbemque nostris pedibus obuersum colas,
licet in recessu penitus extremo abditus
horrifera celsi regna transieris poli
hiemesque supra positus et canas niues 935
gelidi frementes liqueris Boreae minas
post te furentes, sceleribus poenas dabis.
profugum per omnis pertinax latebras premam:
longinqua clausa abstrusa diuersa inuia
emetiemur, nullus obstabit locus: 940
scis unde redeam. tela quo mitti haud queunt,
huc uota mittam: genitor aequoreus dedit
ut uota prono terna concipiam deo,
et inuocata munus hoc sanxit Styge.

En perage donum triste, regnator freti! 945
non cernat ultra lucidum Hippolytus diem
adeatque manes iuuenis iratos patri.
fer abominandam nunc opem gnato, parens:
numquam supremum numinis munus tui

consumeremus, magna ni premerent mala; 950
inter profunda Tartara et Ditem horridum
et imminentes regis inferni minas,
uoto peperci: redde nunc pactam fidem. —
genitor, moraris? cur adhuc undae silent?
nunc atra uentis nubila impellentibus 955
subtexe noctem, sidera et caelum eripe,
effunde pontum, uulgus aequoreum cie
fluctusque ab ipso tumidus Oceano uoca.

Chorvs O magna parens, Natura, deum
tuque igniferi rector Olympi, 960
qui sparsa cito sidera mundo
cursusque uagos rapis astrorum
celerique polos cardine uersas,
cur tanta tibi cura perennes
agitare uices aetheris alti, 965
ut nunc canae frigora brumae
 nudent siluas,
nunc arbustis redeant umbrae,
nunc aestiui colla leonis
Cererem magno feruore coquant 970
uiresque suas temperet annus?
sed cur idem qui tanta regis,
sub quo uasti pondera mundi
librata suos ducunt orbis,
hominum nimium securus abes, 975
non sollicitus prodesse bonis,
 nocuisse malis?
 Res humanas ordine nullo
Fortuna regit sparsitque manu
munera caeca peiora fouens: 980
uincit sanctos dira libido,
fraus sublimi regnat in aula;
tradere turpi fasces populus
gaudet, eosdem colit atque odit.
tristis uirtus peruersa tulit 985

praemia recti:

castos sequitur mala paupertas
uitioque potens regnat adulter —
o uane pudor falsumque decus!

Sed quid citato nuntius portat gradu
rigatque maestis lugubrem uultum genis? 990

Nvntivs O sors acerba et dura, famulatus grauis,
cur me ad nefandi nuntium casus uocas?

Th. Ne metue cladis fortiter fari asperas:
non imparatum pectus aerumnis gero.

Nvn. Vocem dolori lingua luctificam negat. 995

Th. Proloquere, quae sors aggrauet quassam domum.

Nvn. Hippolytus, heu me, flebili leto occubat.

Th. Gnatum parens obisse iam pridem scio:
nunc raptor obiit. mortis effare ordinem.

Nvn. Vt profugus urbem liquit infesto gradu 1000
celerem citatis passibus cursum explicans,
celso sonipedes ocus subigit iugo
et ora frenis domita substrictis ligat.
tum multa secum effatus et patrium solum
abominatus saepe genitorem ciet 1005
acerque habenis lora permissis quatit:
cum subito uastum tonuit ex alto mare
creuitque in astra. nullus inspirat salo
uentus, quieti nulla pars caeli strepit
placidumque pelagus propria tempestas agit. 1010
non tantus Auster Siculo distubrat freta
nec tam furens Ionius exsurgit sinus
regnante Coro, saxa cum fluctu tremunt
et cana summum spuma Leucaten ferit.
consurgit ingens pontus in uastum aggerem, 1015

[tumidumque monstro pelagus in terras ruit]
nec ista ratibus tanta construitur lues:
terris minatur; fluctus haud cursu leui
prouoluitur; nescioquid onerato sinu
grauis unda portat. quae nouum tellus caput 1020
ostendet astris? Cyclas exoritur noua?
latuere rupes numine Epidauri dei
et scelere petrae nobiles Scironides
et quae duobus terra comprimitur fretis.
Haec dum stupentes sequimur, en totum mare 1025
immugit, omnes undique scopuli adstrepunt;
summum cacumen rorat expulso sale,
spumat uomitque uicibus alternis aquas
qualis per alta uehitur Oceani freta
fluctum refundens ore physeter capax. 1030
inhorruit concussus undarum globus
solutque sese et litori inuexit malum
maius timore, pontus in terras ruit
suumque monstrum sequitur — os quassat tremor.

Quis habitus ille corporis uasti fuit! 1035
caerulea taurus colla sublimis gerens
erexit altam fronte uiridanti iubam;
stant hispidae aures, orbibus uarius color,
et quem feri dominator habuisset gregis
et quem sub undis natus: hinc flammam uomunt 1040
oculi, hinc relucent caerulea insignes nota;
opima ceruix arduos tollit toros
naresque hiulcis haustibus patulae fremunt;
musco tenaci pectus ac palear uiret,
longum rubenti spargitur fuco latus; 1045
tum pone tergus ultima in monstrum coit
facies et ingens belua immensam trahit
squamosa partem. talis extremo mari
pistrix citatas sorbet aut frangit rates.

Tremuere terrae, fugit attonitum pecus 1050
passim per agros, nec suos pastor sequi
meminit iuuenecos; omnis e saltu fera

diffugit, omnis frigido exsanguis metu
uenator horret. solus immunis metu
Hippolytus artis continet frenis equos 1055
pavidosque notae uocis hortatu ciet.
Est alta ad Argos collibus ruptis uia,
uicina tangens spatia suppositi maris;
hic se illa moles acuit atque iras parat.
ut cepit animos seque praetemptans satis 1060
prolusit irae, praepeti cursu euolat,
summam citato uix gradu tangens humum,
et torua currus ante trepidantis stetit.
contra feroci gnatus insurgens minax
uultu nec ora mutat et magnum intonat: 1065
‘haud frangit animum uanus hic terror meum:
nam mihi paternus uincere est tauros labor.’

Inobsequentes protinus frenis equi
rapuere cursum iamque derrantes uia,
quacumque rabidos pavidus euexit furor, 1070
hac ire pergunt seque per scopulos agunt.
at ille, qualis turbido rector mari
ratem retentat, ne det obliquum latus,
et arte fluctum fallit, haud aliter citos
currus gubernat: ora nunc pressis trahit 1075
constricta frenis, terga nunc torto frequens
uerbere coerces. sequitur adsiduus comes,
nunc aequa carpens spatia, nunc contra obuius
oberrat, omni parte terrorem mouens.
non licuit ultra fugere: nam toto obuius 1080
incurrit ore corniger ponti horridus.
tum uero pauida sonipedes mente exciti
imperia soluunt seque luctantur iugo
eripere rectique in pedes iactant onus.

Praeceptus in ora fusus implicuit cadens 1085
laqueo tenaci corpus et quanto magis
pugnat, sequaces hoc magis nodos ligat.
sensere pecudes facinus — et curru leui,
dominante nullo, qua timor iussit ruunt.

talis per auras non suum agnoscens onus 1090
Solique falso creditum indignans diem
Phaethonta currus deuium excussit polo.
Late cruentat arua et inlisum caput
scopulis resultat; auferunt dumi comas,
et ora durus pulcra populatur lapis 1095
peritque multo uulnere infelix decor.
moribunda celeres membra peruoluunt rotae;
tandemque raptum truncus ambusta sude
medium per inguen stipite ingesto tenet;
[paulumque domino currus affixo stetit] 1100
haesere biiuges uulnere — et pariter moram
dominumque rumpunt. inde semianimem secant
uirgulta, acutis asperi uepres rubis
omnisque ruscus corporis partem tulit.

Errant per agros funebris famuli manus, 1105
per illa qua distractus Hippolytus loca
longum cruenta tramitem signat nota,
maestaeque domini membra uestigant canes.
necdum dolentum sedulus potuit labor
explere corpus — hocine est formae decus? 1110
qui modo paterni clarus imperii comes
et certus heres siderum fulsit modo,
passim ad supremos ille colligitur rogos
et funeri confertur. **Th.** O nimium potens
quanto parentes sanguinis uinclo tenes 1115
natura! quam te colimus inuiti quoque!
occidere uolui noxium, amissum fleo.

Nvn. Haud flere honeste quisque quod uoluit potest.

Th. Equidem malorum maximum hunc cumulum reor,
si abominanda casus optanda efficit. 1120

Nvn. Et si odia seruas, cur madent fletu genae?

Th. Quod interemi, non quod amisi, fleo.

Chorvs Quanti casus, heu, magna rotant!
minor in paruis Fortuna furit
leuiusque ferit leuiores deus; 1125
seruat placidos obscura quies
praebebetque senes casa securos.

Admota aetheriis culmina sedibus
Euros excipiunt, excipiunt Notos,
insani Boreae minas 1130
imbriferumque Corum.
Raros patitur fulminis ictus
umida uallis:

tremuit telo Iouis altisoni
Caucasus ingens Phrygiumque nemus 1135
matris Cybeles: metuens caelo
Iuppiter alto uicina petit;
non capit umquam magnos motus
humilis tecti plebeia domus.

[circa regna tonat] 1140
Volat ambiguus mobilis alis
hora, nec ulli praestat uelox
Fortuna fidem:
hic qui clari sidera mundi
nitidumque diem * * * morte relictas 1145
luget maestos tristis reditus
ipsoque magis flebile Auerno
sedis patriae uidet hospitium.

Pallas Actaeae ueneranda genti,
quod tuus caelum superosque Theseus 1150
spectat et fugit Stygias paludes,
casta nil debes patruo rapaci:
constat inferno numerus tyranno.

Quae uox ab altis flebilis tectis sonat
strictoque uecors Phaedra quid ferro parat? 1155

Thesevs Quis te dolore percitam instigat furor?
quid ensis iste quidue uociferatio
planctusque supra corpus inuisum uolunt?

Phaedra Me me, profundī saeue dominator freti,
inuade et in me monstra caerulei maris 1160
emitte, quidquid intimo Tethys sinu
extrema gestat, quidquid Oceanus uagis
complexus undis ultimo fluctu tegit.
O dure Theseu semper, o numquam tuis
tuto reuerse: gnatus et genitor nece 1165
reditus tuos luere; peruertis domum
amore semper coniugum aut odio nocens.

Hippolyte, tales intuoꝝ uultus tuos
talesque feci? membra quis saeuus Sinis
aut quis Procrustes sparsit aut quis Cresius, 1170
Daedalea uasto claustra mugitu replens,
taurus biformis ore cornigero ferox
diuulsit? heu me, quo tuus fugit decor
oculique nostrum sidus? exanimis iaces?
ades parumper uerbaque exaudi mea. 1175
nil turpe loquimur: hac manu poenas tibi
soluam et nefando pectori ferrum inseram,
animaque Phaedram pariter ac scelere exuam.
[et te per undas perque Tartareos lacus,
per Styga, per amnes igneos amens sequar] 1180
placemus umbras: capitis exuuias cape
laceraque frontis accipe abscisam comam.
non licuit animos iungere, at certe licet
iunxisse fata. morere, si casta es, uiro;
si incesta, amori. coniugis thalamos petam 1185
tanto impiatos facinore? hoc derat nefas,
ut uindicato sancta fruereris toro.

o mors amoris una sedamen mali,
o mors pudoris maximum laesi decus,
confugimus ad te: pande placatos sinus. 1190

Audite, Athenae, tuque, funesta pater
peior nouerca: falsa memoraui et nefas,
quod ipsa demens pectore insano hauseram,
mentita finxi. uana punisti pater,
iuuenisque castus crimine incesto iacet, 1195

pu^dicus, in^sons — reci^pe iam mo^res tuo^s.
mu^crone pec^tus im^pium iusto pa^tet
cruor^que san^cto soluⁱt in^ferⁱas uiro.

Th. Quid facere rap^to debeas gnato parens,
disce a nouer^ca: con^dere Acherontis plagis. 1200
Pallidi fauces Auerni uosque, Taenarii specus,
unda miseris grata Lethes uosque, torpentes lacus,
im^pium rapite atque mersum premitte perpetuis malis.
nunc adeste, saeua ponti monstra, nunc uasti maris,
ultimo quodcumque Proteus aequorum abscondit sinu, 1205
meque ouantem scelere tanto rapite in altos gurgites.
Tuque semper, genitor, irae facilis assensor meae:
morte facili dignus haud sum qui noua natum nece
segregem sparsi per agros quique, dum falsum nefas
exsequor uindex seuerus, incidi in uerum scelus. 1210
sidera et manes et undas scelere compleui meo:
amplius sors nulla restat; regna me norunt tria.

In hoc redimus? patuit ad caelum uia,
bina ut uiderem funera et geminam necem,
cae^lebs et orbus funebres una face 1215
ut concremarem prolis ac thalami rogos?
donator atrae lucis, Alcide, tuum
Diti remitte munus; ereptos mihi
restitu^e manes. — im^pius frustra inuoco
mortem relictam: crudus et leti artifex, 1220
exitia machinatus insolita effer^a,
nunc tibimet ipse iusta supplicia irroga.
pinus coacto uertice attingens humum
caelo remissum findat in geminas trabes,
mittarue praeceps saxa per Scironia? 1225
grauiora uidi, quae pati clausos iubet
Phlegethon nocentes igneo cingens uado.
quae poena memet maneat et sedes, scio:
umbrae nocentes, cedite et ceruicibus
his, his repositum degrauet fessas manus 1230
saxum, seni perennis Aeolio labor;

me ludat amnis ora uicina alluens;
uultur relicto transuolet Tityo ferus
meumque poenae semper accrescat iecur;
et tu mei requiesce Pirithoi pater: 1235
haec incitatis membra turbinibus ferat
nusquam resistens orbe reuoluto rota.
Dehisce tellus, recipe me dirum chaos,
recipe, haec ad umbras iustior nobis uia est:
gnatum sequor — ne metue qui manes regis: 1240
casti uenimus; recipe me aeterna domo
non exiturum. — non mouent diuos preces;
at, si rogarem scelera, quam proni forent!

Cho. Theseu, querelis tempus aeternum manet:
nunc iusta nato solue et absconde ocus 1245
dispersa foede membra laniatu efferro.

Th. Huc, huc, reliquias uehite cari corporis
pondusque et artus temere congestos date.
Hippolytus hic est? crimen agnosco meum:
ego te peremi; neu nocens tantum semel 1250
solusue fierem, facinus ausurus parens
patrem aduocaui. munere en patrio fruor.
o triste fractis orbitas annis malum!
complectere artus, quodque de nato est super,
miserande, maesto pectore incumbens, foue. 1255

Disiecta, genitor, membra laceri corporis
in ordinem dispone et errantes loco
restitu partes: fortis hic dextrae locus,
hic laeua frenis docta moderandis manus
ponenda: laeui lateris agnosco notas. 1260
quam magna lacrimis pars adhuc nostris abest!
durate trepidae lugubri officio manus,
fletusque largos sistite, arentes genae,
dum membra nato genitor adnumerat suo
corpusque fingit. hoc quid est forma carens 1265
et turpe, multo uulnere abruptum undique?

quae pars tui sit dubito; sed pars est tui:
hic, hic repone, non suo, at uacuo loco.
haecne illa facies igne sidereo nitens,
~inimica flectens lumina? huc cecidit decor? 1270
o dira fata, numinum o saeuus fauor!
sic ad parentem natus ex uoto redit?
en haec suprema dona genitoris cape,
saepe efferendus; interim haec ignes ferant.

 Patefacite acerbam caede funesta domum; 1275
Mopsopia claris tota lamentis sonet.
uos apparate regii flammam rogi;
at uos per agros corporis partes uagas
inquire. — istam terra defossam premat,
grauisque tellus impio capiti incubet.

THYESTES

PERSONAE

Tantali Vmbra

Furia

Atreus, rex Mycenarum

Satelles

Thyestes, frater Atrei

Tantalus, filius Thyestis

Nuntius

Chorus

TANTALI VMBRA: Quis inferorum sede ab infausta extrahit
auido fugaces ore captantem cibos?

quis male deorum Tantalos inuisas domos

ostendit iterum? peius inuentum est siti

arente in undis aliquid et peius fame

hiante semper? Sisyphei numquid lapis

gestandus umeris lubricus nostris uenit

aut membra celeri differens cursu rota,

aut poena Tityi qui specu uasto patens

uisceribus atras pascit effossis aues 10

et nocte reparans quidquid amisit die

plenum recenti pabulum monstro iacet?

in quod malum transcribor? O quisquis noua

supplicia functis durus umbrarum arbiter

disponis, addi si quid ad poenas potest

quod ipse custos carceris diri horreat,

quod maestus Acheron paueat, ad cuius metum

nos quoque tremamus, quaere. Iam nostra subit

e stirpe turba quae suum uincat genus

ac me innocentem faciat et inausa audeat. 20

regione quidquid impia cessat loci

complebo; numquam stante Pelopea domo

Minos uacabit. **FURIA:** Perge, detestabilis

umbra, et penates impios furiis age.
certetur omni scelere et alterna uice
stringatur ensis; nec sit irarum modus
pudorue, mentes caecus instiget furor,
rabies parentum duret et longum nefas
eat in nepotes; nec uacet cuiquam uetus
odisse crimen: semper oriatur nouum, 30
nec unum in uno, dumque punitur scelus,
crescat. Superbis fratribus regna excidant
repetantque profugos; dubia uiolentae domus
fortuna reges inter incertos labet;
miser ex potente fiat, ex misero potens,
fluctuque regnum casus assiduo ferat.
ob scelera pulsus, cum dabit patriam deus
in scelera redeant, sintque tam inuisi omnibus
quam sibi; nihil sit ira quod uetitum putet:
fratrem expauescat frater et natum parens 40
natusque patrem, liberi pereant male,
peius tamen nascentur; immineat uiro
infesta coniunx, bella trans pontum uehant,
effusus omnis irriget terras cruor,
supraque magnos gentium exultet duces
Libido uictrix. Impia stuprum in domo
leuissimum sit; fratris et fas et fides
iusque omne pereat. Non sit a uestris malis
immune caelum - cur micant stellae polo
flammaeque seruant debitum mundo decus? 50
nox alta fiat, excidat caelo dies.
misce penates, odia caedes funera
accerse et imple Tantalum totam domum.
ornetur altum columen et lauro fores
laetae uirescant, dignus aduentu tuo
splendescat ignis - Thracium fiat nefas
maiore numero. Dextra cur patrui uacet?
nondum Thyestes liberos deflet suos?
et quando tollet? ignibus iam subditis
spument aena, membra per partes eant 60

discerpta, patrios polluat sanguis focos,
epulae instruantur - non noui sceleris tibi
conuiuia uenies. Liberum dedimus diem
tuamque ad istas soluimus mensas famem;
ieiunia exple, mixtus in Bacchum cruor
spectante te potetur; inueni dapes
quas ipse fugeres - siste, quo praeceps ruis?

VMBRA TANTALI: Ad stagna et amnes et recedentes aquas
labrisque ab ipsis arboris plenae fugas.
abire in atrum carceris liceat mei 70
cubile, liceat, si parum uideor miser,
mutare ripas: alueo medius tuo,
Phlegethon, relinquer igneo cinctus freto.
Quicumque poenas lege factorum datas
pati iuberis, quisquis exeso iaces
pavidus sub antro iamque uenturi times
montis ruinam, quisquis audiorum feros
rictus leonum et dira Furiarum agmina
implicitus horres, quisquis immissas faces
semiustus abigis, Tantali uocem excipe 80
properantis ad uos: credite experto mihi,
amate poenas. Quando continget mihi
effugere superos? **FVRIA:** Ante perturba domum
inferque tecum proelia et ferri malum
regibus amorem, concute insano ferum
pectus tumultu. **VMBRA TANTALI:** Me pati poenas decet,
non esse poenam. Mittor ut dirus uapor
tellure rupta uel grauem populis luem
sparsura pestis? ducam in horrendum nefas
auus nepotes? magne diuorum parens 90
nosterque quamuis pudeat, ingenti licet
taxata poena lingua crucietur loquax,
nec hoc tacebo: moneo, ne sacra manus
uiolate caede neue furiali malo
aspergite aras. Stabo et arcebo scelus.
Quid ora terres uerbere et tortos ferox

minaris angues? Quid famem infixam intimis
agitas medullis? flagrat incensum siti
cor et perustis flamma uisceribus micat.
Sequor. **FVRIA**: Hunc, hunc furem diuide in totam domum. 100
sic, sic ferantur et suum infensi inuicem
sitiant cruorem. Sentit introitus tuos
domus et nefando tota contactu horruit.
actum est abunde! gradere ad infernos specus
amnemque notum; iam tuum maestae pedem
terrae grauantur: cernis ut fontis liquor
introrsus actus linquat, ut ripae uacent
uentusque raras igneus nubes ferat?
pallescit omnis arbor ac nudus stetit 110
fugiente pomo ramus, et qui fluctibus
illinc propinquis Isthmos atque illinc fremit
uicina gracili diuidens terra uada,
longe remotos latus exaudit sonos.
iam Lerna retro cessit et Phoronides
latuere uenae nec suas profert sacer
Alpheos undas et Cithaeronis iuga
stant parte nulla cana deposita niue
timentque ueterem nobiles Argi sitim.
en ipse Titan dubitat an iubeat sequi 120
cogatque habenis ire peritulum diem.

CHORVS: Argos de superis si quis Achaicum
Pisaeasque domos curribus inclitas,
Isthmi si quis amat regna Corinthii,
et portus geminos et mare dissidens,
si quis Taygeti conspicuas niues,
quas cum Sarmaticus tempore frigido
in summis Boreas composuit iugis,
aestas ueliferis soluit Etesiis,
quem tangit gelido flumine lucidus 130
Alpheos, stadio notus Olympico,
aduertat placidum numen et arceat,
alternae scelerum ne redeant uices

nec succedat auo deterior nepos
et maior placeat culpa minoribus.
tandem lassa feros exuat impetus
sicci progenies impia Tantalī.
peccatum satis est; fas ualuit nihil
aut commune nefas. Proditus occidit
deceptor domini Myrtilus, et fide 140
uctus qua tulerat nobile reddidit
mutato pelagus nomine: notior
nulla est Ioniis fabula nauibus.
exceptus gladio paruulus impio
dum currit patrium natus ad osculum,
immatura focus uictima concidit
diuisusque tua est, Tantale, dextera,
mensas ut strueres hospitibus deis.
hos aeterna fames persequitur cibos,
hos aeterna sitis; nec dapibus feris 150
decerni potuit poena decentior.
Stat lassus uacuo gutture Tantalus;
impendet capiti plurima noxio
Phineis auibus praeda fugacior;
hinc illinc grauidis frondibus incubat
et curuata suis fetibus ac tremens
alludit patulis arbor hiatibus.
haec, quamuis auidus nec patiens morae,
deceptus totiens tangere neglegit
obliquatque oculos oraque comprimit 160
inclusisque famem dentibus alligat.
sed tunc diuitias omne nemus suas
demittit propius pomaque desuper
insultant foliis mitia languidis
accenduntque famem, quae iubet irritas
exercere manus. Has ubi protulit
et falli libuit, totus in arduum
autumnus rapitur siluaque mobilis.
instat deinde sitis non leuior fame;
qua cum percaluit sanguis et igneis 170

exarsit facibus, stat miser obuios
fluctus ore petens, quos profugus latex
auertit sterili deficiens uado
conantemque sequi deserit; hic bibit
altum de rapido gurgite puluerem.

ATREVS: Ignaue, iners, eneruis et (quod maximum
probrum tyranno rebus in summis reor)
inulte, post tot scelera, post fratris dolos
fasque omne ruptum questibus uanis agis
iratus Atreus? fremere iam totus tuis 180
debebat armis orbis et geminum mare
utrimque classes agere, iam flammis agros
lucere et urbes decuit ac strictum undique
micare ferrum. Tota sub nostro sonet
Argolica tellus equite; non siluae tegant
hostem nec altis montium structae iugis
arces; relictis bellicum totus canat
populus Mycenis, quisquis inuisum caput
tegit ac tuetur, clade funesta occidat.
haec ipsa pollens incliti Pelopis domus 190
ruat uel in me, dummodo in fratrem ruat.
Age, anime, fac quod nulla posteritas probet,
sed nulla taceat. Aliquod audendum est nefas
atrox, cruentum, tale quod frater meus
suum esse mallet. Scelera non ulcisceris,
nisi uincis. Et quid esse tam saeuum potest
quod superet illum? numquid abiectus iacet?
numquid secundis patitur in rebus modum,
fessis quietem? noui ego ingenium uiri
indocile; flecti non potest- frangi potest. 200
proinde antequam se firmat aut uires parat,
petatur ultro, ne quiescentem petat.
aut perdet aut peribit: in medio est scelus
positum occupanti. **SATELLES:** Fama te populi nihil
aduersa terret? **ATREVS:** Maximum hoc regni bonum est,
quod facta domini cogitur populus sui

tam ferre quam laudare. **SATELLES:** Quos cogit metus
laudare, eosdem reddit inimicos metus.
at qui fauoris gloriam ueri petit,
animo magis quam uoce laudari uolet. 210

ATREVS: Laus uera et humili saepe contingit uiro,
non nisi potenti falsa. Quod nolunt uelint.

SATELLES: Rex uelit honesta: nemo non eadem uolet.

ATREVS: Vbicumque tantum honesta dominanti licent,
precario regnatur. **SATELLES:** Vbi non est pudor
nec cura iuris sanctitas pietas fides,
instabile regnum est. **ATREVS:** Sanctitas pietas fides
priuata bona sunt; qua iuuat reges eant.

SATELLES: Nefas nocere uel malo fratri puta.

ATREVS: Fas est in illo quidquid in fratre est nefas. 220
quid enim reliquit crimine intactum aut ubi
sceleri pepercit? coniugem stupro abstulit
regnumque furto: specimen antiquum imperi
fraude est adeptus, fraude turbauit domum.
est Pelopis altis nobile in stabulis pecus,
arcanus aries, ductor opulenti gregis,
cuius per omne corpus effuso coma
dependet auro, cuius e tergo noui
aurata reges sceptrata Tantalici gerunt;
possessor huius regnat, hunc tantae domus 230
fortuna sequitur. Tuta seposita sacer
in parte carpit prata, quae cludit lapis
fatale saxeo pasuum muro tegens.
hunc facinus ingens ausus assumpta in scelus
consorte nostri perfidus thalami auehit.
Hinc omne cladis mutuae fluxit malum:
per regna trepidus exul errauit mea,
pars nulla nostri tuta ab insidiis uacat,

corrupta coniunx, imperi quassa est fides,
domus aegra, dubius sanguis et certi nihil 240
nisi frater hostis. Quid stupes? tandem incipe
animosque sume: Tantalum et Pelopem aspice;
ad haec manus exempla poscuntur meae.
profare, dirum qua caput mactem uia.

SATELLES: Ferro peremptus spiritum inimicum expuat.

ATREVS: De fine poenae loqueris; ego poenam uolo.
perimat tyrannus lenis: in regno meo
mors impetratur. **SATELLES:** Nulla te pietas mouet?

ATREVS: Excede, Pietas, si modo in nostra domo
umquam fuisti. Dira Furiarum cohors 250
discorsque Erinys ueniat et geminas faces
Megaera quatiens. Non satis magno meum
ardet furore pectus, impleri iuuat
maiore monstro. **SATELLES:** Quid noui rabidus struis?

ATREVS: Nil quod doloris capiat assueti modum;
nullum relinquam facinus et nullum est satis.

SATELLES: Ferrum? **ATREVS:** Parum est.

SATELLES: Quid ignis? **ATREVS:** Etiamnunc parum est.

SATELLES: Quonam ergo telo tantus utetur dolor?

ATREVS: Ipso Thyeste. **SATELLES:** Maius hoc ira est malum.

ATREVS: Fateor. Tumultus pectora attonitus quatit 260
penitusque uoluit; rapior et quo nescio,
sed rapior. Imo mugit e fundo solum,
tonat dies serenus ac totis domus
ut fracta tectis crepuit et moti lares
uertere uultum: fiat hoc, fiat nefas
quod, di, timetis. **SATELLES:** Facere quid tandem paras?

ATREVS: Nescio quid animus maius et solito amplius
supraque fines moris humani tumet
instatque pigris manibus - haud quid sit scio,
sed grande quiddam est. Ita sit. Hoc, anime, occupa 270
dignum est Thyeste facinus et dignum Atreo,
quod uterque faciat. Vidit infandas domus
Odrysia mensas - fateor, immane est scelus,
sed occupatum; maius hoc aliquid dolor
inueniat. Animum Daulis inspira parens
sororque; causa est similis; assiste et manum
impelle nostram. Liberos avidus pater
gaudensque laceret et suos artus edat.
bene est, abunde est: hic placet poenae modus
tantisper. Vbinam est? Tam diu cur innocens 280
uersatur Atreus? tota iam ante oculos meos
imago caedis errat, ingesta orbitas
in ora patris - anime, quid rursus times
et ante rem subsidis? Audendum est, age!:
quod est in isto scelere praecipuum nefas,
hoc ipse faciet. **SATELLES:** Sed quibus captus dolis
nostros dabit perductus in laqueos pedem?
inimica credit cuncta. **ATREVS:** Non poterat capi,
nisi capere uellet. Regna nunc sperat mea:
hac spe minanti fulmen occurret Ioui, 290
hac spe subibit gurgitis tumidi minas
dubiumque Libycae Syrtis intrabit fretum,
hac spe, quod esse maximum retur malum,
fratrem uidebit. **SATELLES:** Quis fidem pacis dabit?
cui tanta credet? **ATREVS:** Credula est spes improba.
natis tamen mandata quae patruo ferant
dabimus: relictis exul hospitiis uagus
regno ut miserias mutet atque Argos regat
ex parte dominus. Si nimis durus preces
spernet Thyestes, liberos eius rudes 300
malisque fessos grauibus et faciles capi
prece commouebunt. Hinc uetus regni furor,
illinc egestas tristis ac durus labor

quamuis rigentem tot malis subigent uirum.

SATELLES: Iam tempus illi fecit aerumnas leues.

ATREVS: Erras: malorum sensus accrescit die.
leue est miserias ferre, perferre est graue.

SATELLES: Alios ministros consili tristis lege.
Peiora iuuenes facile praecepta audiunt.
In patre facient quidquid in patruo doces; 310
saepe in magistrum scelera redierunt sua.

ATREVS: Vt nemo doceat fraudis et sceleris uias,
regnum docebit. Ne mali fiant times?
nascuntur. Istud quod uocas saeuum asperum,
agique dure credis et nimium impie,
fortasse et illic agitur. **SATELLES:** Hanc fraudem scient
nati parari? **ATREVS:** Tacita tam rudibus fides
non est in annis. Detegent forsitan dolos:
tacere multis discitur uitae malis.

SATELLES: Ipsosne, per quos fallere alium cogitas, 320
falles? **ATREVS:** Vt ipsi crimine et culpa uacent.
quid enim necesse est liberos sceleri meo
inserere? per nos odia se nostra explicent.
male agis, recedis, anime! Si parcis tuis,
parces et illis. Consili Agamemnon mei
sciens minister fiat et fratri sciens
Menelaus adsit. Prolis incertae fides
ex hoc petatur scelere: Si bella abnuunt
et gerere nolunt odia, si patruum uocant,
pater est. Eatur! Multa sed trepidus solet 330
detegere uultus, magna nolentem quoque
consilia produnt: nesciant quantae rei
fiant ministri. Nostra tu coepta occules.

SATELLES: Haud sum monendus: ista nostro in pectore
fides timorque, sed magis claudet fides.

CHORVS: Tandem regia nobilis,
antiqui genus Inachi,
fratrum composuit minas.
Quis uos exagitat furor,
alternis dare sanguinem 340
et sceptrum scelere aggredi?
Nescitis, cupidi arcium,
regnum quo iaceat loco.
Regem non faciunt opes,
non uestis Tyriae color,
non frontis nota regia,
non auro nitidae fores:
rex est qui posuit metus
et diri mala pectoris.
Quem non ambitio impotens 350
et numquam stabilis fauor
uulgi praecipitis mouet,
non quidquid fodit Occidens
aut unda Tagus aurea
claro deuehit alueo,
non quidquid Libycis terit
feruens area messibus,
quem non concutiet cadens
obliqui uia fulminis,
non Eurus rapiens mare 360
aut saeuo rabidus freto
uentosi tumor Hadriae,
quem non lancea militis,
non strictus domuit chalybs,
qui tuto positus loco
infra se uidet omnia
occurritque suo libens
fato nec queritur mori.
Reges conueniant licet
qui sparsos agitant Dahas, 370
qui rubri uada litoris
et gemmis mare lucidis

late sanguineum tenent,
aut qui Caspia fortibus
recludunt iuga Sarmatis,
certet Danuuii uadum
audet qui pedes ingredi
et (quocumque loco iacent)
Seres uellere nobiles,
mens regnum bona possidet. 380
nihil ullis opus est equis,
nihil armis et inertibus
telis quae procul ingerit
Parthus, cum simulat fugas,
admotis nihil est opus
urbes sternere machinis
longe saxa rotantibus.
Rex est qui metuet nihil,
rex est qui cupiet nihil:
hoc regnum sibi quisque dat. 390
Stet quicumque uolet potens
aulae culmine lubrico:
me dulcis saturet quies;
obscuro positus loco
leni perfruar otio,
nullis nota Quiritibus
aetas per tacitum fluat.
Sic cum transierint mei
nullo cum strepitu dies,
plebeius moriar senex. 400
illi mors grauis incubat
qui, notus nimis omnibus,
ignotus moritur sibi.

THYESTES: Optata patriae tecta et Argolicas opes
miserisque summum ac maximum exulibus bonum,
tractum soli natalis et patrios deos
(si sunt tamen di) cerno, Cyclopum sacras
turret, labore maius humano decus,

celebrata iuueni stadia, per quae nobilis
palmam paterno non semel curru tuli. 410
occurreret Argos, populus occurreret frequens -
sed nempe et Atreus. Repete siluestres fugas
saltusque densos potius et mixtam feris
similemque uitam; clarus hic regni nitor
fulgore non est quod oculos falso auferat;
cum quod datur spectabis, et dantem aspice.
modo inter illa, quae putant cuncti aspera,
fortis fui laetusque; nunc contra in metus
reuoluor; animus haeret ac retro cupit
corpus referre, moueo nolentem gradum. 420

TANTALVS: Pigro (quid hoc est?) genitor incessu stupet
uultumque uersat seque in incerto tenet.

THYESTES: Quid, anime, pendes, quidue consilium diu
tam facile torques? rebus incertissimis,
fratri atque regno, credis ac metuis mala
iam uicta, iam mansueta et aerumnas fugis
bene collocatas? Esse iam miserum iuuat.
reflecte gressum, dum licet, teque eripe.

TANTALVS: Quae causa cogit, genitor, a patria gradum
referre uisa? cur bonis tantis sinum 430
subducis? ira frater abiecta redit
partemque regni reddit et lacerae domus
componit artus teque restituit tibi.

THYESTES: Causam timoris ipse quam ignoro exigis.
nihil timendum uideo, sed timeo tamen.
placet ire, pigris membra sed genibus labant,
alioque quam quo nitor abductus feror.
sic concitatam remige et uelo ratem
aestus resistens remigi et uelo refert.

TANTALVS: Euince quidquid obstat et mentem impedit 440

reducemque quanta praemia expectent uide.
pater, potes regnare. **THYESTES**: Cum possim mori.

TANTALVS: Summa est potestas - **THYESTES**: Nulla, si cupias nihil.

TANTALVS: Natis relinques. **THYESTES**: Non capit regnum duos.

TANTALVS: Miser esse mauult esse qui felix potest?

THYESTES: Mihi crede, falsis magna nominibus placent,
frustra timentur dura. Dum excelsus steti,
numquam pauere destiti atque ipsum mei
ferrum timere lateris. O quantum bonum est
obstare nulli, capere securas dapes 450
humi iacentem! scelera non intrant casas,
tutusque mensa capitur angusta cibus;
uenenum in auro bibitur - expertus loquor:
malam bonae praeferre fortunam licet.
Non uertice alti montis impositam domum
et eminentem ciuitas humilis tremit
nec fulget altis splendidum tectis ebur
somnosque non defendit excubitor meos;
non classibus piscamur et retro mare
iacta fugamus mole nec uentrem improbum 460
alimus tributo gentium, nullus mihi
ultra Getas metatur et Parthos ager;
non ture colimur nec meae excluso Ioue
ornantur arae; nulla culminibus meis
imposita nutat silua, nec fumant manu
succensa multa stagna, nec somno dies
Bacchoque nox iungenda peruigili datur:
sed non timemur, tuta sine telo est domus
rebusque paruis magna praestatur quies.
immane regnum est posse sine regno pati. 470

TANTALVS: Nec abnuendum est, si dat imperium deus.
nec appetendum est: frater ut regnes rogat.

THYESTES: Rogat? timendum est. Errat hic aliquis dolus.

TANTALVS: Redire pietas unde submota est solet,
reparatque uires iustus amissas amor.

THYESTES: Amat Thyesten frater? Aetherias prius
perfundet Arctos pontus et Siculi rapax
consistet aestus unda et Ionio seges
matura pelago surget et lucem dabit
nox atra terris, ante cum flammis aquae, 480
cum morte uita, cum mari uentus fidem
foedusque iungent. **TANTALVS:** Quam tamen fraudem times?

THYESTES: Omnem: timori quem meo statuam modum?
tantum potest quantum odit. **TANTALVS:** In te quid potest?

THYESTES: Pro me nihil iam metuo: uos facitis mihi
Atrea timendum. **TANTALVS:** Decipi cautus times?

THYESTES: Serum est cauendi tempus in mediis malis.
eatur. Vnum genitor hoc testor tamen:
ego uos sequor, non duco. **TANTALVS:** Respiciet deus
bene cogitata. Perge non dubio gradu. 490

ATREVS: Plagis tenetur clausa dispositis fera:
et ipsum et una generis inuisi indolem
iunctam parenti cerno. Iam tuto in loco
uersantur odia. Venit in nostras manus
tandem Thyestes, uenit, et totus quidem.
Vix tempero animo, uix dolor frenos capit.
sic, cum feras uestigat et longo sagax
loro tenetur Vmber ac presso uias
scrutatur ore, dum procul lento suem
odore sentit, paret et tacito locum 500
rostrum pererrat; praeda cum propior fuit,

ceruice tota pugnat et gemitu uocat
dominum morantem seque retinenti eripit.
cum sperat ira sanguinem, nescit tegi;
tamen tegatur. Aspice, ut multo grauis
squalore uultus obruat maestos coma.
quam foeda iaceat barba. Praestetur fides.
Fratrem iuuat uidere. Complexus mihi
redde expetitos. Quidquid irarum fuit
transierit; ex hoc sanguis ac pietas die 510
colantur, animis odia damnata excidant.

THYESTES: Diluere possem cuncta, nisi talis fores.
sed fateor, Atreu, fateor, admisi omnia
quae credidisti. Pessimam causam meam
hodierna pietas fecit. Est prorsus nocens
quicumque uisus tam bono fratri est nocens.
lacrimis agendum est; supplicem primus uides;
hae te precantur pedibus intactae manus:
ponatur omnis ira et ex animo tumor
erasus abeat. Obsides fidei accipe 520
hos innocentes, frater. **ATREVS:** A genibus manum
aufer meosque potius amplexus pete.
uos quoque, senum praesidia, tot iuuenes, meo
pendete collo. Squalidam uestem exue,
oculisque nostris parce, et ornatus cape
pares meis, laetusque fraterni imperi
capesse partem. Maior haec laus est mea,
fratri paternum reddere incolumi decus:
habere regnum casus est, uirtus dare.

THYESTES: Di paria, frater, pretia pro tantis tibi 530
meritis rependant. Regiam capitis notam
squalor recusat noster et sceptrum manus
infausta refugit. Liceat in media mihi
latere turba. **ATREVS:** Recipit hoc regnum duos.

THYESTES: Meum esse credo quidquid est, frater, tuum.

ATREVS: Quis influentis dona fortunae abnuit?

THYESTES: Expertus est quicumque quam facile effluant.

ATREVS: Fratrem potiri gloria ingenti uetas?

THYESTES: Tua iam peracta gloria est, restat mea;
respuere certum est regna consilium mihi. 540

ATREVS: Meam relinquam, nisi tuam partem accipis.

THYESTES: Accipio: regni nomen impositi feram,
sed iura et arma seruiant mecum tibi.

ATREVS: Imposita capiti uincla uenerando gere;
ego destinatas uictimas superis dabo.

CHORVS: Credat hoc quisquam? ferus ille et acer
nec potens mentis truculentus Atreus
fratris aspectu stupefactus haesit.
nulla uis maior pietate uera est;
iurgia externis inimica durant, 550
quos amor uerus tenuit, tenebit.
ira cum magnis agitata causis
gratiam rupit cecinitque bellum,
cum leues frenis sonuere turmae,
fulsit hinc illinc agitatus ensis,
quem mouet crebro furibundus ictu
sanguinem Mauors cupiens recentem -
opprimit ferrum manibusque iunctis
ducit ad pacem pietas negantes.
otium tanto subitum e tumultu 560
quis deus fecit? modo per Mycenae
arma ciuilis crepuere belli;
pallidae natos tenuere matres,
uxor armato timuit marito,
cum manum inuitus sequeretur ensis,
sordidus pacis uitio quietae;

ille labentes renouare muros,
hic situ quassas stabilire turres,
ferreis portas cohibere claustris
ille certabat, pavidusque pinnis 570
anxiae noctis uigil incubabat -
peior est bello timor ipse belli.
iam minae saeui cecidere ferri,
iam silet murmur graue classicorum,
iam tacet stridor litui strepentis;
alta pax urbi reuocata laetae est.
sic, ubi ex alto tumuere fluctus
Bruttium Coro feriente pontum,
Scylla pulsatis resonat cauernis
ac mare in portu timuere nautae 580
quod rapax haustum reuomit Charybdis,
et ferus Cyclops metuit parentem
rupe feruentis residens in Aetnae,
ne superfusis uioletur undis
ignis aeternis resonans caminis,
et putat mergi sua posse pauper
regna Laertes Ithaca tremente -
si suae uentis cecidere uires,
mitius stagno pelagus recumbit;
alta, quae nauis timuit secare, 590
hinc et hinc fusis speciosa uelis
strata ludenti patuere cumbae,
et uacat mersos numerare pisces
hic ubi ingenti modo sub procella
Cyclades pontum timuere motae.
nulla sors longa est; dolor ac uoluptas
inuicem cedunt; breuior uoluptas.
ima permutat leuis hora summis.
ille qui donat diadema fronti,
quem genu nixae tremuere gentes, 600
cuius ad nutum posuere bella
et Dahae Parthis equitem minati,
anxius sceptrum tenet et mouentes

cuncta diuinat metuitque casus
mobiles rerum dubiumque tempus.
uos quibus rector maris atque terrae
ius dedit magnum necis atque uitae,
ponite inflatos tumidosque uultus:
quidquid a uobis minor expauescit, 610
maior hoc uobis dominus minatur;
omne sub regno grauiore regnum est.
quem dies uidit ueniens superbum,
hunc dies uidit fugiens iacentem.
nemo confidat nimium secundis,
nemo desperet meliora lapsis:
miscet haec illis prohibetque Clotho
stare fortunam, rotat omne fatum.
nemo tam diuos habuit fauentes,
crastinum ut posset sibi polliceri: 620
res deus nostras celeri citatas
turbine uersat.

NVNTIVS: Quis me per auras turbo praecipitem uehet
atque nube inuoluet, ut tantum nefas
eripiat oculis? O domus Pelopi quoque
et Tantalo pudenda! **CHORVS:** Quid portas noui?

NVNTIVS: Quaenam ista regio est? Argos et Sparte, pios
sortita fratres, et maris gemini premens
fauces Corinthos, an feris Hister fugam
praebens Alanis, an sub aeterna niue 630
Hyrcana tellus, an uagi passim Scythae?
quis hic nefandi est conscius monstri locus?

CHORVS: Effare, et istud pande, quodcumque est, malum.

NVNTIVS: Si steterit animus, si metu corpus rigens
remittet artus. Haeret in uultu trucidis
imago facti. Ferte me insanae procul,
illo, procellae, ferte quo fertur dies

hinc raptus. **CHORVS:** Animos grauius incertos tenes.
quid sit quod horres ede et auctorem indica.
non quaero quis sit, sed uter. Effare ocius. 640

NVNTIVS: In arce summa Pelopiae pars est domus
conuersa ad Austros, cuius extremum latus
aequale monti crescit atque urbem premit
et contumacem regibus populum suis
habet sub ictu; fulget hic turbae capax
immane tectum, cuius auratas trabes
uariis columnae nobiles maculis ferunt.
post ista uulgo nota, quae populi colunt,
in multa diues spatia discedit domus;
arcana in imo regio secessu iacet, 650
alta uetustum ualle compescens nemus,
penetrabile regni, nulla qua laetos solet
praebere ramos arbor aut ferro coli,
sed taxus et cupressus et nigra ilice
obscura nutat silua, quam supra eminens
despectat alte quercus et uincit nemus.
hinc auspicari regna Tantalidae solent,
hinc petere lapsis rebus ac dubiis opem.
affixa inhaerent dona; uocales tubae
fractique currus, spolia Myrtoi maris, 660
uictaeque falsis axibus pendent rotae
et omne gentis facinus; hoc Phrygius loco
fixus tiaras Pelopis, hic praeda hostium
et de triumpho picta barbarico chlamys.
fons stat sub umbra tristis et nigra piger
haeret palude; talis est dirae Stygis
deformis unda quae facit caelo fidem.
hinc nocte caeca gemere feralis deos
fama est, catenis lucus excussis sonat
ululantque manes. Quidquid audire est metus 670
illic uidetur: errat antiquis uetus
emissa bustis turba et insultant loco
maiora notis monstra; quin tota solet

micare silua flamma, et excelsae trabes
ardent sine igne. Saepe latratu nemus
trino remugit, saepe simulacris domus
attonita magnis. Nec dies sedat metum;
nox propria luco est, et superstitio inferum
in luce media regnat. Hinc orantibus
responsa dantur certa, cum ingenti sono 680
laxantur adyto fata et immugit specus
uocem deo soluente. Quo postquam furens
intrauit Atreus liberos fratris trahens,
ornantur arae - quis queat digne eloqui?
post terga iuuenum nobiles reuocat manus
et maesta uitta capita purpurea ligat;
non tura desunt, non sacer Bacchi liquor
tangensque salsa uictimam culter mola.
seruatur omnis ordo, ne tantum nefas
non rite fiat. **CHORVS:** Quis manum ferro admouet? 690

NVNTIVS: Ipse est sacerdos, ipse funesta prece
letale carmen ore uiolento canit.
stat ipse ad aras, ipse deuotos neci
contrectat et componit et ferro admouet;
attendit ipse - nulla pars sacri perit.
lucus tremescit, tota succusso solo
nutauit aula, dubia quo pondus daret
ac fluctuanti similis; e laeuo aethere
atrum cucurrit limitem sidus trahens.
libata in ignes uina mutato fluunt 700
cruenta Baccho, regium capiti decus
bis terque lapsum est, fleuit in templis ebur.
Mouere cunctos monstra, sed solus sibi
immotus Atreus constat, atque ultro deos
terret minantes. Iamque dimissa mora
adsistit aris, toruum et obliquum intuens.
ieiuna siluis qualis in Gangeticis
inter iuuenos tigris errauit duos,
utriusque praedae cupida quo primum ferat

incerta morsus (flectit hoc rictus suos, 710
illo reflectit et famem dubiam tenet),
sic dirus Atreus capita deuota impiae
speculatur irae. Quem prius mactet sibi
dubitat, secunda deinde quem caede immolet.
nec interest, sed dubitat et saeuum scelus
iuuat ordinare. **CHORVS:** Quem tamen ferro occupat?

NVNTIVS: Primus locus (ne desse pietatem putes)
auo dicatur: Tantalus prima hostia est.

CHORVS: Quo iuuenis animo, quo tulit uultu necem?

NVNTIVS: Stetit sui securus et non est preces 720
perire frustra passus; ast illi ferus
in uulnere ensem abscondit et penitus premens
iugulo manum commisit: educto stetit
ferro cadauer, cumque dubitasset diu
hac parte an illa caderet, in patrum cadit.
tunc ille ad aras Plisthenem saeuus trahit
adicitque fratri; colla percussa amputat;
cervice caesa truncus in pronum ruit,
querulum cucurrit murmure incerto caput.

CHORVS: Quid deinde gemina caede perfunctus facit? 730
puerone parcit, an scelus sceleri ingerit?

NVNTIVS: Silua iubatus qualis Armenia leo
in caede multa uictor armento incubat
(cruore rictus madidus et pulsa fame
non ponit iras: hinc et hinc tauros premens
uitulis minatur dente iam lasso piger),
non aliter Atreus saeuuit atque ira tumet,
ferrumque gemina caede perfusum tenens,
oblitus in quem fureret, infesta manu
exegit ultra corpus, ac pueri statim 740
pectore receptus ensis in tergo exstitit;

cadit ille et aras sanguine extinguens suo
per utrumque uulnus moritur. **CHORVS:** O saeuum scelus!

NVNTIVS: Exhorruistis? hactenus si stat nefas,
pius est. **CHORVS:** An ultra maius aut atrocius
natura recipit? **NVNTIVS:** Sceleris hunc finem putas?
gradus est. **CHORVS:** Quid ultra potuit? Obiecit feris
lanianda fors corpora atque igne arcuit?

NVNTIVS: Vtinam arcuisset! ne tegat functos humus
nec soluat ignis! auibus epulandos licet 750
ferisque triste pabulum saeuis trahat -
uotum est sub hoc quod esse supplicium solet -
pater insepultos spectet! o nullo scelus
credibile in aeuo quodque posteritas neget:
erepta uiuis exta pectoribus tremunt
spirantque uenae corque adhuc pauidum salit.
at ille fibras tractat ac fata inspicit
et adhuc calentes uiscerum uenas notat.
postquam hostiae placuere, securus uacat
iam fratris epulis. Ipse diuisum secat 760
in membra corpus, amputat trunco tenus
umeros patentis et lacertorum moras,
denudat artus durus atque ossa amputat;
tantum ora seruat et datas fidei manus.
haec ueribus haerent uiscera et lentis data
stillant caminis, illa flammatus latex
candente aeno iactat. Impositas dapes
transiluit ignis inque trepidantes focos
bis ter regestus et pati iussus moram
inuitus ardet. Stridet in ueribus iecur; 770
nec facile dicas corpora an flammae magis
gemuere. Piceos ignis in fumos abit;
et ipse fumus, tristis ac nebula grauis,
non rectus exit, seque in excelsum leuat -
ipsos penates nube deformi obsidet.
O Phoebe patiens, fugeris retro licet

medioque raptum meriseris caelo diem,
sero occidisti. Lancinat natos pater
artusque mandit ore funesto suos;
nitet fluente madidus unguento comam 780
grauisque uino; saepe praeclusae cibum
tenuere fauces - in malis unum hoc tuis
bonum est, Thyesta, quod mala ignoras tua.
sed et hoc peribit. Verterit currus licet
sibi ipse Titan obuium ducens iter
tenebrisque facinus obruat taetrum nouis
nox missa ab ortu tempore alieno grauis,
tamen uidendum est. Tota patefient mala.

CHORVS: Quo terrarum superumque potens,
cuius ad ortus noctis opacae 790
decus omne fugit, quo uertis iter
medioque diem perdis Olympo?
cur, Phoebe, tuos rapis aspectus?
nondum serae nuntius horae
nocturna uocat lumina Vesper;
nondum Hesperiae flexura rotae
iubet emeritos soluere currus;
nondum in noctem uergente die
tertia misit bucina signum:
stupet ad subitae tempora cenae 800
nondum fessis bubus arator.
Quid te aetherio pepulit cursu?
quae causa tuos limite certo
deiecit equos? numquid aperto
carcere Ditis uicti temptant
bella Gigantes? numquid Tityos
pectore fesso renouat ueteres
saucius iras? num reiecto
latus explicuit monte Typhoeus?
numquid struitur uia Phlegraeos 810
alta per hostes et Thessalicum
Thressa premitur Pelion Ossa?

Solitae mundi periere uices?
nihil occasus, nihil ortus erit?
Stupet Eoos assueta deo
tradere frenos genetrix primae
roscida lucis peruersa sui
limina regni; nescit fessos
tinguere currus nec fumantes
sudore iubas mergere ponto. 820
ipse insueto nouus hospitio
Sol Auroram uidet occiduus
tenebrasque iubet surgere nondum
nocte parata: non succedunt
astra nec ullo micat igne polus,
non Luna graues digerit umbras.
Sed quidquid id est, utinam nox sit!
trepidant, trepidant pectora magno
percussa metu: ne fatali cuncta ruina 830
quassata labent iterumque deos
hominesque premat deforme chaos,
iterum terras et mare cingens
et uaga picti sidera mundi
natura tegat. Non aeternae
facis exortu dux astrorum
saecula ducens dabit aetatis
brumaeque notas, non Phoebeis
obuia flammis demet nocti
Luna timores uincetque sui 840
fratris habenas curuo breuius
limite currens. Ibit in unum
congesta sinum turba deorum.
hic qui sacris peruius astris
secat obliquo tramite zonas,
flectens longos signifer annos,
lapsa uidebit sidera labens;
hic qui nondum uere benigno
reddit Zephyro uela tepenti
Aries praeceps ibit in undas, 850

per quas pauidam uexerat Hellen;
hic qui nitido Taurus cornu
praefert Hyadas, secum Geminos
trahet et curui bracchia Cancri;
Leo flammiferis aestibus ardens
iterum e caelo cadet Hercules,
cadet in terras Virgo relictas
iustaeque cadent pondera Librae
secumque trahent Scorpion acrem.
et qui neruo tenet Haemonio ⁸⁶⁰
pinnata senex spicula Chiron,
rupto perdet spicula neruo;
pigram referens hiemem gelidus
cadet Aegoceros frangetque tuam,
quisquis es, urnam; tecum excedent
ultima caeli sidera Pisces,
monstraque numquam perfusa mari
merget condens omnia gurges;
et qui medias diuidit Vrsas,
fluminis instar lubricus Anguis ⁸⁷⁰
magnoque minor iuncta Draconi
frigida duro Cynosura gelu,
custosque sui tardus plaustri
iam non stabilis ruet Arctophylax.
Nos e tanto uisi populo
digni, premeret quos euerso
cardine mundus? in nos aetas ultima uenit?
o nos dura sorte creatos,
seu perdidimus solem miseri, ⁸⁸⁰
siue expulimus! abeant questus, discede timor!
uitae est audus quisquis non uult
mundo secum pereunte mori.

ATREVS: Aequalis astris gradior et cunctos super
altum superbo uertice attingens polum.
nunc decora regni teneo, nunc solium patris.
dimitto superos; summa uotorum attigi.

bene est, abunde est, iam sat est etiam mihi.
sed cur satis sit? pergam et impleto patre 890
funere suorum. Ne quid obstaret pudor,
dies recessit: perge dum caelum uacat.
utinam quidem tenere fugientes deos
possem, et coactos trahere, ut ultricem dapem
omnes uiderent! quod sat est, uideat pater.
etiam die nolente discutiam tibi
tenebras, miseriae sub quibus latitant tuae.
nimis diu conuiua securo iaces
hilarique uultu; iam satis mensis datum est
satisque Baccho; sobrio tanta ad mala 900
opus est Thyeste. Turba famularis, fores
templi relaxa, festa patefiat domus.
libet uidere, capita natorum intuens,
quos det colores, uerba quae primus dolor
effundat aut ut spiritu expulso stupens
corpus rigescat. Fructus hic operis mei est.
miserum uidere nolo, sed dum fit miser.
Aperta multa tecta conlucent face.
resupinus ipse purpurae atque auro incubat,
uino grauatum fulciens laeua caput. 910
eructat. O me caelitum excelsissimum,
regumque regem! uota transcendendi mea.
satur est; capaci ducit argento merum -
ne parce potu; restat etiam nunc cruor
tot hostiarum; ueteris hunc Bacchi color
abscondet. Hoc, hoc mensa cludatur scypho.
mixtum suorum sanguinem genitor bibat:
meum bibisset. Ecce, iam cantus ciet
festasque uoces, nec satis menti imperat.

THYESTES: Pectora longis hebetata malis, 920
iam sollicitas ponite curas.
fugiat maeror fugiatque pauor,
fugiat trepidi comes exilii
tristis egestas rebusque grauis

pudor afflictis; magis unde cadas
quam quo refert. Magnum, ex alto
culmine lapsum stabilem in plano
figere gressum; magnum, ingenti
strage malorum pressum fracti
pondera regni non inflexa 930
ceruice pati, nec degenerem
uictumque malis rectum impositas
ferre ruinas. Sed iam saeui
nubila fati pelle ac miseri
temporis omnes dimitte notas;
redeant uultus ad laeta boni,
ueterem ex animo mitte Thyesten.
Proprium hoc miseros sequitur uitium,
numquam rebus credere laetis:
redeat felix fortuna licet, 940
tamen afflictos gaudere piget.
quid me reuocas festumque uetas
celebrare diem, quid flere iubes,
nulla surgens dolor ex causa?
quis me prohibet flore decenti
uincire comam? prohibet, prohibet
uernae capiti fluxere rosae,
pingui madidus crinis amomo
inter subitos stetit horrores,
imber uultu nolente cadit, 950
uenit in medias uoces gemitus.
maeror lacrimas amat assuetas,
flendi miseris dira cupido est.
libet infaustos mittere questus,
libet et Tyrio saturas ostro
rumpere uestes, ululare libet.
Mittit luctus signa futuri
mens ante sui praesaga mali:
instat nautis fera tempestas,
cum sine uento tranquilla tument. 960
quos tibi luctus quosue tumultus

fingis, demens? credula praesta
pectora fratri. Iam, quidquid id est,
uel sine causa uel sero times.
nolo infelix, sed uagus intra
terror oberrat, subitos fundunt
oculi fletus, nec causa subest.
dolor an metus est? An habet lacrimas
magna uoluptas?

ATREVS: Festum diem, germane, consensu pari 970
celebremus; hic est, sceptrum qui firmet mea
solidamque pacis alliget certae fidem.

THYESTES: Satias dapibus me nec minus Bacchi tenet.
augere cumulus hic uoluptatem potest,
si cum meis gaudere felici datur.

ATREVS: Hic esse natos crede in amplexu patris;
hic sunt eruntque; nulla pars proles tuae
tibi subtrahetur. Ora quae exoptas dabo
totumque turba iam sua implebo patrem.
satiaberis, ne metue. Nunc mixti meis 980
iucunda mensae sacra iuuenilis colunt;
sed accientur. Poculum infuso cape
gentile Baccho. **THYESTES:** Capiam fraternae dapibus
donum. Paternis uina libentur deis,
tunc hauriantur. - sed quid hoc? nolunt manus
parere, crescit pondus et dextram grauatur;
admotus ipsis Bacchus a labris fugit
circaque rictus ore decepto fluit,
et ipsa trepido mensa subsiluit solo.
uix lucet ignis; ipse quin aether grauis 990
inter diem noctemque desertus stupet.
quid hoc? magis magisque concussi labant
conuexa caeli; spissior densis coit
caligo tenebris noxque se in noctem abdidit:
fugit omne sidus. Quidquid est, fratri precor

natisque parcat, omnis in uile hoc caput
abeat procella. Redde iam natos mihi!

ATREVS: Reddam, et tibi illos nullus eripiet dies.

THYESTES: Quis hic tumultus uiscera exagitat mea?
quid tremuit intus? sentio impatiens onus 1000
meumque gemitu non meo pectus gemit.
adeste, nati, genitor infelix uocat,
adeste. Visis fugiet hic uobis dolor -
unde obloquuntur? **ATREVS:** Expedi amplexus, pater;
uenere. - natos ecquid agnoscis tuos?

THYESTES: Agnosco fratrem. Sustines tantum nefas
gestare, Tellus? non ad infernam Styga
tenebrasque mergis rupta et ingenti uia
ad chaos inane regna cum rege abripis?
non tota ab imo tecta conuellens solo 1010
uertis Mycenae? stare circa Tantalum
uterque iam debuimus. Hinc compagibus
et hinc reuulsis, si quid infra Tartara est
auosque nostros, hoc tuam immani sinu
demitte uallem nosque defossos tege
Acheronte toto. Noxiae supra caput
animae uagentur nostrum et ardenti freto
Phlegethon harenas igneus totas agens
exilia supra nostra uiolentus fluat -
immota tellus pondus ignauum iacet, 1020
fugere superi. **ATREVS:** Iam accipe hos potius libens
diu expetitos: nulla per fratrem est mora;
fruere, osculare, diuide amplexus tribus.

THYESTES: Hoc foedus? haec est gratia, haec fratris fides?
sic odia ponis? non peto, incolumis pater
natos ut habeam; scelere quod saluo dari
odioque possit, frater hoc fratrem rogo:
sepelire liceat. Redde quod cernas statim

uri; nihil te genitor habiturus rogo,
sed perditurus. **ATREVS:** Quidquid e natis tuis 1030
superest habes, quodcumque non superest habes.

THYESTES: Vtrumne saeuis pabulum alitibus iacent,
an beluis seruantur, an pascunt feras?

ATREVS: Epulatus ipse es impia natos dape.

THYESTES: Hoc est deos quod puduit, hoc egit diem
auersum in ortus. Quas miser uoces dabo
questusque quos? quae uerba sufficient mihi?
abscisa cerno capita et auulsas manus
et rupta fractis cruribus uestigia -
hoc est quod audis capere non potuit pater. 1040
uoluuntur intus uiscera et clusum nefas
sine exitu luctatur et quaerit fugam.
da, frater, ensem (sanguinis multum mei
habet ille) ferro liberis detur uia.
negatur ensis? pectora inliso sonent
contusa planctu - sustine, infelix, manum,
parcamus umbris. Tale quis uidit nefas?
quis inhospitalis Caucasi rupem asperam
Heniochus habitans quisue Cecropiis metus
terris Procrustes? genitor en natos premo 1050
premorque natis - sceleris est aliquis modus?

ATREVS: Sceleri modus debetur ubi facias scelus,
non ubi reponas. Hoc quoque exiguum est mihi.
ex uulnere ipso sanguinem calidum in tua
defundere ora debui, ut uiuentium
biberes cruorem - uerba sunt irae data
dum propero. Ferro uulnera impresso dedi,
ceci ad aras, caede uotiuu focos
placui, et artus, corpora exanima amputans,
in parua carpsi frustra et haec feruentibus 1060
demersi aenis; illa lentis ignibus

stillare iussi. Membra neruosque abscidi
uiuentibus, gracilique traiectas ueru
mugire fibras uidi et aggressi manu
mea ipse flammas. Omnia haec melius pater
fecisse potuit, cecidit in cassum dolor:
scidit ore natos impio, sed nesciens,
sed nescientes. **THYESTES**: Clausa litoribus uagis
audite maria, uos quoque audite hoc scelus,
quocumque, di, fugistis; audite inferi, 1070
audite terrae, Noxque Tartarea grauis
et atra nube, uocibus nostris uaca
(tibi sum relictus, sola tu miserum uides,
tu quoque sine astris), uota non faciam improba.
pro me nihil precabor - et quid iam potest
pro me esse? Vobis uota prospicient mea.
tu, summe caeli rector, aetheriae potens
dominator aulae, nubibus totum horridis
conuolue mundum, bella uentorum undique
committe et omni parte uiolentum intona, 1080
manuque non qua tecta et immeritas domos
telo petis minore, sed qua montium
tergemina moles cecidit et qui montibus
stabant pares Gigantes, hac arma expedi
ignesque torque. Vindica amissum diem,
iaculare flammas, lumen ereptum polo
fulminibus exple. Causa, ne dubites diu,
utriusque mala sit; si minus, mala sit mea:
me pete, trisulco flammeam telo facem
per pectus hoc trans mitte. Si natos pater 1090
humare et igni tradere extremo uolo,
ego sum cremandus. Si nihil superos mouet
nullumque telis impios numen petit,
aeterna nox permaneat et tenebris tegat
immensa longis scelera. Nil, Titan, queror,
si perseueras. **ATREVS**: Nunc meas laudo manus,
nunc parta uera est palma. Perdideram scelus,
nisi sic doleres. Liberos nasci mihi

nunc credo, castis nunc fidem reddi toris.

THYESTES: Quid liberi meruere? **ATREVS:** Quod fuerant tui. 1100

THYESTES: Natos parenti - **ATREVS:** Fateor, et, quod me iuuat, certos. **THYESTES:** Piorum praesides testor deos.

ATREVS: Quin coniugales? **THYESTES:** Scelere quis pensat scelus?

ATREVS: Scio quid queraris: scelere praerepto doles,
nec quod nefandas hauseris angit dapes;
quod non pararis. Fuerat hic animus tibi
instruere similes inscio fratri cibos
et adiuuante liberos matre aggredi
similique leto sternere - hoc unum obstitit -
tuos putasti. **THYESTES:** Vindices aderunt dei; 1110
his puniendum uota te tradunt mea.

ATREVS: Te puniendum liberis trado tuis.

HERCULES ON OETA — Hercules Oetaeus

Hercvles Sator deorum, cuius excussum manu
utraeque Phoebi sentiunt fulmen domus,
secure regna: protuli pacem tibi,
quacumque Nereus porrigi terras uetat.
non est tonandum; perfidi reges iacent, 5
saeui tyranni. fregimus quidquid fuit
tibi fulminandum. sed mihi caelum, parens,
adhuc negatur? parui certe Ioue
ubique dignus teque testata est meum
patrem nouerca. quid tamen nectis moras? 10
numquid timemur? numquid impositum sibi
non poterit Atlas ferre cum caelo Herculem?
quid astra, genitor, quid negas? mors me tibi
certe remisit, omne concessit malum
quod terra genuit, pontus aer inferi: 15
nullus per urbes errat Argolicas leo,
Stymphalis icta est, Maenali nulla est fera;
sparsit peremptus aureum serpens nemus
et hydra uires posuit et notos Hebro
cruore pingues hospitum fregi greges 20
hostique traxi spolia Thermodontiae.
uici regentem fata nec tantum redi,
sed trepidus atrum Cerberum uidit dies
et ille solem. nullus Antaeus Libys
animam resumit, cecidit ante aras suas 25
Busiris, una Geryon sparsus manu
taurusque populis horridus centum pauor.
quodcumque tellus genuit infesta occidit
meaque fusum est dextera: iratis deis
non licuit esse. si negat mundus feras, 30
animum nouerca, redde nunc nato patrem
uel astra forti. nec peto ut monstres iter;
permitte tantum, genitor: inueniam uiam.
Vel si times ne terra concipiat feras,

properet malum quodcumque, dum terra Herculem 35
habet uidetque: nam quis inuadet mala
aut quis per urbes rursus Argolicas erit
Iunonis odio dignus? in tutum meas
laudes redegei, nulla me tellus silet:
me sensit ursae frigidum Scythicae genus 40
Indusque Phoebo subditus, cancro Libys;
te, clare Titan, testor: occurri tibi
quacumque fulges, nec meos lux prosequi
potuit triumphos, solis excessi uices
intraque nostras substitit metas dies. 45
natura cessit, terra defecit gradum:
lassata prior est. nox et extremum chaos
in me incucurrit: inde ad hunc orbem redi,
nemo unde retro est. tulimus Oceani minas,
nec ulla ualuit quaterne tempestas ratem 50
quacumque pressi — pars quota est Perseus mei?
Iam uacuum aether non potest odio tuae
sufficere nuptae quasque deuincam feras
tellus timet concipere nec monstra inuenit.
ferae negantur: Hercules monstri loco 55
iam coepit esse; quanta non fregi mala,
quot scelera nudus? quidquid immane obstitit,
solae manus strauere; nec iuuenis feras
timui nec infans. quidquid est iussum leue est,
nec ulla nobis segnis illuxit dies. 60
o quanta fudi monstra quae nullus mihi
rex imperauit! institit uirtus mihi
Iunone peior. Sed quid inpauidum genus
fecisse prodest? non habent pacem dei:
purgata tellus omnis in caelo uidet 65
quodcumque timuit: transtulit Iuno feras.
ambit peremptus cancer ardentem plagam
Libyaeque sidus fertur et messes alit;
annum fugacem tradit Astraeae leo,
at ille, iactans feruidam collo iubam, 70
austrum madentem siccatur et nimbos rapit.

inuasit omnis ecce iam caelum fera
meque antecessit: uictor e terris meos
specto labores, astra portentis prius
ferisque Iuno tribuit, ut caelum mihi 75
faceret timendum — sparserit mundum licet
caelumque terris peius ac peius Styge
irata faciat, dabitur Alcidae locus.
Si post feras, post bella, post Stygium canem
haudum astra merui, Siculus Hesperium latus 80
tangat Pelorus, una iam tellus erit:
illinc fugabo maria; si iungi iubes,
committat undas Isthmos, et iuncto salo
noua ferantur Atticae puppes uia.
mutetur orbis, uallibus currat nouis 85
Hister nouasque Tanais accipiat uias.
Da, da tuendos, Iuppiter, saltem deos:
illa licebit fulmen a parte auferas,
ego quam tuebor. siue glaciale polum,
seu me tueri feruidam partem iubes, 90
hac esse superos parte securos puta.
Cirrhæa Pæan templa et ætheriam domum
serpente caeso meruit — o quotiens iacet
Python in hydra! Bacchus et Perseus deis
iam se intulere — sed quota est mundi plaga 95
oriens subactus aut quota est Gorgon fera?
quis astra natus laudibus meruit suis
ex te et nouerca? quem tuli mundum peto.

Sed tu, comes laboris Herculei, Licha,
perfer triumphos, Euryti uictos lares 100
stratumque regnum. uos pecus rapite ocus
qua templa tollens ora Cenæi Iouis
aestu timendum spectat Euboicum mare.

Chorvs Par ille est superis cui pariter dies
et fortuna fuit; mortis habet uices 105
lente cum trahitur uita gementibus.
Quisquis sub pedibus fata rapacia

et puppem posuit fluminis ultimi,
non captiua dabit bracchia uinculis
nec pompae ueniet nobile ferculum: 110
numquam est ille miser cui facile est mori.
Illum si medio decipiat ratis
ponto, cum Borean expulit Africus
aut Euris Zephyrum, cum mare diuidunt,
non puppis lacerae fragmina conligit, 115
ut litus medio speret in aequore:
uitam qui poterit reddere protinus,
solus non poterit naufragium pati.

Nos turpis macies et lacrimae tenent
et crinis patrio puluere sordidus. 120
nos non flamma rapax, non fragor obruit:
felices sequeris, mors, miseros fugis.
Stamus, sed patriae messibus heu locus
et siluis dabitur, lapsaque sordidae
fient templa casae; iam gelidus Dolops 125
hac ducet pecudes qua tepet obrutus
stratae qui superest Oechaliae cinis.
illo Thessalicus pastor in oppido
indocta referens carmina fistula
cantu nostra canet tempora flebili; 130
et dum pauca deus saecula contrahet,
quaeretur patriae quis fuerit locus.
Felix incolui non steriles focos
nec ieiuna soli iugera Thessali:
ad Trachina uocor, saxa rigentia 135
et dumeta iugis horrida torridis,
uix gratum pecori montiuago nemus.
At si quas melior sors famulas uocat,
illas aut uolucer transferet Inachus
aut Dircaea colent moenia, qua fluit 140
Ismenos tenui flumine languidus —
hic mater tumidi nupserat Herculis?

Falsa est de geminis fabula noctibus, 147
aether cum tenuit sidera longius

commisitque uices Lucifer Hespero
et Solem uetuit Delia tardior: 150
quae cautes Scythiae, quis genuit lapis? 143
num Titana ferum te Rhodope tulit,
te praeptus Athos, te fera Caspia,
quae uirgata tibi praebuit ubera?
nullis uulneribus peruia membra sunt: 151
ferrum sentit hebes, lentior est chalybs;
in nudo gladius corpore frangitur
et saxum resilit, fataque neglegit
et mortem indomito pectore prouocat. 155
Non illum poterant figere cuspides,
non arcus Scythica tensus harundine,
non quae tela gerit Sarmata frigidus
aut qui soliferae suppositus plagae
uicino Nabatae uulnera derigit 160
Parthus Gnosiaceis certior ictibus.

Muros Oechaliae corpore propulit;
nil obstare ualet; uincere quod parat
iam uictum est — quota pars uulnere concidit?
pro fato potuit uultus iniquior 165
et uidisse sat est Herculeas minas.
quis uastus Briareus, quis tumidus Gyges,
supra Thessalicum cum stetit aggerem
caeloque insereret uipereas manus,
hoc uultu riguit? commoda cladibus 170
magnis magna patent, nil superest mali:
iratum miserae uidimus Herculem.

Iole At ego infelix non templa suis
conlapsa deis sparsosue focos,
natis mixtos arsisse patres 175
hominique deos, templa sepulcris:
nullum querimur commune malum.
alio nostras fortuna uocat
lacrimas, alias flere ruinas
mea fata iubent. 180

quae prima querar? quae summa gemam?
pariter cunctas deflere iuuat,
nec plura dedit pectora Tellus,
ut digna sonent uerbera fatis.

Me uel Sipylum flebile saxum 185
fingite, superi,
uel in Eridani ponite ripis,
ubi maesta sonat Phaethontiadum
silua sororum;

me uel Siculis addite saxis,
ubi fata gemam Thessala Siren, 190
uel in Edonas tollite siluas,
qualis natum Daulias ales
solet Ismaria flere sub umbra:
formam lacrimis aptate meis
resonetque malis aspera Trachin. 195

Cypria lacrimas Myrrha tuetur,
raptum coniunx Ceyca gemit,
sibi Tantalus est facta superstes;
fugit uultus Philomela suos
natumque sonat flebilis Atthis: 200
cur mea nondum capiunt uolucres
bracchia plumas?

felix, felix, cum silua domus
nostra feretur
patrioque sedens ales in agro
referam querulo murmure casus 205
uolucrumque Iolen fama loquetur.

Vidi, uidi miseranda mei
fata parentis,
cum letifero stipite pulsus
tota iacuit sparsus in aula:
pro, si tumulum fata dedissent, 210
quotiens, genitor, quaerendus eras!
potuine tuam spectare necem,
nondum teneras uestite genas
necdum forti sanguine, Toxeu?

Quid uestra queror fata, parentes, 215
quos in tutum mors aequa tulit?
mea me lacrimas fortuna rogat:
iam iam dominae captiua colus
 fususque legam.

Pro, saeue decor formaque mortem
 paritura mihi, 220

tibi cuncta domus concidit uni,
dum me genitor negat Alcidae
atque Herculeus socer esse timet.

Sed iam dominae tecta petantur.

Chorvs Quid regna tui clara parentis 225
proauosque tuos respicis amens?
fugiat uultus fortuna prior.
felix quisquis nouit famulum
 regemque pati

uultusque suos uariare potest. 230
rapuit uires pondusque mali
casus animo qui tulit aequo.

Nvtrix O quam cruentus feminas stimulat furor,
cum patuit una paelici et nuptae domus!
Scylla et Charybdis Siculo contorquens freta 235
minus est timenda, nulla non melior fera est.
Namque ut reluxit paelicis captae decus
et fulsit Iole qualis innubis dies
purisue clarum noctibus sidus micat,
stetit furenti similis ac toruum intuens 240
Herculea coniunx; feta ut Armenia iacens
sub rupe tigris hoste conspecto exilit
aut iussa thyrsum quatere conceptum ferens
Maenas Lyaeum dubia quo gressus agat
haesit parumper; tum per Herculeos lares 245
lymphata rapitur, tota uix satis est domus:
incurrit, errat, sistit, in uultus dolor
processit omnis, pectori paene intimo

nihil est relictum; fletus insequitur minas.
nec unus habitus durat aut uno furit 250
contenta uultu: nunc inardescunt genae,
pallor ruborem pellit et formas dolor
errat per omnes; queritur implorat gemit.

Sonuere postes ecce praecipiti gradu,
secreta mentis ore confuso exerit. 255

Deianira Quamcumque partem sedis aetheriae premis,
coniunx Tonantis, mitte in Alciden feram
quae mihi satis sit. si qua fecundum caput
palude tota uastior serpens mouet,
ignara uinci, si quid excessit feras 260
immane dirum horribile, quo uiso Hercules
auertat oculos, hoc specu immenso exeat.
Vel si ferae negantur, hanc animam, precor,
conuerte in aliquod — quodlibet possum malum
hac mente fieri. commoda effigiem mihi 265
parem dolori: non capit pectus minas.
quid excutis telluris extremae sinus
orbemque uersas? quid rogas Ditem mala?
omnes in isto pectore inuenies feras
quas timuit; odiis accipe hoc telum tuis: 270
ego sum, nouerca, perdere Alciden potens:
perfer manus quocumque; quid cessas, dea?
utere furente! quod iubes fieri nefas?
reperi, quid haeres? ipsa iam cesses licet,
haec ira satis est. **Nvt.** Pectoris sani parum, 275
alumna, questus comprime et flammas doma;
frena dolorem. coniugem ostende Herculis.

De. Iole meis captiua germanos dabit
natis Iouisque fiet ex famula nurus?
num flamma cursus pariter et torrens feret 280
et ursa pontum sicca caeruleum bibet?
non ibo inulta: gesseris caelum licet
totusque pacem debeat mundus tibi,

est aliquid hydra peius: iratae dolor
nuptae. quis ignis tantus in caelum furit 285
ardentis Aetnae? quidquid est uictum tibi
hic uincet animus — capta praeripiet toros?
adhuc timebam monstra, iam nullum est malum:
cessere pestes, in locum uenit ferae
inuisa paelex. summe pro rector deum 290
et clare Titan, Herculis tantum fui
coniunx timentis; uota quae superis tuli
cessere captae, paelici felix fui,
illi meas audistis, o superi, preces,
incolumis illi remeat — o nulla dolor 295
contente poena, quaere supplicia horrida,
incogitata, infanda, Iunonem doce
quid odia ualeant: nescit irasci satis.

Pro me gerebas bella, propter me uagas
Achelous undas sanguine infecit suo, 300
cum lenta serpens fieret, in taurum trucem
nunc flecteret serpente deposita minas,
et mille in hoste uinceres uno feras.
iam displicemus, capta praelata est mihi —
non praeferetur: qui dies thalami ultimus 305
nostri est futurus, hic erit uitae tuae.
Quid hoc? recedit animus et ponit minas;
iam cessat ira — quid miser langues dolor?
perdis furorem, coniugis sanctae fidem
mihi reddis iterum. quid uetas flammās ali? 310
quid frangis ignes? hunc mihi serua impetum,
pares eamus — non erit uotis opus:
aderit nouerca quae manus nostras regat
nec inuocata. **Nvt.** Quod paras demens scelus?
perimes maritum, cuius extremus dies 315
primusque laudes nouit et caelo tenus
erecta terras fama suppositas habet?
iam tota in istos terra consurget lares
domusque soceri prima et Aetolum genus
sternetur omne, saxa iam dudum ac faces 320

in te ferentur, uindicem tellus suum
defendet omnis: una quot poenas dabis!
Effugere terras crede et humanum genus
te posse — fulmen genitor Alcidae gerit:
iam iam minaces ire per caelum faces 325
specta et tonantem fulmine excusso diem.
mortem quoque ipsam, quam putes tutam, time:
dominatur illic patruus Alcidae tui.
quocumque perges, misera, cognatos deos
illi uidebis. **De.** Maximum fieri scelus 330
et ipsa fateor, sed dolor fieri iubet.

Nvt. Moriere. **De.** Moriar Herculis nempe incluti
coniunx nec ullus nocte discussa dies
uiduam notabit nec meos paelex toros
captiua capiet. ante ab occasu dies 335
nascetur, Indos ante glacialis polus
Scythasue tepida Phoebus inficiet rota,
quam me relictam Thessalae inspiciant nurus.
meo iugales sanguine extinguiam faces.
aut pereat aut me perimat; elisis feris 340
et coniugem addat, inter Herculeos licet
me quoque labores numeret: Alcidae toros
moritura certe corpore amplectar meo.
Ire, ire ad umbras Herculis nuptam libet,
sed non inultam: si quid ex nostro Hercule 345
concepit Iole, manibus euellam meis
ante et per ipsas paelicem inuadam faces.
me nuptiali uictimam feriat die
infestus, Iolen dum supra exanimem ruam:
felix iacet quicumque quos odit premit. 350

Nvt. Quid ipsa flammis pascis et uastum foues
ultro dolorem? misera, quid cassum times?
dilexit Iolen: nempe cum staret parens
regisque natam peteret — in famulae locum
regina cecidit: perdidit uires amor 355

multumque ab illa traxit infelix status.
illicita amantur, excidit quidquid licet.

De. Fortuna amorem peior inflamat magis:
amat uel ipsum quod caret patrio lare,
quod nudus auro crinis et gemma iacet, 360
ipsas misericors forsan aerumnas amat;
hoc usitatum est Herculi: captas amat.

Nvt. Dilecta Priami nempe Dardanii soror
concessa famula est; adice quot nuptas prius,
quot uirgines dilexit: errauit uagus. 365
Arcadia nempe uirgo, Palladios choros
dum nectit, Auge, uim stupri passa excidit,
nullamque amoris Hercules retinet notam.
referam quid alias? nempe Thespiades uacant
breuique in illis arsit Alcides face. 370
hospes Timoli Lydiam fouit nurum
et amore captus ad leues sedit colos,
tenerum feroci stamen intorquens manu.
nempe illa ceruix spolia deposuit ferae
crinemque mitra pressit et famulus stetit, 375
hirtam Sabaea marcidus myrrha comam:
ubique caluit, sed leui caluit face.

De. Haerere amantes post uagos ignes solent.

Nvt. Famulamne et hostis praeferet gnatam tibi?

De. Vt laeta siluas forma uernantes habet, 380
quas nemore nudo primus inuestit tepor,
at cum solutos expulit Boreas Notos
et saeua totas bruma decussit comas,
deforme solis aspicias truncis nemus:
sic nostra longum forma percurrens iter 385
deperdit aliquid semper et fulget minus,
nec illa uenus est: quidquid in nobis fuit

olim petitem cecidit et periit labans,
aetas citato senior eripuit gradu 390
materque multum rapuit ex illo mihi. 389
Vides ut altum famula non perdat decus? 391
cessere cultus penitus et paedor sedet;
tamen per ipsas fulget aerumnas decor
nihilque ab illa casus et fatum graue
nisi regna traxit. hic meum pectus timor, 395
altrix, lacescit, hic rapit somnos pauor.
Praeclara totis gentibus coniunx eram
thalamosque nostros inuido uoto nurus
optabat omnis, quae nimis quicquam deos
orabat ullos: nuribus Argolicis fui 400
mensura uoti. quem Ioui socerum parem,
altrix, habebo? quis sub hoc mundo mihi
dabitur maritus? ipse qui Alcidae imperat,
facibus suis me iungat Eurystheus licet,
minus est. toris caruisse regnantis leue est: 405
alte illa cecidit quae uiro caret Hercule.

Nvt. Conciliat animos coniugum partus fere.

De. Hic ipse forsā diuidet partus toros.

Nvt. Famula illa trahitur interim donum tibi.

De. Hic quem per urbes ire praeclarum uides 410
et uiua tergo spolia gestantem ferae,
qui regna miseris donat et celsis rapit
uasta grauatus horridam claua manum,
cuius triumphos ultimi Seres canunt
et quisquis alius orbe consaepto iacet, 415
leuis est nec illum gloriae stimulat decor.
errat per orbem, non ut aequetur Ioui
nec ut per urbes magnus Argolicas eat:
quod amet requirit, uirginum thalamos petit.
si qua est negata, rapitur; in populos furit, 420

nuptas ruinis quaerit et uitium impotens
uirtus uocatur. cecidit Oechalia inclita
unusque Titan uidit atque unus dies
stantem et cadentem; causa bellandi est amor.
totiens timebit Herculi natam parens 425
quotiens negabit, hostis est quotiens socer
fieri recusat: si gener non est, ferit.

Post haec quid istas innocens seruo manus,
donec furem simulet ac saeua manu
intendat arcus meque natumque opprimat? 430
sic coniuges expellit Alcides suas,
haec sunt repudia; nec potest fieri nocens:
terris uideri sceleribus causam suis
fecit nouercam. quid stupes segnis, furor?
scelus occupandum est: perage, dum feruet manus. 435

Nvt. Perimes maritum? **De.** Paelicis certe meae.

Nvt. At Ioue creatum. **De.** Nempe et Alcmena satum.

Nvt. Ferrone? **De.** Ferro. **Nvt.** Si nequis? **De.** Perimam dolo.

Nvt. Quis iste furor est? **De.** Quem meus coniunx docet.

Nvt. Quem nec nouerca potuit, hunc perimes uirum? 440

De. Caelestis ira quos premit, miseros facit:
humana nullos. **Nvt.** Parce, miseranda, et time.

De. Contempsit omnes ille qui mortem prius;
libet ire in enses. **Nvt.** Maior admisso tuus,
alumna, dolor est; culpa par odium exigit. 445
cur saeua modicis statuis? ut laesa es, dole.

De. Leue esse credis paelicem nuptae malum?
quidquid dolorem pascit, hoc nimium puta.

Nvt. Amorne clari fugit Alcidae tibi?

De. Non fugit, altrix, remanet et penitus sedet 450
fixus medullis, crede; sed magnus dolor
iratus amor est. **Nvt.** Artibus magicis fere
coniugia nuptae precibus admixtis ligant.
uernare iussi frigore in medio nemos
missumque fulmen stare; concussi fretum 455
cessante uento, turbidum explicui mare
et sicca tellus fontibus patuit nouis.
habuere motum saxa, discussi fores
umbrasque Ditis, et mea iussi prece
manes locuntur, siluit infernus canis; 460
nox media solem uidit et noctem dies: 462
mare terra caelum et Tartarus seruit mihi 461
nihilque leges ad meos cantus tenet: 463
flectemus illum, carmina inuenient iter.

De. Quas Pontus herbas generat aut quas Thessala
sub rupe Pindus aluit inueniam malum
cui cedat ille? carmine in terras mago
descendat astris Luna desertis licet
et bruma messes uideat et cantu fugax
stet deprehensum fulmen et uersa uice 470
medius coactis ferueat stellis dies:
non flectet illum. **Nvt.** Vicit et superos Amor.

De. Vincetur uni forsitan et spoliū dabit
Amorque summus fiet Alcidae labor.

Sed te per omne caelitum numen precor, 475
per hunc timorem: quidquid arcani apparo
penitus recondas et fide tacita premas.

Nvt. Quid istud est quod esse secretum petis?

De. Non tela sunt, non arma, non ignis minax.

Nvt. Praestare fateor posse me tacitam fidem, 480
si scelere careat: interim scelus est fides.

De. Circumspice agendum, ne quis arcana occupet,
partemque in omnem uultus inquirens eat.

Nvt. En locus ab omni tutus arbitrio uacat.

De. Est in remoto regiae sedis loco 485
arcana tacitus nostra defendens specus.
non ille primos accipit soles locus,
non ille seros, cum ferens Titan diem
lassam rubenti mergit Oceano rotam.
illic amoris pignus Herculei latet. 490
altrix, fatebor: auctor est Nessus mali
quem grauida Nephele Thessalo genuit duci,
qua gelidus astris inserit Pindus caput
ultraque nubes Othrys eductus riget.
Namque ut subactus Herculis claua horridi 495
Achelous omnis facilis in species dari
tandem peractis omnibus patuit feris
unoque turpe subdidit cornu caput,
me coniugem dum uictor Alcides habet,
repetebat Argos. forte per campos uagus 500
Euenos altum gurgitem in pontum ferens
iam paene summis turbidus ripis erat.
transire Nessus uerticem solitus uadis
pretium poposcit; meque iam dorso ferens
qua iungit hominem spina deficiens equo, 505
frangebat ipsas fluminis tumidi minas.
Iam totus undis Nessus exierat ferox
medioque adhuc errabat Alcides uado,
uasto rapacem uerticem scindens gradu;
at ille, ut esse uidit Alciden procul: 510
'tu praeda nobis' inquit 'et coniunx eris;
prohibetur undis', meque complexu ferens
gressum citabat. non tenent undae Herculem:
'infide uector' inquit, 'immixti licet
Ganges et Hister uallibus iunctis eant, 515
uincemus ambos, consequar telo fugam.'

praecessit arcus uerba; tum longum ferens
harundo uulnus tenuit haerentem fugam
mortemque fixit. ille, iam quaerens diem,
tabem fluentis uulneris dextra excipit 520
traditque nobis ungulae insertam suae,
quam forte saeua sciderat auolsam manu.
tunc uerba moriens addit: 'hoc' inquit 'magae
dixere amorem posse defigi malo;
hoc docta Mycale Thessalas docuit nurus, 525
unam inter omnis Luna quam sequitur magas
astris relictis. inlitas uestes dabis
hac' inquit 'ipsa tabe, si paelex tuos
inuia thalamos tulerit et coniunx leuis
aliam parenti dederit altisono nurum. 530
hoc nulla lux conspiciat, hoc tenebrae tegant
tantum remotae: sic potens uires suas
sanguis tenebit.' uerba deprendit quies
mortemque lassis intulit membris sopor.

Tu, quam meis admittit arcanis fides, 535
perge ut nitentem uirus in uestem datum
mentem per artus adeat et tacitum intumas
intret medullas. **Nvt.** Ocius iussa exsequar,
alumna, precibus tu deum inuictum aduoca,
qui certa tenera tela dimittit manu. 540

De. Te te precor, quem mundus et superi timent
et aequor et qui fulmen Aetnaeum quatit,
timende matri teliger saeuae puer:
intende certa spiculum uelox manu,
non ex sagittis leuibus: e numero, precor, 545
grauiore prome quod tuae nondum manus
misere in aliquem; non leui telo est opus,
ut amare possit Hercules. rigidas manus
intende et arcum cornibus iunctis para.
nunc, nunc sagittam prome qua quondam horridus 550
Iouem petisti, fulmine abiecto deus
cum fronte subita tumuit et rabidum mare

taurus puellae uector Assyriae scidit;
immitte amorem, uincat exempla omnia:
amare discat coniuges. si quas decor 555
Ioles inussit pectori Herculeo faces,
extingue totas, perbibat formam mei.
tu fulminantem saepe domuisti Iouem,
tu furua nigri sceptrum gestantem poli,
turbam ducem maioris et dominum Stygis, 560
tuque, o nouerca grauior irata deus,
cape hunc triumphum: solus euince Herculem.

Nvt. Prolata uis est quaeque Palladia colu
lassauit omnem texta famularem manum.
nunc ingeratur uirus et uestis bibat 565
Herculeam pestem; precibus augebo malum.

In tempore ipso nauus occurrit Lichas:
celanda uis est dira, ne pateant doli.

De. O quod superbae non habent umquam domus,
fidele semper regibus nomen Licha, 570
cape hos amictus, nostra quos neuit manus,
dum uagus in orbe fertur et uictus mero
tenet feroci Lydiam gremio nurum,
dum poscit Iolen. sed iecur fors horridum
flectam merendo: merita uicerunt malos. 575
non ante coniunx induat uestes iube
quam ture flammam pascat et placet deos,
cana rigentem populo cinctus comam.
ipsa ad penates regios gressus feram
precibusque Amoris horridi matrem colam. 580

Vos, quas paternis extuli comites focis,
Calydoniae, lugete deflendam uicem.

Chorvs Flemus casus, Oenei, tuos
comitum primos turba per annos,
flemus dubios, miseranda, toros. 585
nos Acheloi tecum solitae

pulsare uadum, cum iam tumidas
uere peracto poneret undas
gracilisque gradu serperet aequo
nec praecipitem uolueret amnem 590
flauus rupto fonte Lycormas;
nos Palladias ire per aras
et uirgineos celebrare choros,
nos Cadmeis orgia ferre
tecum solitae condita cistis, 595
cum iam pulso sidere brumae
tertia soles euocat aestas
et spiciferae concessa deae
Attica mystas cludit Eleusin.
nunc quoque casum quemcumque times, 600
fidas comites accipe fati:
nam rara fides ubi iam melior
fortuna ruit.

Tu quicumque es qui sceptras tenes,
licet omne tua uulgu in aula 605
centum pariter limina pulset:
cum tot populis stipatus eas,
in tot populis uix una fides.
tenet auratum limen Erinys,
et quom magnae patuere fores, 610
intrans fraudes cautique doli
ferrumque latens; cumque in populos
prodire paras, comes inuidia est:
noctem quotiens summuet Eos,
regem totiens credite nasci. 615
Pauci reges, non regna colunt:
plures fulgor concitat aulae.
Cupit hic regi proximus ipsi
clarus totas ire per urbes
(urit miserum gloria pectus), 620
cupit hic gazis implere famem,
nec tamen omnis plaga gemmiferi
sufficit Histri

nec tota sitim Lydia uincit
nec quae Zephyro subdita tellus 625
stupet aurato flumine clarum
 radiare Tagum,
nec si totus seruiat Hebrus
ruraque diues iungat Hydaspes
intraque suos currere fines
spectet toto flumine Gangen: 630
audis, audis natura parum est.
Colit hic reges regumque lares,
non ut presso uomere semper
numquam cesset curuus arator
uel mille secent arua coloni: 635
solas optat quas ponat opes.
colit hic reges, calcet ut omnes
perdatque aliquos nullumque leuet:
tantum ut noceat cupit esse potens.

 Quota pars moritur tempore fati! 640
rarum est felix idemque senex: 643
quos felices Cynthia uidit, 641
uidit miseros enata dies,
nec sibi felix pauper habetur, 673
nisi felices cecidisse uidet.
O si pateant pectora ditum! 648
quantos intus sublimis agit
 fortuna metus!

Bruttia Coro pulsante fretum
 lenior unda est.
pectora pauper secunda gerit:
carpit faciles uilesque cibos, 655
sed non strictos respicit enses;
tenet e patula pocula fago, 653
sed non trepida tenet illa manu:
aurea miscet pocula sanguis. 657
caespes Tyrio mollior ostro 644
solet inpauidos ducere somnos;
aurea rumpunt texta quietem

uigilesque trahit purpura noctes.
Coniunx modico nupta marito 658
non disposito clara monili
gestat pelagi dona rubentis,
nec gemmiferas detrahit aures
lapis Eoa lectus in unda,
nec Sidonio mollis aeno
repetita bibit lana rubores,
nec Maeonia distinguit acu 665
quae Phoebeis subditus euris
legit Eois Ser arboribus:
quaelibet herbae tinxere colus
quas indoctae neuere manus,
sed non dubios fouet illa toros. 670
sequitur dira lampade Erinys
quarum populi coluere diem.

Quisquis medium defugit iter 675
stabili numquam tramite curret:
dum petit unum praebere diem
patrioque puer constitit axe
nec per solitum decurrit iter,
sed Phoebeis ignota petens 680
sidera flammis errante rota,
secum pariter perdidit orbem.
medium caeli dum sulcat iter,
tenuit placidas Daedalus oras
nullique dedit nomina ponto; 685
sed dum uolucres uincere ueras

Icarus audet
patriasque puer despicit alas
Phoeboque uolat proxumus ipsi,
dedit ignoto nomina ponto: 690
male pensantur magna ruinis.
Felix alius magnusque sonet,
me nulla uocet turba potentem.
stringat tenuis litora puppis
nec magna meas aura phaselos 695

iubeat medium scindere pontum:
transit tutos Fortuna sinus
medioque rates quaerit in alto,
quarum feriunt sipara nubes.

Sed quid pauido territa uultu, 700
qualis Baccho saucia Thyias,
fertur rapido regina gradu?
quae te rursus fortuna rotat,
miseranda, refer:
licet ipsa neges, uultus loquitur 705
quodcumque tegis.

Deianira Vagus per artus errat excussos tremor,
erectus horret crinis, impulsis adhuc
stat terror animis et cor attonitum salit
pavidumque trepidis palpitat uenis iecur.
ut fractus austro pontus etiamnum tumet, 710
quamuis quiescat languidis uentis dies,
ita mens adhuc uexatur excusso metu.
semel profecto premere felices deus
cum coepit, urget. hos habent magna exitus.

Chorvs Quis tam impotens, miseranda, te casus rotat? 715

De. Vt missa palla est tabe Nesea inlita
thalamisque maerens intuli gressum meis,
nescioquid animus timuit * * *
* * * * et fraudem struit.
libet experiri. solibus uirus ferum
flamisque Nessus sanguinem ostendi arcuit: 720
hic ipse fraudes esse praemonuit dolus.
et forte, nulla nube respersus iubar,
laxabat ardens feruidum Titan diem
(uix ora solui patitur etiamnunc timor):
medios in ignes solis et claram facem, 725
quo tincta fuerat palla uestisque inlita,
abiectus horret uillus et Phoebi coma

tepefactus arsit (uix queo monstrum eloqui).
niues ut Eurus soluit aut tepidus Notus,
quas uere primo lucidus perdit Mimas, 730
utque euolutos frangit Ionio salo
opposita fluctus Leucas et lassus tumor
in litore ipso spumat, aut caelestibus
aspersa tepidis tura laxantur focis,
sic languet omne uellus et perdit comas. 735
dumque ista miror, causa mirandi perit;
quin ipsa tellus spumeos motus agit
et quidquid illa tabe contactum est labat
tumensque tacita * * * *
* * * * quassat caput
natum pauentem cerno et ardenti pede 740
gressus ferentem. prome quid portes noui.

Hyllvs I, profuge, quaere si quid ulterius patet
terris freto sideribus Oceano inferis:
ultra labores, mater, Alcidae fuge.

De. Nescioquod animus grande praesagit malum. 745

Hy. Plenae triumphi templa Iunonis pete:
haec tibi patent, delubra praeclusa omnia.

De. Effare quis me casus insontem premat.

Hy. Decus illud orbis atque praesidium unicum,
quem fata terris in locum dederant Iouis, 750
o mater, abiit: membra et Herculeos toros
urit lues nescioqua; qui domuit feras,
ille ille uictor uincitur maeret dolet.
quid quaeris ultra? **De.** Miserias properant suas
audire miseri; fare, quo posita in statu 755
iam nostra domus est? o lares, miseri lares!
nunc uidua, nunc expulsa, nunc ferar obruta.

Hy. Non sola maeres Herculem: toto iacet

mundo gemendus; fata nec, mater, tua
priuata credas: iam genus totum obstrepit. 760
hunc ecce luctum quem gemis cuncti gemunt;
commune terris omnibus pateris malum.
luctum occupasti: prima, non sola Herculem,
miseranda, maeres. **De.** Quam prope a leto tamen
ede, ede quaeso iaceat Alcides meus. 765

Hy. Mors refugit illum uicta quae in regno suo
semel est nec audent fata tam uastum nefas
admittere. ipsa forsitan trepida colus
Clotho manu proiecit et fata Herculis
timet peragere. pro diem, infandum diem! 770
hocne ille summo magnus Alcides erit?

De. Ad fata et umbras atque peiorem polum
praecedere illum dicis? an possum prior
mortem occupare? fare, si nondum occidit.

Hy. Euboica tellus uertice immenso tumens 775
pulsatur omni latere: Phrixium mare
scindit Caphereus, seruit hoc Austro latus;
at qua niuosi patitur Aquilonis minas,
Euripus undas flectit instabilis uagas
septemque cursus uoluit et totidem refert, 780
dum lassa Titan mergit Oceano iuga.
hic rupe celsa, nulla quam nubes ferit,
annosa fulgent templa Cenaei Iouis.
Vt stetit ad aras omne uotium pecus
totumque tauris gemuit auratis nemus, 785
spolium leonis sordidum tabo exuit
posuitque clauae pondus et pharetra grauis
laxauit umeros. ueste tunc fulgens tua,
cana reuinctus populo horrentem comam,
succendit aras: 'accipe has' inquit 'focis 790
non false messis genitor et largo sacer
splendescat ignis ture, quod Phoebum colens

diues Sabaeis colligit truncis Arabs.
pacata tellus' inquit 'et caelum et freta,
feris subactis omnibus uictor redi: 795
depone fulmen' — gemitus in medias preces
stupente et ipso cecidit; hinc caelum horrido
clamore complet: qualis impressa fugax
taurus bipenni uolnus et telum ferens
delubra uasto trepida mugitu replet, 800
aut quale mundo fulmen emissum tonat,
sic ille gemitu sidera et pontum ferit,
et uasta Chalcis sonuit et uoces Cyclas
excepit omnis; hinc petrae Capherides,
hinc omne uoces reddit Herculeas nemus. 805
flentem uidemus. uulgus antiquam putat
rabiem redisse; tunc fugam famuli petunt.

At ille uoltus ignea torquens face
unum inter omnes sequitur et quaerit Lichan.
complexus aras ille tremibunda manu 810
mortem metu consumpsit et paruum sui
poenae reliquit. dumque tremibundum manu
tenuit cadauer: 'hac manu, hac' inquit 'ferar,
o fata, uictus? Herculem uicit Lichas?
ecce alia clades: Hercules perimit Lichan. 815
facta inquinentur: fiat hic summus labor.'
in astra missus fertur et nubes uago
spargit cruore; talis in caelum exilit
harundo Getica iussa dimitti manu
aut quam Cydon excussit: inferius tamen 820
et tela fugient. truncus in pontum cadit,
in saxa ceruix: unus ambobus iacet.

'Resistite' inquit, 'non furor mentem abstulit,
furore grauius istud atque ira malum est:
in me iuuat saeuire.' uix pestem indicat 825
et saeuit: artus ipse dilacerat suos
et membra uasta carpit auellens manu.
exuere amictus quaerit: hoc solum Herculem
non posse uidi; trahere conatus tamen

et membra traxit: corporis palla horridi 830
pars est et ipsa — uestis immiscet cutem.
nec causa dirae cladis in medio patet,
sed causa tamen est; uixque sufficiens malo
nunc ore terram languidus prono premit,
nunc poscit undas — unda non uincit malum; 835
fluctisona quaerit litora et pontum occupat:
famularis illum retinet errantem manus —
o sortem acerbam! fuimus Alcidae pares.

Nunc puppis illum litore Euboico refert
Austerque lenis pondus Herculeum rapit; 840
destituit animus membra, nox oculos premit.

De. Quid, anime, cessas? quid stupes? factum est scelus:
natum repossit Iuppiter, Iuno aemulum;

* 843a

reddendus orbi est — quod potest reddi, exhibe:
eat per artus ensis exactus meos.
sic, sic agendum est — tam leuis poenas manus
tantas repossit? perde fulminibus, socer,
norum scelestam. nec leui telo manus
armetur: illud fulmen exiliat polo,
quo, nisi fuisset genitus Alcides tibi, 850
hydram cremasses: pestem ut insolitam feri
et ut nouerca peius irata malum.
emitte telum quale in errantem prius
Phaethonta missum est: perdidi in solo Hercule
et ipsa populos. — quid rogas telum deos? 855
iam parce socero: coniugem Alcidae necem
optare pudeat: haec erit uoto manus,
a me petatur; occupa ferrum ocius —
cur deinde ferrum? quidquid ad mortem trahit
telum est abunde: rupe ab aetheria ferar. 860
haec, haec renatum prima quae noscit diem
Oeta eligatur; corpus hinc mitti placet. —
leuis una mors est — leuis, at extendi potest: 865
abrupta cautes scindat et partem mei 863

ferat omne saxum, pendeant lacerae manus
totumque rubeat asperi montis latus. —
eligere nescis, anime, cui telo incubes! 867
utinam esset, utinam fixus in thalamis meis
Herculeus ensis: huic decet ferro inmorti. —
una perire dextera nobis sat est? 870
coite, gentes, saxa et immensas faces
iaculetur orbis, nulla nunc cesset manus,
corripite tela, uindicem uestrum abstuli:
impune saeui sceptrum iam reges gerent,
impune iam nascetur indomitum malum; 875
reddentur arae cernere assuetae hostiam
similem colenti: sceleribus feci uiam;
ego uos tyrannis regibus monstris feris
saeuisque raptu uindice opposui deis. —
cessas, Tonantis socia? non spargis facem 880
imitata fratrem et mittis ereptam Ioui
meque ipsa perdis? laus tibi erepta incluta est,
ingens triumphus: aemuli, Iuno, tui
mortem occupauit. **Nvtrix** Quid domum impulsam trahis?
erroris istic omne quodcumque est nefas. 885
haut est nocens quicumque non sponte est nocens.

De. Quicumque fato ignoscit et parcat sibi,
errare meruit: morte damnari placet.

Nvt. Nocens uideri, qui mori quaerit, cupit.

De. Mors innocentes sola deceptos facit. 890

Nvt. Titana fugies? **De.** Ipse me Titan fugit.

Nvt. Vitam relinques? **De.** Miseram, ut Alciden sequar.

Nvt. Superest et auras ille caelestes trahit.

De. Vinci Hercules cum potuit, hinc coepit mori.

Nvt. Natum relinques fataque abrumpes tua? 895

De. Quamcumque natus sepelit haec uixit diu.

Nvt. Virum sequeris. **De.** Praegredi castae solent.

Nvt. Si te ipsa damnas, scelere te misera arguis.

De. Nemo nocens sibi ipse poenas inrogat.

Nvt. Multis remissa est uita quorum error nocens, 900
non dextra fuerat. fata quis damnat sua?

De. Quicumque fata iniqua sortitus fuit.

Nvt. Hic ipse Megaram nempe confixam suis
strauit sagittis atque natorum indolem
Lernaea figens tela furibunda manu; 905
ter parricida factus ignouit tamen
sibi, nam furoris fonte Cinyphio scelus
sub axe Libyco tersit et dextram abluit.
quo, misera, pergis? cur tuas damnas manus?

De. Damnata meas deuictus Alcides manus: 910
placet scelus punire. **Nvt.** Si noui Herculem,
aderit cruenti forsitan uictor mali
dolorque fractus cedit Alcidae tuo.

De. Exedit artus uirus, ut fama est, hydrae;
immensa pestis coniugis membra abstulit. 915

Nvt. Serpentis illi uirus enectae autumas
haut posse uinci, qui malum uiuum tulit?
elisit hydram, dente cum fixo stetit
media palude uictor effuso obrutus
artus ueneno. sanguis hunc Nessi opprimet, 920
qui uicit ipsas horridi Nessi manus?

De. Frustra tenetur ille qui statuit mori:
proinde lucem fugere decretum est mihi.
uixit satis quicumque cum Alcide occidit.

Nvt. Per has aniles ecce te supplex comas 925
atque ubera ista paene materna obsecro:
depone tumidas pectoris laesi minas
mortisque dirae expelle decretum horridum.

De. Quicumque misero forte dissuadet mori,
crudelis ille est: interim poena est mori, 930
sed saepe donum; pluribus uenia obfuit.

Nvt. Defende saltem dexteram, infelix, tuam
fraudisque facinus esse, non nuptae, sciat.

De. Defendar illic: inferi absoluent ream,
a me ipsa damnor; purget has Pluton manus. 935
stabo ante ripas, immemor Lethe, tuas
et umbra tristis coniugem excipiam meum.

Sed tu, nigrantis regna qui torques poli,
para laborem (scelera quae quisque ausus est,
hic uincit error: Iuno non ausa Herculem est 940
eripere terris), horridam poenam para.

Sisyphia ceruix cesset et nostros lapis
impellat umeros; me uagus fugiat latex
meamque fallax unda deludat sitim;
merui manus praebere turbinibus tuis, 945
quaecumque regem Thessalum torques rota;
effodiat audus hinc et hinc uultur fibras;
uacat una Danaïs: has ego explebo uices.

Laxate, manes; recipe me comitem tibi,
Phasiaca coniunx: peior haec, peior tuo 950
utroque dextra est scelere, seu mater nocens
seu dira soror es; adde me comitem tuis,
Threicia coniunx, sceleribus; natam tuam,
Althaea mater, recipe, nunc ueram tui

agnosce prolem — quid tamen tantum manus 955
uestrae abstulerunt? claudite Elysium mihi,
quaecumque fidae coniuges nemoris sacri
lucos tenetis; si qua respersit manus
uiri cruore nec memor castae facis
stricto cruenta Belias ferro stetit, 960
in me suas agnoscat et laudet manus:
in hanc abire coniugum turbam libet —
sed et illa fugiet turba tam diras manus.

Inuicte coniunx, innocens animus mihi,
scelestas manus est. pro nimis mens credula, 965
pro Nesse fallax atque semiferi doli!
auferre cupiens paelici eripui mihi.
recede, Titan, tuque quae blanda tenes
in luce miseros uita: cariturae Hercule
lux uilis ista est. exigat poenas sibi 970
reddamque uitam — fata an extendo mea
mortemque, coniunx, ad tuas seruo manus?
uirtusne superest aliqua et armatae manus
intendere arcum tela missurum ualent?
an arma cessant teque languenti manu 975
non audit arcus? si potes letum dare,
animosa coniunx dexteram expecto tuam.
mors differatur: frange ut insontem Lichan,
alias in urbes sparge et ignotum tibi
inmitte in orbem; perde ut Arcadiae nefas 980
et quidquid aliud cessit — at ab illis tamen,
coniunx, redisti. **Hyllvs** Parce iam, mater, precor,
ignosce fati; error a culpa uacat.

De. Si uera pietas, Hylle, quaerenda est tibi,
iam perime matrem — pauida quid tremuit manus? 985
quid ora flectis? haec erit pietas scelus.
ignauae dubitas? Herculem eripui tibi:
haec, haec peremit dextra, cui debes patri
auum Tonantem. maius eripui decus,
quam luce tribui. si tibi ignotum est nefas, 990

a matre disce. seu tibi iugulo placet
mersisse ferrum siue maternum libet
inuadere uterum, mater intrepidum tibi
praebebit animum. non erit tantum scelus
a te peractum: dextera sternar tua, 995
sed mente nostra. natus Alcidae times?
ita nulla peragas iussa, nec frangens mala
erres per orbem, si qua nascetur fera
referas parentem: dexteram intrepidam para.
patet ecce plenum pectus aerumnis: feri. — 1000
scelus remitto, dexterae parcent tuae
Eumenides ipsae: uerberum crepuit sonus.
quaenam ista torquens angue uibrato comam
temporibus atras squalidis pinnas quatit?
quid me flagranti, dira, persequeris face, 1005
Megaera? poenas poscis Alcidae? dabo.
iamne inferorum, diua, sedere arbitri?
Sed ecce laxas carceris uideo fores.
quis iste saxum immane detritis gerit
iam senior umeris? ecce iam uictus lapis 1010
quaerit relabi. membra quis praebet rotae?
hic ecce pallens dira Tisiphone stetit,
causam reposcit; parce uerberibus, precor,
Megaera, parce, sustine Stygias faces:
scelus est amoris. Sed quid hoc? tellus labat 1015
et aula tectis crepuit excussis — minax
unde iste coetus? totus in uultus meos
decurrit orbis, hinc et hinc populi fremunt
totusque poscit uindicem mundus suum.
iam parcite, urbes. quo fugam praeceps agam? 1020
mors sola portus dabitur aerumnis meis.
testor nitentis flammeam Phoebi rotam
superosque testor: Herculem in terris adhuc
moritura linquo. **Hy.** Fugit attonita, ei mihi.
peracta iam pars matris est: statuit mori; 1025
nunc nostra superest, mortis auferre impetum.
o misera pietas: si mori matrem uetas,

patri es scelestus; si mori pateris, tamen
in matre peccas — urget hinc illinc scelus.
inhibenda tamen est: pergam et eripiam neci. 1030

Chorvs Verum est quod cecinit sacer
Thressae sub Rhodopes iugis
aptans Pieriam chelyn
Orpheus, Calliopae genus,
aeternum fieri nihil. 1035

Illius stetit ad modos
torrentis rapidi fragor,
oblitusque sequi fugam
amisit liquor impetum;
et dum fluminibus mora est, 1040
defecisse putant Getae
Hebrum Bistones ultimi.
Aduexit uolucrum nemus
et silua residens uenit;
aut si qua aera peruolat 1045
auditis uaga cantibus
ales deficiens cadit.

Abrumpit scopulos Athos
Centauros obiter ferens
et iuxta Rhodopen stetit 1050
laxata niue cantibus;
et quercum fugiens suam
ad uatem properat Dryas.
Ad cantus ueniunt tuos
ipsis cum latebris ferae 1055
iuxtaque inpauidum pecus
sedit Marmaricus leo
nec dammae trepidant lupos
et serpens latebras fugit

tunc oblita ueneni. 1060

Quin per Taenarias fores
manes cum tacitos adit
maerentem feriens chelyn,

cantu Tartara flebili
et tristes Erebi deos 1065
uicit nec timuit Stygis
iuratos superis lacus.
Haesit non stabilis rota
uicto languida turbine,
increuit Tityi iecur, 1070
dum cantus uolucres tenet;
tunc primum Phrygius senex 1075
undis stantibus immemor
excussit rabidam sitim
nec pomis adhibet manus,
et uinci lapis improbus 1081
et uatem potuit sequi.
audis tu quoque, nauita: 1072
infernī ratis aequoris
nullo remigio uenit.
Sic cum uinceret inferos 1079
Orpheus carmine funditus,
consumptos iterum deae 1083
supplent Eurydices colus.
sed dum respicit immemor
nec credens sibi redditam
Orpheus Eurydicen sequi,
cantus praemia perdidit:
quae nata est iterum perit.

Tunc solamina cantibus 1090
quaerens flebilibus modis
haec Orpheus cecinit Getis:

‘ * * * 1092a

leges in superos datas
et qui tempora digerens
quattuor praecipitis deus 1095
anni disposuit uices;
nulli non audi colus
Parcas stamina nectere:
quod natum est properat mori.’

Vati credere Thracio 1100
deuictus iubet Hercules.

Iam, iam legibus obrutis
mundo cum ueniet dies,
australis polus obruet
quidquid per Libyam iacet 1105
et sparsus Garamas tenet;
arctous polus obruet
quidquid subiacet axibus
et siccus Boreas ferit.
amisso trepidus polo 1110
Titan excutiet diem.
Caeli regia concidens
ortus atque obitus trahet
atque omnis pariter deos
perdet mors aliqua et chaos, 1115
et mors fata nouissima
in se constituet sibi.

Quis mundum capiet locus?
discedet uia Tartari,
fractis ut pateat polis? 1120
an quod diuidit aethera
a terris spatium sat est
et mundi nimium malis?
Quis tantum capiet nefas
fati, quis, superi, locus 1125
pontum Tartara sidera
regna unus capiet tria?

Sed quis non modicus fragor
aures attonitas mouet?
est est Herculeus sonus. 1130

Hercvles Conuerte, Titan clare, anhelantes equos,
emitte noctem: pereat hic mundo dies
quo morior, atra nube inhorrescat polus;
obsta nouercae. nunc, pater, caecum chaos
reddi decebat, hinc et hinc compagibus 1135

ruptis uterque debuit frangi polus;
quid parcis astris? Herculem amittis, pater.

Nunc partem in omnem, Iuppiter, specta poli,
ne quis Gyges Thessalica iaculetur iuga
et fiat Othrys pondus Encelado leue. 1140
laxabit atri carceris iam iam fores
Pluton superbus, uincula excutiet patri
caelumque reddet. ille qui pro fulmine
tuisque facibus natus in terris eram,
ad Styga reuertor: surget Enceladus ferox 1145
mittetque quo nunc premitur in superos onus.
regnum omne, genitor, aetheris dubium tibi
mors nostra faciet — antequam spoliū tui
caelum omne fiat, conde me tota, pater,
mundi ruina, frange quem perdis polum. 1150

Cho. Non uana times, gnate Tonantis:
nunc Thessalicam Pelion Ossam
premet et Pindo congestus Athos
nemus aetheriis inseret astris;
uincet scopulos inde Typhoeus 1155
et Tyrrhenam feret Inarimen;
feret Aetnaeos inde caminos
scindetque latus montis aperti
nondum Enceladus fulmine uictus:
iam te caeli regna secuntur. 1160

He. Ego qui relictā morte, contempta Styge,
per media Lethes stagna cum spolio redi
quo paene lapsis excidit Titan equis,
ego quem deorum regna senserunt tria,
moriō nec ullus per meum stridet latus 1165
transmissus ensis, haut meae telum necis
saxum est nec instar montis abrupti lapis
aut totus Othrys, non truci rictu gigas
Pindo cadauer obruit toto meum:
sine hoste uincor, quodque me torquet magis 1170

(o misera uirtus!) summus Alcidae dies
nullum malum prosternit; inpendo, ei mihi,
in nulla uitam facta. pro mundi arbiter
superique quondam dexteræ testes meae,
pro cuncta tellus, Herculis uestri placet 1175
mortem perire? dirus o nobis pudor,
o turpe fatum: femina Herculeae necis
auctor feretur! morior Alcides quibus

!Inuicta si me cadere feminea manu
uoluerè fata perque tam turpes colus 1180
mea mors cucurrit, cadere placuisset mihi
Iunonis odio: feminae caderem manu,
sed caelum habentis. si nimis superis fuit,
Scythico sub axe genita domuisset meas
uires Amazon — feminae cuius manu 1185
Iunonis hostis uincor! hinc grauior tui,
nouerca, pudor est. quid diem hunc laetum uocas?
quid tale tellus genuit iratae tibi?
mortalis odia femina excessit tua.
adhuc furebas esse te Alcidae imparem: 1190
uicta es duobus — pudeat irarum deos.

Vtinam meo cruore satiasset suos
Nemeaea rictus pestis aut centum anguibus
uallatus hydram tabe pauissem mea,
utinam fuisset praeda Centauris datus 1195
aut inter umbras uinctus aeterno miser
saxo sederem! spolia nunc traxi ultima
Fato stupente, nunc ab inferna Styge
lucem recepi, Ditis euici moras —
ubique mors me fugit, ut titulo inclitae 1200
mortis carerem. pro ferae, uictae ferae!
non me triformis sole conspecto canis
ad Styga reuexit, non sub Hesperio polo
Hibera uicit turba pastoris feri,
non gemina serpens — perdidì mortem, ei mihi, 1205
totiens honestam: titulus extremus quis est!

Cho. Viden ut laudis conscia uirtus
non Lethaeos horreat amnes?
pudet auctoris, non morte dolet:
cupit extremum finire diem 1210
uasta tumidi mole gigantis
et montiferum Titana pati
rabidaee necem debere ferae.
sed tua causa est, miserande, manus,
quod nulla fera est nullusque gigas: 1215
iam quis dignus necis Herculeae
superest auctor nisi dextra tui?

He. Eheu quis intus scorpios, quis feruida
plaga reuulsus cancer infixus meas
urit medullas? sanguinis quondam capax 1220
tumidi uigor pulmonis arentes fibras
distendit, ardet felle siccato iecur
totumque lentus sanguinem auexit uapor.
primam cutem consumpsit, hinc aditum nefas
in membra fecit, abstulit pestis latus, 1225
exedit artus penitus et totas malum
hausit medullas: ossibus uacuis sedet;
nec ossa durant ipsa, sed compagibus
discussa ruptis mole conlapsa fluunt.
defecit ingens corpus et pesti satis 1230
Herculeae non sunt membra — pro, quantum est malum
quod esse uastum fateor, o dirum nefas

!En cernite, urbes, cernite ex illo Hercule
quid iam supersit. Herculem agnoscis, pater?
hisne ego lacertis colla Nemeaei mali 1235
elisa pressi? tensus hac arcus manu
astris ab ipsis detulit Stympthalidas?
his ego citatam gressibus uici feram
radiante clarum fronte gestantem caput?
his fracta Calpe manibus emisit fretum? 1240
his tot ferae, tot scelera, tot reges iacent?
his mundus umeris sedit? haec moles mei est,

haecne illa ceruix? has ego opposui manus
caelo ruenti? quis mea custos manu
trahetur ultra Stygius? ubi uires prius 1245
memet sepultae? quid patrem appello Iouem?
quid per Tonantem uindico caelum mihi?
iam, iam meus credetur Amphitryon pater.

Quaecumque pestis uiscere in nostro lates,
procede — quid me uulnere occulto petis? 1250
quis te sub axe frigido pontus Scythes,
quae pigra Tethys genuit aut Maurum premens
Hibera Calpe litus? o dirum malum!
utrumne serpens squalidum crista caput
uibrans an aliquod et mihi ignotum malum? 1255
numquid cruore es genita Lernaeae ferae
an te reliquit Stygius in terris canis?
omne es malum nullumque — quis uoltus tibi est?
concede saltem scire quo peream malo;
quaecumque pestis siue quaecumque es fera, 1260
palam timere. quis tibi in medias locum
fecit medullas? ecce direpta cute
uiscera manus detexit; ulterior tamen
inuenta latebra est — o malum simile Herculi

!Vnde iste fletus? unde in has lacrimae genas? 1265
inuictus olim uoltus et numquam malis
lacrimas suis praebere consuetus (pudet)
iam flere didicit. quis dies fletum Herculis,
quae terra uidit? siccus aerumnas tuli.
tibi illa uirtus, quae tot elisit mala, 1270
tibi cessit uni; prima et ante omnis mihi
fletum abstulisti: durior saxo horrido
et chalybe uoltus et uaga Symplegade
uictus minas infregit et lacrimam expulit.
flentem, gementem, summe pro rector poli, 1275
me terra uidit, quodque me torquet magis,
nouerca uidit. — urit ecce iterum fibras,
incaluit ardor: unde nunc fulmen mihi?

Cho. Quid non possit superare dolor?

quondam Getico durior Haemo 1280

nec Parrhasio lentior axe

saeuo cessit membra dolori

fessumque mouens per colla caput

latus alterno pondere flectit.

fletum uirtus saepe resorbet: 1285

sic arctoas laxare niues

quamuis tepido sidere Titan

non tamen audet uincitque nefas

solis adulti glaciale iubar.

He. Conuerte uoltus ad meas clades, pater: 1290

numquam ad tuas confugit Alcides manus,

non cum per artus hydra fecundum meos

caput explicaret; inter infernos lacus

possessus atra nocte cum Fato steti

nec inuocaui; tot feras uici horridas, 1295

reges, tyrannos, non tamen uoltus meos

in astra torsi: semper haec nobis manus

uotum spopondit; nulla propter me sacro

micuere caelo fulmina — hic aliquid dies

optare iussit. primus audierit preces 1300

idemque summus: unicum fulmen peto;

giganta crede (non minus caelum mihi

asserere potui — dum patrem uerum imputo,

caelo pepercit). siue crudelis, pater,

siue es misericors, commoda nato manum 1305

properante morte et occupa hanc laudem tibi.

uel si piget manusque detrectat nefas,

emitte Siculo uertice ardentes, pater,

Titanas, in me qui manu Pindum ferant

Ossaque qui me monte proiecto opprimant. 1310

abrumpat Erebi claustra, me stricto petat

Bellona ferro; mitte Graduum trucem,

armetur in me dirus: est frater quidem,

sed ex nouerca. Tu quoque, Alcidae soror

tantum ex parente, cuspidem in fratrem tuum 1315
iaculare, Pallas. Supplices tendo manus
ad te, nouerca: sparge tu saltem, precor,
telum: perire feminae possum manu.
iam fracta, iam satiata quid pascis minas?
quid quaeris ultra? supplicem Alciden uides, 1320
et nulla tellus, nulla me uidit fera
te deprecantem. nunc mihi irata satis
opus est nouerca — nunc tuus cessat dolor?
nunc odia ponis? parcis ubi uotum est mori.
O terra et urbes, non facem quisquam Herculi, 1325
non arma tradet? tela subtrahitis mihi?
ita nulla saeuas terra concipiat feras
post me sepultum, nec meas umquam manus
imploret orbis, si qua nascentur mala
nascatur alius: undique infelix caput 1330
mactate saxis, uincite aerumnas meas.
ingrate cessas orbis? excidimus tibi?
adhuc malis ferisque suppositus fores,
ni me tulisses. uindicem uestrum malis
eripite, populi: tempus hoc uobis datur 1335
pensare merita — mors erit pretium omnium.

Alcmene Quas misera terras mater Alcidae petam?
ubi natus, ubinam est? certa si uisus notat,
reclinis ecce corde anhelante aestuat;
gemit: peractum est. membra complecti ultima, 1340
o nate, liceat; spiritus fugiens meo
legatur ore: bracchia, amplexus cape.
ubi membra sunt? ubi illa quae mundum tulit
stelligera ceruix? quis tibi exiguum tui
partem reliquit? **He.** Herculem spectas quidem, 1345
mater, sed umbram et uile nescioquid mei.
agnosce, mater — ora quid flectis retro
uultumque mergis? Herculem dici tuum
partum erubescis? **Al.** Quis feram mundus nouam,
quae terra genuit? quodue tam dirum nefas 1350

de te triumphat? uictor Hercules quis est?

He. Nuptae iacentem cernis Alciden dolis.

Al. Quis tantus est qui uincat Alciden dolus?

He. Quicumque, mater, feminae iratae sat est.

Al. Et unde in artus pestis aut ossa incidit? 1355

He. Aditum uenenis palla femineis dedit.

Al. Vbinam ista palla est? membra nudata intuo.

He. Consumpta mecum est. **Al.** Tantane inuenta est lues?

He. Errare mediis crede uisceribus meis,
o mater, hydram et mille cum Lerna feras. 1360
quae tanta nubes flamma Sicanias secans,
quae Lemnos ardens, quae plaga igniferi poli
uetans flagranti currere in zona diem?
in ipsa me iactate, pro comites, freta
mediosque in amnes — quis sat est Hister mihi? 1365
non ipse terris maior Oceanus meos
franget uapores, omnis in nostris malis
deficiet umor, omnis arescet latex.
Quid, rector Erebi, me remittebas Ioui?
deciuit tenere: redde me tenebris tuis, 1370
talem subactis Herculem ostende inferis.
nil inde ducam, quid times iterum Herculem?
inuade, mors, non trepida: iam possum mori.

Al. Compesce lacrimas saltem et aerumnas doma
malisque tantis Herculem indomitum refer 1375
mortemque differ: quos soles uince inferos.

He. Si me catenis horridus uinctum suis
praeberet auidae Caucasus uolucris dapem,

Scythia gemente flebilis gemitus mihi
non excidisset; si uagae Symplegades 1380
utraque premerent rupe, redeuntis minas
ferrem ruinae; Pindus incumbat mihi
atque Haemus et qui Thracios fluctus Athos
frangit Iouisque fulmen excipiens Mimas:
non ipse si in me, mater, hic mundus ruat 1385
superque nostros flagret incensus toros
Phoebeus axis, degener mentem Herculis
clamor domaret; mille decurrant ferae
pariterque lacerent, hinc feris clangoribus
aetheria me Stymphalis, hinc taurus minax 1390
ceruice tota pulset et quidquid fuit
solum quoque ingens; surgat hinc illinc nemus
artusque nostros dirus immittat Sinis:
sparsus silebo — non ferae excutient mihi,
non arma gemitus, nil quod impelli potest. 1395

Al. Non uirus artus, nate, femineum coquit,
sed dura series operis et longus tibi
pauit cruentos forsitan morbos labor.

He. Vbi morbus, ubinam est? estne adhuc aliquid mali
in orbe mecum? ueniat huc — aliquis mihi 1400
intendat arcus: nuda sufficiet manus.
procedat agedum * * * *

* * * **Al.** Ei mihi, sensus quoque
excussit illi nimius impulsos dolor.
dolor iste furor est: Herculem solus domat. 1407
Remouete quaeso tela et infestas, precor, 1404
rapite hinc sagittas: igne suffuso genae
scelus minantur. quas petam latebras anus? —
cur deinde latebras aut fugam uecors petam? 1408
obire forti meruit Alcmene manu:
uel scelere pereat, antequam letum mihi
ignauus aliquis mandat ac turpis manus
de me triumphat. — ecce lassatus malis

sopore fessas alligat uenas dolor
grauique anhelum pectus impulsu quatit.
faute, superi. si mihi gnatum inclutum 1415
miserae negastis, uindicem saltem, precor,
seruate terris. abeat excussus dolor
corpusque uires reparet Herculeum nouas.

Hyllvs Pro lux acerba, pro capax scelerum dies!
nurus Tonantis occidit, natus iacet, 1420
nepos supersum; scelere materno hic perit,
fraude illa capta est — quis per annorum uices
totoque in aeuo poterit aerumnas senex
referre tantas? unus eripuit dies
parentem utrumque; cetera ut sileam mala 1425
parcamque fatis, Herculem amitto patrem.

Al. Compesce uoces, inclutum Alcidae genus
miseraeque fato similis Alcmenae nepos:
longus dolorem forsitan uincet sopor.

Sed ecce, lassam deserit mentem quies 1430
redditque morbo corpus et luctum mihi.

He. Quid hoc? rigenti cernitur Trachin iugo
an inter astra positus euasi genus
mortale tandem? quis mihi caelum parat?
te te, pater, iam uideo, placatam quoque 1435
specto nouercam. quis sonus nostras ferit
caelestis aures? Iuno me generum uocat.
uideo nitentem regiam clari aetheris
Phoebique tritam flammea zonam rota.
cubile uideo Noctis; hinc tenebras uocat. 1440
Quid hoc? quis axem cludit et ab ipsis, pater,
deducit astris? ora Phoebeus modo
afflabat axis, tam prope a caelo fui —
Trachina uideo; quis mihi terras dedit?
Oete modo infra steterat ac totus fuit 1445
suppositus orbis; tam bene excideras, dolor!

cogis fateri — parce et hanc uocem occupa.

Haec, Hylle, dona matris? hoc munus parat?
utinam liceret stipite ingesto impiam
effringere animam quale Amazonium malum 1450
circa nivalis Caucasi domui latus.

o cara Megara, tune cum furerem mihi
coniunx fuisti? stipitem atque arcus date,
dextra inquinetur, laudibus maculam imprimam,
summus legatur femina Herculeus labor. 1455

Hy. Compesce diras, genitor, irarum minas;
habet, peractum est, quas petis poenas dedit:
sua perempta dextera mater iacet.

He. Cecidit dolose: manibus irati Herculis
occidere meruit; perdidit comitem Lichas. 1460
saeuire in ipsum corpus exanime impetus
atque ira cogit. cur minis nostris caret
ipsum cadauer? pabulum accipiant ferae.

Hy. Plus misera laeso doluit, hinc aliquid quoque
detrahere uelles: occidit dextra sua, 1465
tuo dolore; plura quam poscis tulit.
Sed non cruentae sceleribus nuptae iaces
nec fraude matris: Nessus hos struxit dolos
ictus sagittis qui tuis uitam expulit.
cruore tincta est palla semiferi, pater, 1470
Nessusque nunc has exigit poenas sibi.

He. Bene est, peractum est, fata se nostra explicant;
lux ista summa est: quercus hanc sortem mihi
fatidica quondam dederat et Parnassio
Cirrhaea quatiens templa mugitu nemus: 1475
‘dextra perempti uictor, Alcide, uiri
olim iacebis; hic tibi emenso freta
terrasque et umbras finis extremus datur.’
nil querimur ultra: decuit hunc finem dari,

ne quis superstes Herculis uictor foret. 1480

Nunc mors legatur clara memoranda incluta,
me digna prorsus: nobilem hunc faciam diem.
caedatur omnis silua et Oetaeum nemus
succumbat: ingens Herculem accipiat rogos,
sed ante mortem. Tu, genus Poeantium, 1485
hoc triste nobis, iuuenis, officium appara:
Herculea totum flamma succendat diem.

Ad te preces nunc, Hylle, supremas fero:
est clara captas inter, in uoltu genus
regnumque referens, Euryto uirgo edita 1490
Iole: tuis hanc facibus et thalamis para.
uictor cruentus abstuli patriam lares
nihilque miserae praeter Alciden dedi —
et ipse rapitur. penset aerumnas suas,
Iouis nepotem foueat et natum Herculis; 1495
tibi illa pariat quidquid ex nobis habet.

Tuque ipsa plactus pone funereos, precor,
o clara genetrix: uiuet Alcides tibi.
uirtute nostra paelicem feci tuam
credi nouercam, siue nascenti Herculi 1500
nox illa certa est siue mortalis meus
pater est. licet sit falsa progenies mei,
materna culpa cesset et crimen Iouis,
merui parentem: contuli caelo decus,
natura me concepit in laudes Iouis. 1505
quin ipse, quamquam Iuppiter, credi meus
pater esse gaudet; parce iam lacrimis, parens:
superba matres inter Argolicas eris.
quid tale Iuno genuit aetherium gerens
sceptrum et Tonanti nupta? mortali tamen 1510
caelum tenens inuidit, Alciden suum
dici esse uoluit. Perage nunc, Titan, uices
solus relictus: ille qui uester comes
ubique fueram, Tartara et manes peto.
hanc tamen ad imos perferam laudem inclutam, 1515
quod nulla pestis fudit Alciden palam

omnemque pestem uicit Alcides palam.

Chorvs O decus mundi, radiate Titan,
cuius ad primos Hecate uapores
lassa nocturnae leuat ora bigae: 1520
dic sub Aurora positis Sabaeis,
dic sub occasu positis Hiberis,
quique feruenti quatiuntur axe,
quique sub plaustro patiuntur ursae,
dic ad aeternos properare manes 1525
Herculem et regnum canis inquieti,
unde non umquam remeabit ille.
sume quos nubes radios sequantur,
pallidus maestas speculari terras
et caput turpes nebulae pererrent. 1530

Quando, pro Titan, ubi, quo sub axe
Herculem in terris alium sequeris?
quas manus orbis miser inuocabit,
si qua sub Lerna numerosa pestis
sparget in centum rabiem dracones, 1535
Arcadum si quis, populi uetusti,
fecerit siluas aper inquietas,
Thraciae si quis Rhodopes alumnus
durior terris Helices niuosae
sparget humano stabulum cruore? 1540
quis dabit pacem populo timenti,
si quid irati superi per urbes
iusserint nasci? iacet omnibus par,
quem parem tellus genuit Tonanti.
Planctus immensas resonet per urbes 1545
et comas nullo cohibente nodo
femina exertos feriat lacertos,
solaque obductis foribus deorum
templa securae pateant nouercae.

Vadis ad Lethen Stygiumque litus, 1550
unde te nullae referent carinae;
uadis ad manes miserandus, unde

Morte deuicta tuleras triumphum;
umbra nudatis uenies lacertis
languido uultu tenuique collo, 1555
teque non solum feret illa puppis,

* 1556a

non tamen uilis eris inter umbras:
Aeacon iuxta geminosque Cretas
facta discernes feriens tyrannos.
Parcite, o dites, inhibete dextras: 1560
laudis est purum tenuisse ferrum,
dumque regnabas, minimum procellis
in tuas urbes licuisse Fati.

Sed locum uirtus habet inter astra.
sedis arctoae spatium tenebis 1565
an grauis Titan ubi promit aestus?
an sub occasu tepido nitebis,
unde commisso resonare ponto
audies Calpen? loca quae sereni
deprimes caeli? quis erit recepto 1570
tutus Alcide locus inter astra?
horrido tantum procul a leone
det pater sedes calidoque cancro,
ne tuo uultu tremefacta leges
astra conturbent trepidetque Titan. 1575

Vere dum flores uenient tepenti
et comam siluis reuocabit aestas 1578
pomaque autumnno fugiente cedent
et comam siluis hiemes recident, 1577
tu comes Phoebo, comes ibis astris. 1581
nulla te terris rapiet uetustas: 1580
ante nascetur seges in profundo 1582
uel fretum dulci resonabit unda,
ante descendet glacialis ursae
sidus et ponto uetito fruetur, 1585
quam tuas laudes populi quiescant.

Te, pater rerum, miseri precamur:
nulla nascatur fera, nulla pestis,

non duces saeuos miseranda tellus
horreat, nulla dominetur aula 1590
qui putet solum decus esse regni
semper intensum tenuisse ferrum;
si quid in terris iterum timetur,
uindicem terrae petimus relictæ.

Heu quid hoc? mundus sonat ecce caecum. 1595
maeret Alciden pater? an deorum
clamor, an uox est timidæ nouercae
Hercule et uiso fugit astra Iuno?
passus an pondus titubauit Atlas?
an magis diri tremuere manes 1600
Herculem et uisum canis inferorum
fugit abruptis trepidus catenis?
fallimur: læto uenit ecce uultu
quem tulit Poeans umerisque tela
gestat et notas populis pharetras, 1605

Herculis heres.

Effare casus, iuuenis, Herculeos precor
uoltuue quonam tulerit Alcides necem.

Philoctetes Quo nemo uitam. **Cho.** Laetus adeone ultimos
inuasit ignes? **Ph.** Esse iam flammæ nihil 1610
ostendit ille. quid sub hoc mundo Hercules
immune uinci liquit? en domita omnia.

Cho. Inter uapores quis fuit forti locus?

Ph. Quod unum in orbe uicerat nondum malum,
et flamma uicta est; hæc quoque accessit feris: 1615
inter labores ignis Herculeos abit.

Cho. Edissere agedum, flamma quo uicta est modo?

Ph. Vt omnis Oeten maesta corripuit manus,
huic fagus umbras perdit et toto iacet
succisa trunco, flectit hic pinum ferox 1620

astris minantem et nube de media uocat:
ruitura cautem mouit et siluam tulit
secum minorem. Chaonis quondam loquax
stat uasta late quercus et Phoebum uetat
ultraque totos porrigit ramos nemus; 1625
gemit illa multo uulnere impresso minax
frangitque cuneos, resilit incussus chalybs
uolnusque ferrum patitur et rigidum est parum.
commota tandem cum cadens latam sui
duxit ruinam, protinus radios locus 1630
admisit omnis: sedibus pulsae suis
uolucres pererrant nemore succiso diem
quaeruntque lassis garrulae pinnis domus.
iamque omnis arbor sonuit et sacrae quoque
sensere quercus horridam ferro manum 1635
nullique priscum profuit luco nemus.
Aggeritur omnis silua et alternae trabes
in astra tollunt Herculi angustum rogam:
raptura flammis pinus et robur tenax
et breuior ilex. summa sed complet rogam 1640
populea silua, frondis Herculeae nemus.

At ille, ut ingens nemore sub Nasamonio
aegro reclinis pectore immugit leo,
fertur — quis illum credat ad flammis rapi?
uoltus petentis astra, non ignes erat. 1645
Vt pressit Oeten ac suis oculis rogam
lustrauit omnem, fregit impositus trabes.

* 1647a

arcumque poscit. ‘accipe haec’ inquit, ‘sate
Poeante, dona, et munus Alcidae cape.
has hydra sensit, his iacent Stympthalides 1650
et quidquid aliud eminus uici manu
uictrice. felix iuuenis has numquam irritas
mittes in hostem, siue de media uoles
auferre uolucres nube, descendant aues
et certa praedae tela de caelo fluent, 1655
nec fallet umquam dexteram hic arcus tuam:

librare telum didicit et certam dare
fugam sagittis, ipsa non fallunt iter
emissa neruo tela; tu tantum, precor,
accommoda ignes et facem extremam mihi. 1660
hic nodus' inquit, 'nulla quem cepit manus,
mecum per ignes flagret; hoc telum Herculem
tantum sequetur. hoc quoque acciperes' ait
'si ferre posses. adiuuet domini rogum.'
tum rigida secum spolia Nemeaei mali 1665
arsura poscit; latuit in spolio rogos.

Ingemuit omnis turba nec lacrimas dolor
cuiquam remisit. mater in luctum furens
diduxit auidum pectus atque utero tenus
exerta uastos ubera in planctus ferit, 1670
superosque et ipsum uocibus pulsans Iouem
impleuit omnem uoce feminea locum.
'Deforme letum, mater, Herculeum facis,
compesce lacrimas' inquit, 'introrsus dolor
femineus abeat; Iuno cur laetum diem 1675
te flente ducat? paelicis gaudet suae
spectare lacrimas. comprime infirmum iecur,
mater: nefas est ubera atque uterum tibi
laniare, qui me genuit.' et dirum fremens,
qualis per urbes duxit Argolicas canem, 1680
cum uictor Erebi Dite contempto redit
tremante fato, talis incubuit rogo.
quis sic triumphans laetus in curru stetit
uictor? quis illo gentibus uultu dedit
leges tyrannus? quanta pax habitum tulit! 1685
haesere lacrimae, cecidit impulsus dolor
nobis quoque ipsis, nemo peritulum ingemit:
iam flere pudor est; ipsa quam sexus iubet
maerere, siccis haesit Alcmene genis
stetitque nato paene iam similis parens. 1690

Cho. Nullasne in astra misit ad superos preces
arsurus aut in uota respexit Iouem?

Ph. Iacuit sui securus et caelum intuens
quaesiuit oculis, arce an ex aliqua pater
despiceret illum. tum manus tendens ait: 1695
‘quacumque parte prospicis natum, pater,
te te precor, cui nocte commissa dies
quieuit unus, si meas laudes canit
utrumque Phoebi litus et Scythiae genus
et omnis ardens ora quam torret dies, 1700
si pace tellus plena, si nullae gemunt
urbes nec aras impias quisquam inquinat,
si scelera desunt, spiritum admitte hunc, precor,
in astra. non me noctis infernae locus
nec maesta nigri regna conterrent Iouis, 1705
sed ire ad illos umbra, quos uici, deos,
pater, erubesco. nube discussa diem
pande, ut deorum coetus ardentem Herculem
spectet; licet tu sidera et mundum neges
ultro, pater, cogere: si uoces dolor 1710
abstulerit ullas, pande tunc Stygios lacus
et redde fatis; approba natum prius:
ut dignus astris uidear, hic faciet dies.
leue est quod actum est; Herculem hic, genitor, dies
inueniet aut damnabit.’ Haec postquam edidit, 1715
flammas poposcit. ‘hoc age, Alcidae comes, 1717
non segnis’ inquit ‘corripe Oetaeam facem.
quid dextra tremuit? num manus pauida impium
scelus refugit? redde iam pharetras mihi, 1720
ignauae iners eneruis — en nostros manus
quae tendat arcus! quid sedet pallor genis?
animo faces inuade quo Alciden uides
uultu iacere. respice arsurum, miser:
nouerca cernat quo feram flammas modo. 1715
uocat ecce iam me genitor et pandit polos; 1725
uenio, pater’ — uultusque non idem fuit.
Tremente pinum dextera ardentem intuli.
refugit ignis et reluctantur faces
et membra uitant, sed recedentem Hercules

insequitur ignem. Caucasum aut Pindum aut Athon 1730
ardere credas: nullus erumpit sonus,
tantum ingemiscit ignis. o durum iecur!
Typhon in illo positus immanis rogo
gemuisset ipse quique consuulsam solo
imposuit umeris Ossan Enceladus ferox. 1735

At ille medias inter exurgens faces,
semiustus ac laniatus, intrepidum tuens:
'nunc es parens Herculea: sic stare ad rogam
te, mater' inquit, 'sic decet fleri Herculem.'
inter uapores positus et flammae minas 1740
immutus, inconcussus, in neutrum latus
correpta torquens membra adhortatur, monet,
gerit aliquid ardens. omnibus fortem addidit
animum ministris; urere ardentem putes.
Stupet omne uulgus, uix habent flammae fidem: 1745
tam placida frons est, tanta maiestas uiro.
nec properat uri; cumque iam forti datum
leto satis pensauit, igniferas trabes
hinc inde traxit, minima quas flamma occupat
totas in ignes uertit et quis plurimus 1750
exundat ignis repetit intrepidus ferox.
tunc ora flammis implet: ast illi graues
luxere barbae; cumque iam uultum minax
appeteret ignis, lamberent flammae caput,
non pressit oculos. Sed quid hoc? maestam intuor 1755
sinu gerentem reliquias magni Herculis,
crinemque iactans squalidum Alcmene gemit.

Alcmene Timete, superi, fata: tam paruus cinis
Herculeus, huc huc ille decreuit gigas!
o quanta, Titan, in nihil moles abit; 1760
anilis, heu me, recipit Alciden sinus,
hic cumulus ille est: ecce uix totam Hercules
compleuit urnam; quam leue est pondus mihi,
cui totus aether pondus incubuit leue

!Ad Tartara olim regnaque, o nate, ultima 1765

rediturus ibas — quando ab inferna Styge
remeabis iterum? non ut et spoliū trahas
rursusque Theseus debeat lucem tibi —
sed quando solus? mundus impositus tuas
compescet umbras teque Tartareus canis 1770
inhibere poterit? quando Taenarias fores
pulsabis? aut quas mater ad fauces agar
qua mors aditur? uadis ad manes iter
habiturus unum. quid diem questu tero?
quid misera duras uita? quid lucem hanc tenes? 1775
quem parere rursus Herculem possum Ioui?
quis me parentem natus Alcmenen suam
tantus uocabit? o nimis felix, nimis,
Thebane coniunx, Tartari intrasti loca
florete nato teque uenientem inferi 1780
timuere forsā, quod pater tanti Herculis,
uel falsus, aderas. Quas petam terras anus,
inuisa saeuus regibus (si quis tamen
rex est relictus saeuus)? ei miserae mihi!
quicumque caesos ingemunt nati patres, 1785
a me petent supplicia, me cuncti obruent:
si quis minor Busiris aut si quis minor
Antaeus urbes feruidae terret plagae,
ego praeda ducar; si quis Ismarius greges
Thracis cruenti uindicat, carpent greges 1790
mea membra diri; forsitan poenas petet
irata Iuno: totus exurget dolor;
secura uicto tandem ab Alcide uacat,
paelex supersum — quanta supplicia expetet
ne parere possim! fecit hic natus mihi 1795
uterum timendum. Quae petam Alcmenae loca?
quis me locus, quae regio, quae mundi plaga
defendet aut quas mater in latebras agar
ubique per te nota? si patriam petam
laresque miseros, Argos Eurystheus tenet; 1800
marita Thebas regna et Ismenon petam
thalamosque nostros, in quibus quondam Iouem

dilecta uidi? pro nimis felix, nimis,
si fulminantem et ipsa sensissem Iouem!
utinam meis uisceribus Alcides foret 1805
exsectus infans! nunc datum est tempus, datum est
uidere natum laude certantem Ioui,
ut hoc daretur, scire quid fatum mihi
eripere posset. quis memor uiuit tui,
o nate, populus? omne iam ingratum est genus. 1810
Petam Cleonas? Arcadum an populos petam
meritisque terram nobilem quaeram tuis?
hic dira serpens cecidit, hic ales fera,
hic sus cruentus, hic tua fractus manu
qui te sepulto possidet caelum leo: 1815
si grata terra est, populus Alcmenen tuam
defendat omnis. Thracias gentes petam
Hebrique populos? haec quoque est meritis tuis
defensa tellus: stabula cum regno iacent.
hic pax cruento rege prostrato data est: 1820
ubi enim negata est? Quod tibi infelix anus
quaeram sepulcrum? de tuis totus rogis
contendat orbis. reliquias magni Herculis
quis populus aut quae templa, quae gentes rogant?
quis, quis petit, quis poscit Alcmenes onus? 1825
quae tibi sepulcra, nate, quis tumulus sat est?
hic totus orbis: fama erit titulus tibi.

Quid, anime, trepidas? Herculis cineres tenes;
complectere ossa: reliquiae auxilium dabunt,
erunt satis praesidia, terrebunt tuae 1830
reges uel umbrae. **Cho.** Debitos nato quidem
compesce fletus, mater Alcidae incluti.
non est gemendus nec graui urgendus prece,
uirtute quisquis abstulit fatis iter:
aeterna uirtus Herculem fleri uetat: 1835
fortes uetant maerere, degeneres iubent.

Al. Sedabo questus uindice amisso parens
terrae atque pelagi * * * *

* * * * quaque purpureus dies
utrumque clara spectat Oceanum rota?
quot misera in uno condidi natos parens! 1840
regno carebam, regna sed poteram dare.
una inter omnes terra quas matres gerit
uotis peperci, nil ego a superis peti,
incolume nato: quid dare Hercules mihi
non poterat ardor, quod deus quisquam mihi 1845
negare poterat? uota in hac fuerant manu:
quidquid negaret Iuppiter, daret Hercules.
quid tale genetrix ulla mortalis tulit?
deriguit aliqua mater, ut toto stetit
succisa fetu, bisque septenos gregem 1850
deplanxit una: gregibus aequari meus
quot ille poterat! matribus miseris adhuc
exemplar ingens derat: Alcmene dabo.
cessate, matres, pertinax si quas dolor
adhuc iubet lugere, quas luctus grauis 1855
in saxa uertit; cedit his cunctae malis.

Agedum senile pectus, o miserae manus,
pulsate — et una funeri tanto sat est
grandaeua anus defecta, quod totus breui
iam quaeret orbis? expedi in planctus tamen 1860
defessa quamquam bracchia: inuidiam ut deis
lugendo facias, aduoca in planctus genus.

Flete, Alcmenae magnique Iouis
plangite natum,
cui concepto lux una perit 1865
noctesque duas contulit Eos:
ipsa quiddam plus luce perit.
Totae pariter plangite gentes,
quarum saeuos ille tyrannos
iussit Stygias penetrare domos 1870
populisque madens ponere ferrum.
fletum meritis reddite tantis,
totus, totus personet orbis.
Fleat Alciden caerulea Crete,

magno tellus cara Tonanti: 1875
centum populi bracchia pulsant.
nunc Curetes, nunc Corybantes
arma Idaea quassate manu:
armis illum lugere decet.
nunc, nunc funus plangite uerum: 1880
iacet Alcides non minor ipso,
Creta, Tonante.

Flete Herculeos, Arcades, obitus,
nondum Phoebe nascente genus:
iuga Parthenii ~Nemeaeque sonent 1885
feriatque grauis Maenala planctus:
magno Alcidae poscit gemitum
stratus uestris saetiger agris
alesque sequi iussa sagittas
totum pinnis furata diem. 1890
Flete, Argolicae, flete, Cleonae:
hic terrentem moenia quondam
uestra leonem
fregit nostri dextera nati.
Date, Bistoniae, uerbera, matres
gelidusque sonet planctibus Hebrus: 1895
flete Alciden, quod non stabulis
nascitur infans

nec uestra greges uiscera carpunt.
Fleat Antaeo libera tellus
et rapta fero plaga Geryonae: 1900
mecum, miserae, plangite, gentes,
audiat ictus utraque Tethys.

Vos quoque, mundi turba citati,
flete Herculeos, numina, casus:
uestrum Alcides ceruice meus 1905
mundum, superi, caelumque tulit,
dum stelligeri uector Olympi
pondere liber spirauit Atlans.
Vbi nunc uestrae, Iuppiter, arces?
ubi promissi regia mundi? 1910

nempe Alcides mortalis obit,
nempe sepultus:
totiens telis facibusque tuis
ille pepercit,
quotiens ignis spargendus erat.
in me saltem iaculare facem 1915
Semelenque puta.
Iamne Elysias, o nate, domus,
iam litus habes,
ad quod populos natura uocat?
an post raptum Styx atra canem 1920
praeclusit iter teque in primo
limine Ditis fata morantur?
quis nunc umbras, nate, tumultus
manesque tenet?
fugit abducta nauita cumba
et Centauris Thessala motis 1925
ferit attonitos ungula manes
anguesque suos hydra sub undas
territa mergit
teque labores, o nate, timent?
Fallor, fallor uesana furens, 1930
nec te manes umbraeque timent,
non Argolico rapta leoni
fulua pellis contexta iuba
laeuos operit dira lacertos
uallantque feri tempora dentes: 1935
donum pharetrae cessere tuae
telaque mittet iam dextra minor.
uadis inermis, nate, per umbras,
ad quas semper mansurus eris.

Hercvles Quid me tenentem regna siderei poli 1940
caeloque tandem redditum planctu iubes
sentire fatum? parce: iam uirtus mihi
in astra et ipsos fecit ad superos iter.

Al. Vnde sonus trepidas aures ferit?
unde meas inhibet lacrimas fragor? 1945
agnosco agnosco uictum est chaos.
a Styge, nate, redis iterum mihi
fractaque non semel est mors horrida?
uicisti rursus noctis loca
puppis et infernae uada tristia? 1950
peruius est Acheron iam languidus
et remeare licet soli tibi,
nec te fata tenent post funera?
an tibi praeclusit Pluton iter
et pauidus regni metuit sibi? 1955
certe ego te uidi flagrantibus
impositum siluis, cum plurimus
in caelum fureret flammae metus:
arsisti certe, cur ultima
non tenuere tuas umbras loca? 1960
quid timuere tui manes, precor?
umbra quoque es Diti nimis horrida?

He. Non me gementis stagna Cocyti tenent
nec puppis umbras furua transuexit meas;
iam parce, mater, questibus: manes semel 1965
umbrasque uidi; quidquid in nobis tui
mortale fuerat, ignis euictum tulit:
paterna caelo, pars data est flammis tua.
proinde planctus pone, quos nato pariet
genetrix inerti; luctus in turpes eat: 1970
uirtus in astra tendit, in mortem timor.
praesens ab astris, mater, Alcides cano:
poenas cruentus iam tibi Eurystheus dabit;
curru superbum uecta transcendes caput.

Me iam decet subire caelestem plagam: 1975
inferna uici rursus Alcides loca.

Al. Mane parumper — cessit ex oculis, abit,
in astra fertur. fallor an uultus putat

uidisse natum? misera mens incredula est.
es numen et te mundus aeternum tenet: 1980
credo triumphis. — regna Thebarum petam
nouumque templis additum numen canam.

Chorvs Numquam Stygias fertur ad umbras
inclita uirtus: uiuite fortes
nec Lethaeos saeua per amnes 1985
uos fata trahent,
sed cum summas exiget horas
consumpta dies,
iter ad superos gloria pandet.

Sed tu, domitor magne ferarum
orbisque simul pacator, ades: 1990
nunc quoque nostras aspice terras,
et si qua nouo belua uultu
quatiet populos terrore graui,
tu fulminibus frange trisulcis:
fortius ipso genitore tuo 1995
fulmina mitte.

AGAMEMNON

Thyestis Vmbra Opaca linquens Ditis inferni loca,
adsum profundo Tartari emissus specu,
incertus utras oderim sedes magis:
fugio Thyestes inferos, superos fugo.
En horret animus et pauor membra excutit: 5
uideo paternos, immo fraternos lares.
hoc est uetustum Pelopiae limen domus;
hinc auspicari regium capiti decus
mos est Pelasgis, hoc sedent alti toro
quibus superba sceptrata gestantur manu, 10
locus hic habendae curiae — hic epulis locus.

Libet reuerti. nonne uel tristes lacus
incolere satius? nonne custodem Stygis
trigemina nigris colla iactantem iubis

* * * * *

14a

ubi ille celeri corpus euinctus rotae
in se refertur, ubi per aduersum irritus
redeunte totiens luditur saxo labor,
ubi tondet ales auida fecundum iecur,
et inter undas feruida exustus siti
aquas fugaces ore decepto appetit 20
poenas daturus caelitum dapibus graues?

Sed ille nostrae pars quota est culpae senex?
reputemus omnes quos ob infandas manus
quaesitor urna Gnosius uersat reos:
uincam Thyestes sceleribus cunctos meis. 25
a fratre uincar? liberis plenus tribus
in me sepultis? uiscera exedi mea.
Nec hactenus Fortuna maculauit patrem,
sed maius aliud ausa commisso scelus
gnatae nefandos petere concubitus iubet. 30
non pauidus hausi dicta, sed cepi nefas.
ergo ut per omnis liberos irem parens,
coacta fati gnata fert utero graui

me patre dignum. uersa natura est retro:
auo parentem, pro nefas, patri uirum, 35
gnatis nepotes miscui — nocti diem.

Sed sera tandem respicit fessos malis
post fata demum sortis incertae fides:
rex ille regum, ductor Agamemnon ducum,
cuius secutae mille uexillum rates 40
Iliaca uelis maria texerunt suis,
post decima Phoebi lustra deuicto Ilio
adest — daturus coniugi iugulum suae.
Iam iam natabit sanguine alterno domus:
enses secures tela, diuisum graui 45
ictu bipennis regium uideo caput;
iam scelera prope sunt, iam dolus caedes cruor —
parantur epulae. causa natalis tui,
Aegisthe, uenit. quid pudor uultus grauatur?
quid dextra dubio trepida consilio labat? 50
quid ipse temet consulis torques rogas,
an deceat hoc te? respice ad patrem: decet.

Sed cur repente noctis aestiuae uices
hiberna longa spatia producunt mora,
aut quid cadentes detinet stellas polo? 55
Phoebum moramur. redde iam mundo diem.

[**Chorvs**] O regnorum magnis fallax

Fortuna bonis,
in praecipiti dubioque locas
excelsa nimis.

Numquam placidam sceptris quietem 60
certumue sui tenere diem:

alia ex aliis cura fatigat
uexatque animos noua tempestas.
non sic Libycis Syrtibus aequor
furit alternos uoluere fluctus, 65
non Euxini turgent ab imis

commota uadis
unda niuali uicina polo,
ubi caeruleis immunis aquis

lucida uersat plaustra Bootes, 70
ut praecipites regum casus

Fortuna rotat.

metui cupiunt metuique timent,
non nox illis alma recessus
praebet tutos,

non curarum somnus domitor 75
pectora soluit.

Quas non arces scelus alternum
dedit in praeceps? impia quas non
arma fatigant? iura pudorque
et coniugii sacrata fides 80
fugiunt aulas; sequitur tristis
sanguinolenta Bellona manu
quaeque superbos urit Erinys,
nimias semper comitata domos,
quas in planum quaelibet hora 85
tulit ex alto.

Licet arma uacent cessentque doli,
sidunt ipso pondere magna
ceditque oneri fortuna suo:
uela secundis inflata Notis 90
uentos nimium timuere suos;
nubibus ipsis inserta caput
turris pluuiο uapulat Austro,
densasque nemus spargens umbras
annosa uidet robora frangi; 95
feriunt celsos fulmina colles,
corpora morbis maiora patent,
et cum in pastus armenta uagos
uilia curret,
placet in uulnus maxima ceruix: 100
quidquid in altum Fortuna tulit,
ruitura leuat.

Modicis rebus longius aeuum est:
felix mediae quisquis turbae
sorte quietus

aura stringit litora tuta 105
timidusque mari credere cumbam
remo terras propiore legit.

[**Clytemestra**] Quid, segnis anime, tuta consilia expetis?
quid fluctuaris? clausa iam melior uia est.
licuit pudicos coniugis quondam toros 110
et sceptrata casta uidua tutari fide;
periere mores ius decus pietas fides
et qui redire cum perit nescit pudor;
da frena et omnem prona nequitiam incita:
per scelera semper sceleribus tutum est iter. 115
Tecum ipsa nunc euolue femineos dolos,
quod ulla coniunx perfida atque impos sui
amore caeco, quod nouercales manus
ausae, quod ardens impia uirgo face
Phasiaca fugiens regna Thessalica trabe: 120
ferrum, uenena — uel Mycenaeas domos
coniuncta socio profuge furtiua rate.
Quid timida loqueris furta et exilium et fugas?
soror ista fecit: te decet maius nefas.

[**Nvtrix**] Regina Danaum et inclitum Ledae genus, 125
quid tacita uersas quidue consilii impotens
tumido feroces impetus animo geris?
licet ipsa sileas, totus in uultu est dolor.
proin quidquid est, da tempus ac spatium tibi:
quod ratio non quit, saepe sanauit mora. 130
[**Cl.**] Maiora cruciant quam ut moras possim pati;
flammae medullas et cor exurunt meum;
mixtus dolori subdidit stimulos timor;
inuidia pulsat pectus, hinc animum iugo
premit cupido turpis et uinci uetat; 135
et inter istas mentis obsessae faces
fessus quidem et deiectus et pessumdatus
pudor rebellat. fluctibus uariis agor,
ut, cum hinc profundum uentus, hinc aestus rapit,
incerta dubitat unda cui cedat malo. 140
proinde omisi regimen e manibus meis:

quocumque me ira, quo dolor, quo spes feret,
hoc ire pergam; fluctibus dedimus ratem.
ubi animus errat, optimum est casum sequi.
[Nvt.] Caeca est temeritas quae petit casum ducem. 145
[Cl.] Cui ultima est fortuna, quid dubiam timet?
[Nvt.] Tuta est latetque culpa, si pateris, tua.
[Cl.] Perlucet omne regiae uitium domus.
[Nvt.] Piget prioris et nouum crimen struis?
[Cl.] Res est profecto stulta nequitiae modus. 150
[Nvt.] Quod metuit auget qui scelus scelere obruit.
[Cl.] Et ferrum et ignis saepe medicinae loco est.
[Nvt.] Extrema primo nemo temptauit loco.
[Cl.] Rapienda rebus in malis praeceps uia est.
[Nvt.] At te reflectat coniugi nomen sacrum. 155
[Cl.] Decem per annos uidua respiciam uirum?
[Nvt.] Meminisse debes sobolis ex illo tuae.
[Cl.] Equidem et iugales filiae memini faces
et generum Achillem: praestitit matri fidem.
[Nvt.] Redemit illa classis immotae moras 160
et maria pigro fixa languore impulit.
[Cl.] Pudet doletque: Tyndaris, caeli genus,
lustrale classi Doricae peperit caput!
reuoluit animus uirginis thalamos meae
quos ille dignos Pelopia fecit domo, 165
cum stetit ad aras ore sacrifico pater
quam nuptialis! horruit Calchas suae
responsa uocis et recedentes focos.
o scelera semper sceleribus uincens domus:
cruore uentos emimus, bellum nece! 170
sed uela pariter mille fecerunt rates?
non est soluta prospero classis deo;
eiecit Aulis impias portu rates.

Sic auspicatus bella non melius gerit:
amore captae captus, immotus prece 175
Zminthea tenuit spolia Phoebei senis,
ardore sacrae uirginis iam tum furens.
non illum Achilles flexit indomitus minis,

non ille solus fata qui mundi uidet
(in nos fidelis augur, in captas leuis), 180
non populus aeger et relucens rogi;
inter ruentis Graeciae stragem ultimam
sine hoste uictus marcet ac Veneri uacat
reparatque amores; neue desertus foret
a paelice umquam barbara caelebs torus, 185
ablatam Achilli diligit Lyrnesida
nec rapere pudit e sinu auulsam uiri —
en Paridis hostem! nunc nouum uulnus gerens
amore Phrygiae uatis incensus furit,
et post tropaea Troica ac uersum Ilium 190
captae maritus remeat et Priami gener.

Accingere, anime: bella non leuia apparas.
scelus occupandum est; pigra, quem expectas diem?
Pelopia Phrygiae sceptrum dum teneant nurus?
an te morantur uirgines uiduae domi 195
patrique Orestes similis? horum te mala
uentura moueant, turbo quis rerum imminet.
quid, misera, cessas? [en adest gnatis tuis
furens nouerca] per tuum, si aliter nequit,
latus exigatur ensis et perimat duos; 200
misce cruorem, perde pereundo uirum:
mors misera non est commori cum quo uelis.
[Nvt.] Regina, frena temet et siste impetus
et quanta temptes cogita: uictor uenit
Asiae ferocis, ultor Europae, trahit 205
captiua Pergama et diu uictos Phrygas;
hunc fraude nunc conaris et furto aggredi?
quem non Achilles ense uiolauit fero,
quamuis procacem toruus armasset manum,
non melior Ajax morte decreta furens, 210
non sola Danais Hector et bello mora,
non tela Paridis certa, non Memnon niger,
non Xanthus armis corpora immixta aggerens
fluctusque Simois caede purpureos agens,
non niuea proles Cynus aequorei dei, 215

non bellicoso Thressa cum Rheso phalanx,
non picta pharetras et securigera manu
peltata Amazon, hunc domi reducem paras
mactare et aras caede maculare impia?
Vlatrix inultum Graecia hoc facinus feret? 220
equos et arma classibusque horrens fretum
propone et alto sanguine exundans solum
et tota captae fata Dardaniae domus
regeſta Danais — comprime adfectus truces
mentemque tibimet ipsa pacifica tuam. 225

[**Aegisthvs**] Quod tempus animo ſemper ac mente horru
adeſt profecto, rebus extremum meis.
quid terga uertis, anime? quid primo impetu
deponis arma? crede perniciem tibi
et dira ſaeuos fata moliri deos: 230
opponere cunctis uile ſuppliciis caput,
ferrumque et ignes pectore aduerſo excipe,
Aegisthe: non eſt poena ſic nato mori.

Tu nos pericli ſocia, tu, Leda ſata,
comitare tantum: ſanguinem reddet tibi 235
ignauus iſte ductor ac fortis pater.
ſed quid trementis circuit pallor genas
iacenſque uultu languido optutus ſtupet?

[**Cl.**] Amor iugalis uincit ac flectit retro,
referimur illuc, unde non decuit prius 240

abire; ſed nunc caſta repetatur fides,
nam ſera numquam eſt ad bonos mores uia:
quem paenitet peccaſſe paene eſt innocenſ.

[**Ae.**] Quo raperis amens? credis aut ſperas tibi
Agamemnonis fidele coniugium? ut nihil 245
ſubeſſet animo quod graues faceret metus,
tamen ſuperba et impotens flatu nimis
Fortuna magno ſpiritus tumidos daret.
grauis ille ſociis ſtante adhuc Troia fuit:
quid rere ad animum ſuapte natura trucem 250
Troiam addidiſſe? rex Mycenarum fuit,
ueniet tyrannus: proſpera animos efferunt.

Effusa circa paelicum quanto uenit
 turba apparatu! sola sed turba eminent
 tenetque regem famula ueridici dei. 255
 feresne thalami uicta consortem tui?
 at illa nolet. ultimum est nuptae malum
 palam maritam possidens paelex domum.
 nec regna socium ferre nec taedae sciunt.
 [Cl.] Aegisthe, quid me rursus in praeceps agis 260
 iramque flammis iam residentem incitas?
 permisit aliquid uictor in captam sibi:
 nec coniugem hoc respicere nec dominam decet.
 lex alia solio est, alia priuato in toro.
 quid, quod seueras ferre me leges uiro 265
 non patitur animus turpis admissi memor?
 det ille ueniam facile cui uenia est opus.
 [Ae.] Ita est? pacisci mutuam ueniam licet?
 ignota tibi sunt iura regnorum aut noua?
 nobis maligni iudices, aequi sibi, 270
 id esse regni maximum pignus putant,
 si quidquid aliis non licet solis licet.
 [Cl.] * * * 272a
 ignouit Helenae: iuncta Menelao redit
 quae Europam et Asiam paribus afflixit malis.
 [Ae.] Sed nulla Atriden Venere furtiua abstulit 275
 nec cepit animum coniugi obstrictum suae.
 iam crimen ille quaerit et causas parat.
 nil esse crede turpe commissum tibi:
 quid honesta prodest uita, flagitio uacans?
 ubi dominus odit, fit nocens, non quaeritur. 280
 Spartenne repetes sprete et Eurotan tuum
 patriasque sedes profuga? non dant exitum
 repudia regum: spe metus falsa leuas.
 [Cl.] Delicta nouit nemo nisi fidus mea.
 [Ae.] Non intrat umquam regium limen fides. 285
 [Cl.] Opibus merebor, ut fidem pretio obligem.
 [Ae.] Pretio parata uincitur pretio fides.
 [Cl.] Surgit residuus pristinae mentis pudor;

quid obstrepis? quid uoce blandiloqua mala
consilia dictas? scilicet nubam tibi, 290
regum relicto rege, generosa exuli?

[Ae.] Et cur Atrida uideor inferior tibi,
gnatus Thyestae? [Cl.] Si parum est, adde et nepos.

[Ae.] Auctore Phoebo gignor; haud generis pudet.

[Cl.] Phoebum nefandae stirpis auctorem uocas, 295
quem nocte subita frena reuocantem sua
caelo expulistis? quid deos probro addimus?

subripere doctus fraude geniales toros,
quem Venere tantum scimus inlicita uirum,
facesse propere ac dedecus nostrae domus 300
asporta ab oculis: haec uacat regi ac uiro.

[Ae.] Exilia mihi sunt haud noua; assueui malis.
si tu imperas, regina, non tantum domo
Argisue cedo: nil moror iussu tuo

aperire ferro pectus aerumnis graue. 305

[Cl.] Siquidem hoc cruenta Tyndaris fieri sinam.
quae iuncta peccat debet et culpae fidem.
secede mecum potius, ut rerum statum
dubium ac minacem iuncta consilia explicent.

[Chorvs] Canite, o pubes inclita, Phoebum! 310
tibi festa caput turba coronat,
tibi uirgineas laurum quatiens

de more comas
innuba fudit stirps Inachia.

Tu quoque nostros, Thespias hospes, 315
comitare choros,

quaeque Erasini gelidos fontes,
quaeque Eurotan,

quaeque uirenti tacitum ripa
bibis Ismenon,

quam fatorum praescia Manto,
sata Tiresia, 320

Latonigenas monuit sacris
celebrare deos.

Arcus, uictor, pace relata,

Phoebe, relaxa
umeroque graues leuibus telis
 pone pharetras 325
resonetque manu pulsa citata
 uocale chelys:
nil acre uelim magnumque modis
 intonet altis,
sed quale soles leuiore lyra
 flectere carmen 330
simplex, lusus cum docta tuos
 Musa recenset.
licet et chorda grauiore sones,
 quale canebas
cum Titanas fulmine uictos
 uidere dei,
uel cum montes montibus altis 335
 super impositi
struxere gradus trucibus monstribus,
stetit imposita Pelion Ossa,
pinifer ambos pressit Olympus.
 Ades, o magni, soror et coniunx, 340
consors sceptri, regia Iuno:
tua te colimus turba Mycenae,
tu sollicitum supplexque tui
numinis Argos sola tueris,
tu bella manu pacemque geris; 345
tu nunc laurus Agamemnonias
 accipe uictrix.
Tibi multifora tibia buxo
 sollemne canit,
tibi fila mouent docta puellae
 carmine molli, 350
tibi uotiuam matres Graiae
 lampada iactant:
ad tua coniunx candida tauri
delubra cadet nescia aratri,
nullo collum signata iugo. 355

Tuque, o magni gnata Tonantis,
incluta Pallas,
quae Dardanias saepe petisti
 cuspidе turres,
te permixto matrona minor
 maiorque choro 360
colit et reserat ueniente dea
 templa sacerdos:
tibi nexilibus turba coronis
 redimita uenit,
tibi grandaeui lassique senes
compote uoto reddunt grates 365
libantque manu uina trementi.
 Et te Triuiam nota memores
 uoce precamur:
tu maternam sistere Delon,
 Lucina, iubes,
huc atque illuc prius errantem 370
 Cyclada uentis;
nunc iam stabilis fixa terras
 radice tenet,
respuit auras religatque rates
 assueta sequi.
tu Tantalidos funera matris 375
 uictrix numeras:
stat nunc Sipyli uertice summo
 flebile saxum
et adhuc lacrimas marmora fundunt
 antiqua nouas.
colit impense femina uirque 380
 numen geminum.
 Tuque ante omnis, pater ac rector
 fulmine pollens,
cuius nutu simul extremi
 tremuere poli,
generis nostri, Iuppiter, auctor, 385
 cape dona libens

abauusque tuam non degenerem
respice prolem.

Sed ecce, uasto concitus miles gradu
manifesta properat signa laetitiae ferens
(namque hasta summo lauream ferro gerit) 390
fidusque regi semper Eurybates adest.

[**Eurybates**] Delubra et aras caelitum et patrios lares
post longa fessus spatia, uix credens mihi,
supplex adoro. uota superis soluite:
telluris altum remeat Argolicae decus 395
tandem ad penates uictor Agamemnon suos.

[**Clytemestra**] Felix ad aures nuntius uenit meas.
ubinam petitus per decem coniunx mihi
annos moratur? pelagus an terras premit?
[**Ev.**] Incolumis, auctus gloria, laude inclitus 400
reducem expetito litori impressit pedem.

[**Cl.**] Sacris colamus prosperum tandem diem
et si propitios attamen lentos deos.

Tu pande uiuat coniugis frater mei
et pande teneat quas soror sedes mea. 405
[**Ev.**] Meliora uotis posco et obtestor deos:
nam certa fari sors maris dubii uetat.
ut sparsa tumidum classis excepit mare,
ratis uidere socia non potuit ratem.
quin ipse Atrides aequore immenso uagus 410
grauiora pelago damna quam bello tulit
remeatque uicto similis, exiguas trahens
lacerasque uictor classe de tanta rates.

[**Cl.**] Quis fare nostras hauserit casus rates
aut quae maris fortuna dispulerit duces. 415

[**Ev.**] Acerba fatu poscis, infaustum iubes
miscere laeto nuntium. refugit loqui
mens aegra tantis atque inhorrescit malis.

[**Cl.**] Exprome: clades scire qui refugit suas
grauat timorem; dubia plus torquent mala. 420

[**Ev.**] Vt Pergamum omne Dorica cecidit face,
diuisa praeda est, maria properantes petunt.

iamque ense fessum miles exonerat latus,
neglecta summas scuta per puppes iacent;
ad militares remus aptatur manus 425
omnisque nimium longa properanti mora est.
signum recursus regia ut fulsit rate
et clara laetum remigem monuit tuba,
aurata primas prora designat uias
aperitque cursus, mille quos puppes secent. 430

Hinc aura primo lenis impellit rates
adlapse uelis; unda uix actu leui
tranquilla Zephyri mollis afflatu tremit,
splendetque classe pelagus et pariter latet.
iuuat uidere nuda Troiae litora, 435
iuuat relictis sola Sigei loca.
properat iuuentus omnis adductos simul
lentare remos, adiuuat uentos manu
et ualida nisu brachia alterno mouet.
sulcata uibrant aequora et latera increpant 440
dirimuntque canae caerulum spumae mare.

Vt aura plenos fortior tendit sinus,
posuere tonsas, credita est uento ratis
fususque transtris miles aut terras procul,
quantum recedunt uela, fugientes notat, 445
aut bella narrat: Hectoris fortis minas
currusque et empto redditum corpus rogo,
sparsum cruore regis Herceum Iouem.
tunc qui iacente reciprocus ludit salo
tumidumque pando transilit dorso mare 450
Tyrrhenus omni piscis exultat freto
agitatque gyros et comes lateri adnatat,
anteire naues laetus et rursus sequi;
nunc prima tangens rostra lasciuit chorus,
millesimam nunc ambit et lustrat ratem. 455
iam litus omne tegitur et campi latent
et dubia pereunt montis Idaei iuga;
et uix (quod unum peruicax acies uidet)
Iliacus atra fumus apparet nota.

Iam lassa Titan colla releuabat iugo, 460
in astra iam lux prona, iam praeceps dies:
exigua nubes sordido crescens globo
nitidum cadentis inquinat Phoebi iubar;
suspecta uarius occidens fecit freta.
nox prima caelum sparserat stellis, iacent 465
deserta uento uela. tum murmur graue,
maiora minitans, collibus summis cadit
tractuque longo litus ac petrae gemunt;
agitata uentis unda uenturis tumet:
cum subito luna conditur, stellae latent; 470
nec una nox est: densa tenebras obruit 472
caligo et omni luce subducta fretum
caelumque miscet. undique incumbunt simul
rapiuntque pelagus infimo euersum solo 475
aduersus Euro Zephyrus et Boreae Notus.
sua quisque mittunt tela et infesti fretum
emoliuntur, turbo conuoluit mare:
Strymonius altis Aquilo contorquet niues
Libycusque harenas Auster ac Syrtes agit, 480
[nec manet in Austro; fit grauis nimbus Notus]
imbre auget undas; Euris orientem mouet
Nabataea quatiens regna et Eois sinus.
quid rabidus ora Corus Oceano exerens?
mundum reuelli sedibus totum suis 485
ipsosque rupto crederes caelo deos
decidere et atrum rebus induci chaos.
uento resistit aestus et uentus retro
aestum reuoluit; non capit sese mare:
in astra pontus tollitur, caelum perit 471
undaeque miscent imber et fluctus suas. 490
nec hoc leuamen denique aerumnis datur,
uidere saltem et nosse quo pereant malo:
premunt tenebrae lumina et dirae Stygis
inferna nox est. excidunt ignes tamen
et nube dirum fulmen elisa micat; 495
miserisque lucis tanta dulcedo est malae:

hoc lumen optant. Ipsa se classis premit
et prora prorae nocuit et lateri latus.
illam dehiscens pontus in praeceps rapit
hauritque et alto redditam reuomit mari; 500
haec onere sidit, illa conuulsum latus
submittit undis, fluctus hanc decimus tegit;
haec lacera et omni decore populato leuis
fluitat nec illi uela nec tonsae manent
nec rectus altas malus antemnas ferens, 505
sed trunca toto puppis Ionio natat.

Nil ratio et usus audet: ars cessit malis;
tenet horror artus, omnis officio stupet
nauita relicto, remus effugit manus.
in uota miseros ultimus cogit timor 510
eademque superos Troes et Danai rogant.
quid fata possunt! inuidet Pyrrhus patri,
Aiaci Vlixes, Hectori Atrides minor,
Agamemno Priamo: quisquis ad Troiam iacet
felix uocatur, cadere qui meruit gradu, 515
quem fama seruat, uicta quem tellus tegit.
'Nil nobile ausos pontus atque undae ferent?
ignaua fortes fata consument uiros?
perdenda mors est? quisquis es, nondum malis
satiare tantis, caelitum, tandem tuum 520
numen serena: cladibus nostris daret
uel Troia lacrimas. odia si durant tua
placetque mitti Doricum exitio genus,
quid hos simul perire nobiscum iuuat,
quibus perimus? sistite infestum mare: 525
uehit ista Danaos classis? et Troas uehit!'
nec plura possunt: occupat uocem mare.

Ecce alia clades. fulmine irati Iouis
armata Pallas quidquid aut hasta minax
aut aegide et furore Gorgoneo potest, 530
hoc igne patrio temptat, et caelo nouae
spirant procellae. solus inuictus malis
luctatur Ajax. uela cogentem hunc sua

tento rudente flamma perstrinxit cadens.
libratur aliud fulmen: hoc toto impetu 535
certum reducta Pallas excussit manu,
imitata patrem. transit Aiace[m] et ratem
ratisque partem secum et Aiace[m] tulit.
nil ille motus, ardua ut cautes, salo
ambustus extat, dirimit insanum mare 540
fluctusque rumpit pectore et nauem manu
complexus ignes traxit et caeco mari
conlucet Ajax; omne resplendet fretum.
Tandem occupata rupe furibundum intonat:
'superasse ~nunc pelagus atque ignes iuuat, 545
uicisse caelum Palladem fulmen mare.
non me fugauit bellici terror dei,
[et Hectorem una solus et Martem tuli]
Phoebea nec me tela pepulerunt gradu:
cum Phrygibus istos uicimus — tene horream 550
aliena inert[i] tela iaculantem manu?
quid si ipse mittat?' plura cum auderet furens,
tridente rupem subruit pulsam pater
Neptunus imis exerens undis caput
soluitque montem; quem cadens secum tulit 555
terraque et igne uictus et pelago iacet.

Nos alia maior naufragos pestis uocat.
est humilis unda, scrup[er]eis mendax uadis,
ubi saxa rapidis clausa uerticibus tegit
fallax Caphereus; aestuat scopulis fretum 560
feruetque semper fluctus alterna uice.
arx imminet praerupta quae spectat mare
utrimque geminum: Pelopis hinc oras tui
et Isthmon, arto qui recuruatus solo
Ionia iungi maria Phryxeis uetat, 565
hinc scelere Lemnon nobilem, hinc Anthedona
tardamque ratibus Aulida: hanc arcem occupat
Palamedis ille genitor et clarum manu
lumen nefanda uertice e summo efferens
in saxa ducit perfida classem face. 570

haerent acutis rupibus fixae rates;
has inopis undae breuia comminuunt uada,
pars uehitur huius prima, pars scopulo sedet;
hanc alia retro spatia relegendem ferit
et fracta frangit. iam timent terram rates 575
et maria malunt. cecidit in lucem furor:
postquam litatum est Ilio, Phoebus redit
et damna noctis tristis ostendit dies.

[Cl.] Vtrumne doleam laeter an reducem uirum?
remeasse laetor, uulnus et regni graue 580
lugere cogor. redde iam Graiis, pater
altisona quatiens regna, placatos deos.
nunc omne laeta fronde ueletur caput,
sacrifica dulces tibia effundat modos
et niuea magnas uictima ante aras cadat. 585

Sed ecce, turba tristis incomptae comas
Iliades adsunt, quas super celso gradu
effrena Phoebas entheas laurus quatit.

[Chorvs] Heu quam dulce malum mortalibus additum
uitae dirus amor, cum pateat malis 590
effugium et miseros libera mors uocet,
portus aeterna placidus quiete.
nullus hunc terror nec impotentis
procella Fortunae mouet aut iniqui

flamma Tonantis. 595
pax alta nullos ciuium coetus
timet aut minaces uictoris iras,
non maria asperis insana Coris,
non acies feras puluereamue nubem
motam barbaricis equitum cateruis, 600
non urbe cum tota populos cadentis
hostica muros populante flamma
indomitumque bellum.

Solus seruitium perrumpet omne
contemptor leuium deorum, 605
qui uultus Acherontis atri,
qui Styga tristem non tristis uidet

audetque uitae ponere finem:
par ille regi, par superis erit.
o quam miserum est nescire mori! 610

Vidimus patriam ruentem
nocte funesta, cum Dardana tecta
Dorici raperetis ignes.
non illa bello uicta, non armis,
ut quondam Herculea cecidit pharetra;
quam non Pelei Thetidisque natus 615
carusque Pelidae nimium feroci
uicit, acceptis cum fulsit armis
fuditque Troas falsus Achilles,
aut cum ipse Pelides animos feroces
sustulit luctu celeremque saltu 620
Troades summis timuere muris,
perdidit in malis extremum decus
fortiter uinci: restitit annis
Troia bis quinis unius noctis
peritura furto.

Vidimus simulata dona 625
molis immensae Danaumque
fatale munus duximus nostra
creduli dextra tremuitque saepe
limine in primo sonipes cauernis
conditos reges bellumque gestans. 630
et licuit dolos uersare ut ipsi
fraude sua caderent Pelasgi:
saepe commotae sonuere parmae
tacitumque murmur percussit aures,
ut fremuit male subdolo 635
parens Pyrrhus Vlixi.

Secura metus Troica pubes
sacros gaudet tangere funes.
hinc aequaeui gregis Astyanax,
hinc Haemonio desponsa rogo 640
ducunt turmas, haec femineas,
ille uiriles.

festae matres uotiuā ferunt
munera diuis,
festi patres adeunt aras; 645
unus tota est uultus in urbe;
et, quod numquam post Hectoreos
uidimus ignes, laeta est Hecabe.

Quid nunc primum, dolor infelix,
quidue extremum deflere paras? 650
moenia diuum fabricata manu,
diruta nostra?
an templa deos super usta suos?
non uacat istis lacrimare malis:
te, magne parens, flent Iliades. 655
uidi, uidi senis in iugulo
telum Pyrrhi uix exiguo
sanguine tingui.

[**Cassandra**] Cohibete lacrimas omne quas tempus petet,
Troades, et ipsae uestra lamentabili 660
lugete gemitu funera: aerumnae meae
socium recusant. cladibus questus meis
remouete: nostris ipsa sufficiam malis.

[**Cho.**] Lacrimas lacrimis miscere iuuat:
magis exurunt quos secretae 665
lacerant curae,

iuuat in medium deflere suos.
Nec tu, quamuis dura uirago
patiensque mali,
poteris tantas flere ruinas.
non quae uerno mobile carmen 670
ramo cantat tristis aedon
Ityn in uarios modulata sonos,
non quae tectis Bistonis ales
residens summis impia diri
furta mariti garrula narrat, 675
lugere tuam poterit digne
conquesta domum,
licet ipse uelit clarus niueos

inter olores Histrum cycnus
Tanainque colens extrema loqui, 680
licet alcyones Ceyca suum
fluctu leuiter plangente sonent,
cum tranquillo male confisae
credunt iterum pelago audaces
fetusque suos nido puidae 685

titubante fouent,
non si molles imitata uiros
tristis laceret brachia tecum
quae turritae turba parenti
pectora rauco concita buxo
ferit ut Phrygium lugeat Attin. 690
non est lacrimis, Cassandra, modus,
quia quae patimur uicere modum.

Sed cur sacratas deripis capiti infulas?
miseris colendos maxime superos putem.
[Ca.] Vicere nostra iam metus omnis mala. 695
equidem nec ulla caelites placo prece
nec, si uelint saeuire, quo noceant habent.

Fortuna uires ipsa consumpsit suas.
quae patria restat, quis pater, quae iam soror?
bibere tumuli sanguinem atque arae meum. 700
quid illa felix turba fraterni gregis?
exhausta nempe: regia miseri senes
uacua relict, totque per thalamos uident
praeter Lacaenam ceteras uiduas nurus.
tot illa regum mater et regimen Phrygum, 705
fecunda in ignes Hecuba factorum nouas
experta leges induit uultos feros:

circa ruinas rabida latrauit suas,
Troiae superstes, Hectori, Priamo, sibi.
[Cho.] Silet repente Phoebas et pallor genas 710
creberque totum possidet corpus tremor;
stetere uittae, mollis horrescit coma,
anhela corda murmure incluso fremunt,
incerta nutant lumina et uersi retro

torquentur oculi, rursus immoti rigent. 715
nunc leuat in auras altior solito caput
graditurque celsa, nunc reluctantis parat
reserare fauces, uerba nunc clauso male
custodit ore maenas impatiens dei.
[Ca.] Quid me furoris incitam stimulis noui, 720
quid mentis inopem, sacra Parnasi iuga,
rapitis? recede, Phoebe, iam non sum tua,
extingue flammas pectori infixas meo.
cui nunc uagor uesana? cui bacchor furens?
iam Troia cecidit — falsa quid uates agor? 725

Vbi sum? fugit lux alma et obscurat genas
nox alta et aether abditus tenebris latet.
sed ecce gemino sole praefulget dies
geminumque duplices Argos attollit domus.
Idaea cerno nemora: fatalis sedet 730
inter potentes arbiter pastor deas.
timete, reges, moneo, furtium genus:
agrestis iste alumnus euertet domum.
Quid ista uecors tela feminea manu
dstricta praefert? quem petit dextra uirum 735
Lacaena cultu, ferrum Amazonium gerens?
quae uersat oculos alia nunc facies meos?
uictor ferarum colla sublimis iacet
ignobili sub dente Marmaricus leo,
morsus cruentos passus audacis leae. 740

Quid me uocatis sospitem solam e meis,
umbrae meorum? te sequor, tota pater
Troia sepulte; frater, auxilium Phrygum
terrorque Danaum, non ego antiquum decus
uideo aut calentes ratibus exustis manus, 745
sed lacera membra et saucios uinclo graui
illos lacertos. te sequor, nimium cito
congresse Achilli Troile; incertos geris,
Deiphobe, uultus, coniugis munus nouae.
iuuat per ipsos ingredi Stygios lacus, 750
iuuat uidere Tartari saeuum canem

audique regna Ditis! haec hodie ratis
Phlegethontis atri regias animas uehet,
uictamque uictricemque. uos, umbrae, precor,
iurata superis unda, te pariter precor: 755
reserate paulum terga nigrantis poli,
leuis ut Mycenae turba prospiciat Phrygum.
spectate, miseri: fata se uertunt retro.

Instant sorores squalidae,
anguinea iactant uerbera, 760
fert laeua semustas faces
turgentque pallentes genae
et uestis atri funeris
exesa cingit ilia

* * * * * 764a

strepuntque nocturni metus
et ossa uasti corporis
corrupta longinquo situ
palude limosa iacent.

Et ecce, defessus senex
ad ora ludentes aquas 770
non captat oblitus sitim,
maestus futuro funere.
exultat et ponit gradus
pater decoros Dardanus.

[**Cho.**] Iam peruagatus ipse se fregit furor, 775
caditque flexo qualis ante aras genu
ceruice taurus uulnus incertum gerens.
releuemus artus. — En deos tandem suos
uictrice lauru cinctus Agamemnon adit,
et festa coniunx obuio illi tulit 780
gressus reditque iuncta concordia gradu.

[**Agamemnon**] Tandem reuertor sospes ad patrios lares;
o cara salue terra! tibi tot barbarae
dedere gentes spolia, tibi felix diu
potentis Asiae domina summisit manus. 785

Quid ista uates corpus effusa ac tremens
dubia labat ceruice? famuli, attollite,

refouete gelido latice. iam recipit diem
marcente uisu. Suscita sensus tuos:
optatus ille portus aerumnis adest. 790
festus dies est. [Ca.] Festus et Troiae fuit.
[Ag.] Veneremur aras. [Ca.] Cecidit ante aras pater.
[Ag.] Iouem precemur pariter. [Ca.] Herceum Iouem?
[Ag.] Credis uidere te Ilium? [Ca.] Et Priamum simul.
[Ag.] Hic Troia non est. [Ca.] Vbi Helena est, Troiam puta. 795
[Ag.] Ne metue dominam famula. [Ca.] Libertas adest.
[Ag.] Secura uiue. [Ca.] Mihi mori est securitas.
[Ag.] Nullum est periculum tibimet. [Ca.] At magnum tibi.
[Ag.] Victor timere quid potest? [Ca.] Quod non timet.
[Ag.] Hanc fida famuli turba, dum excutiat deum, 800
retinete ne quid impotens peccet furor.

At te, pater, qui saeua torques fulmina
pellisque nubes, sidera et terras regis,
ad quem triumpho spolia uictores ferunt,
et te sororem cuncta pollentis uiri, 805
Argolica Iuno, pecore uotiuo libens
Arabumque donis supplice et fibra colam.

[Chorvs] Argos nobilibus nobile ciuibus,
Argos iratae carum nouercae,
semper ingentes educas alumnos, 810
imparem aequasti numerum deorum:
tuus ille bis seno meruit labore
adlegi caelo magnus Alcides,
cui lege mundi Iuppiter rupta
roscidae noctis geminauit horas 815
iussitque Phoebum
tardius celeres agitare currus
et tuas lente remeare bigas,
candida Phoebe.

* * * rettulitque pedem
nomen alternis stella quae mutat 820
seque mirata est Hesperum dici.
Aurora mouit
ad solitas uices caput et relabens

imposuit seni collum marito.
Sensit ortus, sensit occasus
Herculem nasci: uiolentus ille 825
nocte non una poterat creari.
tibi concitatus substitit mundus,
o puer subiture caelum.

Te sensit Nemeaeus arto
pressus lacerto fulmineus leo 830
ceruaque Parrhasis,
sensit Arcadii populator agri
gemuitque taurus Dictaea linquens
horridus arua.

Morte fecundum domuit draconem 835
uetuitque collo pereunte nasci,
geminosque fratres
pectore ex uno tria monstra natos
stipite incusso fregit insultans
duxitque ad ortus Hesperium pecus, 840
Geryonae spoliū triformis.

Egit Threiciū gregem,
quem non Strymonii gramine fluminis
Hebriue ripis pauit tyrannus:
hospitum dirus stabulis cruorem 845
praebuit saeuis tinxitque crudos
ultimus rictus sanguis aurigae.

Vidit Hippolyte ferox
pectore e medio rapi
spoliū, et sagittis nube percussa 850
Stymphalis alto decidit caelo
arborque pomis fertilis aureis
extimuit manus insueta carpi
fugitque in auras leuiore ramo.
audiuit sonitum crepitante lamna 855
frigidus custos nescius somni,
linqueret cum iam nemus omne fuluo
plenus Alcides uacuum metallo.
Tractus ad caelum canis inferorum

triplici catena tacuit nec ullo 860
latrauit ore,
lucis ignotae metuens colorem.
Te duce succidit
mendax Dardanidae domus
et sensit arcus iterum timendos;
te duce concidit totidem diebus 865

Troia quot annis.

[Ca.] Res agitur intus magna, par annis decem.
eheu quid hoc est? anime, consurge et cape
pretium furoris: uicimus uicti Phryges.
bene est, resurgis Troia; traxisti iacens 870
pares Mycenae, terga dat uictor tuus!
Tam clara numquam prouidae mentis furor
ostendit oculis: uideo et intersum et fruor;
imago uisus dubia non fallit meos:
spectemus! epulae regia instructae domo, 875
quales fuerunt ultimae Phrygibus dapes,
celebrantur: ostro lectus Iliaco nitet
merumque in auro ueteris Assaraci trahunt.
et ipse picta ueste sublimis iacet,
Priami superbas corpore exuuias gerens. 880

Detrahere cultus uxor hostiles iubet,
induere potius coniugis fidae manu
textos amictus — horreo atque animo tremo:
regemne perimet exul et adulter uirum?
uenere fata. sanguinem extremae dapes 885
domini uidebunt et cruor Baccho incidet.
Mortifera uinctum perfidae tradit neci
induta uestis: exitum manibus negant
caputque laxi et inuui cludunt sinus.
haurit trementi semiuir dextra latus, 890
nec penitus egit: uulnere in medio stupet.
At ille, ut altis hispidus siluis aper
cum casse uinctus temptat egressus tamen
artatque motu uincla et in cassum furit,
cupit fluentes undique et caecos sinus 895

dissicere et hostem quaerit implicitus suum.

Armat bipenni Tyndaris dextram furens,
qualisque ad aras colla taurorum prius
designat oculis * * * *

* * * antequam ferro petat,
sic huc et illuc impiam librat manum. 900
habet, peractum est. pendet exigua male
caput amputatum parte et hinc trunco cruor
exundat, illinc ora cum fremitu iacent.
Nondum recedunt: ille iam exanimem petit
laceratque corpus, illa fodientem adiuvat. 905
uterque tanto scelere respondet suis:
est hic Thyestae natus, haec Helenae soror.

Stat ecce Titan dubius emerito die,
suane currat an Thyestea uia.

[**Electra**] Fuge, o paternae mortis auxilium unicum, 910
fuge et scelestas hostium euita manus.
euersa domus est funditus, regna occidunt.

Quis iste celeres concitus currus agit?
germane, uultus ueste furabor tuos.
quid, anime demens, refugis? externos times? 915
domus timenda est. pone iam trepidos metus,
Oresta: amici fida praesidia intuo.

[**Strophius**] Phocide relictis Strophius Elea inclutus
palma reuertor. causa ueniendi fuit
gratari amico, cuius impulsum manu 920
cecidit decenni Marte concussum Ilium.

Quaenam ista lacrimis lugubrem uultum rigat
pauetque maesta? regium agnosco genus.

Electra, fletus causa quae laeta in domo est?

[**El.**] Pater peremptus scelere materno iacet, 925
comes paternae quaeritur natus neci,
Aegisthus arces Venere quaesitas tenet.

[**St.**] O nulla longi temporis felicitas!

[**El.**] Per te parentis memoriam obtestor mei,
per sceptris terris nota, per dubios deos: 930
recipe hunc Oresten ac pium furtum occulte.

[St.] Etsi timendum caesus Agamemnon docet,
aggrediar et te, Oresta, furabor libens.

[fidem secunda poscunt, aduersa exigunt]
cape hoc decorum ludicri certaminis, 935
insigne frontis; laeua uictricem tenens
frondem uirenti protegat ramo caput,
et ista donum palma Pisaei Iouis
uelamen eadem praestet atque omen tibi.
Tuque, o paternis assidens frenis comes, 940
condisce, Pylade, patris exemplo fidem.

Vos Graecia nunc teste ueloces equi
infida cursu fugite praecipiti loca.

[El.] Excessit, abiit, currus effreno impetu
effugit aciem. tuta iam opperiar meos 945
hostes et ultro uulneri opponam caput.

Adest cruenta coniugis uictrix sui,
et signa caedis ueste maculata gerit.
manus recenti sanguine etiamnunc madent
uultusque prae se scelera truculenti ferunt. 950
concedam ad aras. — Patere me uittis tuis,
Cassandra, iungi paria metuentem tibi.

[Clytemestra] Hostis parentis, impium atque audax caput,
quo more coetus publicos uirgo petis?

[El.] Adulterorum uirgo deserui domum. 955

[Cl.] Quis esse credat uirginem — [El.] Gnatam tuam?

[Cl.] Modestius cum matre. [El.] Pietatem doces?

[Cl.] Animos uiriles corde tumefacto geris;
sed agere domita feminam disces malo.

[El.] Nisi forte fallor, feminas ferrum decet. 960

[Cl.] Et esse demens te parem nobis putas?

[El.] Vobis? quis iste est alter Agamemnon tuus?
ut uidua loquere: uir caret uita tuus.

[Cl.] Indomita posthac uirginis uerba impiae
regina frangam; citius interea mihi 965
edissere ubi sit gnatus, ubi frater tuus.

[El.] Extra Mycenae. [Cl.] Redde nunc gnatum mihi.

[El.] Et tu parentem redde. [Cl.] Quo latitat loco?

[El.] Tuto quietus, regna non metuens noua:
iustae parenti satis. [Cl.] At iratae parum. 970
mories hodie. [El.] Dummodo hac moriar manu.
recedo ab aris. siue te iugulo iuuat
mersisse ferrum, praebeo iugulum tibi;
seu more pecudum colla resecari placet,
intenta ceruix uulnus expectat tuum. 975
scelus paratum est: caede respersam uiri
atque obsoletam sanguine hoc dextram ablue.

[Cl.] Consors pericli pariter ac regni mei,
Aegisthe, gradere. gnata genetricem impie
probris lacessit, occulit fratrem abditum. 980

[Aegisthvs] Furibunda uirgo, uocis infandae sonum
et aure uerba indigna materna opprime.

[El.] Etiam monebit sceleris infandi artifex,
per scelera natus, nomen ambiguum suis,
idem sororis gnatus et patris nepos? 985

[Cl.] Aegisthe, cessas impium ferro caput
demetere? fratrem reddat aut animam statim.

[Ae.] Abstrusa caeco carcere et saxo exigit
aeuum; per omnes torta poenarum modos
referre quem nunc occulit fors uolet. 990
inops egens inclusa, paedore obruta,
uidua ante thalamos, exul, inuisa omnibus
aethere negato sero subcumbet malis.

[El.] Concede mortem. [Ae.] Si recusares, darem:
rudis est tyrannus morte qui poenam exigit. 995

[El.] Mortem aliquid ultra est? [Ae.] Vita, si cupias mori. —
Abripite, famuli, monstrum et auctam procul
ultra Mycenae ultimo in regni angulo
uincite saeptam nocte tenebrosi specus,
ut inquietam uirginem carcer domet. 1000

[Cl.] At ista poenas capite persoluet suo
captiua coniunx, regii paelex tori.
trahite, ut sequatur coniugem ereptum mihi.

[Ca.] Ne trahite, uestros ipsa praecedam gradus.
perferre prima nuntium Phrygiis meis 1005

propero: repletum ratibus euersis mare,
captas Mycenae, mille ductorem ducum,
ut paria fata Troicis lueret malis,
perisse dono, feminae stupro, dolo.
nihil moramur, rapite, quin grates ago: 1010
iam, iam iuuat uixisse post Troiam, iuuat.
[Cl.] Furiosa, morere. [Ca.] Veniet et uobis furor.

OEDIPUS

Oedipvs Iam nocte Titan dubius expulsa redit
et nube maestum squalida exoritur iubar,
lumenque flamma triste luctifica gerens
prospiciet auida peste solatas domos,
stragemque quam nox fecit ostendet dies. 5
Quisquamne regno gaudet? o fallax bonum,
quantum malorum fronte quam blanda tegis!
ut alta uentos semper excipiunt iuga
rupemque saxis uasta dirimentem freta
quamuis quieti uerberat fluctus maris, 10
imperia sic excelsa Fortunae obiacent.
Quam bene parentis sceptrum Polybi fugeram!
curis solutus exul, intrepidus uagans
(caelum deosque testor) in regnum incidi;
infanda timeo: ne mea genitor manu 15
perimatur; hoc me Delphicae laurus monent,
aliudque nobis maius indicunt scelus.
est maius aliquod patre mactato nefas?
pro misera pietas (eloqui fatum pudet),
thalamos parentis Phoebus et diros toros 20
gnato minatur impia incestos face.
hic me paternis expulit regnis timor,
hoc ego penates profugus excessi meos:
parum ipse fidens mihimet in tuto tua,
natura, posui iura. cum magna horreas, 25
quod posse fieri non putes metuas tamen:
cuncta expauesco meque non credo mihi.

Iam iam aliquid in nos fata moliri parant.
nam quid rear quod ista Cadmeae lues
infesta genti strage tam late edita 30
mihi parcit uni? cui reseruamur malo?
inter ruinas urbis et semper nouis
deflenda lacrimis funera ac populi struem
incolumis asto — scilicet Phoebi reus.

sperare poteras sceleribus tantis dari 35
regnum salubre? fecimus caelum nocens.

Non aura gelido lenis afflatu fouet
anhela flammis corda, non Zephyri leues
spirant, sed ignes auget aestiferi canis
Titan, leonis terga Nemeaei premens. 40
deseruit amnes umor atque herbas color
aretque Dirce, tenuis Ismenos fluit
et tinguunt inopi nuda uix unda uada.
obscura caelo labitur Phoebi soror,
tristisque mundus nubilo pallet nouo. 45
nullum serenae noctibus sidus micat,
sed grauis et ater incubat terris uapor:
obtexunt arces caelorum ac summas domos
inferna facies. denegat fructum Ceres
adulta, et altis flaua cum spicis tremat, 50
arente culmo sterilis emoritur seges.
Nec ulla pars immunis exitio uacat,
sed omnis aetas pariter et sexus ruit,
iuuenesque senibus iungit et gnatis patres
funesta pestis, una fax thalamos cremat, 55
fletuque acerbo funera et questu carent.
quin ipsa tanti peruicax clades mali
siccauit oculos, quodque in extremis solet,
periere lacrimae. portat hunc aeger parens
supremum ad ignem, mater hunc amens gerit 60
properatque ut alium repetat in eundem rogam.
quin luctu in ipso luctus exoritur nouus,
suaeque circa funus exequiae cadunt.
tum propria flammis corpora alienis cremant;
diripitur ignis: nullus est miseris pudor. 65
non ossa tumuli lecta discreti tegunt:
arsisse satis est — pars quota in cineres abit?
dest terra tumulis, iam rogos siluae negant.
non uota, non ars ulla correptos leuat:
cadunt medentes, morbus auxilium trahit. 70

Adfusus aris supplices tendo manus

matura poscens fata, praecurram ut prior
patriam ruentem neuē post omnis cadam
fiamque regni funus extremum mei.
o saeua nimium numina, o fatum graue! 75
negatur uni nempe in hoc populo mihi
mors tam parata? sperne letali manu
contacta regna, linque lacrimas, funera,
tabifica caeli uitia quae tecum inuehis
infaustus hospes, profuge iamdudum ocius — 80
uel ad parentes. **Iocasta** Quid iuuat, coniunx, mala
grauare questu? regium hoc ipsum reor:
aduersa capere, quoque sit dubius magis
status et cadentis imperi moles labet,
hoc stare certo pressius fortem gradu: 85
haud est uirile terga Fortunae dare.

Oe. Abest pauoris crimen ac probrum procul,
uirtusque nostra nescit ignauos metus:
si tela contra stricta, si uis horrida
Mauortis in me rueret — aduersus feros 90
audax Gigantas obuias ferrem manus.
nec Sphinga caecis uerba nectentem modis
fugi: cruentos uatis infandae tuli
rictus et albens ossibus sparsis solum;
cumque e superna rupe iam praedae imminens 95
aptaret alas uerbera et caudae mouens
saeui leonis more conciperet minas,
carmen poposci: sonuit horrendum insuper,
crepuere malae, saxaque impatiens morae
reuulsit unguis uiscera expectans mea; 100
nodosa sortis uerba et implexos dolos
ac triste carmen alitis solui ferae.

Quid sera mortis uota nunc demens facis?
licuit perire. laudis hoc pretium tibi
sceptrum et peremptae Sphingis haec merces datur. 105
ille, ille dirus callidi monstri cinis
in nos rebellat, illa nunc Thebas lues

perempta perdit. Vna iam superest salus,
si quam salutis Phoebus ostendat uiam.

Chorvs Occidis, Cadmi generosa proles, 110

urbe cum tota; uiduas colonis
respicis terras, miseranda Thebe.

carpitur leto tuus ille, Bacche,
miles, extremos comes usque ad Indos,
ausus Eois equitare campis 115

figere et mundo tua signa primo:

cinnami siluis Arabas beatos

uidit et uersas equitis sagittas,

terga fallacis metuenda Parthi;

litus intrauit pelagi rubentis: 120

promit hinc ortus aperitque lucem

Phoebus et flamma propiore nudos

inficit Indos.

Stirpis inuictae genus interimus,

labimur saeuo rapiente fato; 125

ducitur semper noua pompa Morti:

longus ad manes properatur ordo

agminis maesti, seriesque tristis

haeret et turbae tumulos petenti

non satis septem patuere portae. 130

stat grauis strages premiturque iuncto

funere funus.

Prima uis tardas tetigit bidentes:

laniger pingues male carpsit herbas;

colla tacturus steterat sacerdos: 135

dum manus certum parat alta uulnus,

aureo taurus rutilante cornu

labitur segnis; patuit sub ictu

ponderis uasti resoluta ceruix:

nec cruor, ferrum maculauit atra 140

turpis e plaga sanies profusa.

segnior cursu sonipes in ipso

concidit gyro dominumque prono

prodidit armo.

Incubant agris pecudes relictæ; 145
taurus armento pereunte marcet:
deficit pastor grege deminuto
tabidos inter moriens iuuenos.
non lupos cerui metuunt rapaces,
cessat irati fremitus leonis, 150
nulla uillosis feritas in ursis;
perdidit pestem latebrosa serpens:
aret et sicco moritur ueneno.

Non silua sua decorata coma
fundit opacis montibus umbras, 155
non rura uirent ubere glebae,
non plena suo uitis Iaccho
bracchia curuat:

omnia nostrum sensere malum.
Rupere Erebi claustra profundi 160
turba sororum face Tartarea
Phlegethonque sua motam ripa
miscuit undis Styga Sidoniis.
Mors atra auidos oris hiatus
pandit et omnis explicat alas; 165
quique capaci turbida cumba
flumina seruat

durus senio nauita crudo,
uix assiduo bracchia conto
lassata refert,
fessus turbam uectare nouam. 170

Quin Taenarii uincula ferri
rupisse canem fama et nostris
errare locis, mugisse solum,
uaga per lucos * * *
simulacra uirum maiora uiris, 175
bis Cadmeum niue discussa

tremuisse nemus,
bis turbatam sanguine Dircen,
nocte silenti * * *

Amphionios ululasse canes.

O dira noui facies leti 180

grauior leto:

piger ignauos alligat artus

languor, et aegro rubor in uultu,

maculaeque cutem sparsere leues.

tum uapor ipsam corporis arcem 185

flammeus urit

multoque genas sanguine tendit,

oculique rigent, resonant aures 187a,188b

stillatque niger naris aduncae 189

cruor et uenas rumpit hiantes;

intima creber uiscera quassat

gemitus stridens 192a

et sacer ignis pascitur artus. 187b,188a

Iamque amplexu frigida presso 192b,193a

saxa fatigant; 193b

quos liberior domus elato 193c

custode sinit, petitis fontes 195

aliturque sitis latice ingesto.

Prostrata iacet turba per aras

oratque mori:

solum hoc faciles tribuere dei.

delubra petunt, haut ut uoto

numina placent, 200

sed iuuat ipsos satiare deos.

Quisnam ille propero regiam gressu petit?

adestne clarus sanguine ac factis Creo

an aeger animus falsa pro ueris uidet?

adest petitus omnibus uotis Creo. 205

Oedipvs Horrore quatiore, fata quo uergant timens,

trepidumque gemino pectus affectu labat:

ubi laeta duris mixta in ambiguo iacent,

incertus animus scire cum cupiat timet.

Germane nostrae coniugis, fessis opem 210

si quam reportas, uoce properata edoce.

Creo Responsa dubia sorte perplexa iacent.

Oe. Dubiam salutem qui dat afflictis negat.

Cr. Ambage flexa Delphico mos est deo
arcana tegere. **Oe.** Fare, sit dubium licet: 215
ambigua soli noscere Oedipodae datur.

Cr. Caedem expiari regiam exilio deus
et interemptum Laium ulcisci iubet:
non ante caelo lucidus curret dies
haustusque tutos aetheris puri dabit. 220

Oe. Et quis peremptor incluti regis fuit?
quem memoret ede Phoebus, ut poenas luat.

Cr. Sit, precor, dixisse tutum uisu et auditu horrida;
torpor insedit per artus, frigidus sanguis coit.
ut sacrata templa Phoebi supplici intraui pede 225
et pias numen precatus rite summissi manus,
gemina Parnasi niualis arx trucem fremitum dedit;
imminens Phoebea laurus tremuit et mouit domum
ac repente sancta fontis lympa Castalii stetit.
incipit Letoa uates spargere horrentes comas 230
et pati commota Phoebum; contigit nondum specum,
emicat uasto fragore maior humano sonus:
‘mitia Cadmeis remeabunt sidera Thebis,
si profugus Dircen Ismenida liquerit hospes
regis caede nocens, Phoebo iam notus et infans. 235
nec tibi longa manent sceleratae gaudia caedis:
tecum bella geres, natis quoque bella relinques,
turpis maternos iterum reuolutus in ortus.’

Oe. Quod facere monitu caelitem iussus paro,
functi cineribus regis hoc decuit dari, 240
ne sancta quisquam sceptrum uiolaret dolo.
regi tuenda maxime regum est salus:
quaerit peremptum nemo quem incolumem timet.

Cr. Curam perempti maior excussit timor.

Oe. Pium prohibuit ullus officium metus? 245

Cr. Prohibent nefandi carminis tristes minae.

Oe. Nunc expietur numinum imperio scelus.

Quisquis deorum regna placatus uides:
tu, tu penes quem iura praecipitis poli,
tuque, o sereni maximum mundi decus, 250
bis sena cursu signa qui uario legis,
qui tarda celeri saecula euoluis rota,
sororque fratri semper occurrens tuo,
noctiuaga Phoebe, quique uentorum potens
aequor per altum caerulos currus agis, 255
et qui carentis luce disponis domos,
adeste: cuius Laius dextra occidit,
hunc non quieta tecta, non fidi lares,
non hospitalis exulem tellus ferat:
thalamis pudendis doleat et prole impia; 260
hic et parentem dextera perimat sua,
faciatque (num quid grauius optari potest?)
quidquid ego fugi. Non erit ueniae locus:
per regna iuro quaeque nunc hospes gero
et quae reliqui perque penetrales deos, 265
per te, pater Neptune, qui fluctu leui
utrimque nostro geminus alludis solo;
et ipse nostris uocibus testis ueni,
fatidica uatis ora Cirrhaeae mouens:
ita molle senium ducat et summum diem 270
securus alto reddat in solio parens
solasque Merope nouerit Polybi faces,
ut nulla sontem gratia eripiet mihi.

Sed quo nefandum facinus admissum loco est,
memorate: aperto Marte an insidiis iacet? 275

Cr. Frondifera sanctae nemora Castaliae petens

calcauit artis obsitum dumis iter,
trigemina qua se spargit in campos uia.
secat una gratum Phocidos Baccho solum,
unde altus arua deserit, caelum petens, 280
clementer acto colle Parnasos biceps;
at una bimaris Sisyphi terras adit
Olenia in arua; tertius trames caua
conualle serpens tangit errantes aquas
gelidumque dirimit amnis Olmii uadum: 285
hic pace fretum subita praedonum manus
aggressa ferro facinus occultum tulit.

In tempore ipso sorte Phoebea excitus
Tiresia tremulo tardus accelerat genu
comesque Manto luce uiduatum trahens. 290

Oe. Sacrate diuis, proximum Phoebo caput,
responsa solue; fare, quem poenae petant.

Tiresia Quod tarda fatu est lingua, quod quaerit moras
haut te quidem, magnanime, mirari addecet:
uisu carenti magna pars ueri patet. 295
sed quo uocat me patria, quo Phoebus, sequar:
fata eruantur; si foret uiridis mihi
calidusque sanguis, pectore exciperem deum.

Appellite aris candidum tergo bouem
curuoque numquam colla depressam iugo. 300
Tu lucis inopem, gnata, genitorem regens
manifesta sacri signa fatidici refer.

Manto Opima sanctas uictima ante aras stetit.

Ti. In uota superos uoce sollemni uoca
arasque dono turis Eoi extrue. 305

Ma. Iam tura sacris caelitum ingessi focis.

Ti. Quid flamma? largas iamne comprehendit dapes?

Ma. Subito refulsit lumine et subito occidit.

Ti. Vtrumne clarus ignis et nitidus stetit
rectusque purum uerticem caelo tulit 310
et summam in auras fusus explicuit comam?
an latera circa serpit incertus uiae
et fluctuante turbidus fumo labat?

Ma. Non una facies mobilis flammae fuit:
imbrifera qualis implicat uarios sibi 315
Iris colores, parte quae magna poli
curuata picto nuntiat nimbos sinu
(quis desit illi quiue sit dubites color),
caerulea fuluis mixta oberrauit notis,
sanguinea rursus; ultima in tenebras abit. 320
sed ecce pugnax ignis in partes duas
discedit et se scindit unius sacri
discors fauilla — genitor, horresco intuens:
libata Bacchi dona permutat cruor
ambitque densus regium fumus caput 325
ipsosque circa spissior uultus sedet
et nube densa sordidam lucem abdidit.
quid sit, parens, effare. **Ti.** Quid fari queam
inter tumultus mentis attonitae uagus?
quidnam loquar? sunt dira, sed in alto mala; 330
solet ira certis numinum ostendi notis:
quid istud est quod esse prolatum uolunt
iterumque nolunt et truces iras tegunt?
pudet deos nescioquid. Huc propere admoue
et sparge salsa colla taurorum mola. 335
placidone uultu sacra et admotas manus
patiuntur? **Ma.** Altum taurus attollens caput
primos ad ortus positus expauit diem
trepidusque uultum obliquat et radios fugit.

Ti. Vnone terram uulnere afflicti petunt? 340

Ma. Iuuenca ferro semet opposito induit
et uulnere uno cecidit, at taurus duos
perpessus ictus huc et huc dubius ruit
animamque fessus uix reluctantem exprimit.

Ti. Vtrum citatus uulnere angusto micat 345
an lentus altis irrigat plagas cruor?

Ma. Huius per ipsam qua patet pectus uiam
effusus amnis, huius exiguo graues
maculantur ictus imbre; sed uersus retro
per ora multus sanguis atque oculos redit. 350

Ti. Infausta magnos sacra terrores cient.
sed ede certas uiscerum nobis notas.

Ma. Genitor, quid hoc est? non leui motu, ut solent,
agitata trepidant exta, sed totas manus
quatiunt nouusque prosilit uenis cruor. 355
cor marcet aegrum penitus ac mersum latet
liuentque uenae; magna pars fibris abest
et felle nigro tabidum spumat iecur,
ac (semper omen unico imperio graue)
en capita paribus bina consurgunt toris; 360
sed utrumque caesum tenuis abscondit caput
membrana latebram rebus occultis negans.
hostile ualido robore insurgit latus
septemque uenas tendit; has omnis retro
prohibens reuerti limes oblicus secat. 365
mutatus ordo est, sede nil propria iacet,
sed acta retro cuncta: non animae capax
in parte dextra pulmo sanguineus iacet,
non laeua cordi regio, non molli ambitu
omenta pingues uisceri obtendunt sinus: 370
natura uersa est; nulla lex utero manet.
Scrutemur, unde tantus hic extis rigor.
quod hoc nefas? conceptus innuptae bouis,

nec more solito positus alieno in loco,
implet parentem; membra cum gemitu mouet, 375
rigore tremulo debiles artus micant;
infecit atras liuidus fibras cruor
temptantque turpes mobilem trunci gradum,
et inane surgit corpus ac sacros petit
cornu ministros; uiscera effugiunt manum. 380
neque ista, quae te pepulit, armenti grauis
uox est nec usquam territi resonant greges:
immugit aris ignis et trepidant foci.

Oe. Quid ista sacri signa terrifici ferant,
exprome; uoces aure non timida hauriam: 385
solent suprema facere securos mala.

Ti. His inuidebis quibus opem quaeris malis.

Oe. Memora quod unum scire caelicolae uolunt,
contaminarit rege quis caeso manus.

Ti. Nec alta caeli quae leui pinna secant 390
nec fibra uiuis rapta pectoribus potest
ciere nomen; alia temptanda est uia:
ipse euocandus noctis aeternae plagis,
emissus Erebo ut caedis auctorem indicet.
reseranda tellus, Ditis implacabile 395
numen precandum, populus infernae Stygis
huc extrahendus: ede cui mandes sacrum;
nam te, penes quem summa regnorum, nefas
inuisere umbras. **Oe.** Te, Creo, hic poscit labor,
ad quem secundum regna respiciunt mea. 400

Ti. Dum nos profundae claustra laxamus Stygis,
populare Bacchi laudibus carmen sonet.

Chorvs Effusam redimite comam nutante corymbo,
mollia Nysaeis armatus bracchia thyrsis,
lucidum caeli decus. huc ades 405

uotis, quae tibi nobiles
Thebae, Bacche, tuae
palmis supplicibus ferunt.
huc aduerte fauens uirgineum caput,
uultu sidereo discute nubila
et tristes Erebi minas 410
audumque fatum.
Te decet cingi comam floribus uernis,
te caput Tyria cohibere mitra
hederaue mollem
bacifera religare frontem, 415
spargere effusos sine lege crines,
rursus adducto reuocare nodo,
qualis iratam metuens nouercam
creueras falsos imitatus artus,
crine flauenti simulata uirgo, 420
lutea uestem retinente zona:
inde tam molles placuere cultus
et sinus laxi fluidumque syrma.
Vidit aurato residere curru
ueste cum longa regere et leones 425
omnis Eoae plaga uasta terrae,
qui bibit Gangen niueumque quisquis
frangit Araxen.
Te senior turpi sequitur Silenus asello,
turgida pampineis redimitus tempora sertis; 430
condita lasciui deducunt orgia mystae.
Te Bassaridum comitata cohors
nunc Edono pede pulsauit
sola Pangaeo,
nunc Threicio uertice Pindi; 435
nunc Cadmeas inter matres
impia maenas
comes Ogygio uenit Iaccho,
nebride sacra praecincta latus.
Tibi commotae pectora matres
fudere comam 440

thyrsumque leuem uibrante manu

* * * 441a

iam post laceros Pentheos artus
thyades oestro membra remissae
uelut ignotum uidere nefas.

Ponti regna tenet nitidi matertera Bacchi 445

Nereidumque choris Cadmeia cingitur Ino;
ius habet in fluctus magni puer aduena ponti,
cognatus Bacchi, numen non uile Palaemon.

Te Tyrrhena, puer, rapuit manus,
et tumidum Nereus posuit mare, 450

caerula cum pratis mutat freta:
hinc uerno platanus folio uiret
et Phoebo laurus carum nemus;
garrula per ramos auis obstrepit;
uiuaces hederas remus tenet, 455
summa ligat uitis carchesia.

Idaeus prora fremuit leo,
tigris puppe sedet Gangetica.

Tum pirata freto pavidus natat,
et noua demersos facies habet: 460

bracchia prima cadunt praedonibus
inlisumque utero pectus coit,
paruula dependet lateri manus,
et dorso fluctum curuo subit,
lunata scindit cauda mare: 465

et sequitur curuus fugientia
carbasa delphin.

Diuite Pactolos uexit te Lydius unda,
aurea torrenti deducens flumina ripa;
laxauit uictos arcus Geticasque sagittas
lactea Massagetes qui pocula sanguine miscet; 470
regna securigeri Bacchum sensere Lycurgi,
sensere terrae te Dacum feroces
et quos uicinus Boreas ferit
arua mutant quasque Maeotis
alluit gentes frigido fluctu 475

quasque despectat uertice e summo
sidus Arcadium geminumque plastrum.

Ille dispersos domuit Gelonos,
arma detraxit trucibus puellis:
ore deiecto petiere terram 480
Thermodontiacae cateruae,
positisque tandem leuibus sagittis

Maenades factae.

Sacer Cithaeron sanguine undauit
Ophioniaque caede; 485
Proetides siluas petiere, et Argos
praesente Bacchum coluit nouerca.

Naxos Aegaeo redimita ponto
tradidit thalamis uirginem relictam
meliore pensans damna marito: 490
pumice ex sicco

fluxit Nyctelius latex;
garruli gramen secuere riui,
conbibit dulces humus alta sucos
niueique lactis candidos fontes 495
et mixta odoro Lesbia cum thymo.

Ducitur magno noua nupta caelo:
sollemne Phoebus
carmen infusus humero capillis
cantat et geminus Cupido 500

concutit taedas;
telum deposuit Iuppiter igneum
conditque Baccho ueniente fulmen.
Lucida dum current annosi sidera mundi,
Oceanus clausum dum fluctibus ambiet orbem
Lunaque dimissos dum plena recolliget ignes, 505
dum matutinos praedicet Lucifer ortus
altaque caeruleum dum Nerea nesciet Arctos,
candida formosi uenerabimur ora Lyaei.

Oedipvs Etsi ipse uultus flebiles praefert notas,
exprome cuius capite placemus deos. 510

Creo Fari iubes tacere quae suadet metus.

Oe. Si te ruentes non satis Thebae mouent,
at sceptrā moueant lapsa cognatae domus.

Cr. Nescisse cupies nosse quae nimium expetis.

Oe. Iners malorum remedium ignorantia est. 515
itane et salutis publicae indicium obrues?

Cr. Vbi turpis est medicina, sanari piget.

Oe. Audita fare, uel malo domitus graui
quid arma possint regis irati scies.

Cr. Odere reges dicta quae dici iubent. 520

Oe. Mitteris Erebo uile pro cunctis caput,
arcana sacri uoce ni retegis tua.

Cr. Tacere liceat. ulla libertas minor
a rege petitur? **Oe.** Saepe uel lingua magis
regi atque regno muta libertas obest. 525

Cr. Vbi non licet tacere, quid cuiquam licet?

Oe. Imperia soluit qui tacet iussus loqui.

Cr. Coacta uerba placidus accipias precor.

Oe. Vlline poena uocis expressae fuit?

Cr. Est procul ab urbe lucus ilicibus niger 530
Dircaea circa uallis inriguae loca.
cupressus altis exerens siluis caput
uirente semper alligat trunco nemus,
curuosque tendit quercus et putres situ
annosa ramos: huius abruptis latas 535
edax uetustas; illa, iam fessa cadens

radice, fulta pendet aliena trabe.

* * * 537a

amara bacas laurus et tiliae leues 537b
et Paphia myrtus et per immensum mare 537c
motura remos alnus et Phoebobuia 540
enode Zephyris pinus opponens latus.
medio stat ingens arbor atque umbra graui
siluas minores urguet et magno ambitu
diffusa ramos una defendit nemus.
tristis sub illa, lucis et Phoebi inscius, 545
restagnatumor frigore aeterno rigens;
limosa pigrum circumit fontem palus.

Huc ut sacerdos intulit senior gradum,
haut est moratus: * * * *

* * * praestitit noctem locus.
tum effossa tellus, et super rapti rogis 550
iaciuntur ignes. ipse funesto integit
uates amictu corpus et frondem quatit;
squalente cultu maestus ingreditur senex, 554
lugubris imos palla perfundit pedes, 553
mortifera canam taxus adstringit comam. 555
nigro bidentes uellere atque atrae boues
antro trahuntur. flamma praedatur dapes
uiuumque trepidat igne ferali pecus.

Vocat inde manes teque qui manes regis
et obsidentem claustra Lethaei lacus, 560
carmenque magicum uoluit et rabido minax
decantat ore quidquid aut placat leues
aut cogit umbras; sanguinem libat focis
solidasque pecudes urit et multo specum
saturat cruore; libat et niueum insuper 565
lactis liquorem, fundit et Bacchum manu
laeua canitque rursus ac terram intuens
grauiore manes uoce et attonita citat.
latrauit Hecates turba; ter ualles cauae
sonuere maestum, tota succusso solo 570
pulsata tellus. 'audior' uates ait,

‘rata uerba fudi: rumpitur caecum chaos
iterque populis Ditis ad superos datur.’
Subsedit omnis silua et erexit comas,
duxere rimas robora et totum nemus 575
concussit horror, terra se retro dedit
gemuitque penitus: siue temptari abditum
Acheron profundum mente non aequa tulit,
siue ipsa tellus, ut daret functis uiam,
compage rupta sonuit, aut ira furens 580
triceps catenas Cerberus mouit graues.

Subito dehiscit terra et immenso sinu
laxata patuit — ipse pallentes deos
uidi inter umbras, ipse torpentes lacus
noctemque ueram; gelidus in uenis stetit 585
haesitque sanguis. saeua prosiluit cohors
et stetit in armis omne uipereum genus,
fratrum cateruae dente Dircae satae.
tum torua Erinys sonuit et caecus Furor 590
Horrorque et una quidquid aeternae creant
celantque tenebrae: Luctus auellens comam
aegreque lassum sustinens Morbus caput,
grauis Senectus sibimet et pendens Metus
auidumque populi Pestis Ogygii malum — 589
nos liquit animus; ipsa quae ritus senis 595
artisque norat stupuit. Intrepidus parens
audaxque damno conuocat Ditis feri
exsanguis uulgu: ilico, ut nebulae leues,
uolitant et auras libero caelo trahunt.
non tot caducas educat frondes Eryx 600
nec uere flores Hybla tot medio creat,
cum examen arto nectitur densum globo,
fluctusque non tot frangit Ionium mare,
nec tanta gelidi Strymonis fugiens minas
permutat hiemes ales et caelum secans 605
tepente Nilo pensat Arctoas niues,
quot ille populos uatis eduxit sonus.

Pauide latebras nemoris umbrosi petunt

animae trementes: primus emergit solo,
dextra ferocem cornibus taurum premens, 610
Zethus, manuque sustinet laeua chelyn
qui saxa dulci traxit Amphion sono,
interque natos Tantalus tandem suos
tuto superba fert caput fastu graue
et numerat umbras. peior hac genetrix adest 615
furibunda Agaue, tota quam sequitur manus
partita regem: sequitur et Bacchas lacer
Pentheus tenetque saeuus etiamnunc minas.

Tandem uocatus saepe pudibundum extulit
caput atque ab omni dissidet turba procul 620
celatque semet (instat et Stygias preces
geminat sacerdos, donec in apertum efferat
uultus opertos) Laius — fari horreo:
stetit per artus sanguine effuso horridus,
paedore foedo squalidam obtentus comam, 625
et ore rabido fatur: ‘O Cadmi effera,
cruore semper laeta cognato domus,
uibrate thyrsos, enthea gnatos manu
lacerate potius — maximum Thebis scelus
maternus amor est. patria, non ira deum, 630
sed scelere raperis: non graui flatu tibi
luctificus Auster nec parum pluuiio aethere
satiata tellus halitu sicco nocet,
sed rex cruentus, pretia qui saeuae necis
sceptra et nefandos occupat thalamos patris 635
[inuisa proles: sed tamen peior parens
quam gnatus, utero rursus infausto grauis]
egitque in ortus semet et matri impios
fetus regessit, quique uix mos est feris,
fratres sibi ipse genuit — implicitum malum 640
magisque monstrum Sphinge perplexum sua.
Te, te cruenta sceptra qui dextra geris,
te pater inultus urbe cum tota petam
et mecum Erinyn pronubam thalami traham,
traham sonantis uerbera, incestam domum 645

uertam et penates impio Marte obteram.
Proinde pulsum finibus regem ocius
agite exulem quocumque; funesto gradu
solum relinquat: uere florifero uirens
reparabit herbas; spiritus puros dabit 650
uitalis aura, ueniet et siluis decor;
Letum Luesque, Mors Labor Tabes Dolor,
comitatus illo dignus, excedent simul;
et ipse rapidis gressibus sedes uolet
effugere nostras, sed graues pedibus moras 655
addam et tenebo: reptet incertus uiae,
baculo senili triste praetemptans iter:
eripite terras, auferam caelum pater.'

Oe. Et ossa et artus gelidus inuasit tremor:
quidquid timebam facere fecisse arguor — 660
tori iugalis abnuit Merope nefas
sociata Polybo; sospes absoluit manus
Polybus meas: uterque defendit parens
caedem stuprumque. quis locus culpae est super?
multo ante Thebae Laium amissum gemunt, 665
Boeota gressu quam meo tetigi loca.
falsusne senior an deus Thebis grauis?

Iam iam tenemus callidi socios doli:
mentitur ista praeferens fraudi deos
uates, tibiue sceptra despondet mea. 670

Cr. Egone ut sororem regia expelli uelim?
si me fides sacrata cognati laris
non contineret in meo certum statu,
tamen ipsa me fortuna terreret nimis
sollicita semper. liceat hoc tuto tibi 675
exuere pondus nec recedentem opprimat:
iam te minore tutior pones loco.

Oe. Hortaris etiam, sponte deponam ut mea
tam grauia regna? **Cr.** Suadeam hoc illis ego,

in utrumque quis est liber etiam nunc status: 680
tibi iam necesse est ferre fortunam tuam.

Oe. Certissima est regnare cupienti uia
laudare modica et otium ac somnum loqui;
ab inquieto saepe simulatur quies.

Cr. Parumne me tam longa defendit fides? 685

Oe. Aditum nocendi perfido praestat fides.

Cr. Solutus onere regio regni bonis
fruor domusque ciuium coetu uiget,
nec ulla uicibus surgit alternis dies
qua non propinqui munera ad nostros lares 690
sceptri redundant; cultus, opulentae dapes,
donata multis gratia nostra salus:
quid tam beatae desse fortunae rear?

Oe. Quod dest: secunda non habent umquam modum.

Cr. Incognita igitur ut nocens causa cadam? 695

Oe. Num ratio uobis reddita est uitae meae?
num audita causa est nostra Tiresiae? tamen
sontes uidemur. facitis exemplum: sequor.

Cr. Quid si innocens sum? **Oe.** Dubia pro certis solent
timere reges. **Cr.** Qui pauet uanos metus, 700
ueros meretur. **Oe.** Quisquis in culpa fuit,
dimissus odit: omne quod dubium est cadat.

Cr. Sic odia fiunt. **Oe.** Odia qui nimium timet
regnare nescit: regna custodit metus.

Cr. Qui sceptrum duro saeuus imperio gerit, 705
timet timentis: metus in auctorem redit.

Oe. Seruate sontem saxeo inclusum specu.
ipse ad penates regios referam gradum.

Chorvs Non tu tantis causa periclis,
non haec Labdacidas petunt 710
fata, sed ueteres deum
irae secuntur: Castalium nemus
umbram Sidonio praebuit hospiti
lauitque Dirce Tyrios colonos,
ut primum magni natus Agenoris, 715
fessus per orbem furta sequi Iouis,
sub nostra pauidus constitit arbore
praedonem uenerans suum,
monituque Phoebi
iussus erranti comes ire uaccae,
quam non flexerat 720
uomer aut tardi iuga curua plaustri,
deseruit fugas nomenque genti
inauspicata de boue tradidit.

Tempore ex illo noua monstra semper
protulit tellus: 725
aut anguis imis uallibus editus
annosa circa robora sibilat
superatque pinus,
supra Chaonias celsior arbores
erexit caeruleum caput,
cum maiore sui parte recumberet; 730
aut feta tellus impio partu
effudit arma:
sonuit reflexo classicum cornu
lituusque adunco stridulos cantus
elisit aere

* 734a

non ante linguas agiles et ora
uocis ignotae clamore primum
hostico experti.

Agmina campos cognata tenent,

dignaque iacto semine proles
uno aetatem permensa die 740
post Luciferi nata meatus
ante Hesperios occidit ortus.
horret tantis aduena monstribus
populique timet bella recentis,
donec cecidit saeua iuuentus 745
genetrixque suo reddi gremio
modo productos uidit alumnos —
hac transierit ciuile nefas!
illa Herculeae norint Thebae
proelia fratrum. 750
Quid? Cadmei fata nepotis,
cum uiuacis cornua cerui
frontem ramis texere nouis
dominumque canes egere suum?
praeceps siluas montesque fugit 755
citus Actaeon agilique magis
pede per saltus ac saxa uagus
metuit motas zephyris plumas
et quae posuit retia uitat —
donec placidi fontis in unda 760
cornua uidit uultusque feros,
ubi uirgineos fouerat artus
nimium saeui diua pudoris.

Oedipus Curas reuoluit animus et repetit metus.
obisse nostro Laium scelere autumant 765
superi inferique, sed animus contra innocens
sibique melius quam deis notus negat.
redit memoria tenue per uestigium,
cecidisse nostri stipitis pulsu obuium
datumque Diti, cum prior iuuenem senex 770
curru superbus pelleret, Thebis procul
Phocaea trifidas regio qua scindit uias.

Nvanima coniunx, explica errores, precor:
quae spatia moriens Laius uitae tulit?

primone in aevo uiridis an fracto occidit? 775

Iocasta Inter senem iuuenemque, sed propior seni.

Oe. Frequensne turba regium cinxit latus?

Ioc. Plures fefellit error ancipitis uiae,
paucos fidelis curribus iunxit labor.

Oe. Aliquisne cecidit regio fato comes? 780

Ioc. Vnum fides uirtusque consortem addidit.

Oe. Teneo nocentem: conuenit numerus, locus —
sed tempus adde. **Ioc.** Decima iam metitur seges.

Senex Corinthius Corinthius te populus in regnum uocat
patrium: quietem Polybus aeternam obtinet. 785

Oe. Vt undique in me saeua Fortuna irruit!
edissere agedum, quo cadat fato parens.

Sen. Animam senilem mollis exsoluit sopor.

Oe. Genitor sine ulla caede defunctus iacet:
testor, licet iam tollere ad caelum pie 790
puras nec ulla scelera metuentes manus.
Sed pars magis metuenda factorum manet.

Sen. Omnem paterna regna discutient metum.

Oe. Repetam paterna regna; sed matrem horreo.

Sen. Metuis parentem, quae tuum reditum expetens 795
sollicita pendet? **Oe.** Ipsa me pietas fugat.

Sen. Viduam relinques? **Oe.** Tangis en ipsos metus.

Sen. Effare mersus quis premat mentem timor;

praestare tacitam regibus soleo fidem.

Oe. Conubia matris Delphico monitu tremo. 800

Sen. Timere uana desine et turpes metus
depone. Merope uera non fuerat parens.

Oe. Quod subditiui praemium gnati petit?

Sen. Regum superbam liberi astringunt fidem.

Oe. Secreta thalami fare quo excipias modo. 805

Sen. Hae te parenti paruulum tradunt manus.

Oe. Tu me parenti tradis; at quis me tibi?

Sen. Pastor niuoso sub Cithaeronis iugo.

Oe. In illa temet nemora quis casus tulit?

Sen. Illo sequebar monte cornigeros greges. 810

Oe. Nunc adice certas corporis nostri notas.

Sen. Forata ferro gesseras uestigia,
tumore nactus nomen ac uitio pedum.

Oe. Quis fuerit ille qui meum dono dedit
corpus requiro. **Sen.** Regios pauit greges; 815
minor sub illo turba pastorum fuit.

Oe. Eloquere nomen. **Sen.** Prima languescit senum
memoria longo lassa sublabens situ.

Oe. Potesne facie noscere ac uultu uirum?

Sen. Fortasse noscam: saepe iam spatio obrutam 820
leuis exoletam memoriam reuocat nota.

Oe. Ad sacra et aras omne compulsus pecus
duces sequuntur: ite, propere accersite,
famuli, penes quem summa consistit gregum.

Ioc. Siue ista ratio siue fortuna occulit, 825
latere semper patere quod latuit diu:
saepe eruentis ueritas patuit malo.

Oe. Malum timeri maius his aliquod potest?

Ioc. Magnum esse magna mole quod petitur scias:
concurrit illinc publica, hinc regis salus, 830
utrimque paria; contine medias manus:
ut nil lacesas, ipsa se fata explicant.

Oe. Non expedit concutere felicem statum:
tuto mouetur quidquid extremo in loco est.

Ioc. Nobilius aliquid genere regali appetis? 835
ne te parentis pigeat inuenti uide.

Oe. Vel paenitendi sanguinis quaeram fidem:
sic nosse certum est. — Ecce grandaeuus senex,
arbitria sub quo regii fuerant gregis,
Phorbas. refersne nomen aut uultum senis? 840

Sen. Adridet animo forma; nec notus satis,
nec rursus iste uultus ignotus mihi.

Oe. Regnum optinente Laio famulus greges
agitasti opimos sub Cithaeronis plaga?

Phorbas Laetus Cithaeron pabulo semper nouo 845
aestiuâ nostro prata summittit gregi.

Sen. Noscisne memet? **Ph.** Dubitat anceps memoria.

Oe. Huic aliquis a te traditur quondam puer?

effare. dubitas? cur genas mutat color?
quid uerba quaeris? ueritas odit moras. 850

Ph. Obducta longo temporum tractu moues.

Oe. Fatere, ne te cogat ad uerum dolor.

Ph. Inutile isti munus infantem dedi:
non potuit ille luce, non caelo frui.

Sen. Procul sit omen; uiuit et uiuat precor. 855

Oe. Superesse quare traditum infantem negas?

Ph. Ferrum per ambos tenue transactum pedes
ligabat artus, uulneri innatus tumor
puerile foeda corpus urebat lue.

Oe. Quid quaeris ultra? fata iam accedunt prope. — 860
quis fuerit infans edoce. **Ph.** Prohibet fides.

Oe. Huc aliquis ignem! flamma iam excutiet fidem.

Ph. Per tam cruentas uera quaerentur uias?
ignosce quaeso. **Oe.** Si ferus uideor tibi
et impotens, parata uindicta in manu est: 865
dic uera: quisnam? quoue generatus patre?
qua matre genitus? **Ph.** Coniuge est genitus tua.

Oe. Dehisce, tellus, tuque tenebrarum potens,
in Tartara ima, rector umbrarum, rape
retro reuersas generis ac stirpis uices. 870
congerite, ciues, saxa in infandum caput,
mactate telis: me petat ferro parens,
me gnatus, in me coniuges arment manus
fratresque, et aeger populus ereptos rogis
iaculetur ignes. saeculi crimen uagor, 875
odium deorum, iuris exitium sacri,

qua luce primum spiritus hausi rudes
iam morte dignus. redde nunc animos pares,
nunc aliquid aude sceleribus dignum tuis. —
i, perge, propero regiam gressu pete: 880
gratare matri liberis auctam domum.

Chorvs Fata si liceat mihi
fingere arbitrio meo,
temperem Zephyro leui
uela, ne pressae graui 885
spiritu antennae tremant:
lenis et modice fluens
aura nec uergens latus
ducat intrepidam ratem;
tuta me media uehat 890
uita decurrens uia.

Gnosium regem timens
astra dum demens petit
artibus fisus nouis
certat et ueras aues 895
uincere ac falsis nimis
imperat pinnis puer,
nomen eripuit freto.
Callidus medium senex
Daedalus librans iter 900
nube sub media stetit
alitem expectans suum
(qualis accipitris minas
fugit et sparsos metu
conligit fetus auis), 905
donec in ponto manus
mouit implicitas puer.
[comes audacis uiae]
quidquid excessit modum
pendet instabili loco. 910

Sed quid hoc? postes sonant,
maestus et famulus manu

regius quassat caput. —
Ede quid portes noui.

Nvntivs Praedicta postquam fata et infandum genus 915

deprendit ac se scelere conuictum Oedipus
damnauit ipse, regiam infestus petens
inuisa propero tecta penetrauit gradu,
qualis per arua Libycus insanit leo,
fuluam minaci fronte concutiens iubam; 920
uultus furore toruus atque oculi truces,
gemitus et altum murmur, et gelidus uolat
sudor per artus, spumat et uoluit minas
ac mersus alte magnus exundat dolor.
secum ipse saeuus grande nescioquid parat 925
suisque fatis simile. ‘quid poenas moror?’
ait ‘hoc scelestum pectus aut ferro petat
aut feruido aliquis igne uel saxo domet.
quae tigris aut quae saeua uisceribus meis
incurrat ales? ipse tu scelerum capax, 930
sacer Cithaeron, uel feras in me tuis
emitte siluis, mitte uel rabidos canes —
nunc redde Agauen. anime, quid mortem times?
mors innocentem sola Fortunae eripit.’

Haec fatus aptat impiam capulo manum 935
ensemque ducit. ‘itane? tam magnis breues
poenas sceleribus soluis atque uno omnia
pensabis ictu? moreris: hoc patri sat est;
quid deinde matri, quid male in lucem editis
gnatis, quid ipsi, quae tuum magna luit 940
scelus ruina, flebili patriae dabis?
soluendo non es: illa quae leges ratas
Natura in uno uertit Oedipoda, nouos
commenta partus, supplicis eadem meis
nouetur. iterum uiuere atque iterum mori 945
liceat, renasci semper ut totiens noua
supplicia pendas — utere ingenio, miser:
quod saepe fieri non potest fiat diu;

mors eligatur longa. quaeratur uia
qua nec sepultis mixtus et uiuis tamen 950
exemptus erres: morere, sed citra patrem.
cunctaris, anime? subitus en uultus grauat
profusus imber ac rigat fletu genas —
et flere satis est? hactenus fundent leuem
oculi liquorem? sedibus pulsi suis 955
lacrimas sequantur: hi maritales statim
fodiantur oculi.’ Dixit atque ira furit:
ardent minaces igne truculento genae
oculique uix se sedibus retinent suis;
uiolentus audax uultus, iratus ferox 960
iam iam eruentis; gemit et dirum fremens
manus in ora torsit. at contra truces
oculi steterunt et suam intenti manum
ultra insecuntur, uulneri occurrunt suo.
scrutatur auidus manibus uncis lumina, 965
radice ab ima funditus uulsos simul
euoluit orbes; haeret in uacuo manus
et fixa penitus unguibus lacerat cauos
alte recessus luminum et inanes sinus
saeuitque frustra plusque quam satis est furit. 970
tantum est periculum lucis? attollit caput
cauisque lustrans orbibus caeli plagas
noctem experitur. quidquid effossis male
dependet oculis rumpit, et uictor deos
conclamat omnis: ‘parcite en patriae, precor: 975
iam iusta feci, debitas poenas tuli;
inuenta thalamis digna nox tandem meis.’
rigat ora foedus imber et lacerum caput
largum reuulsis sanguinem uenis uomit.

Chorvs Fatis agimur: cedite fatis; 980
non sollicitae possunt curae
mutare rati stamina fusi.
quidquid patimur mortale genus,
quidquid facimus uenit ex alto,

seruatque suae decreta colus 985
Lachesis dura reuoluta manu.
omnia certo tramite uadunt
primusque dies dedit extremum:
non illa deo uertisse licet,
quae nexa suis currunt causis. 990
it cuique ratus prece non ulla
 mobilis ordo:
multis ipsum metuisse nocet,
multi ad fatum uenere suum
 dum fata timent.
 Sonuere fores atque ipse suum 995
duce non ullo molitur iter
 luminis orbus.

Oedipvs Bene habet, peractum est: iusta persolui patri.
iuuant tenebrae. quis deus tandem mihi
placatus atra nube perfundit caput? 1000
quis scelera donat? conscium euasi diem.
nil, parricida, dexteræ debes tuæ:
lux te refugit. uultus Oedipodam hic decet.

Cho. En ecce, rapido saeua prosiluit gradu
Iocasta uaecors, qualis attonita et furens 1005
Cadmea mater abstulit gnato caput
sensitue raptum. dubitat afflictum alloqui,
cupit pauetque. iam malis cessit pudor,
sed haeret ore prima uox. **Iocasta** Quid te uocem?
gnatumne? dubitas? gnatus es: gnatum pudet; 1010
inuite loquere gnate — quo auertis caput
uacuosque uultus? **Oe.** Quis frui tenebris uetat?
quis reddit oculos? matris, en matris sonus!
perdidimus operam. congregi fas amplius
haut est nefandos. diuidat uastum mare 1015
dirimatque tellus abdita et quisquis sub hoc
in alia uersus sidera ac solem auium
dependet orbis alterum ex nobis ferat.

Ioc. Fati ista culpa est: nemo fit fato nocens.

Oe. Iam parce uerbis, mater, et parce auribus: 1020
per has reliquias corporis trunci precor,
per inauspicatum sanguinis pignus mei,
per omne nostri nominis fas ac nefas.

Ioc. Quid, anime, torpes? socia cur scelerum dare
poenas recusas? omne confusum perit, 1025
incesta, per te iuris humani decus:
morere et nefastum spiritum ferro exige.
non si ipse mundum concitans diuum sator
corusca saeua tela iaculetur manu,
umquam rependam sceleribus poenas pares 1030
mater nefanda. mors placet: mortis uia
quaeratur. — Agedum, commoda matri manum,
si parricida es. restat hoc operi ultimum:
rapiatur ensis; hoc iacet ferro meus
coniunx — quid illum nomine haud uero uocas? 1035
socer est. utrumne pectori infigam meo
telum an patenti conditum iugulo inprimam?
eligere nescis uulnus: hunc, dextra, hunc pete
uterum capacem, qui uirum et gnatos tulit.

Cho. Iacet perempta. uulneri immoritur manus 1040
ferrumque secum nimius eiecit cruor.

Oe. Fatidice te, te praesidem ueri deum
compello: solum debui fatis patrem;
bis parricida plusque quam timui nocens
matrem peremi: scelere confecta est meo. 1045
o Phoebe mendax, fata superaui impia.

Pauit ante gressu sequere fallentes uias;
suspensa plantis efferens uestigia
caecam tremante dextera noctem rege.
ingredere praeceps, lubricos ponens gradus, 1050
i profuge uade — siste, ne in matrem incidas.

Quicumque fessi corpore et morbo graues
semanima trahitis pectora, en fugio, exeo:
releuate colla. mitior caeli status
posterga sequitur: quisquis exilem iacens 1055
animam retentat, uiuidos haustus leuis
concipiat. ite, ferte depositis opem:
mortifera mecum uitia terrarum extraho.
Violenta Fata et horridus Morbi tremor,
Maciesque et atra Pestis et rabidus Dolor, 1060
mecum ite, mecum. ducibus his uti libet.

MEDEA

Medea Di coniugales tuque genialis tori,
Lucina, custos quaeque domituram freta
Tiphyn nouam frenare docuisti ratem,
et tu, profundi saeue dominator maris,
clarumque Titan diuidens orbi diem, 5
tacitisque praebens conscium sacris iubar
Hecate triformis, quosque iurauit mihi
deos Iason, quosque Medae magis
fas est precari: noctis aeternae chaos,
auersa superis regna manesque impios 10
dominumque regni tristis et dominam fide
meliore raptam, uoce non fausta precor.
nunc, nunc adeste sceleris ultrices deae,
crinem solutis squalidae serpentibus,
atram cruentis manibus amplexae facem, 15
adeste, thalamis horridae quondam meis
quales stetitistis: coniugi letum nouae
letumque socero et regiae stirpi date.

Num peius aliquid? quod precer sponso malum?
uiuat; per urbes erret ignotas egens 20
exul pauens inuisus incerti laris,
iam notus hospes limen alienum expetat; 23a,22b
me coniugem opto, quoque non aliud queam 22a,23b
peius precari, liberos similes patri 24
similesque matri++parta iam, parta ultio est:
peperi. Querelas uerbaque in cassum sero?
non ibo in hostes? manibus excutiam faces
caeloque lucem++spectat hoc nostri sator
Sol generis, et spectatur, et curru insidens
per solita puri spatia decurrit poli? 30
non redit in ortus et remetitur diem?
da, da per auras curribus patriis uehi,
committe habenas, genitor, et flagrantibus
ignifera loris tribue moderari iuga:

gemino Corinthos litori opponens moras 35
cremata flammis maria committat duo.
hoc restat unum, pronubam thalamo feram
ut ipsa pinum postque sacrificas preces
caedam dicatis uictimas altaribus.

Per uiscera ipsa quaere supplicio uiam, 40
si uiuis, anime, si quid antiqui tibi
remanet uigoris; pelle femineos metus
et inhospitalem Caucasum mente indue.
quodcumque uidit Phasis aut Pontus nefas,
uidebit Isthmos. effera ignota horrida, 45
tremenda caelo pariter ac terris mala
mens intus agitat: uulnera et caedem et uagum
funus per artus++leuia memorauit nimis:
haec uirgo fecit; grauior exurgat dolor:
maiora iam me scelera post partus decent. 50
accingere ira teque in exitium para
furore toto. paria narrentur tua
repudia thalamis: quo uirum linques modo?
hoc quo secuta es. rumpe iam segnes moras:
quae scelere parta est, scelere linquenda est domus. 55

Chorvs Ad regum thalamos numine prospero
qui caelum superi quique regunt fretum
adsint cum populis rite fauentibus.
Primum sceptriferis colla Tonantibus
taurus celsa ferat tergore candido; 60
Lucinam niuei femina corporis
intemptata iugo placet, et asperi
Martis sanguineas quae cohibet manus,
quae dat belligeris foedera gentibus
et cornu retinet diuite copiam, 65
donetur tenera mitior hostia.
Et tu, qui facibus legitimis ades,
noctem discutiens auspice dextera
huc incede gradu marcidus ebrio,
praecingens roseo tempora uinculo. 70

Et tu, quae, gemini praeuia temporis,
tarde, stella, redis semper amantibus:
te matres, auide te cupiunt nurus
quamprimum radios spargere lucidos.

Vincit uirgineus decor 75

longe Cecropias nurus,
et quas Taygeti iugis
exercet iuuenum modo
muris quod caret oppidum,
et quas Aonius latex 80
Alpheosque sacer lauat.
Si forma uelit aspici,
cedent Aesonio duci
proles fulminis improbi
aptat qui iuga tigribus, 85
nec non, qui tripodas mouet,
frater uirginis asperae,
cedet Castore cum suo
Pollux caestibus aptior.
Sic, sic, caelicolae, precor, 90
uincat femina coniuges,
uir longe superet uiros.

Haec cum femineo constitit in choro,
unius facies praenitet omnibus.
sic cum sole perit sidereus decor, 95
et densi latitant Pleiadum greges,
cum Phoebe solidum lumine non suo
orbem circuitis cornibus alligat.
ostro sic niueus puniceo color
perfusum rubuit, sic nitidum iubar 100
pastor luce noua roscidus aspicit.
Ereptus thalamis Phasidis horridi,
effrenae solitus pectora coniugis
inuita trepidus prendere dextera,
felix Aeoliam corripe uirginem 105
nunc primum soceris sponse uolentibus.

Concesso, iuuenes, ludite iurgio,

hinc illinc, iuuenes, mittite carmina:
rara est in dominos iusta licentia.

Candida thyrsgigeri proles generosa Lyaei, 110
multifidam iam tempus erat succendere pinum:
excute sollemnem digitis marcentibus ignem.
festa dicax fundat conuicia fescenninus,
soluat turba iocos++tacitis eat illa tenebris,
si qua peregrino nubit furtiua marito. 115

Medea Occidimus: aures pepulit hymenaeus meas.
uix ipsa tantum, uix adhuc credo malum.
hoc facere Iason potuit, erepto patre
patria atque regno sedibus solam exteris
deserere durus? merita contempsit mea 120
qui scelere flammis uiderat uinci et mare?
adeone credit omne consumptum nefas?
incerta uecors mente non sana feror
partes in omnes; unde me ulcisci queam?
utinam esset illi frater! est coniunx: in hanc 125
ferrum exigatur. hoc meis satis est malis?
si quod Pelasgae, si quod urbes barbarae
nouere facinus quod tuae ignorent manus,
nunc est parandum. scelera te hortentur tua
et cuncta redeant: inclitum regni decus 130
raptum et nefandae uirginis paruus comes
diuisus ense, funus ingestum patri
sparsumque ponto corpus et Peliae senis
decocta aeno membra: funestum impie
quam saepe fudi sanguinem++et nullum scelus 135
irata feci: saeuit infelix amor.

Quid tamen Iason potuit, alieni arbitri
iurisque factus? debuit ferro obuium
offerre pectus++melius, a melius, dolor
furiose, loquere. si potest, uiuat meus, 140
ut fuit, Iason; si minus, uiuat tamen
memorque nostri muneri parcat meo.
Culpa est Creontis tota, qui sceptro impotens

coniugia soluit quique genetricem abstrahit
gnatis et arto pignore astrictam fidem 145
dirimit: petatur, solus hic poenas luat,
quas debet. alto cinere cumulabo domum;
uidebit atrum uerticem flammis agi
Malea longas nauibus flectens moras.

Nutrix Sile, obsecro, questusque secreto abditos 150
manda dolori. grauia quisquis uulnera
patiente et aequo mutus animo pertulit,
referre potuit: ira quae tegitur nocet;
professa perdunt odia uindictae locum.

Medea Lewis est dolor, qui capere consilium potest 155
et clepere sese: magna non latitant mala.
libet ire contra. **Nutrix** Siste furialem impetum,
alumna: uix te tacita defendit quies.

Medea Fortuna fortes metuit, ignauos premit.

Nutrix Tunc est probanda, si locum uirtus habet. 160

Medea Numquam potest non esse uirtuti locus.

Nutrix Spes nulla rebus monstrat adflictis uiam.

Medea Qui nil potest sperare, desperet nihil.

Nutrix Abiere Colchi, coniugis nulla est fides
nihilque superest opibus e tantis tibi. 165

Medea Medea superest: hic mare et terras uides
ferrumque et ignes et deos et fulmina.

Nutrix Rex est timendus. **Medea** Rex meus fuerat pater.

Nutrix Non metuis arma? **Medea** Sint licet terra edita.

Nutrix Moriere. **Medea** Cupio. **Nutrix** Profuge. **Medea** Paenituit

fugae. 170

Nutrix Medea++**Medea** Fiam. **Nutrix** Mater es. **Medea** Cui sim uide.

Nutrix Profugere dubitas? **Medea** Fugiam, at ulciscar prius.

Nutrix Vindex sequetur. **Medea** Forsan inueniam moras.

Nutrix Compesce uerba, parce iam, demens, minis animosque minue: tempori aptari decet. 175

Medea Fortuna opes auferre, non animum potest.

Sed cuius ictu regius cardo strepit?
ipse est Pelasgo tumidus imperio Creo.

Creo Medea, Colchi noxium Aeetae genus,

nondum meis exportat e regnis pedem? 180

molitur aliquid: nota fraus, nota est manus.

cui parcat illa quemue securum sinet?

abolere propere pessimam ferro luem

equidem parabam: precibus euicit gener.

concessa uita est, liberet fines metu 185

abeatque tuta.++fert gradum contra ferox

minaxque nostros propius affatus petit.++

Arcete, famuli, tactu et accessu procul,

iubete sileat. regium imperium pati

aliquando discat. Vade ueloci uia 190

monstrumque saeuum horribile iamdudum auehe.

Medea Quod crimen aut quae culpa multatur fuga?

Creo Quae causa pellat, innocens mulier rogat.

Medea Si iudicas, cognosce, si regnas, iube.

Creo Aequum atque iniquum regis imperium feras. 195

Medea Iniqua numquam regna perpetuo manent.

Creo I, querere Colchis. **Medea** Redeo: qui auexit, ferat.

Creo Vox constituto sera decreto uenit.

Medea Qui statuit aliquid parte inaudita altera,
aequum licet statuerit, haud aequus fuit. 200

Creo Auditus a te Pelia supplicium tulit?
sed fare, causae detur egregiae locus.

Medea Difficile quam sit animum ab ira flectere
iam concitatum quamque regale hoc putet
scepтрis superbas quisquis admouit manus, 205
qua coepit ire, regia didici mea.
quamuis enim sim clade miseranda obruta,
expulsa supplex sola deserta, undique
afflicta, quondam nobili fulsi patre
auoque clarum Sole deduxi genus. 210
quodcumque placidis flexibus Phasis rigat
Pontusque quidquid Scythicus a tergo uidet,
palustribus qua maria dulcescunt aquis,
armata peltis quidquid exterret cohors
inclusa ripis uidua Thermodontiis, 215
hoc omne noster genitor imperio regit.
generosa, felix, decore regali potens
fulsi: petebant tunc meos thalamos proci,
qui nunc petuntur. rapida fortuna ac leuis
praecepsque regno eripuit, exilio dedit. 220
confide regnis, cum leuis magnas opes
huc ferat et illuc casus++hoc reges habent
magnificum et ingens, nulla quod rapiat dies:
prodesse miseris, supplices fido lare
protegere. Solum hoc Colchico regno extuli, 225
decus illud ingens Graeciae et florem inclitum,
praesidia Achiuae gentis et prolem deum

seruasse memet. munus est Orpheus meum,
qui saxa cantu mulcet et siluas trahit,
geminumque munus Castor et Pollux meum est 230
satique Borea quique trans Pontum quoque
summota Lynceus lumine immisso uidet,
omnesque Minyae: nam ducum taceo ducem,
pro quo nihil debetur: hunc nulli imputo;
uobis reuexi ceteros, unum mihi. 235

Incesse nunc et cuncta flagitia ingere:
fatebor; obici crimen hoc solum potest,
Argo reuersa. uirgini placeat pudor
paterque placeat: tota cum ducibus ruet
Pelasga tellus, hic tuus primum gener 240
tauri ferocis ore flagranti occidet.
[fortuna causam quae uolet nostram premat,
non paenitet seruasse tot regum decus]
quodcumque culpa praemium ex omni tuli,
hoc est penes te. si placet, damna ream; 245
sed redde crimen. sum nocens, fateor, Creο:
talem sciebas esse, cum genua attigi
fidemque supplex praesidis dextra peti;
terra hac miseriis angulum et sedem rogo
latebrasque uiles: urbe si pelli placet, 250
detur remotus aliquis in regnis locus.

Creο Non esse me qui scepra uiolentus geram
nec qui superbo miseras calcem pede,
testatus equidem uideor haud clare parum
generum exilem legendo et adflictum et graui 255
terrore pauidum, quippe quem poenae expetit
letoque Acastus regna Thessalica optinens.
senio trementem debili atque aeuo grauem
patrem peremptum queritur et caesi senis
discissa membra, cum dolo captae tuo 260
piae sorores impium auderent nefas.
potest Iason, si tuam causam amoues,
suam tueri: nullus innocuum cruor

contaminauit, afuit ferro manus
proculque uestro purus a coetu stetit. 265

Tu, tu malorum machinatrix facinorum,
cui feminae nequitia, ad audendum omnia
robur uirile est, nulla famae memoria,
egredere, purga regna, letales simul
tecum aufer herbas, libera ciues metu, 270
alia sedens tellure sollicita deos.

Medea Profugere cogis? redde fugienti ratem
uel redde comitem++fugere cur solam iubes?
non sola ueni. bella si metuis pati,
utrumque regno pelle. cur sontes duos 275
distinguis? illi Pelia, non nobis iacet;
fugam, rapinas adice, desertum patrem
lacerumque fratrem, quidquid etiamnunc nouas
docet maritus coniuges, non est meum:
totiens nocens sum facta, sed numquam mihi. 280

Creo Iam exisse decuit. quid seris fando moras?

Medea Supplex recedens illud extremum precor,
ne culpa natos matris insontes trahat.

Creo Vade: hos paterno ut genitor excipiam sinu.

Medea Per ego auspicatos regii thalami toros, 285
per spes futuras perque regnorum status,
Fortuna uaria dubia quos agitat uice,
precor, breuem largire fugienti moram,
dum extrema natis mater infigo oscula,
fortasse moriens. **Creo** Fraudibus tempus petis. 290

Medea Quae fraus timeri tempore exiguo potest?

Creo Nullum ad nocendum tempus angustum est malis.

Medea Parumne miserae temporis lacrimis negas?

Creo Etsi repugnat precibus infixus timor,
unus parando dabitur exilio dies. 295

Medea Nimis est, recidas aliquid ex isto licet;
et ipsa propero. **Creo** Capite supplicium lues,
clarum priusquam Phoebus attollat diem
nisi cedis Isthmo. ++Sacra me thalami uocant,
uocat precari festus Hymenaeo dies. 300

Chorvs Audax nimium qui freta primus
rate tam fragili perfida rupit
terrasque suas posterga uidens
animam leuibus credidit auris,
dubioque secans aequora cursu 305
potuit tenui fidere ligno
inter uitae mortisque uices
nimium gracili limite ducto.
Nondum quisquam sidera norat,
stellisque, quibus pingitur aether, 310
non erat usus, nondum pluuias
Hyadas poterat uitare ratis,
non Oleniae lumina caprae,
nec quae sequitur flectitque senex
Attica tardus plaustra Bootes, 315
nondum Boreas, nondum Zephyrus
nomen habebant.

Ausus Tiphys pandere uasto
carbasa ponto
legesque nouas scribere uentis: 320
nunc lina sinu tendere toto,
nunc prolato pede transuersos
captare notos, nunc antemnas
medio tutas ponere malo,
nunc in summo religare loco, 325
cum iam totos auidus nimium
nauita flatu optat et alto
rubicunda tremunt sipara uelo.

Candida nostri saecula patres
uidere procul fraude remota. 330
sua quisque piger litora tangens
patrioque senex factus in aruo,
paruo diues nisi quas tulerat
natale solum non norat opes.
Bene dissaepi foedera mundi 335
traxit in unum Thessala pinus
iussitque pati uerbera pontum
partemque metus fieri nostri
mare sepositum.

Dedit illa graues improba poenas 340
per tam longos ducta timores,
cum duo montes, claustra profundi,
hinc atque illinc subito impulsu
uelut aetherio gemerent sonitu,
spargeret arces nubesque ipsas 345
mare deprensum.

Palluit audax Tiphys et omnes
labente manu misit habenas,
Orpheus tacuit torpente lyra
ipsaque uocem perdidit Argo.

Quid cum Siculi uirgo Pelori, 350
rabidos utero succincta canes,
omnis pariter soluit hiatus?
quis non totos horruit artus
totiens uno latrante malo?

Quid cum Ausonium dirae pestes 355
uoce canora mare mulcerent,
cum Pieria resonans cithara

Thracius Orpheus
solitam cantu retinere rates
paene coegit Sirena sequi? 360
Quod fuit huius pretium cursus?
aurea pellis
maiusque mari Medea malum,
merces prima digna carina.

Nunc iam cessit pontus et omnes
patitur leges: 365

non Palladia compacta manu
regum referens inclita remos
quaeritur Argo++
quaelibet altum cumba pererrat.
Terminus omnis motus et urbes
muros terra posuere noua, 370
nil qua fuerat sede reliquit
peruius orbis:

Indus gelidum potat Araxen,
Albin Persae Rhenumque bibunt++
uenient annis saecula seris, 375
quibus Oceanus uincula rerum
laxet et ingens pateat tellus
Tethysque nouos detegat orbes
nec sit terris ultima Thule.

Nutrix Alumna, celerem quo rapis tectis pedem? 380
resiste et iras comprime ac retine impetum.

Incerta qualis entheos gressus tulit
cum iam recepto maenas insanit deo
Pindi niualis uertice aut Nysae iugis,
talis recursat huc et huc motu efferro, 385
furoris ore signa lymphati gerens.
flammata facies, spiritum ex alto citat,
proclamat, oculos uberi fletu rigat,
renidet: omnis specimen affectus capit.
haeret: minatur aestuat queritur gemit. 390
quo pondus animi uerget? ubi ponet minas?
ubi se iste fluctus franget? exundat furor.
non facile secum uersat aut medium scelus;
se uincet: irae nouimus ueteris notas.
magnum aliquid instat, efferum immane impium: 395
uultum Furoris cerno. di fallant metum!

Medea Si quaeris odio, misera, quem statuas modum,

imitare amorem. regias egone ut faces
inulta patiar? segnis hic ibit dies,
tanto petitus ambitu, tanto datus? 400
dum terra caelum media libratum feret
nitidusque certas mundus euoluet uices
numerusque harenis derit et solem dies,
noctem sequentur astra, dum siccas polus
uersabit Arctos, flumina in pontum cadent, 405
numquam meus cessabit in poenas furor
crescetque semper++quae ferarum immanitas,
quae Scylla, quae Charybdis Ausonium mare
Siculumque sorbens quaeue anhelantem premens
Titana tantis Aetna feruebit minis? 410
non rapidus amnis, non procellosum mare
pontusue coro saeuus aut uis ignium
adiuta flatu possit inhibere impetum
irasque nostras: sternam et euertam omnia.

Timuit Creontem ac bella Thessalici ducis? 415
amor timere neminem uerus potest.
sed cesserit coactus et dederit manus:
adire certe et coniugem extremo alloqui
sermone potuit++hoc quoque extimuit ferox;
laxare certe tempus immitis fugae 420
genero licebat++liberis unus dies
datus est duobus. non queror tempus breue:
multum patebit. faciet hic faciet dies
quod nullus umquam taceat++inuadam deos
et cuncta quatiā. **Nutrix** Recipe turbatum malis, 425
era, pectus, animum mitiga. **Medea** Sola est quies,
mecum ruina cuncta si uideo obruta:
mecum omnia abeant. trahere, cum pereas, libet.

Nutrix Quam multa sint timenda, si perstas, uide:
nemo potentes aggredi tutus potest. 430

Iason O dura fata semper et sortem asperam,
cum saeuit et cum parcit ex aequo malam!

remedia quotiens inuenit nobis deus
periculis peiora: si uellem fidem
praestare meritis coniugis, leto fuit 435
caput offerendum; si mori nollem, fide
misero carendum. non timor uicit fidem,
sed trepida pietas: quippe sequeretur necem
proles parentum. sancta si caelum incolis
Iustitia, numen inuoco ac testor tuum: 440
nati patrem uicere. quin ipsam quoque,
etsi ferox est corde nec patiens iugi,
consulere natis malle quam thalamis reor.
constituit animus precibus iratam aggredi++
atque ecce, uiso memet exiluit, furit, 445
fert odia prae se: totus in uultu est dolor.

Medea Fugimus, Iason, fugimus++hoc non est nouum,
mutare sedes; causa fugiendi noua est:
pro te solebam fugere++discedo, exeo,
penatibus profugere quam cogis tuis. 450
ad quos remittis? Phasin et Colchos petam
patriumque regnum quaeque fraternus cruor
perfudit arua? quas peti terras iubes?
quae maria monstras? Pontici fauces freti
per quas reuexi nobilem regum manum 455
adulterum secuta per Symplegadas?
patruamne Iolcon, Thessala an Tempe petam?
quascumque aperui tibi uias, clausi mihi++
quo me remittis? exuli exilium imperas
nec das. eatur. regius iussit gener: 460
nihil recuso. dira suppliciaingere:
merui. cruentis paelicem poenis premat
regalis ira, uinculis oneret manus
clausamque saxo noctis aeternae obruat:
minora meritis patiar++ingratum caput, 465
reuoluat animus igneos tauri halitus
interque saeuos gentis indomitae metus
armifero in aruo flammeum Aeetae pecus,

hostisque subiti tela, cum iussu meo
terrigena miles mutua caede occidit; 470
adice expetita spolia Phrixei arietis
somnoque iussum lumina ignoto dare
insomne monstrum, traditum fratrem neci
et scelere in uno non semel factum scelus,
ausasque natas fraude deceptas mea 475
secare membra non reuicturi senis:
[aliena quaerens regna, deserui mea]
per spes tuorum liberum et certum larem,
per uicta monstra, per manus, pro te quibus
numquam peperci, perque praeteritos metus, 480
per caelum et undas, coniugi testes mei,
miserere, redde supplici felix uicem.
ex opibus illis, quas procul raptas Scythae
usque a perustis Indiae populis agunt,
quas quia referta uix domus gazas capit, 485
ornamus auro nemora, nil exul tuli
nisi fratris artus: hos quoque impendi tibi;
tibi patria cessit, tibi pater frater pudor++
hac dote nupsi. redde fugienti sua.

Iason Perimere cum te uellet infestus Creo, 490
lacrimis meis euictus exilium dedit.

Medea Poenam putabam: munus, ut uideo, est fuga.

Iason Dum licet abire, profuge teque hinc eripe:
grauis ira regum est semper. **Medea** Hoc suades mihi,
praestas Creusae: paelicem inuisam amoues. 495

Iason Medea amores obicit? **Medea** Et caedem et dolos.

Iason Obicere crimen quod potes tandem mihi?

Medea Quodcumque feci. **Iason** Restat hoc unum insuper,
tuis ut etiam sceleribus fiam nocens.

Medea Tua illa, tua sunt illa: cui prodest scelus, 500
is fecit++omnes coniugem infamem arguant,
solus tuere, solus insontem uoca:
tibi innocens sit quisquis est pro te nocens.

Iason Ingrata uita est cuius acceptae pudet.

Medea Retinenda non est cuius acceptae pudet. 505

Iason Quin potius ira concitum pectus doma,
placare natis. **Medea** Abdico eiuro abnuo++
meis Creusa liberis fratres dabit?

Iason Regina natis exulum, afflictis potens.

Medea Ne ueniat umquam tam malus miseris dies, 510
qui prole foeda misceat prolem inclitam,
Phoebi nepotes Sisyphi nepotibus.

Iason Quid, misera, meque teque in exitium trahis?
abscede, quaeso. **Medea** Supplicem audiuit Creο.

Iason Quid facere possim, loquere. **Medea** Pro me uel scelus. 515

Iason Hinc rex et illinc++**Medea** Est et his maior metus
Medea. nos ~confligere. certemus sine,
sit pretium Iason. **Iason** Cedo defessus malis.
et ipsa casus saepe iam expertos time.

Medea Fortuna semper omnis infra me stetit. 520

Iason Acastus instat. **Medea** Propior est hostis Creο:
utrumque profuge. non ut in socerum manus
armes nec ut te caede cognata inquines
Medea cogit: innocens mecum fuge.

Iason Et quis resistet, gemina si bella ingruant, 525
Creο atque Acastus arma si iungant sua?

Medea His adice Colchos, adice et Aeeten ducem,
Scythas Pelasgis iunge: demersos dabo.

Iason Alta extimesco sceptrum. **Medea** Ne cupias uide.

Iason Suspecta ne sint, longa colloquia amputa. 530

Medea Nunc summe toto Iuppiter caelo tona,
intende dextram, uindices flammas para
omnemque ruptis nubibus mundum quate.
nec deligenti tela librentur manu
uel me uel istum: quisquis e nobis cadet 535
nocens peribit, non potest in nos tuum
errare fulmen. **Iason** Sana meditari incipe
et placida fare. si quod ex soceri domo
potest fugam leuare solamen, pete.

Medea Contemnere animus regias, ut scis, opes 540
potest soletque; liberos tantum fugae
habere comites liceat, in quorum sinu
lacrimas profundam. te noui gnati manent.

Iason Parere precibus cupere me fateor tuis;
pietas uetat: namque istud ut possim pati, 545
non ipse memet cogat et rex et socer.
haec causa uitae est, hoc perusti pectoris
curis leuamen. spiritu citius queam
carere, membris, luce. **Medea** Sic natos amat?
bene est, tenetur, uulneri patuit locus.++ 550
Suprema certe liceat abeuntem loqui
mandata, liceat ultimum amplexum dare:
gratum est. et illud uoce iam extrema peto,
ne, si qua noster dubius effudit dolor,
maneant in animo uerba: melioris tibi 555
memoria nostri sedeat; haec irae data
oblitterentur. **Iason** Omnia ex animo expuli
precorque et ipse, feruidam ut mentem regas
placideque tractes: miserias lenit quies.

Medea Discessit. itane est? uadis oblitus mei 560
et tot meorum facinorum? excidimus tibi?
numquam excidemus. hoc age, omnis aduoca
uires et artes. fructus est scelerum tibi
nullum scelus putare. uix fraudi est locus:
timemur. hac aggredere, qua nemo potest 565
quicquam timere. perge, nunc aude, incipe
quidquid potest Medea, quidquid non potest.

Tu, fida nutrix, socia maeroris mei
uariique casus, misera consilia adiua.
est palla nobis, munus aetheriae domus 570
decusque regni, pignus Aeetae datum
a Sole generis, est et auro textili
monile fulgens quodque gemmarum nitor
distinguit aurum, quo solent cingi comae.
haec nostra nati dona nubenti ferant, 575
sed ante diris inlita ac tincta artibus.
uocetur Hecate. sacra letifica appara:
statuantur arae, flamma iam tectis sonet.

Chorvs Nulla uis flammae tumidiue uenti
tanta, nec teli metuenda torti, 580
quanta cum coniunx uiduata taedis
ardet et odit;
non ubi hibernos nebulosus imbres
Auster aduexit properatque torrens
Hister et iunctos uetat esse pontes 585
ac uagus errat;
non ubi impellit Rhodanus profundum,
aut ubi in riuos niuibus solutis
sole iam forti medioque uere
tabuit Haemus. 590
caecus est ignis stimulatus ira
nec regi curat patiturue frenos
aut timet mortem: cupit ire in ipsos
obuius enses.
Parcite, o diui, ueniam precamur, 595

uiuat ut tutus mare qui subegit.
sed furi uinci dominus profundi
 regna secunda.
ausus aeternos agitare currus
immemor metae iuuenis paternae 600
quos polo sparsit furiosus ignes
 ipse recepit.
constitit nulli uia nota magno:
uade qua tutum populo priori,
rumpe nec sacro uiolente sancta 605
 foedera mundi.

 Quisquis audacis tetigit carinae
nobiles remos nemorisque sacri
Pelion densa spoliauit umbra,
quisquis intrauit scopulos uagantes 610
et tot emensus pelagi labores
barbara funem religauit ora
raptor externi rediturus auri,
exitu diro temerata ponti
 iura piauit. 615

Exigit poenas mare prouocatum:
Tiphys, in primis domitor profundi,
liquit indocto regimen magistro;
litore externo, procul a paternis
occidens regnis tumultoque uili 620
tectus ignotas iacet inter umbras.
Aulis amissi memor inde regis
portibus lentis retinet carinas
 stare querentes.

Ille uocali genitus Camena, 625
cuius ad chordas modulante plectro
restitit torrens, siluere uenti,
cui suo cantu uolucris relicto
adfuit tota comitante silua,
Thracios sparsus iacuit per agros, 630
at caput tristi fluitauit Hebro:
contigit notam Styga Tartarumque,

non rediturus.

Strauit Alcides Aquilone natos,
patre Neptuno genitum necauit 635
sumere innumeras solitum figuras:
ipse post terrae pelagique pacem,
post feri Ditis patefacta regna
uiuus ardenti recubans in Oeta
praebuit saeuus sua membra flammis 640
tabe consumptus gemini cruoris,
munere nuptae.

Strauit Ancaeum uiolentus ictu
saetiger; fratrem, Meleagre, matris
impious mactas morerisque dextra 645
matris iratae: meruere cuncti++
morte quod crimen tener expiauit
Herculi magno puer inrepertus,
raptus, heu, tutas puer inter undas?
ite nunc, fortes, perarate pontum 650
fonte timendo.

Idmonem, quamuis bene fata nosset,
condidit serpens Libycis harenis;
omnibus uerax, sibi falsus uni
concidit Mopsus caruitque Thebis. 655
ille si uere cecinit futura,
exul errabit Thetidis maritus;
fulmine et ponto moriens Oilei 661
* * * patrioque pendet 660a
crimine poenas. 660b

Igne fallaci nociturus Argis 658
Nauplius praeceps cadet in profundum;
coniugis fatum redimens Pheraei 662
uxor impendes animam marito.
ipse qui praedam spoliūque iussit
aureum prima reuehi carina 665
[ustus accenso Pelias aeno]
arsit angustas uagus inter undas.
Iam satis, diui, mare uindicastis:

parcite iusso.

Nutrix Pauet animus, horret: magna perniciēs adest. 670
immane quantum augescit et semet dolor
accendit ipse uimque praeteritam integrat.
uidi furem saepe et aggressam deos,
caelum trahentem: maius his, maius parat
Medea monstrum. namque ut attonito gradu 675
euasit et penetrale funestum attigit,
totas opes effundit et quidquid diu
etiam ipsa timuit promit atque omnem explicat
turbam malorum, arcana secreta abdita,
et triste laeua comparans sacrum manu 680
pestes uocat quascumque feruentis creat
harena Libyae quasque perpetua niue
Taurus coercet frigore Arctoo rigens,
et omne monstrum. tracta magicis cantibus
squamifera latebris turba desertis adest. 685
hic saeua serpens corpus immensum trahit
trifidamque linguam exertat et quaerit quibus
mortifera ueniat: carmine audito stupet
tumidumque nodis corpus aggestis plicat
cogitque in orbis. 'Parua sunt' inquit 'mala 690
et uile telum est, ima quod tellus creat:
caelo petam uenena. iam iam tempus est
aliquid mouere fraude uulgari altius.
huc ille uasti more torrentis patens
descendat anguis, cuius immensos duae, 695
maior minorque, sentiunt nodos ferae
(maior Pelasgis apta, Sidoniis minor),
pressasque tandem soluat Ophiuchus manus
uirusque fundat; adsit ad cantus meos
laccessere ausus gemina Python numina, 700
et Hydra et omnis redeat Herculeae manu
succisa serpens caede se reparans sua.
tu quoque relictis peruigil Colchis ades,
sopite primum cantibus, serpens, meis.'

Postquam euocauit omne serpentum genus, 705
congerit in unum frugis infaustae mala:
quaecumque generat inuius saxis Eryx,
quae fert opertis hieme perpetua iugis
sparsus cruore Caucasus Promethei,
et quis sagittas diuites Arabes linunt 711
pharetraque pugnax Medus aut Parthi leues, 710
aut quos sub axe frigido sucos legunt 712
lucis Suebae nobiles Hyrcaniis;
quodcumque tellus uere nidifico creat
aut rigida cum iam bruma decussit decus 715
nemorum et niuali cuncta constrinxit gelu,
quodcumque gramen flore mortifero uiret,
dirusue tortis sucus in radicibus
causas nocendi gignit, attrectat manu.
Haemonius illas contulit pestes Athos, 720
has Pindus ingens, illa Pangaei iugis
teneram cruenta falce deposuit comam;
has aluit altum gurgitem Tigris premens,
Danuuius illas, has per arentis plagas
tepidis Hydaspes gemmifer currens aquis, 725
nomenque terris qui dedit Baetis suis
Hesperia pulsans maria languenti uado.
haec passa ferrum est, dum parat Phoebus diem,
illius alta nocte succisus frutex;
at huius ungue secta cantato seges. 730

Mortifera carpit gramina ac serpentium
saniem exprimit miscetque et obscenas aues
maestique cor bubonis et raucae strigis
exsecta uiuae uiscera. haec scelerum artifex
discreta ponit: his rapax uis ignium, 735
his gelida pigri frigoris glacies inest.
addit uenenis uerba non illis minus
metuenda.++Sonuit ecce uesano gradu
canitque. mundus uocibus primis tremit.

Medea Comprecor uulgus silentum uosque ferales deos 740

et Chaos caecum atque opacam Ditis umbrosi domum,
Tartari ripis ligatos squalidae Mortis specus.
supplicis, animae, remissis currite ad thalamos nouos:
rota resistat membra torquens, tangat Ixion humum,
Tantalus securus undas hauriat Pirenidas, 745
[grauior uni poena sedeat coniugis socero mei]
lubricus per saxa retro Sisypum soluat lapis.
uos quoque, urnis quas foratis inritus ludit labor,
Danaides, coite: uestras hic dies quaerit manus.++
nunc meis uocata sacris, noctium sidus, ueni 750
pessimos induta uultus, fronte non una minax.

Tibi more gentis uinculo soluens comam
secreta nudo nemora lustraui pede
et euocaui nubibus siccis aquas
egique ad imum maria, et Oceanus graues 755
interius undas aestibus uictis dedit,
pariterque mundus lege confusa aetheris
et solem et astra uidit et uetitum mare
tetigistis, ursae. temporum flexi uices:
aestiuat tellus horruit cantu meo, 760
coacta messem uidit hibernam Ceres;
uiolenta Phasis uertit in fontem uada
et Hister, in tot ora diuisus, truces
compressit undas omnibus ripis piger;
sonuere fluctus, tumuit insanum mare 765
tacente uento; nemoris antiqui domus
amisit umbras uocis imperio meae.++
die relicto Phoebus in medio stetit,
Hyadesque nostris cantibus motae labant:
adesse sacris tempus est, Phoebe, tuis. 770
Tibi haec cruenta sorta texuntur manu,
nouena quae serpens ligat,
tibi haec Typhoeus membra quae discors tulit,
qui regna concussit Iouis.
uectoris istic perfidi sanguis inest, 775
quem Nessus expirans dedit.
Oetaeus isto cinere defecit rogos,

qui uirus Herculeum bibit.
piae sororis, impiae matris, facem
ultricis Althaeae uides. 780
reliquit istas inuio plumas specu
Harpyia, dum Zeten fugit.
his adice pinnas sauciae Stympthalidos
Lernaea passae spicula.++
sonuistis, arae, tripodas agnosco meos 785
fauente commotos dea.
Video Triuiaae currus agiles,
non quos pleno lucida uultu
pernox agitat,
sed quos facie lurida maesta, 790
cum Thessalicis uexata minis
caelum freno propiore legit.
sic face tristem pallida lucem
funde per auras,
horrore nouo terre populos
inque auxilium, Dictynna, tuum 795
pretiosa sonent aera Corinthi.
Tibi sanguineo caespite sacrum
sollemne damus,
tibi de medio rapta sepulcro
fax nocturnos sustulit ignes, 800
tibi mota caput flexa uoces
ceruice dedi,
tibi funereo de more iacens
passos cingit uitta capillos,
tibi iactatur tristis Stygia
ramus ab unda, 805
tibi nudato pectore maenas
sacro feriam bracchia cultro.
manet noster sanguis ad aras:
assuesce, manus, stringere ferrum
carosque pati posse cruores++ 810
sacrum laticem percussa dedi.
Quodsi nimium saepe uocari

quereris uotis, ignosce, precor:
causa uocandi, Persei, tuos

saepius arcus 815

una atque eadem est semper, Iason.

Tu nunc uestes tinge Creusae,
quas cum primum sumpserit, imas
urat serpens flamma medullas.

Ignis fuluo clusus in auro 820

latet obscurus, quem mihi caeli

qui furta luit uiscere feto

dedit et docuit condere uires

arte, Prometheus; dedit et tenui

sulphure tectos Mulciber ignes, 825

et uiuacis fulgura flammae

de cognato Phaethonte tuli.

habeo mediae dona Chimaerae,

habeo flammam usto tauri

guttore raptas, 830

quas permixto felle Medusae

tacitum iussi seruare malum.

Adde uenenis stimulos, Hecate,

donisque meis semina flammae

condita serua:

fallant uisus tactusque ferant, 835

meet in pectus uenasque calor,

stillent artus ossaque fument

uincatque suas flagrante coma

noua nupta faces.

Vota tenentur: ter latratus 840

audax Hecate dedit et sacros

edidit ignes face luctifera.

Peracta uis est omnis: huc gnatos uoca,
pretiosa per quos dona nubenti feram.

Ite, ite, nati, matris infaustae genus, 845

placate uobis munere et multa prece

dominam ac nouercam. uadite et celeres domum

referte gressus, ultimo amplexu ut fruam.

Chorvs Quonam cruenta maenas

praeceps amore saeuo 850

rapitur? quod impotenti

facinus parat furore?

uultus citatus ira

riget et caput feroci

quatiens superba motu 855

regi minatur ultro.

quis credat exulem?

Flagrant genae rubentes,

pallor fugat ruborem.

nullum uagante forma 860

seruat diu colorem.

huc fert pedes et illuc,

ut tigris orba natis

cursu furente lustrat

Gangeticum nemus. 865

Frenare nescit iras

Medea, non amores;

nunc ira amorque causam

iunxere: quid sequetur?

quando efferet Pelasgis 870

nefanda Colchis aruis

gressum metuque soluet

regnum simulque reges?

Nunc, Phoebe, mitte currus

nullo morante loro, 875

nox condat alma lucem,

mergat diem timendum

dux noctis Hesperus.

Nvntivs Periere cuncta, concidit regni status;

nata atque genitor cinere permixto iacent. 880

Chorus Qua fraude capti? **Nuntius** Qua solent reges capi:

donis. **Chorus** In illis esse quis potuit dolus?

Nuntius Et ipse miror uixque iam facto malo
potuisse fieri credo. **Chorus** Quis cladis modus?

Nuntius Auidus per omnem regiae partem furit 885
immissus ignis: iam domus tota occidit,
urbi timetur. **Chorus** Vnda flammas opprimat.

Nuntius Et hoc in ista clade mirandum accidit:
alit unda flammas, quoque prohibetur magis,
magis ardet ignis; ipsa praesidia occupat. 890

Nutrix Effer citatum sede Pelopea gradum,
Medea, praeceps quaslibet terras pete.

Medea Egone ut recedam? si profugissem prius,
ad hoc redirem. nuptias specto nouas.
quid, anime, cessas? sequere felicem impetum. 895
pars ultionis ista, qua gaudes, quota est?
amas adhuc, furiose, si satis est tibi
caelebs Iason. quaere poenarum genus
haut usitatum iamque sic temet para:
fas omne cedat, abeat expulsus pudor; 900
uindicta levis est quam ferunt purae manus.
incumbe in iras teque languentem excita
penitusque ueteres pectore ex imo impetus
uiolentus hauri. quidquid admissum est adhuc,
pietas uocetur. hoc age! en faxo sciant 905
quam leuia fuerint quamque uulgaris notae
quae commodauit scelera. prolusit dolor
per ista noster: quid manus poterant rudes
audere magnum, quid puellaris furor?
Medea nunc sum; creuit ingenium malis: 910
iuuat, iuuat rapuisse fraternum caput,
artus iuuat secuisse et arcano patrem
spoliasse sacro, iuuat in exitium senis
armasse natas. quaere materiam, dolor:
ad omne facinus non rudem dextram afferes. 915

Quo te igitur, ira, mittis, aut quae perfido
intendis hosti tela? nescioquid ferox
decreuit animus intus et nondum sibi
audet fateri. stulta properaui nimis:
ex paelice utinam liberos hostis meus 920
aliquos haberet++quidquid ex illo tuum est,
Creusa peperit. placuit hoc poenae genus,
meritoque placuit: ultimum magno scelus
animo parandum est: liberi quondam mei,
uos pro paternis sceleribus poenas date. 925

Cor pepulit horror, membra torpescunt gelu
pectusque tremuit. ira discessit loco
materque tota coniuge expulsa redit.
egone ut meorum liberum ac prolis meae
fundam cruorem? melius, a, demens furor! 930
incognitum istud facinus ac dirum nefas
a me quoque absit; quod scelus miseri luent?
scelus est Iason genitor et maius scelus
Medea mater++occidant, non sunt mei;
pereant, mei sunt. crimine et culpa carent, 935
sunt innocentes, fateor: et frater fuit.
quid, anime, titubas? ora quid lacrimae rigant
uariamque nunc huc ira, nunc illuc amor
diducit? anceps aestus incertam rapit;
ut saeua rapidi bella cum uenti gerunt, 940
utrimque fluctus maria discordes agunt
dubiumque feruet pelagus, haut aliter meum
cor fluctuatur: ira pietatem fugat
iramque pietas++cede pietati, dolor.

Huc, cara proles, unicum afflictae domus 945
solamen, huc uos ferte et infusos mihi
coniungite artus. habeat incolumes pater,
dum et mater habeat++urguet exilium ac fuga:
iam iam meo rapiuntur auulsi e sinu,
flentes, gementes++osculis pereant patris, 950
periere matris. rursus increscit dolor
et feruet odium, repetit inuitam manum

antiqua Erinys++ira, qua ducis, sequor.
utinam superbae turba Tantalidos meo
exisset utero bisque septenos parens 955
natos tulissem! sterilis in poenas fui++
fratri patrique quod sat est, pepereris duos.

Quonam ista tendit turba Furiarum impotens?
quem quaerit aut quo flammeos ictus parat,
aut cui cruentas agmen infernum faces 960
intentat? ingens anguis excusso sonat
tortus flagello. quem trabe infesta petit
Megaera? cuius umbra dispersis uenit
incerta membris? frater est, poenas petit:
dabimus, sed omnes. fige luminibus faces, 965
lania, perure, pectus en Furiis patet.

Discedere a me, frater, ultrices deas
manesque ad imos ire securas iube:
mihi me relinque et utere hac, frater, manu
quae strinxit ensem++uictima manes tuos 970
placamus ista. Quid repens affert sonus?
parantur arma meque in exitium petunt.
excelsa nostrae tecta conscendam domus
caede incohata. perge tu mecum comes.
tuum quoque ipsa corpus hinc mecum auferam. 975
nunc hoc age, anime: non in occulto tibi est
perdenda uirtus; approba populo manum.

Iason Quicumque regum cladibus fidus doles,
concorre, ut ipsam sceleris auctorem horridi
capiamus. huc, huc, fortis armiferi cohors, 980
conferte tela, uertite ex imo domum.

Medea Iam iam recepi sceptrum germanum patrem,
spoliumque Colchi pecudis auratae tenent;
rediere regna, rapta uirginitas redit.
o placida tandem numina, o festum diem, 985
o nuptialem! uade, perfectum est scelus++
uindicta nondum: perage, dum faciunt manus.

quid nunc moraris, anime? quid dubitas? potens
iam cecidit ira? paenitet facti, pudet.
quid, misera, feci? misera? paeniteat licet, 990
feci. uoluptas magna me inuitam subit,
et ecce crescit. derat hoc unum mihi,
spectator iste. nil adhuc facti reor:
quidquid sine isto fecimus sceleris perit.

Iason En ipsa tecti parte praecipiti imminet. 995
huc rapiat ignes aliquis, ut flammis cadat
suis perusta. **Medea** Congere extremum tuis
natis, Iason, funus ac tumulum strue:
coniunx socerque iusta iam functis habent
a me sepulti; gnatus hic fatum tulit, 1000
hic te uidente dabitur exitio pari.

Iason Per numen omne perque communes fugas
torosque, quos non nostra uiolauit fides,
iam parce nato. si quod est crimen, meum est:
me dedo morti; noxium macta caput. 1005

Medea Hac qua recusas, qua doles, ferrum exigam.
i nunc, superbe, uirginum thalamos pete,
relinque matres. **Iason** Vnus est poenae satis.

Medea Si posset una caede satiari manus,
nullam petisset. ut duos perimam, tamen 1010
nimium est dolori numerus angustus meo.
in matre si quod pignus etiamnunc latet,
scrutabor ense uiscera et ferro extraham.

Iason Iam perage coeptum facinus, haut ultra precor,
moramque saltem supplicis dona meis. 1015

Medea Perfruere lento scelere, ne propera, dolor:
meus dies est; tempore accepto utimur.

Iason Infesta, memet perime. **Medea** Misereri iubes.++

bene est, peractum est. plura non habui, dolor,
quae tibi litarem. lumina huc tumida alleua, 1020
ingrate Iason. coniugem agnoscis tuam?
sic fugere soleo. patuit in caelum uia:
squamosa gemini colla serpentes iugo
summissa praebent. recipe iam gnatos, parens;
ego inter auras aliti curru uehar. 1025

Iason Per alta uade spatia sublime aetheris,
testare nullos esse, qua ueheris, deos.

OCTAVIA

Octavia Iam uaga caelo sidera fulgens

Aurora fugat,
surgit Titan radiante coma
mundoque diem reddit clarum.
Age, tot tantis onerata malis, 5
repete assuetos iam tibi questus
atque aequoreas uince Alcyonas,
uince et uolucres Pandionias:
grauior namque his fortuna tua est.
Semper genetrix deflenda mihi, 10
prima meorum causa malorum,
tristes questus natae exaudi,
si quis remanet sensus in umbris.
utinam ante manu grandaeva sua
mea rupisset stamina Clotho, 15
tua quam maerens uulnera uidi
oraeque foedo sparsa cruore!
o nox semper funesta mihi;
tempore ab illo lux est tenebris

inuisa magis: 20
tulimus saeuae iussa nouercae,
hostilem animum uultusque truces.
illa, illa meis tristes Erinys
thalamis Stygios praetulit ignes
teque extinxit, miserande pater, 25
modo cui totus paruit orbis
ultra Oceanum cuique Britanni

terga dedere,
ducibus nostris ante ignoti

iurisque sui; 30
coniugis, heu me, pater, insidiis

oppressae iaces seruitque domus
cum prole tua capta tyranno.

Nvtrix Fulgore primo captus et fragili bono
fallacis aulae quisquis attonitus stupet, 35
subito latentis ecce Fortunae impetu
modo praepotentem cernat euersam domum
stirpemque Claudii, cuius imperio fuit
subiectus orbis, paruit liber diu
Oceanus et recepit inuitus rates. 40
En qui Britannis primus imposuit iugum,
ignota tantis classibus texit freta
interque gentes barbaras tutus fuit
et saeva maria, coniugis scelere occidit;
mox illa nati: cuius extinctus iacet 45
frater uenenis, maeret infelix soror
eademque coniunx nec graues luctus ualet
ira coacta tegere crudelis uiri,
quem spreto refugit semper atque odio pari
ardens mariti mutua flagrat face. 50
animum dolentis nostra solatur fides
pietasque frustra: uincit immitis dolor
consilia nostra nec regi mentis potest
generosus ardor, sed malis uires capit.
heu quam nefandum prospicit noster timor 55
scelus, quod utinam numen auertat deum.

Oc. O mea nullis aequanda malis

fortuna, licet
repetam luctus, Electra, tuos:
tibi maerenti caesum licuit 60

flere parentem,
scelus ulcisci uindice fratre,
tua quem pietas hosti rapuit

textitque fides:
me crudeli sorte parentes 65
raptos prohibet lugere timor
fratrisque necem deflere uetat,
in quo fuerat spes una mihi
totque malorum breue solamen.
nunc in luctus seruata meos 70
magni resto nominis umbra.

Nvt. Vox en nostras perculit aures

tristis alumnae; 72a
cesset thalamis inferre gradus

tarda senectus?

Oc. Excipe nostras lacrimas, nutrix, 75
testis nostri fida doloris.

Nvt. Quis te tantis soluet curis,

miseranda, dies?

Oc. Qui me Stygias mittet ad umbras.

Nvt. Omina quaeso sint ista procul. 80

Oc. Non uota meos tua nunc casus,

sed fata regunt.

Nvt. Dabit afflictæ meliora deus

tempora mitis; 83a
tu modo blando uince obsequio

placata uirum.

Oc. Vincam saeuos ante leones

tigresque truces 86a
fera quam saeui corda tyranni:
odit genitos sanguine claro,
spernit superos hominesque simul,
nec fortunam capit ipse suam, 90
quam dedit illi per scelus ingens

infanda parens.
Licet ingratum dirae pudeat

munere matris 93a
hoc imperium cepisse, licet
tantum munus morte rependat,
feret hunc titulum post fata tamen
femina longo semper in aeuo.

Nvt. Animi retine uerba furentis,
temere emissam comprime uocem.

Oc. Toleranda quamuis patiar, haud umquam queant 100
nisi morte tristi nostra finiri mala.
genetrice caesa, per scelus rapto patre,
orbata fratre, miseriis luctu obruta,
maerore pressa, coniugi inuisa ac meae
subiecta famulae, luce non grata fruor, 105
trepidante semper corde non mortis metu,
sed sceleris++absit crimen a fatis meis,
mori iuuabit; poena nam grauior nece est
uidere tumidos et truces miserae mihi
uultus tyranni, iungere atque hosti oscula, 110
timere nutus cuius obsequium meus
haud ferre posset fata post fratris dolor
scelere interempti, cuius imperium tenet
et sorte gaudet auctor infandae necis.

Quam saepe tristis umbra germani meis 115
offertur oculis, membra cum soluit quies
et fessa fletu lumina oppressit sopor:

modo facibus atris armat infirmas manus
oculosque et ora fratris infestus petit,
modo trepidus idem refugit in thalamos meos; 120
persequitur hostis atque inhaerenti mihi
uiolentus ensem per latus nostrum rapit.
tunc tremor et ingens excutit somnos pauor
renouatque luctus et metus miserae mihi.

Adice his superbam paelicem, nostrae domus 125
spoliis nitentem, cuius in munus suam
Stygiae parentem natus imposuit rati,
quam, dira post naufragia, superato mari,
ferro interemit saeuior pelagi fretis:
quae spes salutis, post nefas tantum, mihi? 130
inimica uictrix imminet thalamis meis
odioque nostri flagrat et pretium stupri
iustae maritum coniugis poscit caput.

Emergere umbris et fer auxilium tuae
natae inuocanti, genitor, aut Stygios sinus 135
tellure rupta pande, quo praeceps ferar.

Nvt. Frustra parentis inuocas manes tui,
miseranda, frustra, nulla cui prolis suae
manet inter umbras cura: qui nato suo
praeferre potuit sanguine alieno satum 140
genitamque fratris coniugem captus sibi
toris nefandis flebili iunxit face.
hinc orta series facinorum: caedes, doli,
regni cupido, sanguinis diri sitis;
mactata soceri concidit thalamis gener 145
uictima, tuis ne fieret hymenaeis potens.
pro facinus ingens! feminae est munus datus
Silanus et cruore foedauit suo
patrios penates, criminis ficti reus.
intrauit hostis, ei mihi, captam domum 150
dolis nouercae, principis factus gener
idemque natus, iuuenis infandi ingeni,
capaxque scelerum, dira cui genetrix facem

accendit et te iunxit inuitam metu.

Tantoque uictrix facta successu ferox 155
ausa imminere est orbis imperio sacri.
quis tot referre facinorum formas potest
et spes nefandas feminae et blandos dolos
regnum petentis per gradus scelerum omnium?
tunc sancta Pietas extulit trepidos gradus 160
uacuumque Erinys saeua funesto pede
intrauit aulam, polluit Stygia face
sacros penates, iura naturae furens
fasque omne rupit: miscuit coniunx uiro
uenena saeua, cecidit atque eadem sui 165
mox scelere nati. Tu quoque extinctus iaces,
deflende nobis semper, infelix puer,
modo sidus orbis, columen augustae domus,
Britannice, heu me, nunc leuis tantum cinis
et tristis umbra; saeua cui lacrimas dedit 170
etiam nouerca, cum rogis artus tuos
dedit cremandos membraque et uultus deo
similes uolanti saeuens flamma abstulit.

Oc. Extinguat et me, ne manu nostra cadat!

Nvt. Natura uires non dedit tantas tibi. 175

Oc. Dolor ira maeror miseriae luctus dabunt.

Nvt. Vince obsequendo potius immitem uirum.

Oc. Vt fratrem ademptum scelere restituat mihi?

Nvt. Incolumis ut sis ipsa, labentem ut domum
genitoris olim subole restituas tua. 180

Oc. Expectat aliam principis subolem domus;
me dira miseri fata germani trahunt.

Nvt. Confirmet animum ciuium tantus fauor.

Oc. Solatur iste nostra, non releuat mala.

Nvt. Vis magna populi est. **Oc.** Principis maior tamen. 185

Nvt. Respiciet ipse coniugem. **Oc.** Paelex uetat.

Nvt. Inuisa cunctis nempe. **Oc.** Sed cara est uiro.

Nvt. Nondum uxor est. **Oc.** Iam fiet, et genetrix simul.

Nvt. Iuuenilis ardor impetu primo furit,
languescit idem facile nec durat diu 190
in Venere turpi, ceu leuis flammae uapor:
amor perennis coniugis castae manet.
Violare prima quae toros ausa est tuos
animumque domini famula possedit diu,
iam metuit eadem++**Oc.** Nempe praelatam sibi. 195

Nvt. Subiecta et humilis, atque monumenta extruit
quibus timorem falsa testatur suum.

Et hanc leuis fallaxque destituet deus
uolucer Cupido: sit licet forma eminens,
opibus superba, gaudium capiet breue. 200

Passa est similes ipsa dolores

regina deum,

cum se formas uertit in omnes
dominus caeli diuumque pater
et modo pennas sumpsit oloris, 205

modo Sidonii cornua tauri;
aureus idem fluxit in imbri;
fulgent caelo sidera Ledaee,
patrio residet Bacchus Olympo,
deus Alcides possidet Heben 210

nec Iunonis iam timet iras,
cuius gener est qui fuit hostis.
Vicit sapiens tamen obsequium
coniugis altae pressusque dolor:

sola Tonantem tenet aetherio 215
secura toro maxima Iuno,
nec mortali captus forma
deserit altam Iuppiter aulam.
Tu quoque, terris altera Iuno,
soror Augusti coniunxque, graues 220

uince dolores.

Oc. Iungentur ante saeua sideribus freta
et ignis undae, Tartaro tristi polus,
lux alma tenebris, roscidae nocti dies,
quam cum scelesti coniugis mente impia 225
mens nostra, semper fratris extincti memor.
utinam nefandi principis dirum caput
obruere flammis caelitem rector paret,
qui saepe terras fulmine infesto quatit
mentesque nostras ignibus terret sacris 230
nouisque monstris; uidimus caelo iubar
ardens cometen pandere infaustam facem,
qua plaustra tardus noctis alterna uice
regit Bootes, frigore Arctoo rigens:
en ipse diro spiritu saeui ducis 235
polluitur aether, gentibus clades nouas
minantur astra, quas regit dux impius.
non tam ferum Typhona neglecto Ioue
irata Tellus edidit quondam parens:
haec grauior illo pestis, hic hostis deum 240
hominumque templis expulit superos suis
ciuesque patria, spiritum fratri abstulit,
hausit cruorem matris++et lucem uidet
fruiturque uita noxiam atque animam trahit!
Pro summe genitor, tela cur frustra iacis 245
inuicta totiens temere regali manu?
in tam nocentem dextra cur cessat tua?
utinam suorum facinorum poenas luat
Nero insituius, Domitio genitus patre,

orbis tyrannus, quem premit turpi iugo 250
morumque uitiiis nomen Augustum inquinat!

Nvt. Indignus ille, fateor, est thalamis tuis;
sed cede fatis atque fortunae tuae,
alumna, quaeso, neue uiolenti moue
iram mariti. forsitan uindex deus 255
existet aliquis, laetus et ueniet dies.

Oc. Graui deorum nostra iam pridem domus
urgetur ira, prima quam pressit Venus
furore miserae dura genetricis meae,
quae nupta demens nupsit incesta face, 260
oblita nostri, coniugis, legum immemor.
illos soluta crine, succincta anguibus
ultrix Erinys uenit ad Stygios toros
raptasque thalamis sanguine extinxit faces;
incendit ira principis pectus truci 265
caedem in nefandam: cecidit infelix parens,
heu, nostra ferro meque perpetuo obruit
extincta luctu; coniugem traxit suum
natumque ad umbras, prodidit lapsam domum.

Nvt. Renouare luctus parce cum fletu pios, 270
manes parentis neue sollicita tuae,
graues furoris quae sui poenas dedit.

Chorvs Quae fama modo uenit ad aures?
utinam falso credita perdat
frustra totiens iactata fidem, 275
nec noua coniunx nostri thalamos
principis intret, teneatque suos
nupta penates Claudia proles.
edat partu pignora pacis,
qua tranquillus gaudeat orbis 280
seruetque decus Roma aeternum.
Fratris thalamos sortita tenet

maxima Iuno,
soror Augusti sociata toris
cur a patria pellitur aula? 285
sancta quid illi prodest pietas

diuusque pater? 286a
quid uirginitas castusque pudor?
Nos quoque nostri sumus immemores
post fata ducis, cuius stirpem
prodimus aegro suadente metu. 290

Vera priorum uirtus quondam
Romana fuit uerumque genus
Martis in illis sanguisque uiris.
Illi reges hac expulerunt

urbe superbos 294a
ultique tuos sunt bene manes,
mactata tua, miseranda, manu, 301

nata Lucreti,
stuprum saeui passa tyranni.
Te quoque bellum triste secutum est, 300
uirgo dextra caesa parentis, 296
ne seruitium paterere graue et
improba ferret praemia uictrix

dira libido.
Dedit infandi sceleris poenas 304
cum Tarquinio Tullia coniunx,
quae per caesi membra parentis
egit saeuos impia currus
laceroque seni uiolenta rogos

nata negauit. 308a
Haec quoque nati uidere nefas

saecula magnum,
cum Tyrrhenum rate ferali

princeps captam fraude parentem

misit in aequor. 312a

Properant placidos linquere portus

iussi nautae,

resonant remis pulsata freta; 315

fertur in altum prouecta ratis,

quae resoluta robore labens

pressa dehiscit sorbetque mare.

Tollitur ingens clamor ad astra

cum femineo mixtus planctu. 320

mors ante oculos dira uagatur;

quaerit leti sibi quisque fugam:

alii lacerae puppis tabulis

haerent nudi fluctusque secant,

repetunt alii litora nantes; 325

multos mergunt fata profundo.

Scindit uestes Augusta suas

laceratque comas

rigat et maestis fletibus ora.

postquam spes est nulla salutis, 330

ardens ira, iam uicta malis:

‘haec’ exclamat ‘mihi pro tanto

munere reddis praemia, nate?

hac sum, fateor, digna carina,

quae te genui, quae tibi lucem 335

atque imperium nomenque dedi

Caesaris amens.

Exere uultus Acheronte tuos

poenisque meis pascere, coniunx:

ego causa tuae, miserande, necis 340

natoque tuo funeris auctor

en, ut merui, ferar ad manes

inhumata tuos,

obruta saevis aequoris undis.’
Feriunt fluctus ora loquentis, 345
ruit in pelagus rursusque salo

pressa resurgit;
pellit palmis cogente metu
freta, sed cedit fessa labori.
Mansit tacitis in pectoribus 350
spreta tristi iam morte fides:
multi dominae ferre auxilium
pelago fractis uiribus audent;
bracchia quamuis lenta trahentem
uoce hortantur manibusque leuant. 355
Quid tibi saeui fugisse maris

profuit undas?
ferro es nati moritura tui,
cuius facinus uix posteritas,
tarde semper saecula credent. 360
Furit ereptam pelagoque dolet

uiuere matrem
impius ingens geminatque nefas:
ruit in miserae fata parentis
patiturque moram sceleris nullam. 365
missus peragit iussa satelles:
reserat dominae pectora ferro.
Caedis moriens illa ministrum

rogat infelix,
utero dirum condat ut ensem: 370
‘hic est, hic est fodiendus’ ait
‘ferro, monstrum qui tale tulit.’
post hanc uocem cum supremo

mixtam gemitu
animam tandem per fera tristem 375

uulnera reddit.

Seneca Quid, impotens Fortuna, fallaci mihi
blandita uultu, sorte contentum mea
alte extulisti, grauius ut ruerem edita
receptus arce totque prospicerem metus? 380
melius latebam procul ab inuidiae malis
remotus inter Corsici rupes maris,
ubi liber animus et sui iuris mihi
semper uacabat studia recolenti mea.
O quam iuuabat, quo nihil maius parens 385
Natura genuit, operis immensi artifex,
caelum intueri, solis et cursus sacros
mundique motus, noctis alternas uices
orbemque Phoebes, astra quam cingunt uaga,
lateque fulgens aetheris magni decus; 390
qui si senescit, tantus in caecum chaos
casurus iterum, tunc adest mundo dies
supremus ille, qui premat genus impium
caeli ruina, rursus ut stirpem nouam
generet renascens melior, ut quondam tulit 395
iuuenis, tenente regna Saturno poli.
Tunc illa uirgo, numinis magni dea,
Iustitia, caelo missa cum sancta Fide
terra regebat mitis humanum genus.
non bella norant, non tubae fremitus truces, 400
non arma gentes, cingere assuerant suas
muris nec urbes: peruium cunctis iter,
communis usus omnium rerum fuit;
et ipsa Tellus laeta fecundos sinus
pandebat ultro, tam piis felix parens 405
et tuta alumnis. Alia sed suboles minus
conspecta mitis * * *
* * * Tertium sollers genus 407a
nouas ad artes extitit, sanctum tamen,
mox inquietum quod sequi cursu feras
auderet acres, fluctibus tectos graui 410

extrahere pisces rete uel calamo leui,
decipere uolucres crate * * *
tenere laqueo, premere subiectos iugo 412bis
tauros feroces, uomere immunem prius
sulcare terram, laesa quae fruges suas

* 414a

interior, alte condidit sacro sinu.

Sed in parentis uiscera intrauit suae
deterior aetas; eruit ferrum graue
aurumque, saeuas mox et armauit manus;
partita fines regna constituit, nouas
exstruxit urbes, tecta defendit sua 420
aliena telis aut petit praedae imminens.
neglecta terras fugit et mores feros
hominum, cruenta caede pollutas manus
Astraea uirgo, siderum magnum decus.
cupido belli creuit atque auri fames 425
totum per orbem, maximum exortum est malum
luxuria, pestis blanda, cui uires dedit
roburque longum tempus atque error grauis.

Collecta uitia per tot aetates diu
in nos redundant: saeculo premimur graui, 430
quo scelera regnant, saeuit impietas furens,
turpi libido Venere dominatur potens,
luxuria uictrix orbis immensas opes
iam pridem auaris manibus, ut perdat, rapit.

Sed ecce, gressu fertur attonito Nero 435
trucique uultu. quid ferat mente horreo.

Nero Perage imperata: mitte, qui Plauti mihi
Sullaeque caesi referat abscisum caput.

Praefectvs Iussa haud morabor: castra confestim petam.

Se. Nihil in propinquos temere constitui decet. 440

Ne. Iusto esse facile est cui uacat pectus metu.

Se. Magnum timoris remedium clementia est.

Ne. Extinguere hostem maxima est uirtus ducis.

Se. Seruare ciues maior est patriae patri.

Ne. Praecipere mitem conuenit pueris senem. 445

Se. Regenda magis est feruida adolescentia.

Ne. Aetate in hac satis esse consilii reor.

Se. Vt facta superi comprobent semper tua.

Ne. Stulte uerebor, ipse cum faciam, deos.

Se. Hoc plus uerere quod licet tantum tibi. 450

Ne. Fortuna nostra cuncta permittit mihi.

Se. Crede obsequenti parcius: leuis est dea.

Ne. Inertis est nescire quid liceat sibi.

Se. Id facere laus est quod decet, non quod licet.

Ne. Calcat iacentem uulgus. **Se.** Inuisum opprimit. 455

Ne. Ferrum tuetur principem. **Se.** Melius fides.

Ne. Decet timeri Caesarem. **Se.** At plus diligi.

Ne. Metuant necesse est++**Se.** Quidquid exprimitur graue est.

Ne. Iussisque nostris pareant. **Se.** Iusta impera.

Ne. Statuam ipse. **Se.** Quae consensus efficiat rata. 460

Ne. Destructus ensis faciet. **Se.** Hoc absit nefas.

Ne. An patiar ultra sanguinem nostrum peti,
inultus et contemptus ut subito opprimar?
exilia non fregere summos procul
Plautum atque Sullam, pertinax quorum furor 465
armat ministros sceleris in caedem meam,
absentium cum maneat etiam ingens fauor
in urbe nostra, qui fouet spes exulum.
tollantur hostes ense suspecti mihi,
inuisa coniunx pereat et carum sibi 470
fratrem sequatur. quidquid excelsum est cadat.

Se. Pulcrum eminere est inter illustres uiros,
consulere patriae, parcere afflictis, fera
caede abstinere, tempus atque irae dare,
orbi quietem, saeculo pacem suo. 475
haec summa uirtus, petitur hac caelum uia.
sic ille patriae primus Augustus parens
complexus astra est, colitur et templis deus.
illum tamen Fortuna iactauit diu
terra marique per graues belli uices, 480
hostes parentis donec oppressit sui:
tibi numen incruenta summisit suum
et dedit habenas imperi facili manu
nutuque terras maria subiecit tuo;
inuidia tristis, uicta consensu pio, 485
cessit; senatus, equitis accensus fauor;
plebisque uotis atque iudicio patrum
tu pacis auctor, generis humani arbiter
electus orbem spiritu sacro regis
patriae parens: quod nomen ut serues petit 490
suosque ciues Roma commendat tibi.

Ne. Munus deorum est, ipsa quod seruit mihi
Roma et senatus quodque ab inuitis preces
humilesque uoces exprimit nostri metus.

seruare ciues principi et patriae graues, 495
claro tumentes genere quae dementia est,
cum liceat una uoce suspectos sibi
mori iubere? Brutus in caedem ducis,
a quo salutem tulerat, armauit manus:
inuictus acie, gentium domitor, Ioui 500
aequatus altos saepe per honorum gradus
Caesar nefando ciuium scelere occidit.

Quantum cruoris Roma tum uidit sui,
lacerata totiens! ille qui meruit pia
uirtute caelum, diuus Augustus, uiros 505
quot interemit nobiles, iuuenes senes
sparsos per orbem, cum suos mortis metu
fugerent penates et trium ferrum ducum,
tabula notante deditos tristi neci!
exposita rostris capita caesorum patres 510
uidere maesti, flere nec licuit suos,
non gemere dira tabe polluto foro,
stillante sanie per putres uultus graui.
Nec finis hic cruoris aut caedis stetit:
pauere uolucres et feras saeuas diu 515
tristes Philippi, * * *

* * * hausit et Siculum mare 516a
classes uirosque saepe caedentes suos,
concussus orbis uiribus magnis ducum.
superatus acie puppibus Nilum petiit
fugae paratis, ipse periturus breui: 520
hausit cruorem incesta Romani ducis
Aegyptus iterum, non leues umbras tegit.
Illic sepultum est impie gestum diu
ciuile bellum. condidit tandem suos
iam fessus enses uictor hebetatos feris 525
uulneribus, et continuit imperium metus.
armis fideque militis tutus fuit,
pietate nati factus eximia deus,
post fata consecratus et templis datus.

Nos quoque manebunt astra, si saeuo prior 530

ense occuparo quidquid infestum est mihi
dignaque nostram subole fundaro domum.

Se. Implebit aulam stirpe caelesti tuam
generata diuo, Claudiae gentis decus,
sortita fratris more Iunonis toros. 535

Ne. Incesta genetrix detrahit generi fidem,
animusque numquam coniugis iunctus mihi.

Se. Teneris in annis haud satis clara est fides,
pudore uictus cum tegit flammam amor.

Ne. Hoc equidem et ipse credidi frustra diu, 540
manifesta quamuis pectore insociabili
uultuque signa proderent odium mei,
tandem quod ardens statuit ulcisci dolor++
dignamque thalamis coniugem inueni meis
genere atque forma, uicta cui cedit Venus 545
Iouisque coniunx et ferox armis dea.

Se. Probitas fidesque coniugis, mores pudor
placeant marito: sola perpetuo manent
subiecta nulli mentis atque animi bona;
flore decoris singuli carpunt dies. 550

Ne. Omnes in unam contulit laudes deus
talemque nasci fata uoluerunt mihi.

Se. Recedat a te (temere ne credas) amor.

Ne. Quem summouere fulminis dominus nequit,
caeli tyrannum, saeua qui penetrat freta 555
Ditisque regna, detrahit superos polo?

Se. Volucrem esse Amorem fingit immitem deum
mortalis error, armat et telis manus
arcuque sacras, instruit saeua face

genitumque credit Venere, Vulcano satum: 560
uis magna mentis blandus atque animi calor
Amor est; iuuenta gignitur, luxu otio
nutritur inter laeta Fortunae bona.
quem si fouere atque alere desistas, cadit
breuique uires perdit extinctus suas. 565

Ne. Hanc esse uitae maximam causam reor,
per quam uoluptas oritur; interitu caret,
cum procreetur semper, humanum genus
Amore grato, qui truces mulcet feras.
hic mihi iugales praeferat taedas deus 570
iungatque nostris igne Poppaeam toris.

Se. Vix sustinere possit hos thalamos dolor
uidere populi, sancta nec pietas sinat.

Ne. Prohibebor unus facere quod cunctis licet?

Se. Maiora populus semper a summo exigit. 575

Ne. Libet experiri, uiribus fractus meis
an cedat animis temere conceptus furor.

Se. Obsequere potius ciuibus placidus tuis.

Ne. Male imperatur, cum regit uulgus duces.

Se. Nihil impetrare cum ualet, iuste dolet. 580

Ne. Exprimere ius est, ferre quod nequeunt preces?

Se. Negare durum est. **Ne.** Principem cogi nefas.

Se. Remittat ipse. **Ne.** Fama sed uictum feret.

Se. Lewis atque uana. **Ne.** Sit licet, multos notat.

Se. Excelsa metuit. **Ne.** Non minus carpit tamen. 585

Se. Facile opprimetur. merita te diui patris
aetasque frangat coniugis, probitas pudor.

Ne. Desiste tandem, iam grauis nimium mihi,
instare: liceat facere quod Seneca improbat.
et ipse populi uota iam pridem moror 590

*

590a

cum portet utero pignus et partem mei.
quin destinamus proximum thalamis diem.

Agrippina Tellure rupta Tartaro gressum extuli,
Stygiam cruenta praeferens dextra facem
thalamis scelestis: nubat his flammis meo 595
Poppaea nato iuncta, quas uindex manus
dolorque matris uertet ad tristes rogos.
manet inter umbras impiae caedis mihi
semper memoria, manibus nostris grauis
adhuc inultis, reddita et meritis meis 600
funesta merces puppis et pretium imperi
nox illa qua naufragia defleui mea;
comitum necem natique crudelis nefas
deflere uotum fuerat++haud tempus datum est
lacrimis, sed ingens scelere geminauit nefas. 605
perempta ferro, foeda uulneribus sacros
intra penates spiritum effudi grauem
erepta pelago, sanguine extinxi meo
nec odia nati: saeuit in nomen ferus
matris tyrannus, obrui meritum cupit, 610
simulacra, titulos destruit mortis metu
totum per orbem, quem dedit poenam in meam
puero regendum noster infelix amor.

Extinctus umbras agitat infestus meas
flammisque uultus noxios coniunx petit, 615
instat, minatur, imputat fatum mihi
tumulumque nati, poscit auctorem necis.
iam parce: dabitur, tempus haud longum peto.

ultrix Erinys impio dignum parat
letum tyranno, uerbera et turpem fugam 620
poenasque quis et Tantali uincat sitim,
dirum laborem Sisyphei, Tityi alitem
Ixionisque membra rapientem rotam.
licet extruat marmoribus atque auro tegat
superbus aulam, limen armatae ducis 625
seruent cohortes, mittat immensas opes
exhaustus orbis, supplices dextram petant
Parthi cruentam, regna diuitias ferant:
ueniet dies tempusque quo reddat suis
animam nocentem sceleribus, iugulum hostibus 630
desertus ac destructus et cunctis egens.

Heu, quo labor, quo uota ceciderunt mea?
quo te furor prouexit attonitum tuus
et fata, nate, cedat ut tantis malis
genetricis ira, quae tuo scelere occidit? 635
utinam, antequam te paruulum in lucem edidi
aluique, saeuae nostra lacerassent ferae
uiscera: sine ullo scelere, sine sensu innocens
meus occidisses; iunctus atque haerens mihi
semper quieta cerneret sede inferum 640
proauos patremque, nominis magni uiros,
quos nunc pudor luctusque perpetuus manet
ex te, nefande, meque quae talem tuli.

Quid tegere cesso Tartaro uultus meos,
nouerca coniunx mater infelix meis? 645

Octavia Parcite lacrimis urbis festo

laetoque die,
ne tantus amor nostrique fauor
principis acres suscitet iras
uobisque ego sim causa malorum. 650
non hoc primum pectora uulnus
mea senserunt: grauiora tuli;
dabit hic nostris finem curis

uel morte dies; 653a
non ego saeui cernere cogar

coniugis ora,
non inuisos intrare mihi

thalamos famulae;
soror Augusti, non uxor ero.
absint tantum tristes poenae

letique metus++ 660
scelerum diri, miseranda, uiri
potes hoc demens sperare memor?
hos ad thalamos seruata diu
uictima tandem funesta cades.

Sed quid patrios saepe penates 665
respicis udis confusa genis?
propera tectis efferre gradus,
linque cruentam principis aulam.

Chorvs En illuxit suspecta diu
fama totiens iactata dies: 670
cessit thalamis Claudia diri

pulsa Neronis,
quos iam uictrix Poppaea tenet,
cessat pietas dum nostra graui
compressa metu segnisque dolor. 675
Vbi Romani uis est populi,
fregit diros quae saepe duces,
dedit inuictae leges patriae,
fasces dignis ciuibus olim,
iussit bellum pacemque, feras 680

gentes domuit, 680a
captos reges carcere clausit?
Grauis en oculis undique nostris
iam Poppaeae fulget imago

iuncta Neroni!

affligat humo uiolenta manus 685
similes nimium uultus dominae
ipsamque toris detrahat altis,
petat infestis mox et flammis
telisque feri principis aulam.

Nvtrix Quo trepida gressum coniugis thalamis tui 690
effers, alumna, quidue secretum petis
turbata uultu? cur genae fletu madent?
certe petitus precibus et uotis dies
nostris refulsit: Caesari iuncta es tuo
taeda iugali, quem tuus cepit decor 695
et culta sancte tradidit uinctum tibi
genetrix Amoris, maximum numen, Venus.
O qualis altos quanta pressisti toros
residens in aula! uidit attonitus tuam
formam senatus, tura cum superis dares 700
sacrasque grato spargeris aras mero,
uelata summum flammeo tenui caput;
et ipse lateri iunctus atque haerens tuo
sublimis inter ciuium laeta omina
incessit habitu atque ore laetitiam gerens 705
princeps superbo: talis emersam freto
spumante Peleus coniugem accepit Thetin,
quorum toros celebrasse caelestes ferunt
pelagique numen omne consensu pari.
Quae subita uultus causa mutauit tuos? 710
quid pallor iste, quid ferant lacrimae doce.

Poppaea Confusa tristi proximae noctis metu
uisuque, nutrix, mente turbata feror,
defecta sensu. laeta nam postquam dies
sideribus atris cessit et nocti polus, 715
inter Neronis uincta complexus mei
somno resoluor; nec diu placida frui
quiete licuit. uisa nam thalamos meos

celebrare turba est maesta: resolutis comis
matres Latinae flebiles planctus dabant; 720
inter tubarum saepe terribilem sonum
sparsam cruore coniugis genetrix mei
uultu minaci saeua quatiebat facem.
Quam dum sequor coacta praesenti metu,
diducta subito patuit ingenti mihi 725
tellus hiatu; lata quo praeceps toros
cerno iugales pariter et miror meos,
in quis resedi fessa. uenientem intuor
comitante turba coniugem quondam meum
natumque; properat petere complexus meos 730
Crispinus, intermissa libare oscula:
irrupit intra tecta cum trepidus mea
ensemque iugulo condidit saeuum Nero.
Tandem quietem magnus excussit timor;
quatit ora et artus horridus nostros tremor 735
pulsatque pectus; continet uocem timor,
quam nunc fides pietasque produxit tua.
Heu quid minantur inferum manes mihi
aut quem cruorem coniugis uidi mei?

Nvt. Quaecumque mentis agit intentus uigor, 740
ea per quietem sacer et arcanus refert
ueloque sensus. coniugem thalamos toros
uidisse te miraris amplexu noui
haerens mariti? sed mouent laeto die
pulsata palmis pectora et fusae comae? 745
Octauiae discidia planxerunt sacros
inter penates fratris et patrium larem.
fax illa, quam secuta es, Augustae manu
praelata clarum nomen inuidia tibi
partum ominatur, inferum sedes toros 750
stabiles futuros spondet aeternae domus.
iugulo quod ensem condidit princeps tuus,
bella haud mouebit, pace sed ferrum teget.
Recollige animum, recipe laetitiam, precor,

timore pulso redde te thalamis tuis. 755

Po. Delubra et aras petere constitui sacras,
caesis litare uictimis numen deum,
ut expientur noctis et somni minae
terrorque in hostes redeat attonitus meos.
Tu uota pro me suscipe et precibus piis 760
superos adora, maneat ut praesens status.

Chorvs Si uera loquax fama Tonantis
furta et gratos narrat amores
(quem modo Ladae pressisse sinum
tectum plumis pennisque ferunt, 765
modo per fluctus raptam Europen
taurum tergo portasse trucem),
quae regit et nunc deseret astra,
petet amplexus, Poppaea, tuos,
quos et Ladae praeferre potest 770
et tibi, quondam cui miranti
fuluo, Danae, fluxit in auro.
Formam Sparte iactet alumnae
licet et Phrygius praemia pastor,
uincet uultus haec Tyndaridos, 775
qui mouerunt horrida bella
Phrygiaeque solo regna dedere.

Sed quis gressu ruit attonito
aut quid portat pectore anhelio?

Nvntivs Quicumque tectis excubat miles ducis, 780
defendat aulam, cui furor populi imminet.
trepidi cohortes ecce praefecti trahunt
praesidia ad urbis, uicta nec cedit metu
concepta rabies temere, sed uires capit.

Cho. Quis iste mentes agitat attonitus furor? 785

Nvn. Octauiae fauore percussa agmina

et efferata per nefas ingens ruunt.

Cho. Quid ausa facere quoque consilio doce.

Nvn. Reddere penates Claudiaei diri parant
torosque fratris, debitam partem imperi. 790

Cho. Quos iam tenet Poppaea concordii fide?

Nvn. Hinc urit animos pertinax nimium fauor
et in furorem temere praecipites agit:
quaecumque claro marmore effigies stetit
aut aere fulgens, ora Poppaeae gerens, 795
afflicta uulgi manibus et saeuo iacet
euersa ferro; membra per partes trahunt
diducta laqueis, obruunt turpi diu
calcata caeno. uerba conueniunt feris
immixta factis, quae timor reticet meus. 800
Saepire flammis principis sedem parant,
populi nisi irae coniugem reddat nouam,
reddat penates Claudiaei uictus suos.
ut noscat ipse ciuium motus mea
uoce, haud morabor iussa praefecti exequi. 805

Cho. Quid fera frustra bella mouetis?

inuicta gerit tela Cupido:
flammis uestros obruet ignes
quis extinxit fulmina saepe
captumque Iouem caelo traxit. 810

Laesi tristes dabitur poenas

sanguine uestro;
non est patiens feruidus irae

facilisque regi: 813a
ille ferocem iussit Achillem

pulsare lyram,

fregit Danaos, fregit Atriden,
regna euertit Priami, claras

diruit urbes. 817a
et nunc animus quid ferat horret
uis immitis uiolenta dei.

Nero O lenta nimium militis nostri manus 820
et ira patiens post nefas tantum mea,
quod non cruor ciuilis accensas faces
extinguit in nos, caede nec populi madet
funerea Roma, quae uiros tales tulit!
Admissa sed iam morte puniri parum est, 825
grauiora meruit impium plebis scelus.
en illa, cui me ciuium subicit furor,
suspecta coniunx et soror semper mihi,
tandem dolori spiritum reddat meo
iramque nostram sanguine extinguat suo; 830
mox tecta flammis concidant urbis meis,
ignes ruinae noxium populum premant
turpisque egestas, saeua cum luctu fames.
Exultat ingens saeculi nostri bonis
corrupta turba nec capit clementiam 835
ingrata nostram, ferre nec pacem potest,
sed inquieta rapitur hinc audacia,
hinc temeritate fertur in praeceps sua:
malis domanda est et graui semper iugo
premenda, ne quid simile temptare audeat 840
contraque sanctos coniugis uultus meae
attollere oculos; fracta per poenas metu
parere discet principis nutu sui.

Sed adesse cerno rara quem pietas uirum
fidesque castris nota praeposuit meis. 845

Praefectvs Populi furorem caede paucorum, diu
qui restiterunt temere, compressum affero.

Ne. Et hoc sat est? sic miles audisti ducem?

* * 848a

compescis? haec uindicta debetur mihi?

Prf. Cecidere motus impii ferro duces.

Ne. Quid illa turba, petere quae flammis meos
ausa est penates, principi legem dare,
abstrahere nostris coniugem caram toris,
uiolare quantum licuit incesta manu
et uoce dira? debita poena uacat? 855

Prf. Poenam dolor constituet in ciues tuos?

Ne. Constituet, aetas nulla quam famae eximat.

Prf. Tua temperet nos ira, non noster timor.

Ne. Iram expiabit prima quae meruit meam.

Prf. Quam poscat ede, nostra ne parcat manus. 860

Ne. Caedem sororis poscit et dirum caput.

Prf. Horrore uinctum trepidus astrinxit rigor.

Ne. Parere dubitas? **Prf.** Cur meam damnas fidem?

Ne. Quod parcis hosti. **Prf.** Femina hoc nomen capit?

Ne. Si scelera cepit. **Prf.** Estne qui sontem arguat? 865

Ne. Populi furor. **Prf.** Quis regere dementes ualet?

Ne. Qui concitare potuit. **Prf.** Haud quemquam, reor,
mulier++**Ne.** Dedit natura cui primum malo
animum, ad nocendum pectus instruxit dolis.

Prf. Sed uim negauit. **Ne.** Vt ne inexpugnabilis 870
esset, sed aegras frangeret uires timor
uel poena; quae iam sera damnatam premet
diu nocentem. tolle consilium ac preces
et imperata perage: deuectam rate
procul in remotum litus interim iube, 875
tandem ut residat pectoris nostri tumor.

Chorvs O funestus multis populi

dirusque fauor, 877a
qui cum flatu uela secundo
ratis impleuit uexitque procul,
languidus idem deserit alto 880

saeuoque mari.
Fleuit Gracchos miseranda parens,
perdidit ingens quos plebis amor

nimiusque fauor, 883a
genere illustres, pietate fide
lingua claros, pectore fortes,

legibus acres.
Te quoque, Liui, simili leto
Fortuna dedit,
quem neque fasces texere, suae
nec tecta domus++plura referre 890
prohibet praesens exempla dolor:
modo cui patriam reddere ciues
aulam et fratris uoluere toros,
nunc ad poenam letumque trahi
flentem miseram cernere possunt. 895

Bene paupertas humili tecto

contenta latet: 896a
quatiunt altas saepe procellae
aut euertit Fortuna domos.

Octavia Quo me trahitis quodue tyrannus
aut exilium regina iubet? 900
sic mihi uitam fracta remittit,
tot iam nostris euicta malis?
sin caede mea cumulare parat
luctus nostros, inuidet etiam
cur in patria mihi saeua mori? 905
sed iam spes est nulla salutis:
fratris cerno miseranda ratem.
hac est cuius uecta carina
quondam genetrix, nunc et thalamis
expulsa soror miseranda uehar. 910
nullum Pietas nunc numen habet

nec sunt superi:
regnat mundo tristis Erinys.
Quis mea digne deflere potest
mala? quae lacrimis nostris questus 915

reddere aedon? 915a
cuius pennas utinam miserae

mihi fata darent!
fugerem luctus ablata meos
penna uolucris procul et coetus
hominum tristes caedemque feram. 920
sola in uacuo nemore et tenui

ramo pendens 921a
querulo possem gutture maestum

fundere murmur.

Cho. Regitur fati mortale genus
nec sibi quidquam spondere potest 925

firmum et stabile,
quem per casus uoluit uarios

semper nobis metuenda dies.
Animum firment exempla tuum,
iam multa domus quae uestra tulit: 930
quid saeuior est Fortuna tibi?
Tu mihi primum tot natorum
memoranda parens, nata Agrippae,
nurus Augusti, Caesaris uxor,
cuius nomen clarum toto 935

fulsit in orbe,
utero totiens enixa graui

pignora pacis, 937a
mox exilium, uerbera, saeuas
passa catenas, funera, luctus,
tandem letum cruciata diu. 940
Felix thalamis Liuia Drusi
natisque ferum ruit in facinus

poenamque suam.
Iulia matris fata secuta est:
post longa tamen tempora ferro 945
caesa est, quamuis crimine nullo.
Quid non potuit quondam genetrix
tua quae rexit principis aulam
cara marito partuque potens?
eadem famulo subiecta suo 950
cecidit diri militis ense.
Quid cui licuit regnum caeli
sperare, parens tanta Neronis?
non funesta uiolata manu

remigis ante, 955
mox et ferro lacerata diu
saeui iacuit uictima nati?

Oc. Me quoque tristes mittit ad umbras

ferus et manes ecce tyrannus.
quid iam frustra miseranda moror? 960
rapite ad letum quis ius in nos

Fortuna dedit. 961a

Testor superos++quid agis, demens?
parce precari quis inuisa es
numina diuum: Tartara testor
Erebique deas scelerum ultrices 965

et te, genitor,
dignum tali morte et poena:
non inuisa est mors ista mihi.

Armata ratem, date uela fretis
uentisque, petat puppis rector 970
Pandatariae litora terrae.

Cho. Lenes aurae zephyrique leues,
tectam quondam nube aetheria
qui uexistis raptam saeuae
uirginis aris Iphigeniam, 975
hanc quoque tristi procul a poena
portate, precor, templa ad Triuiæ.
Vrbe est nostra mitior Aulis
et Taurorum barbara tellus:
hospitis illic caede litatur 980

numen superum;
cuius gaudet Roma cruore.

The Epistles

TO MARCIA, ON CONSOLATION — Ad Marciam, De consolatione

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I.

1. Nisi te, Marcia, scirem tam longe ab infirmitate muliebris animi quam a ceteris uitiiis recessisse et mores tuos uelut aliquod antiquum exemplar aspici, non auderem obuiam ire dolori tuo, cui uiri quoque libenter haerent et incubant, nec spem concepissem tam iniquo tempore, tam inimico iudice, tam inuidioso crimine posse me efficere ut fortunam tuam absolueres. Fiduciam mihi dedit exploratum iam robur animi et magno experimento adprobata uirtus tua.

2. Non est ignotum qualem te in persona patris tui gesseris, quem non minus quam liberos dilexisti, excepto eo quod non optabas superstitem. Nec scio an et optaueris; permittit enim sibi quaedam contra bonum morem magna pietas. Mortem A. Cremuti Cordi parentis tui quantum poteras inhibuisti; postquam tibi apparuit inter Seianianos satellites illam unam patere seruitutis fugam, non fauisti consilio eius, sed dedisti manus uicta, fudistique lacrimas palam et gemitus deuorasti quidem, non tamen hilari fronte texisti, et haec illo saeculo quo magna pietas erat nihil impie facere. 3. Vt uero aliquam occasionem mutatio temporum dedit, ingenium patris tui, de quo sumptum erat supplicium, in usum hominum reduxisti et a uera illum uindicasti morte ac restituisti in publica monumenta libros quos uir ille fortissimus sanguine suo scripserat. Optime meruisti de Romanis studiis: magna illorum pars arserat; optime de posteris, ad quos ueniet incorrupta rerum fides, auctori suo magno inputata; optime de ipso, cuius uiget uigebitque memoria quam diu in pretio fuerit Romana cognosci, quam diu quisquam erit qui reuerti uelit ad acta maiorum, quam diu quisquam qui uelit scire quid sit uir Romanus, quid subactis iam ceruicibus omnium et ad Seianianum iugum adactis indomitus, quid sit homo ingenio animo manu liber. 4. Magnum mehercules detrimentum res publica ceperat, si illum ob duas res pulcherrimas in obliuionem coniectum, eloquentiam et libertatem, non eruisses: legitur, floret, in manus hominum, in pectora receptus uetustatem nullam timet; at illorum carnificum cito scelera quoque, quibus solis memoriam meruerunt, tacebuntur.

5. Haec magnitudo animi tui uetuit me ad sexum tuum respicere, uetuit ad uultum, quem tot annorum continua tristitia, ut semel

obduxit, tenet. Et uide quam non subrepam tibi nec furtum facere adfectibus tuis cogitem: antiqua mala in memoriam reduxi et, ut scires hanc quoque plagam esse sanandam, ostendi tibi aequae magni uulneris cicatricem. Alii itaque molliter agant et blandiantur, ego configere cum tuo maerore constitui et defessos exhaustosque oculos, si uerum uis magis iam ex consuetudine quam ex desiderio fluentis, continebo, si fieri potuerit, fauente te remediis tuis, si minus, uel inuita, teneas licet et amplexeris dolorem tuum, quem tibi in filii locum superstitem fecisti. 6. Quis enim erit finis? Omnia in superuacuum temptata sunt: fatigatae adlocutiones amicorum, auctoritates magnorum et adfinium tibi uirorum; studia, hereditarium et paternum bonum, surdas aures inrito et uix ad breuem occupationem proficiente solacio transeunt; illud ipsum naturale remedium temporis, quod maximas quoque aerumnas componit, in te una uim suam perdidit. 7. Tertius iam praeterit annus, cum interim nihil ex primo illo impetu cecidit: renouat se et corroborat cotidie luctus et iam sibi ius mora fecit eoque adductus est ut putet turpe desinere. Quemadmodum omnia uitia penitus insidunt nisi dum surgunt oppressa sunt, ita haec quoque tristitia et misera et in se saeuientia ipsa nouissime acerbitate pascuntur et fit infelicis animi praua uoluptas dolor. 8. Cupissem itaque primis temporibus ad istam curationem accedere; leniore medicina fuisset oriens adhuc restringenda uis: uehementius contra inueterata pugnandum est. Nam uulnere quoque sanitas facilis est, dum a sanguine recentia sunt: tunc et uruntur et in altum reuocantur et digitos scrutantium recipiunt, ubi corrupta in malum ulcus uerterunt. Non possum nunc per obsequium nec molliter adgredi tam durum dolorem: frangendus est.

II.

1. Scio a praeceptis incipere omnis qui monere aliquem uolunt, in exemplis desinere. Mutari hunc interim morem expedit; aliter enim cum alio agendum est: quosdam ratio ducit, quibusdam nomina clara opponenda sunt et auctoritas quae liberum non relinquat animum ad speciosa stupentibus. 2. Duo tibi ponam ante oculos maxima et sexus et saeculi tui exempla: alterius feminae quae se tradidit ferendam dolori, alterius quae pari adfecta casu, maiore damno, non tamen dedit longum in se malis suis dominium, sed cito animum in sedem suam reposuit. 3. Octauia et Liuia, altera soror Augusti, altera uxor, amiserunt filios iuuenes, utraque spe futuri principis certa: Octauia Marcellum, cui et auunculus et socer incumbere coeperat, in quem onus imperii reclinare, adulescentem animo alacrem, ingenio potentem, sed frugalitatis continentiaeque in illis aut annis aut opibus non mediocriter admirandae, patientem laborum, uoluptatibus alienum, quantumcumque inponere illi auunculus et, ut ita dicam, inaedicare uoluisset laturum; bene legerat nulli cessura ponderi fundamenta. 4. Nullum finem per omne uitae suae tempus flendi gemendique fecit nec ullas admisit uoces salutare aliquid adferentis, ne auocari quidem se passa est; intenta in unam rem et toto animo adfixa, talis per omnem uitam fuit qualis in funere, non dico non [est] ausa consurgere, sed adleuari recusans, secundam orbitatem iudicans lacrimas mittere. 5. Nullam habere imaginem filii carissimi uoluit, nullam sibi de illo fieri mentionem. Oderat omnes matres et in Liuiam maxime furebat, quia uidebatur ad illius filium transisse sibi promissa felicitas. Tenebris et solitudini familiarissima, ne ad fratrem quidem respiciens, carmina celebrandae Marcelli memoriae composita aliosque studiorum honores reiecit et aures suas aduersus omne solacium clusit. A sollemnibus officiis seducta et ipsam magnitudinis fraternae nimis circumlucentem fortunam exosa defodit se et abdidit. Adsidentibus liberis, nepotibus lugubrem uestem non deposuit, non sine contumelia omnium suorum, quibus saluis orba sibi uidebatur.

III.

1. Liuia amiserat filium Drusum, magnum futurum principem, iam magnum ducem; intrauerat penitus Germaniam et ibi signa Romana fixerat ubi uix ullos esse Romanos notum erat. In expeditione decesserat ipsis illum hostibus aegrum cum ueneratione et pace mutua prosequentibus nec optare quod expediebat audentibus. Accedebat ad hanc mortem, quam ille pro re publica obierat, ingens ciuium prouinciarumque et totius Italiae desiderium, per quam effusis in officium lugubre municipiis coloniisque usque in urbem ductum erat funus triumpho simillimum. 2. Non licuerat matri ultima filii oscula gratumque extremi sermonem oris haurire; longo itinere reliquias Drusi sui prosecuta, tot per omnem Italiam ardentibus rogis, quasi totiens illum amitteret, inritata, ut primum tamen intulit tumulto, simul et illum et dolorem suum posuit, nec plus doluit quam aut honestum erat Caesare aut aequum saluo. Non desiit denique Drusi sui celebrare nomen, ubique illum sibi priuatim publiceque repraesentare, libentissime de illo loqui, de illo audire: cum memoria illius uixit, quam nemo potest retinere et frequentare qui illam tristem sibi reddidit.

3. Elige itaque utrum exemplum putes probabilius. Si illud prius sequi uis, eximes te numero uiuorum: auersaberis et alienos liberos et tuos ipsumque quem desideras; triste matribus omen occurreres; uoluptates honestas, permissas, tamquam parum decoras fortunae tuae reicies; inuisa haerebis in luce et aetati tuae, quod non praecipitet te quam primum et finiat, infestissima eris; quod turpissimum alienissimumque est animo tuo in meliorem noto partem, ostendes te uiuere nolle, mori non posse. 4. Si ad hoc maximae feminae te exemplum adplicueris moderatius, mitius, non eris in aerumnis nec te tormentis macerabis: quae enim, malum, amentia est poenas a se infelicitatis exigere et mala sua ~non~ augere! Quam in omni uita seruasti morum probitatem et uerecundiam, in hac quoque re praestabis; est enim quaedam et dolendi modestia. Illum ipsum iuuenem, dignissimum qui te laetam semper nominatus cogitatusque faciat, meliore pones loco, si matri suae, qualis uiuus solebat, hilarisque et cum gaudio occurrit.

IV.

1. Nec te ad fortiora ducam praecepta, ut inhumano ferre humana iubeam modo, ut ipso funebri die oculos matris exsiccem. Ad arbitrium tecum ueniam: hoc inter nos quaeretur, utrum magnus dolor esse debeat an perpetuus. 2. Non dubito quin Iuliae Augustae, quam familiariter coluisti, magis tibi placeat exemplum: illa te ad suum consilium uocat. Illa in primo feruore, cum maxime impatientes ferocesque sunt miseriae, consolandam se Areo, philosopho uiri sui, praebuit et multum eam rem profuisse sibi confessa est, plus quam populum Romanum, quem nolebat tristem tristitia sua facere, plus quam Augustum, qui subducto altero adminiculo titubabat nec luctu suorum inclinandus erat, plus quam Tiberium filium, cuius pietas efficiebat ut in illo acerbo et defleto gentibus funere nihil sibi nisi numerum deesse sentiret. 3. Hic, ut opinor, aditus illi fuit, hoc principium apud feminam opinionis suae custodem diligentissimam: ‘usque in hunc diem, Iulia, quantum quidem ego sciam, adsiduus uiri tui comes, cui non tantum quae in publicum emittuntur nota, sed omnes sunt secretiores animorum uestrorum motus, dedisti operam ne quid esset quod in te quisquam reprobaret; nec id in maioribus modo obseruasti, sed in minimis, ne quid faceres cui famam, liberrimam principum iudicem, uelles ignoscere. 4. Nec quicquam pulchrius existimo quam in summo fastigio conlocatos multarum rerum ueniam dare, nullius petere; seruandus itaque tibi in hac quoque re tuus mos est, ne quid committas quod minus aliterue factum uelis.

V.

1. Deinde oro atque obsecro ne te difficilem amicis et intractabilem praestes. Non est enim quod ignores omnes hos nescire quemadmodum se gerant, loquantur aliquid coram te de Druso an nihil, ne aut obliuio clarissimi iuuenis illi faciat iniuriam aut mentio tibi. 2. Cum secessimus et in unum conuenimus, facta eius dictaque quanto meruit suspectu celebramus; coram te altum nobis de illo silentium est. Cares itaque maxima uoluptate, filii tui laudibus, quas non dubito quin uel inpendio uitae, si potestas detur, in aeuum omne sis prorogatura. 3. Quare patere, immo arcesse sermones quibus ille narretur, et apertas aures praebe ad nomen memoriamque filii tui; nec hoc graue duxeris ceterorum more, qui in eiusmodi casu partem mali putant audire solacia. 4. Nunc incubuisti tota in alteram partem et oblita meliorum fortunam tuam qua deterior est aspicias. Non conuertis te ad conuictus filii tui occursusque iucundos, non ad pueriles dulcesque blanditias, non ad incrementa studiorum: ultimam illam faciem rerum premis; in illam, quasi parum ipsa per se horrida sit, quidquid potes congeris. Ne, obsecro te, concupieris peruersissimam gloriam, infelicissima uideri. 5. Simul cogita non esse magnum rebus prosperis fortem se gerere, ubi secundo cursu uita procedit: ne gubernatoris quidem artem tranquillum mare et obsequens uentus ostendit, aduersi aliquid incurrat oportet quod animum probet. 6. Proinde ne summiseris te, immo contra fige stabilem gradum et quidquid onerum supra cecidit sustine, primo dumtaxat strepitu conterrita. Nulla re maior inuidia fortunae fit quam aequo animo.’ Post haec ostendit illi filium incolumem, ostendit ex amisso nepotes.

VI.

1. Tuum illic, Marcia, negotium actum, tibi Areus adsedit; muta personam — te consolatus est. Sed puta, Marcia, ereptum tibi amplius quam ulla umquam mater amiserit — non permulceo te nec extenuo calamitatem tuam: si fletibus fata uincuntur, conferamus; 2. eat omnis inter luctus dies, noctem sine somno tristitia consumat; ingerantur lacerato pectori manus et in ipsam faciem impetus fiat atque omni se genere saeuitiae profecturus maeror exerceat. Sed si nullis planctibus defuncta reuocantur, si sors inmotā et in aeternum fixa nulla miseria mutatur et mors tenuit quidquid abstulit, desinat dolor qui perit. 3. Quare regamur nec nos ista uis transuersos auferat. Turpis est nauigii rector cui gubernacula fluctus eripuit, qui fluuitantia uela deseruit, permisit tempestati ratem; at ille uel in naufragio laudandus quem obruit mare clauum tenentem et obnixum.

VII.

1. 'At enim naturale desiderium suorum est.' Quis negat, quam diu modicum est? Nam discessu, non solum amissione carissimorum necessarius morsus est et firmissimorum quoque animorum contractio. Sed plus est quod opinio adicit quam quod natura imperauit. 2. Aspice mutorum animalium quam concitata sint desideria et tamen quam breuia: uaccarum uno die alteroue mugitus auditur, nec diutius equarum uagus ille amensque discursus est; ferae cum uestigia catulorum consecratae sunt et siluas peruagatae, cum saepe ad cubilia expilata redierunt, rabiem intra exiguum tempus extinguunt; aues cum stridore magno inanes nidos circumfremuerunt, intra momentum tamen quietae uolatus suos repetunt; nec ulli animali longum fetus sui desiderium est nisi homini, qui adest dolori suo nec tantum quantum sentit sed quantum constituit adficitur.

3. Vt scias autem non esse hoc naturale, luctibus frangi, primum magis feminas quam uiros, magis barbaros quam placidae eruditaeque gentis homines, magis indoctos quam doctos eadem orbitas uulnerat. Atqui quae a natura uim acceperunt eandem in omnibus seruant: apparet non esse naturale quod uarium est. 4. Ignis omnes aetates omniumque urbium ciues, tam uiros quam feminas uret; ferrum in omni corpore exhibebit secandi potentiam. Quare? quia uires illis a natura datae sunt, quae nihil in personam constituit. Paupertatem luctum ambitionem alius aliter sentit prout illum consuetudo infecit, et inbecillum inpatientemque reddit praesumpta opinio de non timendis terribilis.

VIII.

1. Deinde quod naturale est non decrescit mora: dolorem dies longa consumit. Licet contumacissimum, cotidie insurgentem et contra remedia efferuescentem, tamen illum efficacissimum mitigandae ferociae tempus eneruat. 2. Manet quidem tibi, Marcia, etiamnunc ingens tristitia et iam uidetur duxisse callum, non illa concitata qualis initio fuit, sed pertinax et obstinata; tamen hanc quoque tibi aetas minutatim eximet: quotiens aliud egeris, animus relaxabitur. 3. Nunc te ipsa custodis; multum autem interest utrum tibi permittas maerere an imperes. Quanto magis hoc morum tuorum elegantiae conuenit, finem luctus potius facere quam expectare, nec illum opperiri diem quo te inuita dolor desinat! ipsa illi renuntia.

IX.

1. 'Vnde ergo tanta nobis pertinacia in deploratione nostri, si id non fit naturae iussu?' Quod nihil nobis mali antequam eueniat proponimus, sed ut immunes ipsi et aliis pacatius ingressi iter alienis non admonemur casibus illos esse communes. 2. Tot praeter domum nostram ducuntur exequiae: de morte non cogitamus; tot acerba funera: nos togam nostrorum infantium, nos militiam et paternae hereditatis successionem agitamus animo; tot diuitum subita paupertas in oculos incidit: et nobis numquam in mentem uenit nostras quoque opes aequae in lubrico positae. Necesse est itaque magis corruamus: quasi ex inopinato ferimur; quae multo ante prouisa sunt languidius incurrunt. 3. Vis tu scire te ad omnis expositum ictus stare et illa quae alios tela fixerunt circa te uibrasse? Velut murum aliquem aut obsessum multo hoste locum et arduum ascensu semermis adeas, expecta uulnus et illa superne uolantia cum sagittis pilisque saxa in tuum puta librata corpus. Quotiens aliquis ad latus aut pone tergum ceciderit, exclama: 'non decipies me, fortuna, nec securum aut neglegentem opprimes. Scio quid pares: alium quidem percussisti, sed me petisti. 4. Quis umquam res suas quasi periturus aspexit? Quis umquam uestrum de exilio, de egestate, de luctu cogitare ausus est? Quis non, si admoneatur ut cogitet, tamquam dirum omen respuat et in capita inimicorum aut ipsius intempestiui monitoris abire illa iubeat? 'Non putauit futurum.' 5. Quicquam tu putas non futurum quod [multis] scis posse fieri, quod multis uides euenisse? Egregium uersum et dignum qui non e pulpito exiret:

cuius potest accidere quod cuiquam potest!

Ille amisit liberos: et tu amittere potes; ille damnatus est: et tua innocentia sub ictu est. Error decipit hic, effeminat, dum patimur quae numquam pati nos posse prouidimus. Aufert uim praesentibus malis qui futura prospexit.

X.

1. Quidquid est hoc, Marcia, quod circa nos ex aduenticio fulget, liberi honores opes, ampla atria et exclusorum clientium turba referta uestibula, clarum <nomen>, nobilis aut formosa coniux ceteraque ex incerta et mobili sorte pendentia alieni commodatique apparatus sunt; nihil horum dono datur. Conlaticiis et ad dominos redituris instrumentis scaena adornatur; alia ex his primo die, alia secundo referentur, pauca usque ad finem perseuerabunt. 2. Itaque non est quod nos suspiciamus tamquam inter nostra positi: mutua accepimus. Vsus fructusque noster est, cuius tempus ille arbiter muneris sui temperat; nos oportet in promptu habere quae in incertum diem data sunt et appellatos sine querella reddere: pessimi debitoris est creditori facere conuicium. 3. Omnes ergo nostros, et quos superstitibus lege nascendi optamus et quos praecedere iustissimum ipsorum uotum est, sic amare debemus tamquam nihil nobis de perpetuitate, immo nihil de diuturnitate eorum promissum sit. Saepe admonendus est animus, amet ut recessura, immo tamquam recedentia: quidquid a fortuna datum est, tamquam exempto auctore possideas. 4. Rapite ex liberis uoluptates, fruendos uos in uicem liberis date et sine dilatione omne gaudium haurite: nihil de hodierna nocte promittitur — nimis magnam aduocationem dedi — nihil de hac hora. Festinandum est, instatur a tergo: iam disicietur iste comitatus, iam contubernia ista sublato clamore soluentur. Rapina rerum omnium est: miseri nescitis in fuga uiuere.

5. Si mortuum tibi filium doles, eius temporis quo natus est crimen est; mors enim illi denuntiata nascenti est; in hanc legem genitus <est>, hoc illum fatum ab utero statim prosequabatur. 6. In regnum fortunae et quidem durum atque inuictum peruenimus, illius arbitrio digna atque indigna passuri. Corporibus nostris inpotenter contumeliose crudeliter abutetur: alios ignibus peruret uel in poenam admotis uel in remedium; alios uinciet — id nunc hosti licebit, nunc cui; alios per incerta nudos maria iactabit et luctatos cum fluctibus ne in harenam quidem aut litus explodet, sed in alicuius immensae uentrem beluae decondet; alios morborum uariis generibus emaceratos diu inter uitam mortemque medios detinebit. Vt uaria et

libidinosa mancipiorumque suorum neglegens domina et poenis et muneribus errabit.

XI.

1. Quid opus est partes deflere? tota flebilis uita est: urgebunt noua incommoda, priusquam ueteribus satis feceris. Moderandum est itaque uobis maxime, quae inmoderate fertis, et in multos dolores humani pectoris <uis> dispensanda. Quae deinde ista suae publicaeque condicionis obliuio est? Mortalis nata es mortalesque peperisti: putre ipsa fluidumque corpus et causis [morbos] repetita sperasti tam inbecilla materia solida et aeterna gestasse? 2. Decessit filius tuus, id est decucurrit ad hunc finem ad quem quae feliciora partu tuo putas properant. Hoc omnis ista quae in foro litigat, in theatris <plaudit>, in templis precatur turba dispari gradu uadit: et quae diligis, ueneraris et quae despicias unus exaequabit cinis. 3. Hoc uidelicet * * * illa Pythicis oraculis adscripta <uox>: nosce te. Quid est homo? quolibet quassu uas et quolibet fragile iactatu. Non tempestate magna ut dissiperis opus est: ubicumque arietaueris, solueris. Quid est homo? inbecillum corpus et fragile, nudum, suapte natura inerme, alienae opis indigens, ad omnis fortunae contumelias proiectum, cum bene lacertos exercuit, cuiuslibet ferae pabulum, cuiuslibet uictima; ex infirmis fluidisque contextum et lineamentis exterioribus nitidum, frigoris aestus laboris inpatiens, ipso rursus situ et otio iturum in tabem, alimenta metuens sua, quorum modo inopia <deficit, modo copia> rumpitur; anxiae sollicitaeque tutelae, precarii spiritus et male haerentis, quod pauor repentinus aut auditus ex inproviso sonus auribus grauis excutit, sollicitudinis semper sibi nutrimentum, uitiosum et inutile. 4. Miramur in hoc mortem, quae unius singultus opus est? Numquid enim ut concidat magni res molimenti est? odor illi saporque et lassitudo et uigilia et umor et cibus et sine quibus uiuere non potest mortifera sunt; quocumque se mouit, statim infirmitatis suae conscium, non omne caelum ferens, aquarum nouitatibus flatuque non familiaris aerae et tenuissimis causis atque offensionibus morbidum, putre causarium, fletu uitam auspicatum, cum interim quantos tumultus hoc tam contemptum animal mouet, in quantas cogitationes oblitum condicionis suae uenit! 5. Inmortalia, aeterna uolutat animo et in nepotes pronepotesque disponit, cum interim longa conantem eum mors

opprimit et hoc quod senectus uocatur paucissimorum <est>
circumitus annorum.

XII.

1. Dolor tuus, si modo ulla illi ratio est, utrum sua spectat incommoda an eius qui decessit? Vtrum te in amisso filio mouet quod nullas ex illo uoluptates cepisti, an quod maiores, si diutius uixisset, percipere potuisti? 2. Si nullas percepisse te dixeris, tolerabilius efficies detrimentum tuum; minus enim homines desiderant ea ex quibus nihil gaudi laetitiaeque perceperant. Si confessa fueris percepisse magnas uoluptates, oportet te non de eo quod detractum est queri, sed de eo gratias agere quod contigit; prouenerunt enim satis magni fructus laborum tuorum ex ipsa educatione, nisi forte ii qui catulos auesque et friuola animorum oblectamenta summa diligentia nutriunt fruuntur aliqua uoluptate ex uisu tactuque et blanda adulatione mutorum, liberos nutrientibus non fructus educationis ipsa educatio est. Licet itaque nil tibi industria eius contulerit, nihil diligentia custodierit, nihil prudentia suaserit, ipsum quod habuisti, quod amasti, fructus est. 3. 'At potuit longior esse, maior.' Melius tamen tecum actum est quam si omnino non contigisset, quoniam, si ponatur electio utrum satius sit non diu felicem esse an numquam, melius est discessura nobis bona quam nulla contingere. Vtrumne malles degenerem aliquem et numerum tantum nomenque filii expleturum habuisse an tantae indolis quantae tuus fuit, iuuenis cito prudens, cito pius, cito maritus, cito pater, cito omnis officii curiosus, cito sacerdos, omnia tamquam properans? Nulli fere et magna bona et diuturna contingunt, non durat nec ad ultimum exit nisi lenta felicitas: filium tibi di immortales non diu daturi statim talem dederunt qualis diu effici <uix> potest.

4. Ne illud quidem dicere potes, electam te a dis cui frui non liceret filio: circumfer per omnem notorum, ignotorum frequentiam oculos, occurrent tibi passi ubique maiora. Senserunt ista magni duces, senserunt principes; ne deos quidem fabulae immunes reliquerunt, puto, ut nostrorum funerum leuamentum esset etiam diuina concidere. Circumspice, inquam, omnis: nullam <tam> miseram nominabis domum quae non inueniat in miseriore solacium. 5. Non mehercules tam male de moribus tuis sentio ut putem posse te leuius pati casum tuum, si tibi ingentem lugentium numerum

produxero: maliuolum solacii genus est turba miserorum. Quosdam tamen referam, non ut scias hoc solere hominibus accidere — ridiculum est enim mortalitatis exempla colligere - sed ut scias fuisse multos qui lenirent aspera placide ferendo.

6. A felicissimo incipiam. L. Sulla filium amisit, nec ea res aut malitiam eius et acerrimam uirtutem in hostes ciuesque contudit aut effecit ut cognomen illud usurpasse falso uideretur, quod amisso filio adsumpsit nec odia hominum ueritus, quorum malo illae nimis secundae res constabant, nec inuidiam deorum, quorum illud crimen erat, Sulla tam felix. Sed istud inter res nondum iudicatas abeat, qualis Sulla fuerit — etiam inimici fatebuntur bene illum arma sumpsisse, bene posuisse: hoc de quo agitur constabit, non esse maximum malum quod etiam ad felicissimos peruenit.

XIII.

1. Ne nimis admiretur Graecia illum patrem qui in ipso sacrificio nuntiata filii morte tibicinem tantum tacere iussit et coronam capiti detraxit, cetera rite perfecit, Puluillus effecit pontifex, cui postem tenenti et Capitolium dedicanti mors filii nuntiata est. Quam ille exaudisse dissimulauit et sollemnia pontificii carminis uerba concepit gemitu non interrompente precationem et ad filii sui nomen Ioue propitiato. 2. Putasne eius luctus aliquem finem esse debere, cuius primus dies et primus impetus ab altaribus publicis et fausta nuncupatione non abduxit patrem? Dignus mehercules fuit memorabili dedicatione, dignus amplissimo sacerdotio, qui colere deos ne iratos quidem destitit. Idem tamen, ut redit domum, et inpleuit oculos et aliquas uoces flebiles misit; sed peractis quae mos erat praestare defunctis ad Capitolinum illum redit uultum.

3. Paulus circa illos nobilissimi triumphi dies quo uinctum ante currum egit Persen [incliti regis nomen] duos filios in adoptionem dedit, <duos> quos sibi seruauerat extulit. Quales retentos putas, cum inter commodatos Scipio fuisset? Non sine motu uacuum Pauli currum populus Romanus aspexit. Contionatus est tamen et egit dis gratias quod compos uoti factus esset; precatum enim se ut, si quid ob ingentem uictoriam inuidiae dandum esset, id suo potius quam publico damno solueretur. 4. Vides quam magno animo tulerit? orbitati suae gratulatus est. Et quem magis poterat permouere tanta mutatio? solacia simul atque auxilia perdidit. Non contigit tamen tristem Paulum Persi uidere.

XIV.

1. Quid nunc te per innumerabilia magnorum uirorum exempla ducam et quaeram miseros, quasi non difficilius sit inuenire felices? Quota enim quaeque domus usque ad exitum omnibus partibus suis constitit, in qua non aliquid turbatum sit? Vnum quemlibet annum occupa et ex eo magistratus cita, Lucium si uis Bibulum et C. Caesarem: uidebis inter collegas inimicissimos concordem fortunam.

2. L. Bibuli, melioris quam fortioris uiri, duo simul filii interfecti sunt, Aegyptio quidem militi ludibrio habiti, ut non minus ipsa orbitate auctor eius digna res lacrimis esset. Bibulus tamen, qui toto honoris sui anno <in> inuidiam collegae domi latuerat, postero die quam geminum funus renuntiaturum est processit ad solita imperatoris officia. Quis minus potest quam unum diem duobus filiis dare? Tam cito liberorum luctum finiuit qui consulatum anno luxerat.

3. C. Caesar cum Britanniam peragraret nec oceano continere felicitatem suam posset, audit decessisse filiam publica secum fata ducentem. In oculis erat iam Cn. Pompeius non aequo laturus animo quemquam alium esse in re publica magnum et modum inpositurus incrementis, quae grauia illi uidebantur etiam cum in commune cresceret. Tamen intra tertium diem imperatoria obit munia et tam cito dolorem uicit quam omnia solebat.

XV.

1. Quid aliorum tibi funera Caesarum referam? quos in hoc mihi uidetur interim uiolare fortuna ut sic quoque generi humano prosint, ostendentes ne eos quidem qui dis geniti deosque genituri dicantur sic suam fortunam in potestate habere quemadmodum alienam. 2. Diuus Augustus amissis liberis, nepotibus, exhausta Caesarum turba, adoptione desertam domum fulsit: tulit tamen tam fortiter quam cuius iam res agebatur cuiusque maxime intererat de dis neminem queri. 3. Ti. Caesar et quem genuerat et quem adoptauerat amisit; ipse tamen pro rostris laudauit filium stetitque in conspectu posito corpore, interiecto tantummodo uelamento quod pontificis oculos a funere arceret, et flente populo Romano non flexit uultum; experiendum se dedit Seiano ad latus stanti quam patienter posset suos perdere.

4. Videsne quanta copia uirorum maximorum sit quos non excepit hic omnia prosternens casus, et in quos tot animi bona, tot ornamenta publice priuatimque congesta erant? Sed uidelicet it in orbem ista tempestas et sine dilectu uastat omnia agitque ut sua. Iube singulos conferre rationem: nulli contigit inpune nasci.

XVI.

1. Scio quid dicas: ‘oblitus es feminam te consolari, uirorum refert exempla.’ Quis autem dixit naturam maligne cum mulierum ingeniis egisse et uirtutes illarum in artum retraxisse? par illis, mihi crede, uigor, par ad honesta, libeat <modo>, facultas est; dolorem laboremque ex aequo, si consueuere, patiuntur. 2. In qua istud urbe, di boni, loquimur? in qua regem Romanis capitibus Lucretia et Brutus deiecerunt: Bruto libertatem debemus, Lucretiae Brutum; in qua Cloeliam contempto et hoste et flumine ob insignem audaciam tantum non in uiros transcripsimus: equestri insidens statuae in sacra uia, celeberrimo loco, Cloelia exprobrat iuuenibus nostris puluinum escendentibus in ea illos urbe sic ingredi in qua etiam feminas equo donauimus. 3. Quod tibi si uis exempla referri feminarum quae suos fortiter desiderauerint, non ostiatim quaeram; ex una tibi familia duas Cornelias dabo: primam Scipionis filiam, Gracchorum matrem. Duodecim illa partus totidem funeribus recognouit; et de ceteris facile est, quos nec editos nec amissos ciuitas sensit: Tiberium Gaiumque, quos etiam qui bonos uiros negauerit magnos fatebitur, et occisos uidit et insepultos. Consolantibus tamen miseramque dicentibus ‘numquam’ inquit ‘non felicem me dicam, quae Gracchos peperit.’ 4. Cornelia Liui Drusi clarissimum iuuenem inlustris ingenii, uadentem per Gracchana uestigia imperfectis tot rogationibus intra penates interemptum suos, amiserat incerto caedis auctore. Tamen et acerbam mortem filii et inultam tam magno animo tulit quam ipse leges tulerat. 5. Iam cum fortuna in gratiam, Marcia, reuerteris, si tela quae in Scipiones Scipionumque matres ac filias exegit, quibus Caesares petit, ne a te quidem continuit?

Plena et infesta uariis casibus uita est, a quibus nulli longa pax, uix indutiae sunt. Quattuor liberos sustuleras, Marcia. Nullum aiunt frustra cadere telum quod in confertum agmen inmissum est: mirum est tantam turbam non potuisse sine inuidia damnoue praeteruehi? 6. ‘At hoc iniquior fortuna fuit quod non tantum eripuit filios sed elegit.’ Numquam tamen iniuriam dixeris ex aequo cum potentiore diuidere: duas tibi reliquit filias et harum nepotes; et ipsum quem maxime luges prioris oblita non ex toto abstulit: habes ex illo duas

filias, si male fers, magna onera, si bene, magna solacia. In hoc te perduc ut illas cum uideris admonearis filii, non doloris. 7. Agricola euersis arboribus quas aut uentus radicitus auolsit aut contortus repentino impetu turbo praefregit sobolem ex illis residuam fouet et in <locum> amissarum semina statim plantasque disponit; et momento (nam ut ad damna, ita ad incrementa rapidum ueloxque tempus est) adulescunt amissis laetiora. 8. Has nunc Metili tui filias in eius uicem substitue et uacantem locum exple et unum dolorem geminato solacio leua. Est quidem haec natura mortalium, ut nihil magis placeat quam quod amissum est: iniquiores sumus aduersus relictam ereptorum desiderio. Sed si aestimare uolueris quam ualde tibi fortuna, etiam cum saeuiret, pepercerit, scies te habere plus quam solacia: respice tot nepotes, duas filias. Dic illud quoque, Marcia: ‘mouerer, si esset cuique fortuna pro moribus et numquam mala bonos sequerentur: nunc uideo exempto discrimine eodem modo malos bonosque iactari.’

XVII.

1. 'Graue est tamen quem educaueris iuuenem, iam matri iam patri praesidium ac decus amittere.' Quis negat graue esse? sed humanum est. Ad hoc genitus es, ut perderes ut perires, ut sperares metueres, alios teque inquietares, mortem et timeres et optares et, quod est pessimum, numquam scires cuius esses status.

2. Si quis Syracusas petenti diceret: 'omnia incommoda, omnes uoluptates futurae peregrinationis tuae ante cognosce, deinde ita nauiga. Haec sunt quae mirari possis: uidebis primum ipsam insulam ab Italia angusto interscissam freto, quam continenti quondam cohaesisse constat; subitum illo mare inrupit et

Hesperium Siculo latus abscidit.

Deinde uidebis (licebit enim tibi audissimum maris uerticem stringere) stratam illam fabulosam Charybdin quam diu ab austro uacat, at, si quid inde uehementius spirauit, magno hiatus profundoque nauigia sorbentem. 3. Videbis celebratissimum carminibus fontem Arethusam, nitidissimi ac perlucidi ad imum stagni, gelidissimas aquas profundentem, siue illas ibi primum nascentis inuenit, siue inlapsum terris flumen integrum subter tot maria et a confusione peioris undae seruatum reddidit. 4. Videbis portum quietissimum omnium quos aut natura posuit in tutelam classium aut adiuuit manus, sic tutum ut ne maximarum quidem tempestatum furori locus sit. Videbis ubi Athenarum potentia fracta, ubi tot milia captiuorum ille excisis in infinitam altitudinem saxis natiuus carcer incluserat, ipsam ingentem ciuitatem et laxius territorium quam multarum urbium fines sunt, tepidissima hiberna et nullum diem sine interuentu solis. 5. Sed cum omnia ista cognoueris, grauis et insalubris aestas hiberni caeli beneficia corrumpet. Erit Dionysius illic tyrannus, libertatis iustitiae legum exitium, dominationis cupidus etiam post Platonem, uitae etiam post exilium: alios uret, alios uerberabit, alios ob leuem offensam detruncari iubebit, arcesset ad libidinem mares feminasque et inter foedos regiae intemperantiae greges parum erit simul binis coire. Audisti quid te inuitare possit, quid abstertere: proinde aut nauiga aut resiste.' 6. Post hanc denuntiationem si quis dixisset intrare se

Syracusas uelle, satisne iustam querellam de ullo nisi de se habere posset, qui non incidisset in illa sed prudens sciensque uenisset?

Dicit omnibus nobis natura: 'neminem decipio. Tu si filios sustuleris, poteris habere formosos, et deformes poteris. Fortasse multi nascentur: esse aliquis ex illis tam seruator patriae quam proditor poterit. 7. Non est quod desperes tantae dignationis futuros ut nemo tibi propter illos male dicere audeat; propone tamen et tantae futuros turpitudinis ut ipsi maledicta sint. Nihil uetat illos tibi suprema praestare et laudari te a liberis tuis, sed sic te para tamquam in ignem inpositurus uel puerum uel iuuenem uel senem; nihil enim ad rem pertinent anni, quoniam nullum non acerbum funus est quod parens sequitur.' Post has leges propositas si liberos tollis, omni deos inuidia liberas, qui tibi nihil certi spoponderunt.

XVIII.

18. <Ad> hanc imaginem agedum totius uitae introitum refer. An Syracusas uiseres deliberanti tibi quidquid delectare poterat, quidquid offendere exposui: puta nascenti me tibi uenire in consilium. 2. 'Intraturus es urbem dis hominibus communem, omnia complexam, certis legibus aeternisque deuinctam, indefatigata caelestium officia uoluentem. Videbis illic innumerabiles stellas micare, uidebis uno sidere omnia inpleri, solem cotidiano cursu diei noctisque spatia signantem, annuo aestates hiemesque aequalius[que] diuidentem. Videbis nocturnam lunae successionem, a fraternis occursibus lene remissumque lumen mutuantem et modo occultam modo toto ore terris imminentem, accessionibus damnisque mutabilem, semper proximae dissimilem. 3. Videbis quinque sidera diuersas agentia uias et in contrarium praecipiti mundo nitentia: ex horum leuissimis motibus fortunae populorum dependent et maxima ac minima proinde formantur prout aequum iniquumue sidus incessit. Miraberis collecta nubila et cadentis aquas et obliqua fulmina et caeli fragorem. 4. Cum satiatus spectaculo supernorum in terram oculos deieceris, excipiet te alia forma rerum aliterque mirabilis: hinc camporum in infinitum patentium fusa planities, hinc montium magnis et nualibus surgentium iugis erecti in sublime uertices; deiectus fluminum et ex uno fonte in occidentem orientemque diffusi amnes et summis cacuminibus nemora nutantia et tantum siluarum cum suis animalibus auiumque concentu dissono; 5. uarii urbium situs et seclusae nationes locorum difficultate, quarum aliae se in erectos subtrahunt montes, aliae ~ripis lacu uallibus pauidae~ circumfunduntur; adiuta cultu seges et arbusta sine cultore feritatis; et riuorum lenis inter prata discursus et amoeni sinus et litora in portum recedentia; sparsae tot per uastum insulae, quae interuentu suo maria distinguunt. 6. Quid lapidum gemmarumque fulgor et [inter] rapidorum torrentium aurum harenis interfluens et in mediis terris medioque rursus mari ~terret~ ignium faces et uinculum terrarum oceanus, continuationem gentium triplici sinu scindens et ingenti licentia exaestuans? 7. Videbis hic inquietis et sine uento fluctuantibus aquis innare [et] excedenti terrestria magnitudine

animalia, quaedam grauiā et alieno se magisterio mouentia, quaedam uelocia et concitatis perniciores remigiis, quaedam haurientia undas et magno praenauigantium periculo efflantia; uidebis hic nauigia quas non nouere terras quaerentia. Videbis nihil humanae audaciae intemptatum erisque et spectator et ipse pars magna conantium: disces docebisque artes, alias quae uitam instruant, alias quae ornent, alias quae regant. 8. Sed istic erunt mille corporum, animorum pestes, et bella et latrocinia et uenena et naufragia et intemperies caeli corporisque et carissimorum acerba desideria et mors, incertum facilis an per poenam cruciatumque. Delibera tecum et perpende quid uelis: ut ad illa uenias, per illa exeundum est.' Respondebis uelle te uiuere. Quidni? immo, puto, ad id non accedes ex quo tibi aliquid decuti doles! Viue ergo ut conuenit. 'Nemo' inquis 'nos consuluit.' Consulti sunt de nobis parentes nostri, qui, cum condicionem uitae nossent, in hanc nos sustulerunt.

XIX.

1. Sed ut ad solacia ueniam, uideamus primum quid curandum sit, deinde quemadmodum. Mouet lugentem desiderium eius quem dilexit. Id per se tolerabile esse apparet; absentis enim afuturosque dum uiuent non flemus, quamuis omnis usus nobis illorum <cum> conspectu ereptus sit; opinio est ergo quae nos cruciat, et tanti quodque malum est quanti illud taxauimus. In nostra potestate remedium habemus: iudicemus illos abesse et nosmet ipsi fallamus; dimisimus illos, immo consecuturi praemisimus. 2. Mouet et illud lugentem: ‘non erit qui me defendat, qui a contemptu uindictet.’ Vt minime probabili sed uero solacio utar, in ciuitate nostra plus gratiae orbitas confert quam eripit, adeoque senectutem solitudo, quae solebat destruere, ad potentiam ducit ut quidam odia filiorum simulent et liberos eiurent, orbitatem manu faciant.

3. Scio quid dicas: ‘non mouent me detrimenta mea; etenim non est dignus solacio qui filium sibi decessisse sicut mancipium moleste fert, cui quicquam in filio respicere praeter ipsum uacat.’ Quid igitur te, Marcia, mouet? utrum quod filius tuus decessit an quod non diu uixit? Si quod decessit, semper debuisti dolere; semper enim scisti moriturum. 4. Cogita nullis defunctum malis adfici, illa quae nobis inferos faciunt terribiles, fabulas esse, nullas imminere mortuis tenebras nec carcerem nec flumina igne flagrantia nec Obluionem amnem nec tribunalia et reos et in illa libertate tam laxa ullos iterum tyrannos: luserunt ista poetae et uanis nos agitauiere terroribus. 5. Mors dolorum omnium exsolutio est et finis ultra quem mala nostra non exeunt, quae nos in illam tranquillitatem in qua antequam nasceremur iacuimus reponit. Si mortuorum aliquis miseretur, et non natorum misereatur. Mors nec bonum nec malum est; id enim potest aut bonum aut malum esse quod aliquid est; quod uero ipsum nihil est et omnia in nihilum redigit, nulli nos fortunae tradit. Mala enim bonaque circa aliquam uersantur materiam: non potest id fortuna tenere quod natura dimisit, nec potest miser esse qui nullus est. 6. Excessit filius tuus terminos intra quos seruitur, excepit illum magna et aeterna pax: non paupertatis metu, non diuitiarum cura, non libidinis per uoluptatem animos carpentis stimulis incessitur, non

inuidia felicitatis alienae tangitur, non suae premitur, ne conuiciis quidem ullis uerecundae aures uerberantur; nulla publica clades prospicitur, nulla priuata; non sollicitus futuri pendet [et] ex euentu semper ~in certiora dependenti~. Tandem ibi constitit unde nil eum pellat, ubi nihil terreat.

XX.

1. O ignaros malorum suorum, quibus non mors ut optimum inuentum naturae laudatur expectaturque, siue felicitatem includit, siue calamitatem repellit, siue satietatem ac lassitudinem senis terminat, siue iuuenile aeuum dum meliora sperantur in flore deducit, siue pueritiam ante duriores gradus reuocat, omnibus finis, multis remedium, quibusdam uotum, de nullis melius merita quam de iis ad quos uenit antequam inuocaretur. 2. Haec seruitutem inuito domino remittit; haec captiuorum catenas leuat; haec e carcere educit quos exire imperium inpotens uetuerat; haec exulibus in patriam semper animum oculosque tendentibus ostendit nihil interesse infra quos quis iaceat; haec, ubi res communes fortuna male diuisit et aequo iure genitos alium alii donauit, exaequat omnia; haec est post quam nihil quisquam alieno fecit arbitrio; haec est in qua nemo humilitatem suam sensit; haec est quae nulli non patuit; haec est, Marcia, quam pater tuus concupit; haec est, inquam, quae efficit ut nasci non sit supplicium, quae efficit ut non concidam aduersus minas casuum, ut seruare animum saluum ac potentem sui possim: habeo quod appellem. 3. Video istic cruces ne unius quidem generis sed aliter ab aliis fabricatas: capite quidam conuersos in terram suspendere, alii per obscena stipitem egerunt, alii brachia patibulo explicuerunt; uideo fidiculas, uideo uerbera, et ~membris singulis articulis~ singula ~docuerunt~ machinamenta: sed uideo et mortem. Sunt istic hostes cruenti, ciues superbi: sed uideo istic et mortem. Non est molestum seruire ubi, si dominii pertaesum est, licet uno gradu ad libertatem transire. Caram te, uita, beneficio mortis habeo.

4. Cogita quantum boni opportuna mors habeat, quam multis diutius uixisse nocuerit. Si Gnaeum Pompeium, decus istud firmamentumque imperii, Neapoli ualetudo abstulisset, indubitatus populi Romani princeps excesserat: at nunc exigui temporis adiectio fastigio illum suo depulit. Vidit legiones in conspectu suo caesas et ex illo proelio in quo prima acies senatus fuit — quam infelices reliquiae sunt! — ipsum imperatorem superfuisse; uidit Aegyptium carnificem et sacrosanctum uictoribus corpus satelliti praestitit, etiam si incolumis fuisset paenitentiam salutis acturus; quid enim erat

turpius quam Pompeium uiuere beneficio regis? 5. M. Cicero si illo tempore quo Catilinae sicas deuitauit, quibus pariter cum patria petitus est, concidisset, liberata re publica seruator eius, si denique filiae suae funus secutus esset, etiamtunc felix mori potuit. Non uidisset strictos in ciuilia capita mucrones nec diuisa percussoribus occisorum bona, ut etiam de suo perirent, non hastam consularia spolia uendentem nec caedes locatas publice nec latrocinia, bella, rapinas, tantum Catilinarum. 6. M. Catonem si a Cypro et hereditatis regiae dispensatione redeuntem mare deuorasset uel cum illa ipsa pecunia quam adferebat ciuili bello stipendium, nonne illi bene actum foret? Hoc certe secum tulisset, neminem ausurum coram Catone peccare: nunc annorum adiectio paucissimorum uirum libertati non suae tantum sed publicae natum coegit Caesarem fugere, Pompeium sequi.

Nihil ergo illi mali inmaturna mors attulit: omnium etiam malorum remisit patientiam.

XXI.

1. 'Nimis tamen cito perit et immaturus.' Primum puta illi superfuisse — comprende quantum plurimum procedere homini licet: quantum est? Ad breuissimum tempus editi, cito cessuri loco uenienti inpactum hoc prospicimus hospitium. De nostris aetatibus loquor, quas incredibili celeritate ~conuoluit~? Computa urbium saecula: uidebis quam non diu steterint etiam quae uetustate gloriantur. Omnia humana breuia et caduca sunt et infiniti temporis nullam partem occupantia. 2. Terram hanc cum urbibus populisque et fluminibus et ambitu maris puncti loco ponimus ad uniuersa referentes: minorem portionem aetas nostra quam puncti habet, si omni tempori comparetur, cuius maior est mensura quam mundi, utpote cum ille se intra huius spatium totiens remetiat. Quid ergo interest id extendere cuius quantumcumque fuerit incrementum non multum aberit a nihilo? Vno modo multum est quod uiuimus, si satis est. 3. Licet mihi uiuaces et in memoriam traditae senectutis uiros nomines, centenos denosque percenseas annos: cum ad omne tempus dimiseris animum, nulla erit illa breuissimi longissimique aevi differentia, si inspecto quanto quis uixerit spatio comparaueris quanto non uixerit. 4. Deinde sibi maturus decessit; uixit enim quantum debuit uiuere, nihil illi iam ultra supererat. Non una hominibus senectus est, ut ne animalibus quidem: intra quattuordecim quaedam annos defetigauit, et haec illis longissima aetas est quae homini prima; dispar cuique uiuendi facultas data est. Nemo nimis cito moritur, quia uicturus diutius quam uixit non fuit. 5. Fixus est cuique terminus: manebit semper ubi positus est nec illum ulterius diligentia aut gratia promouebit. Sic habe, te illum [ulterius diligentiam] ex consilio perdidisse: tulit suum

metasque dati peruenit ad aevi.

6. Non est itaque quod sic te oneres: 'potuit diutius uiuere'. Non est interrupta eius uita nec umquam se annis casus intericit. Soluitur quod cuique promissum est; eunt uia sua fata nec adiciunt quicquam nec ex promisso semel demunt. Frustra uota ac studia sunt: habebit quisque quantum illi dies primus adscripsit. Ex illo quo primum lucem uidit iter mortis ingressus est accessitque fato propior et illi

ipsi qui adiciebantur adulescentiae anni uitae detrahebantur. 7. In hoc omnes errore uersamur, ut non putemus ad mortem nisi senes inclinatosque iam uergere, cum illo infantia statim et iuuenta, omnis aetas ferat. Agunt opus suum fata: nobis sensum nostrae necis auferunt, quoque facilius obrepat, mors sub ipso uitae nomine latet: infantiam in se pueritia conuertit, pueritiam pubertas, iuuenem senex abstulit. Incrementa ipsa, si bene computes, damna sunt.

XXII.

1. Quereris, Marcia, non tam diu filium tuum uixisse quam potuisset? Vnde enim scis an diutius illi expedierit uiuere, an illi hac morte consultum sit? Quemquam inuenire hodie potes cuius res tam bene positae fundataeque sint ut nihil illi procedente tempore timendum sit? Labant humana ac fluunt neque ulla pars uitae nostrae tam obnoxia aut tenera est quam quae maxime placet, ideoque felicissimis optanda mors est, quia in tanta inconstantia turbaque rerum nihil nisi quod praeterit certum est. 2. Quis tibi recipit illud filii pulcherrimum corpus et summa pudoris custodia inter luxuriosae urbis oculos conseruatum potuisse tot morbos ita euadere ut ad senectutem inlaesum perferret formae decus? Cogita animi mille labes; neque enim recta ingenia qualem in adulescentia spem sui fecerant usque in senectutem pertulerunt, sed interuersa plerumque sunt: aut sera eoque foedior luxuria inuasit coepitque dehonestare speciosa principia, aut in popinam uentremque procubuerunt toti summaque illis curarum fuit quid essent, quid biberent. 3. Adice incendia ruinas naufragia lacerationesque medicorum ossa uiuis legentium et totas in uiscera manus demittentium et non per simplicem dolorem pudenda curantium; post haec exilium (non fuit innocentior filius tuus quam Rutilius), carcerem (non fuit sapientior quam Socrates), uoluntario uulnere transfixum pectus (non fuit sanctior quam Cato): cum ista perspexeris, scies optime cum iis agi quos natura, quia illos hoc manebat uitae stipendium, cito in tutum recepit. Nihil est tam fallax quam uita humana, nihil tam insidiosum: non mehercules quisquam illam accepisset, nisi daretur ignorantibus. Itaque si felicissimum est non nasci, proximum est, puto, breui aetate defunctos cito in integrum restitui.

4. Propone illud acerbissimum tibi tempus, quo Seianus patrem tuum clienti suo Satrio Secundo congiarium dedit. Irascebatur illi ob unum aut alterum liberius dictum, quod tacitus ferre non potuerat Seianum in ceruices nostras ne inponi quidem sed escendere. Decernebatur illi statua in Pompei theatro ponenda, quod exustum Caesar reficiebat: exclamauit Cordus tunc uere theatrum perire. 5. Quid ergo? non rumperetur supra cineres Cn. Pompei constitui

Seianum et in monumentis maximi imperatoris consecrari perfidum militem? ~Consecratur~ subscriptio, et acerrimi canes, quos ille, ut sibi uni mansuetos, omnibus feros haberet, sanguine humano pascebat, circumlatrare hominem ~etiam illum imperiatum~ incipiunt. 6. Quid faceret? Si uiuere uellet, Seianus rogandus erat, si mori, filia, uterque inexorabilis: constituit filiam fallere. Vsus itaque balineo quo plus uirium poneret, in cubiculum se quasi gustaturus contulit et dimissis pueris quaedam per fenestram, ut uideretur edisse, proiecit; a cena deinde, quasi iam satis in cubiculo edisset, abstinuit. Altero quoque die et tertio idem fecit; quartus ipsa infirmitate corporis faciebat indicium. Complexus itaque te, 'carissima' inquit 'filia et hoc unum tota celata uita, iter mortis ingressus sum et iam medium fere teneo; reuocare me nec debes nec potes.' Atque ita iussit lumen omne praecludi et se in tenebras condidit. 7. Cognito consilio eius publica uoluptas erat, quod e faucibus audissimorum luporum educeretur praeda. Accusatores auctore Seiano adeunt consulum tribunalia, queruntur mori Cordum, ut interpellarent quod coegerant: adeo illis Cordus uidebatur effugere. Magna res erat in quaestione, an mortis <ius> rei perderent; dum deliberatur, dum accusatores iterum adeunt, ille se absoluerat. 8. Videsne, Marcia, quantae iniquorum temporum uices ex inopinato ingruant? Fles, quod alicui tuorum mori necesse fuit? Paene non licuit!

XXIII.

1. Praeter hoc quod omne futurum incertum est et ad deteriora certius, facillimum ad superos iter est animis cito ab humana conuersatione dimissis; minimum enim faecis, ponderis traxerunt. Ante quam obdurescerent et altius terrena conciperent liberati leuiiores ad originem suam reuolant et facilius quicquid est illud obsoleti inlitique eluunt. 2. Nec umquam magis ingenis cara in corpore mora est; exire atque erumpere gestiunt, aegre has angustias ferunt, uagi per omne, sublimes et ex alto adsueti humana despiciere. Inde est quod Platon clamat: sapientis animum totum in mortem prominere, hoc uelle, hoc meditari, hac semper cupidine ferri in exteriora tendentem.

3. Quid? tu, Marcia, cum uideres senilem in iuvene prudentiam, uictorem omnium uoluptatum animum, emendatum, carentem uitio, diuitias sine auaritia, honores sine ambitione, uoluptates sine luxuria adpetentem, diu tibi putabas illum sospitem posse contingere? Quicquid ad summum peruenit, ab exitu prope est. Eripit se aufertque ex oculis perfecta uirtus, nec ultimum tempus expectant quae in primo maturuerunt. 4. Ignis quo clarius fulsit, citius extinguitur; uiuacior est, qui cum lenta ac difficili materia commissus fumoque demersus ex sordido lucet; eadem enim detinet causa, quae maligne alit. Sic ingenia quo inlustriora, breuiora sunt; nam ubi incremento locus non est, uicinus occasus est. 5. Fabianus ait, id quod nostri quoque parentes uidere, puerum Romae fuisse statura ingentis uiri; sed hic cito decessit, et moriturum breui nemo prudens non ante dixit; non poterat enim ad illam aetatem peruenire, quam praeceperat. Ita est: indicium imminētis exiti nimia maturitas est; adpetit finis ubi incrementa consumpta sunt.

XXIV.

1. Incipe uirtutibus illum, non annis aestimare; satis diu uixit. Pupillus relictus sub tutorum cura usque ad quartum decimum annum fuit, sub matris tutela semper. Cum haberet suos penates, relinquere tuos noluit et in materno contubernio, cum uix patrum liberi ferant, perseuerauit. Adulescens statura, pulchritudine, certo corporis robore castris natus militiam recusauit, ne a te discederet. 2. Computa, Marcia, quam raro liberos uideant quae in diuersis domibus habitant; cogita tot illos perire annos matribus et per sollicitudinem exigi, quibus filios in exercitu habent: scies multum patuisse hoc tempus, ex quo nil perdidisti. Numquam e conspectu tuo recessit; sub oculis tuis studia formauit excellentis ingeni et aequaturi auum, nisi obstitisset uerecundia, quae multorum profectus silentio pressit. 3. Adulescens rarissimae formae in tam magna feminarum turba uiros corruptentium nullius se spei praebeuit, et cum quarundam usque ad temptandum peruenisset improbitas, erubuit quasi peccasset, quod placuerat. Hac sanctitate morum effecit, ut puer admodum dignus sacerdotio uideretur, materna sine dubio suffragatione, sed ne mater quidem nisi pro bono candidato ualuisset. 4. Harum contemplatione uirtutum filium gere quasi sinu! Nunc ille tibi magis uacat, nunc nihil habet, quo auocetur; numquam tibi sollicitudini, numquam maerori erit. Quod unum ex tam bono filio poteras dolere, doluisti; cetera, exempta casibus, plena uoluptatis sunt, si modo uti filio scis, si modo quid in illo pretiosissimum fuerit intellegis. 5. Imago dumtaxat fili tui perit et effigies non simillima; ipse quidem aeternus meliorisque nunc status est, despoliatus oneribus alienis et sibi relictus. Haec quae uides circumdata nobis, ossa neruos et obductam cutem uultumque et ministras manus et cetera quibus inuoluti sumus, uincula animorum tenebraeque sunt. Obruitur his, offocatur, inficitur, arcetur a ueris et suis in falsa coiectus. Omne illi cum hac graui carne certamen est, ne abstrahatur et sidat; nititur illo, unde demissus est. Ibi illum aeterna requies manet ex confusis crassisque pura et liquida uisentem.

XXV.

1. Proinde non est quod ad sepulcrum fili tui curras; pessima eius et ipsi molestissima istic iacent, ossa cineresque, non magis illius partes quam uestes aliaque tegimenta corporum. Integer ille nihilque in terris relinquens sui fugit et totus excessit; paulumque supra nos commoratus, dum expurgatur et inhaerentia uitia situmque omnem mortalis aevi excutit, deinde ad excelsa sublatus inter felices currit animas. Excepit illum coetus sacer, Scipiones Catonesque, interque contemptores uitae et ueneficio liberos parens tuus, Marcia. 2. Ille nepotem suum — quamquam illic omnibus omne cognatum est — applicat sibi noua luce gaudentem et uicinorum siderum meatus docet, nec ex coniectura sed omnium ex uero peritus in arcana naturae libens ducit; utque ignotarum urbium monstrator hospiti gratus est, ita sciscitanti caelestium causas domesticus interpres. Et in profunda terrarum permittere aciem iubet; iuuat enim ex alto relictia respicere. 3. Sic itaque te, Marcia, gere, tamquam sub oculis patris filique posita, non illorum, quos noueras, sed tanto excelsiorum et in summo locatorum. Erubescere quicquam humile aut uolgare cogitare et mutatos in melius tuos flere! Aeternarum rerum per libera et uasta spatia dimissi sunt; non illos interfusa maria discludunt nec altitudo montium aut inuiuae ualles aut incertarum uada Syrtium: omnia ibi plana et ex facili mobiles et expediti et in uicem peruii sunt intermixtique sideribus.

XXVI.

1. Puta itaque ex illa arce caelesti patrem tuum Marcia, cui tantum apud te auctoritatis erat quantum tibi apud filium tuum, non illo ingenio, quo ciuilia bella defleuit, quo proscribentis in aeternum ipse proscripsit, sed tanto elatiore, quanto est ipse sublimior, dicere: 2. 'Cur te, filia, tam longa tenet aegritudo? Cur in tanta ueri ignorance uersaris, ut inique actum cum filio tuo iudices, quod integro domus statu integer ipse se ad maiores recepit suos? Nescis quantis fortuna procellis disturbet omnia? Quam nullis benignam facilemque se praestiterit, nisi qui minimum cum illa contraxerant? Regesne tibi nominem felicissimos futuros, si maturius illos mors instantibus subtraxisset malis? an Romanos duces, quorum nihil magnitudini deerit, si aliquid aetati detraxeris? an nobilissimos uiros clarissimosque ad ictum militaris gladi composita ceruice curuatos? 3. Respice patrem atque auum tuum: ille in alieni percussoris uenit arbitrium; ego nihil in me cuiquam permisi et cibo prohibitus ostendi tam magno me quam uidebar animo scripsisse. Cur in domo nostra diutissime lugetur qui felicissime moritur? Coimus omnes in unum uidemusque non alta nocte circumdati nil apud uos, ut putatis, optabile, nil excelsum, nil splendidum, sed humilia cuncta et grauia et anxia et quotam partem luminis nostri cernentia! 4. Quid dicam nulla hic arma mutuis furere concursibus nec classes classibus frangi nec parricidia aut fingi aut cogitari nec fora litibus strepere dies perpetuos, nihil in obscuro, detectas mentes et aperta praecordia et in publico medioque uitam et omnis aevi prospectum uenientiumque?

5. 'Iuuabat unius me saeculi facta componere in parte ultima mundi et inter paucissimos gesta. Tot saecula, tot aetatium contextum, seriem, quicquid annorum est, licet uisere; licet surrectura, licet ruitura regna prospicere et magnarum urbium lapsus et maris nouos cursus. 6. Nam si tibi potest solacio esse desiderii tui commune fatum, nihil quo stat loco stabit, omnia sternet abducatque secum uetustas. Nec hominibus solum (quota enim ista fortuitae potentiae portio est?), sed locis, sed regionibus, sed mundi partibus ludet. Totos supprimet montes et alibi rupes in altum nouas exprimet; maria sorbebit, flumina auertet et commercio gentium rupto

societatem generis humani coetumque dissoluet; alibi hiatibus uastis subducat urbes, tremoribus quatiet et ex infimo pestilentiae halitus mittet et inundationibus quicquid habitatur obducat necabitque omne animal orbe submerso et ignibus uastis torrebit incendetque mortalia. Et cum tempus aduenerit, quo se mundus renouaturus extinguat, uiribus ista se suis caedent et sidera sideribus incurrent et omni flagrante materia uno igni quicquid nunc ex disposito lucet ardebit. 7. Nos quoque felices animae et aeterna sortitae, cum deo uisum erit iterum ista moliri, labentibus cunctis et ipsae parua ruinae ingentis accessio in antiqua elementa uertemur.’

**TO MY MOTHER HELVIA, ON
CONSOLATION — Ad Helviam matrem, De
consolatione**

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I.

1. Saepe iam, mater optima, impetum cepi consolandi te, saepe continui. Vt auderem multa me inpellebant: primum uidebar depositurus omnia incommoda, cum lacrimas tuas, etiam si suppressere non potuissem, interim certe abstersissem; deinde plus habiturum me auctoritatis non dubitabam ad excitandam te, si prior ipse consurrexissem; praeterea timebam ne a me uicta fortuna aliquem meorum uinceret. Itaque utcumque conabar manu super plagam meam inposita ad obliganda uulnera uestra reptare. 2. Hoc propositum meum erant rursus quae retardarent: dolori tuo, dum recens saeuiret, sciebam occurrendum non esse ne illum ipsa solacia inritarent et accenderent — nam in morbis quoque nihil est perniciosius quam inmatura medicina; expectabam itaque dum ipse uires suas frangeret et ad sustinenda remedia mora mitigatus tangi se ac tractari pateretur. Praeterea cum omnia clarissimorum ingeniorum monumenta ad compescendos moderandosque luctus composita euoluerem, non inueniebam exemplum eius qui consolatus suos esset, cum ipse ab illis comploraretur; ita in re noua haesitabam uerebarque ne haec non consolatio esset sed exulceratio. 3. Quid quod nouis uerbis nec ex uulgari et cotidiana sumptis adlocutione opus erat homini ad consolandos suos ex ipso rogo caput adleuanti? Omnis autem magnitudo doloris modum excedentis necesse est dilectum uerborum eripiat, cum saepe uocem quoque ipsam intercludat. 4. Vtcumque conitar, non fiducia ingenii, sed quia possum instar efficacissimae consolationis esse ipse consolator. Cui nihil negares, huic hoc utique te non esse negaturam, licet omnis maeror contumax sit, spero, ut desiderio tuo uelis a me modum statui.

II.

1. Vide quantum de indulgentia tua promiserim mihi: potentior me futurum apud te non dubito quam dolorem tuum, quo nihil est apud miseros potentius. Itaque ne statim cum eo concurram, adero prius illi et quibus excitetur ingeram; omnia proferam et rescindam quae iam obducta sunt. 2. Dicet aliquis: 'quod hoc genus est consolandi, oblitterata mala reuocare et animum in omnium aerumnarum suarum conspectu conlocare uix unius patientem?' Sed is cogitet, quaecumque usque eo perniciose sunt ut contra remedium conualuerint, plerumque contrariis curari. Omnis itaque luctus illi suos, omnia lugubria admouebo: hoc erit non molli uia mederi, sed urere ac secare. Quid consequar? ut pudeat animum tot miseriarum uictorem aegre ferre unum uulnus in corpore tam cicatricoso. 3. Fleant itaque diutius et gemant, quorum delicatas mentes eneruauit longa felicitas, et ad leuissimarum iniuriarum motus conlabantur: at quorum omnes anni per calamitates transierunt, grauissima quoque forti et immobili constantia perferant. Vnum habet adsidua infelicitas bonum, quod quos semper uexat nouissime indurat.

4. Nullam tibi fortuna uacationem dedit a grauissimis luctibus, ne natalem quidem tuum excepit: amisisti matrem statim nata, immo dum nasceris, et ad uitam quodam modo exposita es. Creuisti sub nouerca, quam tu quidem omni obsequio et pietate, quanta uel in filia conspici potest, matrem fieri coegisti; nulli tamen non magno constitit etiam bona nouerca. Auunculum indulgentissimum, optimum ac fortissimum uirum, cum aduentum eius expectares, amisisti; et ne saeuitiam suam fortuna leuiorem diducendo faceret, intra tricesimum diem carissimum uirum, ex quo mater trium liberorum eras, extulisti. 5. Lugenti tibi luctus nuntiatus est omnibus quidem absentibus liberis, quasi de industria in id tempus coniectis malis tuis ut nihil esset [haberes] ubi se dolor tuus reclinaret. Transeo tot pericula, tot metus, quos sine interuallo in te incursantis pertulisti: modo modo in eundem sinum ex quo tres nepotes emiseras ossa trium nepotum recepisti; intra uicesimum diem quam filium meum in manibus et in osculis tuis mortuum funeraueras, raptum me audisti: hoc adhuc defuerat tibi, lugere uiuos.

III.

1. Grauissimum est ex omnibus quae umquam in corpus tuum descenderunt recens uulnus, fateor; non summam cutem rupit, pectus et uiscera ipsa diuisit. Sed quemadmodum tirones leuiter saucii tamen uociferantur et manus medicorum magis quam ferrum horrent, at ueterani quamuis confossi patienter ac sine gemitu uelut aliena corpora exsaniari patiuntur, ita tu nunc debes fortiter praebere te curationi. 2. Lamentationes quidem et eiulatus et alia per quae fere muliebris dolor tumultuatur amoue; perdidisti enim tot mala, si nondum misera esse didicisti. Ecquid uideor non timide tecum egisse? nihil tibi subduxi ex malis tuis, sed omnia coaceruata ante te posui.

IV.

1. Magno id animo feci; constitui enim uincere dolorem tuum, non circumscribere. Vincam autem, puto, primum si ostendero nihil me pati propter quod ipse dici possim miser, nedum propter quod miseros etiam quos contingo faciam; deinde si ad te transiero et probauero ne tuam quidem grauem esse fortunam, quae tota ex mea pendet.

2. Hoc prius adgrediar quod pietas tua audire gestit, nihil mihi mali esse. Si potuero, ipsas res quibus me putas premi non esse intolerabiles faciam manifestum; sin id credi non potuerit, at ego mihi ipse magis placebo, quod inter eas res beatus ero quae miseros solent facere. 3. Non est quod de me aliis credas: ipse tibi, ne quid incertis opinionibus perturberis, indico me non esse miserum. Adiciam, quo securior sis, ne fieri quidem me posse miserum.

V.

1. Bona condicione geniti sumus, si eam non deseruerimus. Id egit rerum natura ut ad bene uiuendum non magno apparatu opus esset: unusquisque facere se beatum potest. Leue momentum in aduenticiis rebus est et quod in neutram partem magnas uires habeat: nec secunda sapientem euehunt nec aduersa demittunt; laborauit enim semper ut in se plurimum poneret, ut a se omne gaudium peteret. 2. Quid ergo? sapientem esse me dico? Minime; nam id quidem si profiteri possem, non tantum negarem miserum esse me, sed omnium fortunatissimum et in uicinum deo perductum praedicarem: nunc, quod satis est ad omnis miseras leniendas, sapientibus me uiris dedi et nondum in auxilium mei ualidus in aliena castra confugi, eorum scilicet qui facile se ac suos tuentur. 3. Illi me iusserunt stare adsidue uelut in praesidio positum et omnis conatus fortunae, omnis impetus prospicere multo ante quam incurrant. Illis grauis est quibus repentina est: facile eam sustinet qui semper expectat. Nam et hostium aduentus eos prosternit quos inopinantibus occupauit: at qui futuro se bello ante bellum parauerunt, compositi et aptati primum qui tumultuosissimus est ictus facile excipiunt. 4. Numquam ego fortunae credidi, etiam cum uideretur pacem agere; omnia illa quae in me indulgentissime conferebat, pecuniam honores gratiam, eo loco posui unde posset sine motu meo repetere. Interuallum inter illa et me magnum habui; itaque abstulit illa, non auulsit. Neminem aduersa fortuna comminuit nisi quem secunda decepit. 5. Illi qui munera eius uelut sua et perpetua amauerunt, qui se suspici propter illa uoluerunt, iacent et maerent cum uanos et pueriles animos, omnis solidae uoluptatis ignaros, falsa et mobilia oblectamenta destituunt: at ille qui se laetis rebus non inflauit nec mutatis contrahit. Aduersus utrumque statum inuictum animum tenet exploratae iam firmitatis; nam in ipsa felicitate quid contra infelicitatem ualeret expertus est. 6. Itaque ego in illis quae omnes optant existimaui semper nihil ueri boni inesse, tum inania et specioso ac deceptorio fucō circumlita inueni, intra nihil habentia fronti suae simile: nunc in his quae mala uocantur nihil tam terribile ac durum inuenio quam opinio uulgi minabatur. Verbum quidem ipsum persuasionem quadam et consensu

iam asperius ad aures uenit et audientis tamquam triste et execrabile
ferit: ita enim populus iussit, sed populi scita ex magna parte
sapientes abrogant.

VI.

1. Remoto ergo iudicio plurium, quos prima rerum species, utcumque credita est, aufert, uideamus quid sit exilium. Nempe loci commutatio. Ne angustare uidear uim eius et quidquid pessimum in se habet subtrahere, hanc commutationem loci sequuntur incommoda, paupertas ignominia contemptus. Aduersus ista postea conflagam: interim primum illud intueri uolo, quid acerbi adferat ipsa loci commutatio.

2. ‘Carere patria intolerabile est.’ Aspice agedum hanc frequentiam, cui uix urbis immensae tecta sufficiunt: maxima pars istius turbae patria caret. Ex municipiis et coloniis suis, ex toto denique orbe terrarum confluerunt: alios adduxit ambitio, alios necessitas officii publici, alios inposita legatio, alios luxuria opportunum et opulentum uitae locum quaerens, alios liberalium studiorum cupiditas, alios spectacula; quosdam traxit amicitia, quosdam industria laxam ostendendae uirtuti nanta materiam; quidam uenalem formam attulerunt, quidam uenalem eloquentiam. 3. Nullum non hominum genus concucurrit in urbem et uirtutibus et uitae magna pretia ponentem. Iube istos omnes ad nomen citari et ‘unde domo’ quisque sit quaere: uidebis maiorem partem esse quae relictis sedibus suis uenerit in maximam quidem ac pulcherrimam urbem, non tamen suam. 4. Deinde ab hac ciuitate discede, quae ueluti communis potest dici, omnes urbes circum: nulla non magnam partem peregrinae multitudinis habet. Transi ab iis quarum amoena positio et opportunitas regionis plures adlicit, deserta loca et asperrimas insulas, Sciathum et Seriphum, Gyaram et Cossuran percense: nullum inuenies exilium in quo non aliquis animi causa moretur. 5. Quid tam nudum inueniri potest, quid tam abruptum undique quam hoc saxum? Quid ad copias respicienti ieiunius? Quid ad homines inmansuetius? Quid ad ipsum loci situm horridius? Quid ad caeli naturam intemperantius? Plures tamen hic peregrini quam ciues consistunt. Vsque eo ergo commutatio ipsa locorum grauis non est ut hic quoque locus a patria quosdam abduxerit. 6. Inuenio qui dicant inesse naturalem quandam irritationem animis commutandi sedes et transferendi domicilia; mobilis enim et inquieta homini

mens data est, nusquam se tenet, spargitur, et cogitationes suas in omnia nota atque ignota dimittit, uaga et quietis inpatiens et nouitate rerum laetissima. 7. Quod non miraberis, si primam eius originem aspexeris: non est ex terreno et graui concreta corpore, ex illo caelesti spiritu descendit; caelestium autem natura semper in motu est, fugit et uelocissimo cursu agitur. Aspice sidera mundum inlustrantia: nullum eorum perstat. <Sol> labitur adsidue et locum ex loco mutat et, quamuis cum uniuerso uertatur, in contrarium nihilo minus ipsi mundo refertur, per omnis signorum partes discurrit, numquam resistit; perpetua eius agitatio et aliunde alio commigratio est. 8. Omnia uoluuntur semper et in transitu sunt; ut lex et naturae necessitas ordinauit, aliunde alio deferuntur; cum per certa annorum spatia orbis suos explicuerint, iterum ibunt per quae uenerant: i nunc et humanum animum, ex isdem quibus diuina constant seminibus compositum, moleste ferre transitum ac migrationem puta, cum dei natura adsidua et citatissima commutatione uel delectet se uel conseruet.

VII.

1. A caelestibus agedum te ad humana conuerte: uidebis gentes populosque uniuersos mutasse sedem. Quid sibi uolunt in mediis barbarorum regionibus Graecae urbes? Quid inter Indos Persasque Macedonicus sermo? Scythia et totus ille ferarum indomitarumque gentium tractus ciuitates Achaiae Ponticis inpositas litoribus ostentat: non perpetuae hiemis saeuitia, non hominum ingenia ad similitudinem caeli sui horrentia transferentibus domos suas obstiterunt. 2. Atheniensis in Asia turba est; Miletus quinque et septuaginta urbium populum in diuersa effudit; totum Italiae latus quod infero mari adluitur maior Graecia fuit. Tuscos Asia sibi uindicat; Tyrii Africam incolunt, [in] Hispaniam Poeni; Graeci se in Galliam inmiserunt, in Graeciam Galli; Pyrenaeus Germanorum transitus non inhiuit — per inuia, per incognita uersauit se humana leuitas. 3. Liberos coniugesque et graues senio parentes traxerunt. Alii longo errore iactati non iudicio elegerunt locum sed lassitudine proximum occupauerunt, alii armis sibi ius in aliena terra fecerunt; quasdam gentes, cum ignota peterent, mare hausit, quaedam ibi consederunt ubi illas rerum omnium inopia deposuit. 4. Nec omnibus eadem causa relinquendi quaerendique patriam fuit: alios excidia urbium suarum hostilibus armis elapsos in aliena spoliatos suis expulerunt; alios domestica seditio summouit; alios nimia superfluentis populi frequentia ad exonerandas uires emisit; alios pestilentia aut frequentes terrarum hiatus aut aliqua intoleranda infelicis soli uitia eiecerunt; quosdam fertilis orae et in maius laudatae fama corruptit. 5. Alios alia causa exciuit domibus suis: illud utique manifestum est, nihil eodem loco mansisse quo genitum est. Adsiduus generis humani discursus est; cotidie aliquid in tam magno orbe mutatur: noua urbium fundamenta iaciuntur, noua gentium nomina extinctis prioribus aut in accessionem ualidioris conuersis oriuntur. Omnes autem istae populorum transportationes quid aliud quam publica exilia sunt? 6. Quid te tam longo circumitu traho? Quid interest enumerare Antenorem Pataui conditorem et Euandrum in ripa Tiberis regna Arcadum conlocantem? Quid Diomedem aliosque quos Troianum bellum uictos simul uictoresque per alienas terras

dissipauit? 7. Romanum imperium nempe auctorem exulem respicit, quem profugum capta patria, exiguas reliquias trahentem, necessitas et uictoris metus longinqua quaerentem in Italiam detulit. Hic deinde populus quot colonias in omnem prouinciam misit! ubicumque uicit Romanus, habitat. Ad hanc commutationem locorum libentes nomina dabant, et relictis aris suis trans maria sequebatur colonos senex. 8. Res quidem non desiderat plurium enumerationem; unum tamen adiciam quod in oculos se ingerit: haec ipsa insula saepe iam cultores mutauit. Vt antiquiora, quae uetustas obduxit, transeam, Phocide relictæ Graii qui nunc Massiliam incolunt prius in hac insula consederunt, ex qua quid eos fugauerit incertum est, utrum caeli grauitas an praepotentis Italiae conspectus an natura inportuosi maris; nam in causa non fuisse feritatem accolarum eo apparet quod maxime tunc trucibus et inconditis Galliae populis se interposuerunt. 9. Transierunt deinde Ligures in eam, transierunt et Hispani, quod ex similitudine ritus apparet; eadem enim tegmenta capitum idemque genus calciamenti quod Cantabris est, et uerba quaedam; nam totus sermo conuersatione Graecorum Ligurumque a patrio desciiuit. Deductae deinde sunt duae ciuium Romanorum coloniae, altera a Mario, altera a Sulla: totiens huius aridi et spinosi saxi mutatus est populus! 10. Vix denique inuenies ullam terram quam etiamnunc indigenae colant; permixta omnia et insiticia sunt. Alius alii successit: hic concupiuit quod illi fastidio fuit; ille unde expulerat eiectus est. Ita fato placuit, nullius rei eodem semper loco stare fortunam.

VIII.

1. Aduersus ipsam commutationem locorum, detractis ceteris incommodis quae exilio adhaerent, satis hoc remedii putat Varro, doctissimus Romanorum, quod quocumque uenimus eadem rerum natura utendum est; M. Brutus satis hoc putat, quod licet in exilium euntibus uirtutes suas secum ferre. 2. Haec etiam si quis singula parum iudicat efficacia ad consolandum exulem, utraque in unum conlata fatebitur plurimum posse. Quantulum enim est quod perdimus! duo quae pulcherrima sunt quocumque nos mouerimus sequentur, natura communis et propria uirtus. 3. Id actum est, mihi crede, ab illo, quisquis formator uniuersi fuit, siue ille deus est potens omnium, siue incorporalis ratio ingentium operum artifex, siue diuinus spiritus per omnia maxima ac minima aequali intentione diffusus, siue fatum et immutabilis causarum inter se cohaerentium series — id, inquam, actum est ut in alienum arbitrium nisi uilissima quaeque non caderent. 4. Quidquid optimum homini est, id extra humanam potentiam iacet, nec dari nec eripi potest. Mundus hic, quo nihil neque maius neque ornatus rerum natura genuit, <et> animus contemplator admiratorque mundi, pars eius magnificentissima, propria nobis et perpetua et tam diu nobiscum mansura sunt quam diu ipsi manebimus. 5. Alacres itaque et erecti quocumque res tulerit intrepido gradu properemus, emetiamur quascumque terras: nullum inueniri exilium intra mundum <potest; nihil enim quod intra mundum> est alienum homini est. Vndecumque ex aequo ad caelum erigitur acies, paribus interuallis omnia diuina ab omnibus humanis distant. 6. Proinde, dum oculi mei ab illo spectaculo cuius insatiabiles sunt non abducantur, dum mihi solem lunamque intueri liceat, dum ceteris inhaerere sideribus, dum ortus eorum occasusque et interualla et causas inuestigare uel ocuis meandi uel tardius, <dum> spectare tot per noctem stellas micantis et alias immobiles, alias non in magnum spatium exeuntis sed intra suum se circumagentis uestigium, quasdam subito erumpentis, quasdam igne fuso praestringentis aciem, quasi decidant, uel longo tractu cum luce multa praeteruolantis, dum cum his sim et caelestibus, qua homini fas est, inmiscer, dum animum ad cognatarum rerum conspectum

tendentem in sublimi semper habeam, quantum refert mea quid
calcem?

IX.

1. 'At non est haec terra frugiferarum aut laetarum arborum ferax; non magnis nec nauigabilibus fluminum alueis inrigatur; nihil gignit quod aliae gentes petant, uix ad tutelam incolentium fertilis; non pretiosus hic lapis caeditur, non auri argentique uenae eruuntur.' 2. Angustus animus est quem terrena delectant: ad illa abducendus est quae ubique aequae apparent, ubique aequae splendent. Et hoc cogitandum est, ista ueris bonis per falsa et praeue credita obstare. Quo longiores porticus expedierint, quo altius turres sustulerint, quo latius uicos porrexerint, quo depressius aestiuos specus foderint, quo maiori mole fastigia cenationum subdlexerint, hoc plus erit quod illis caelum abscondat. 3. In eam te regionem casus eiecit in qua lautissimum receptaculum casa est: ne [et] tu pusilli animi es et sordide se consolantis, si ideo id fortiter pateris quia Romuli casam nosti. Dic illud potius: 'istud humile tugurium nempe uirtutes recipit? iam omnibus templis formosius erit, cum illic iustitia conspecta fuerit, cum continentia, cum prudentia, pietas, omnium officiorum recte dispensandorum ratio, humanorum diuinorumque scientia. Nullus angustus est locus qui hanc tam magnarum uirtutum turbam capit; nullum exilium graue est in quod licet cum hoc ire comitatu.' 4. Brutus in eo libro quem de uirtute composuit ait se Marcellum uidisse Mytilenis exulantem et, quantum modo natura hominis pateretur, beatissime uiuentem neque umquam cupidiorum bonarum artium quam illo tempore. Itaque adicit uisum sibi se magis in exilium ire, qui sine illo rediturus esset, quam illum in exilio relinqui. 5. O fortunatiorem Marcellum eo tempore quo exilium suum Bruto adprobauit quam quo rei publicae consulatum! Quantus ille uir fuit qui effecit ut aliquis exul sibi uideretur quod ab exule recederet! Quantus uir fuit qui in admirationem sui adduxit hominem etiam Catoni suo mirandum! 6. Idem Brutus ait C. Caesarem Mytilenas praeteruectum, quia non sustineret uidere deformatum uirum. Illi quidem reditum inpetrauit senatus publicis precibus, tam sollicitus ac maestus ut omnes illo die Bruti habere animum uiderentur et non pro Marcello sed pro se deprecari, ne exules essent si sine illo fuissent; sed plus multo consecutus est quo die illum exulem Brutus relinquere

non potuit, Caesar uidere. Contigit enim illi testimonium utriusque: Brutus sine Marcello reuerti se doluit, Caesar erubuit. 7. Num dubitas quin se ille [Marcellus] tantus uir sic ad tolerandum aequo animo exilium saepe adhortatus sit: 'quod patria cares, non est miserum: ita te disciplinis inbuisti ut scires omnem locum sapienti uiro patriam esse. Quid porro? hic qui te expulit, non ipse per annos decem continuos patria caruit? propagandi sine dubio imperii causa; sed nempe caruit. 8. Nunc ecce trahit illum ad se Africa resurgentis belli minis plena, trahit Hispania, quae fractas et adflictas partes refouet, trahit Aegyptus infida, totus denique orbis, qui ad occasionem concussi imperii intentus est: cui primum rei occurret? cui parti se opponet? Aget illum per omnes terras uictoria sua. Illum suspiciant et colant gentes: tu uiue Bruto miratore contentus.'

X.

1. Bene ergo exilium tulit Marcellus nec quicquam in animo eius mutauit loci mutatio, quamuis eam paupertas sequeretur; in qua nihil mali esse, quisquis modo nondum peruenit in insaniam omnia subuertentis auaritiae atque luxuriae intellegit. Quantulum enim est quod in tutelam hominis necessarium est! et cui deesse hoc potest ullam modo uirtutem habenti? 2. Quod ad me quidem pertinet, intellego me non opes sed occupationes perdisse. Corporis exigua desideria sunt: frigus summoueri uult, alimentis famem ac sitim extinguere; quidquid extra concupiscitur, uitiiis, non usibus laboratur. Non est necesse omne perscrutari profundum nec strage animalium uentrem onerare nec conchylia ultimi maris ex ignoto litore eruere: di istos deaeque perdant quorum luxuria tam inuidiosi imperii fines transcendit! 3. Ultra Phasin capi uolunt quod ambitiosam popinam instruat, nec piget a Parthis, a quibus nondum poenas repetimus, aues petere. Vndique conuehant omnia nota fastidienti gulae; quod dissolutus deliciis stomachus uix admittat ab ultimo portatur oceano; uomunt ut edant, edunt ut uomant, et epulas quas toto orbe conquirunt nec concoquere dignantur. Ista si quis despicit, quid illi paupertas nocet? Si quis concupiscit, illi paupertas etiam prodest; inuitus enim sanatur et, si remedia ne coactus quidem recipit, interim certe, dum non potest, illa nolenti similis est. 4. C. Caesar [Augustus], quem mihi uidetur rerum natura edidisse ut ostenderet quid summa uitia in summa fortuna possent, centiens sestertio cenauit uno die; et in hoc omnium adiutus ingenio uix tamen inuenit quomodo trium prouinciarum tributum una cena fieret. 5. O miserabiles, quorum palatum nisi ad pretiosos cibos non excitatur! Pretiosos autem non eximius sapor aut aliqua faucium dulcedo sed raritas et difficultas parandi facit. Alioqui, si ad sanam illis mentem placeat reuerti, quid opus est tot artibus uentri seruientibus? quid mercaturis? quid uastatione siluarum? quid profundi perscrutatione? Passim iacent alimenta quae rerum natura omnibus locis disposuit; sed haec uelut caeci transeunt et omnes regiones peruagantur, maria traiciunt et, cum famem exiguo possint sedare, magno iniritant. 6. Libet dicere: 'quid deducitis naues? Quid manus et aduersus feras et

aduersus homines armatis? Quid tanto tumultu discurretis? Quid opes opibus adgeritis? Non uultis cogitare quam parua uobis corpora sint? Nonne furor et ultimus mentium error est, cum tam exiguum capias, cupere multum? Licet itaque augeatis census, promoueatis fines, numquam tamen corpora uestra laxabitis. Cum bene cesserit negotiatio, multum militia rettulerit, cum indagati undique cibi coierint, non habebitis ubi istos apparatus uestros conlocetis. 7. Quid tam multa conquiritis? Scilicet maiores nostri, quorum uirtus etiamnunc uitia nostra sustentat, infelices erant, qui sibi manu sua parabant cibum, quibus terra cubile erat, quorum tecta nondum auro fulgebant, quorum templa nondum gemmis nitebant; itaque tunc per fictiles deos religiose iurabatur: qui illos inuocauerant, ad hostem morituri, ne fallerent, redibant. 8. Scilicet minus beate uiuebat dictator noster qui Samnitium legatos audit cum uilissimum cibum in foco ipse manu sua uersaret — illa qua iam saepe hostem percusserat laureamque in Capitolini Iouis gremio reposuerat — quam Apicius nostra memoria uixit, qui in ea urbe ex qua aliquando philosophi uelut corruptores iuuentutis abire iussi sunt scientiam popinae professus disciplina sua saeculum infecit.’ Cuius exitum nosse operae pretium est. 9. Cum sestertium milliens in culinam coniecisset, cum tot congiaria principum et ingens Capitolii uestigial singulis comisationibus exsorsisset, aere alieno oppressus rationes suas tunc primum coactus inspexit: superfuturum sibi sestertium centiens computauit et uelut in ultima fame uicturus si in sestertio centiens uixisset, ueneno uitam finiuit. 10. Quanta luxuria erat cui centiens sestertium egestas fuit! i nunc et puta pecuniae modum ad rem pertinere, non animi. Sestertium centiens aliquis extimuit et quod alii uoto petunt ueneno fugit. Illi uero tam prauae mentis homini ultima potio saluberrima fuit: tunc uenena edebat bibebatque cum immensis epulis non delectaretur tantum sed gloriaretur, cum uitia sua ostentaret, cum ciuitatem in luxuriam suam conuerteret, cum iuuentutem ad imitationem sui sollicitaret etiam sine malis exemplis per se docilem. 11. Haec accidunt diuitias non ad rationem reuocantibus, cuius certi fines sunt, sed ad uitiosam consuetudinem, cuius inmensum et incomprehensibile arbitrium est. Cupiditati nihil satis est, naturae satis est etiam parum. Nullum ergo paupertas exulis incommodum habet; nullum enim tam inops exilium est quod non

alendo homini abunde fertile sit.

XI.

1. 'At uestem ac domum desideraturus est exsul.' Haec quoque ad usum tantum desiderabit: neque tectum ei deerit neque uelamentum; aequae enim exiguo tegitur corpus quam alitur; nihil homini natura quod necessarium faciebat fecit operosum. 2. Sed desiderat saturatam multo conchylio purpuram, intextam auro uariisque et coloribus distinctam et artibus: non fortunae iste uitio sed suo pauper est. Etiam si illi quidquid amisit restitueris, nihil ages; plus enim restituto deerit ex eo quod cupit quam exsuli ex eo quod habuit. 3. Sed desiderat aureis fulgentem uasis supellectilem et antiquis nominibus artificum argentum nobile, aes paucorum insania pretiosum et seruorum turbam quae quamuis magnam domum angustet, iumentorum corpora differta et coacta pinguescere et nationum omnium lapides: ista congerantur licet, numquam explebunt inexplebilem animum, non magis quam ullus sufficiet umor ad satiandum eum cuius desiderium non ex inopia sed ex aestu ardentium uiscerum oritur; non enim sitis illa sed morbus est. 4. Nec hoc in pecunia tantum aut alimentis euenit; eadem natura est in omni desiderio quod modo non ex inopia sed ex uitio nascitur: quidquid illi congesseris, non finis erit cupiditatis sed gradus. Qui continebit itaque se intra naturalem modum, paupertatem non sentiet; qui naturalem modum excedet, eum in summis quoque opibus paupertas sequetur. Necessariis rebus et exilia sufficiunt, superuacuis nec regna. 5. Animus est qui diuites facit; hic in exilia sequitur, et in solitudinibus asperrimis, cum quantum satis est sustinendo corpori inuenit, ipse bonis suis abundat et fruitur: pecunia ad animum nihil pertinet, non magis quam ad deos immortalis. 6. Omnia ista quae imperita ingenia et nimis corporibus suis addicta suspiciunt, lapides aurum argentum et magni leuatique mensarum orbis, terrena sunt pondera, quae non potest amare sincerus animus ac naturae suae memor, leuis ipse, expeditus, et quandoque emissus fuerit ad summa emicaturus; interim, quantum per moras membrorum et hanc circumfusam grauem sarcinam licet, celeri et uolucris cogitatione diuina perlustrat. 7. Ideoque nec exulare umquam potest, liber et deis cognatus et omni mundo omnique aevo par; nam cogitatio eius circa

omne caelum it, in omne praeteritum futurumque tempus inmittitur. Corpusculum hoc, custodia et uinculum animi, huc atque illuc iactatur; in hoc supplicia, in hoc latrocinia, in hoc morbi exercentur: animus quidem ipse sacer et aeternus est et cui non possit inici manus.

XII.

1. Ne me putes ad eleuanda incommoda paupertatis, quam nemo grauem sentit nisi qui putat, uti tantum praeceptis sapientium, primum aspice quanto maior pars sit pauperum, quos nihilo notabis tristiores sollicitioresque diuitibus: immo nescio an eo laetiores sint quo animus illorum in pauciora dstringitur. 2. Transeamus [a pauperibus, ueniamus] ad locupletes: quam multa tempora sunt quibus pauperibus similes sint! Circumcisae sunt peregrinantium sarcinae, et quotiens festinationem necessitas itineris exegit, comitum turba dimittitur. Militantes quotam partem rerum suarum secum habent, cum omnem apparatus castrensis disciplina summoueant! 3. Nec tantum condicio illos temporum aut locorum inopia pauperibus exaequat: sumunt quosdam dies, cum iam illos diuitiarum taedium cepit, quibus humi cenent et remoto auro argentoque fictilibus utantur. Dementes! hoc quod aliquando concupiscunt semper timent. O quanta illos caligo mentium, quanta ignorantia ueritatis * * * exercet, quam uoluptatis causa imitantur! 4. Me quidem, quotiens ad antiqua exempla respexi, paupertatis uti solaciis pudet, quoniam quidem eo temporum luxuria prolapsa est ut maius uiaticum exulum sit quam olim patrimonium principum fuit. Vnum fuisse Homero seruum, tres Platoni, nullum Zenoni, a quo coepit Stoicorum rigida ac uirilisi sapientia, satis constat: num ergo quisquam eos misere uixisse dicet ut non ipse miserrimus ob hoc omnibus uideatur? 5. Menenius Agrippa, qui inter patres ac plebem publicae gratiae sequester fuit, aere conlato funeratus est. Atilius Regulus, cum Poenos in Africa funderet, ad senatum scripsit mercennarium suum discessisse et ab eo desertum esse rus, quod senatui publice curari dum abesset Regulus placuit: fuitne tanti seruum non habere ut colonus eius populus Romanus esset? 6. Scipionis filiae ex aerario dotem acceperunt, quia nihil illis reliquerat pater: aequum mehercules erat populum Romanum tributum Scipioni semel conferre, cum a Carthagine semper exigeret. O felices uiros puellarum quibus populus Romanus loco soceri fuit! Beatioresne istos putas quorum pantomimae deciens sestertio nubunt quam Scipionem, cuius liberi a senatu, tutore suo, in dotem aes graue

acceperunt? 7. Dedignatur aliquis paupertatem, cuius tam clarae imagines sunt? Indignatur exul aliquid sibi deesse, cum defuerit Scipioni dos, Regulo mercennarius, Menenio funus, cum omnibus illis quod deerat ideo honestius suppletum sit quia defuerat? His ergo aduocatis non tantum tuta est sed etiam gratiosa paupertas.

XIII.

1. Responderi potest: 'quid artificiose ista diducis quae singula sustineri possunt, conlata non possunt? Commutatio loci tolerabilis est, si tantum locum mutes; paupertas tolerabilis est, si ignominia abest, quae uel sola opprimere animos solet.' 2. Aduersus hunc, quisquis me malorum turba terrebit, his uerbis utendum erit: 'si contra unam quamlibet partem fortunae satis tibi roboris est, idem aduersus omnis erit. Cum semel animum uirtus indurauit, undique inuulnerabilem praestat. Si auaritia dimisit, uehementissima generis humani pestis, moram tibi ambitio non faciet; si ultimum diem non quasi poenam sed quasi naturae legem aspicias, ex quo pectore metum mortis eieceris, in id nullius rei timor audebit intrare; 3. si cogitas libidinem non uoluptatis causa homini datam sed propagandi generis, quem non uiolauerit hoc secretum et infixum uisceribus ipsis exitium, omnis alia cupiditas intactum praeteribit. Non singula uitia ratio sed pariter omnia prosternit: in uniuersum semel uincitur.' 4. Ignominia tu putas quemquam sapientem moueri posse, qui omnia in se reposuit, qui ab opinionibus uulgi secessit? Plus etiam quam ignominia est mors ignominiosa: Socrates tamen eodem illo uultu quo triginta tyrannos solus aliquando in ordinem redegerat carcerem intrauit, ignominiam ipsi loco detracturus; neque enim poterat carcer uideri in quo Socrates erat. 5. Quis usque eo ad conspiciendam ueritatem excaecatus est ut ignominiam putet Marci Catonis fuisse duplicem in petitione praeturae et consulatus repulsam? ignominia illa praeturae et consulatus fuit, quibus ex Catone honor habebatur. 6. Nemo ab alio contemnitur, nisi a se ante contemptus est. Humilis et proiectus animus est isti contumeliae opportunus; qui uero aduersus saeuissimos casus se extollit et ea mala quibus alii opprimuntur euertit, ipsas miseras infularum loco habet, quando ita adfecti sumus ut nihil aequae magnae apud nos admirationem occupet quam homo fortiter miser. 7. Ducebatur Athenis ad supplicium Aristides, cui quisquis occurrerat deiciebat oculos et ingemescebat, non tamquam in hominem iustum sed tamquam in ipsam iustitiam animaduertetur; inuentus est tamen qui in faciem eius inspueret. Poterat ob hoc moleste ferre quod sciebat neminem id ausurum puri

oris; at ille abstersit faciem et subridens ait comitanti se magistratui: 'admone istum ne postea tam inprobe oscitet.' Hoc fuit contumeliam ipsi contumeliae facere. 8. Scio quosdam dicere contemptu nihil esse grauius, mortem ipsis potiore uideri. His ego respondebo et exilium saepe contemptione omni carere: si magnus uir cecidit, magnus iacuit, non magis illum contemni quam aedium sacrarum ruinae calcantur, quas religiosi aequae ac stantis adorant.

XIV.

1. Quoniam meo nomine nihil habes, mater carissima, quod te in infinitas lacrimas agat, sequitur ut causae tuae te stimulent. Sunt autem duae; nam aut illud te mouet quod praesidium aliquod uideris amisisse, aut illud quod desiderium ipsum per se pati non potes.

2. Prior pars mihi leuiter perstringenda est; noui enim animum tuum nihil in suis praeter ipsos amantem. Viderint illae matres quae potentiam liberorum muliebri inpotentia exercent, quae, quia feminis honores non licet gerere, per illos ambitiosae sunt, quae patrimonia filiorum et exhauriunt et captant, quae eloquentiam commodando aliis fatigant: 3. tu liberorum tuorum bonis plurimum gauisa es, minimum usa; tu liberalitati nostrae semper inposuisti modum, cum tuae non inponeres; tu filia familiae locupletibus filiis ultro contulisti; tu patrimonia nostra sic administrasti ut tamquam in tuis laborares, tamquam alienis abstineres; tu gratiae nostrae, tamquam alienis rebus utereris, pepercisti, et ex honoribus nostris nihil ad te nisi uoluptas et inpena pertinuit. Numquam indulgentia ad utilitatem respexit; non potes itaque ea in erepto filio desiderare quae in incolumi numquam ad te pertinere duxisti.

XV.

1. Illo omnis consolatio mihi uertenda est unde uera uis materni doloris oritur: 'ergo complexu fili carissimi careo; non conspectu eius, non sermone possum frui. Vbi est ille quo uiso tristem uultum relaxaui, in quo omnes sollicitudines meas deposui? Vbi conloquia, quorum inexplebilis eram? Vbi studia, quibus libentius quam femina, familiarius quam mater intereram? Vbi ille occursus? Vbi matre uisa semper puerilis hilaritas?' 2. Adicis istis loca ipsa gratulationum et conuictuum et, ut necesse est, efficacissimas ad uexandos animos recentis conuersationis notas. Nam hoc quoque aduersus te crudeliter fortuna molita est, quod te ante tertium demum diem quam percussus sum securam nec quicquam tale metuentem digredi uoluit. 3. Bene nos longinquitas locorum diuiserat, bene aliquot annorum absentia huic te malo praeparauerat: redisti, non ut uoluptatem ex filio perciperes, sed ut consuetudinem desiderii perderes. Si multo ante afuisses, fortius tulisses, ipso interuallo desiderium molliente; si non recessisses, ultimum certe fructum biduo diutius uidendi filium tulisses: nunc crudele fatum ita composuit ut nec fortunae meae interesses nec absentiae adsuesceres. 4. Sed quanto ista duriora sunt, tanto maior tibi uirtus aduocanda est, et uelut cum hoste noto ac saepe iam uicto acrius congregiendum. Non ex intacto corpore tuo sanguis hic fluxit: per ipsas cicatrices percussa es.

XVI.

1. Non est quod utaris excusatione muliebris nominis, cui paene concessum est inmoderatum in lacrimis ius, non inmensum tamen; et ideo maiores decem mensum spatium lugentibus uiros dederunt ut cum pertinacia muliebris maeroris publica constitutione deciderent. Non prohibuerunt luctus sed finierunt; nam et infinito dolore, cum aliquem ex carissimis amiseris, adfici stulta indulgentia est, et nullo inhumana duritia: optimum inter pietatem et rationem temperamentum est et sentire desiderium et opprimere. 2. Non est quod ad quasdam feminas respicias quarum tristitiam semel sumptam mors finiuit (nosti quasdam quae amissis filiis inposita lugubria numquam exuerunt): a te plus exigit uita ab initio fortior; non potest muliebris excusatio contingere ei a qua omnia muliebria uitia afuerunt. 3. Non te maximum saeculi malum, inpudicitia, in numerum plurium adduxit; non gemmae te, non margaritae flexerunt; non tibi diuitiae uelut maximum generis humani bonum refulserunt; non te, bene in antiqua et seuera institutam domo, periculosa etiam probis peiorum detorsit imitatio; numquam te fecunditatis tuae, quasi exprobraret aetatem, puduit, numquam more aliarum, quibus omnis commendatio ex forma petitur, tumescentem uterum abscondisti quasi indecens onus, nec intra uiscera tua conceptas spes liberorum elisisti; 4. non faciem coloribus ac lenociniis polluisti; numquam tibi placuit uestis quae nihil amplius nudaret cum poneretur: unicum tibi ornamentum, pulcherrima et nulli obnoxia aetati forma, maximum decus uisa est pudicitia. 5. Non potes itaque ad optinendum dolorem muliebre nomen praetendere, ex quo te uirtutes tuae seduxerunt; tantum debes a feminarum lacrimis abesse quantum <a> uitiiis. Ne feminae quidem te sinent intabescere uulneri tuo, sed ~leuior~ necessario maerore cito defunctam iubebunt exsurgere, si modo illas intueri uoles feminas quas conspecta uirtus inter magnos uiros posuit. 6. Corneliam ex duodecim liberis ad duos fortuna redegerat: si numerare funera Corneliae uelles, amiserat decem, si aestimare, amiserat Gracchos. Flentibus tamen circa se et fatum eius execrantibus interdixit ne fortunam accusarent, quae sibi filios Gracchos dedisset. Ex hac femina debuit nasci qui diceret in

contione, ‘tu matri meae male dicas quae me peperit?’ Multo mihi uox matris uidetur animosior: filius magno aestimauit Gracchorum natales, mater et funera. 7. Rutilia Cottam filium secuta est in exilium et usque eo fuit indulgentia constricta ut mallet exilium pati quam desiderium, nec ante in patriam quam cum filio rediit. Eundem iam reducem et in re publica florentem tam fortiter amisit quam secuta est, nec quisquam lacrimas eius post elatum filium notauit. In expulso uirtutem ostendit, in amisso prudentiam; nam et nihil illam a pietate deterruit et nihil in tristitia superuacua stultaque detinuit. Cum his te numerari feminis uolo; quarum uitam semper imitata es, earum in coercenda comprimendaque aegritudine optime sequeris exemplum.

XVII.

1. Scio rem non esse in nostra potestate nec ullum adfectum seruire, minime uero eum qui ex dolore nascitur; ferox enim et aduersus omne remedium contumax est. Volumus interim illum obruere et deuorare gemitus; per ipsum tamen compositum fictumque uultum lacrimae profunduntur. Ludis interim aut gladiatoribus animum occupamus; at illum inter ipsa quibus auocatur spectacula leuis aliqua desiderii nota subruit. 2. Ideo melius est uincere illum quam fallere; nam qui delusus et uoluptatibus aut occupationibus abductus est resurgit et ipsa quiete impetum ad saeuiendum colligit: at quisquis rationi cessit, in perpetuum componitur. Non sum itaque tibi illa monstraturus quibus usos esse multos scio, ut peregrinatione te uel longa detineas uel amoena delectes, ut rationum accipiendarum diligentia, patrimonii administratione multum occupes temporis, ut semper nouo te aliquo negotio inplices: omnia ista ad exiguum momentum prosunt nec remedia doloris sed impedimenta sunt; ego autem malo illum desinere quam decipi. 3. Itaque illo te duco quo omnibus qui fortunam fugiunt confugiendum est, ad liberalia studia: illa sanabunt uulnus tuum, illa omnem tristitiam tibi euellent. His etiam si numquam adsuesses, nunc utendum erat; sed quantum tibi patris mei antiquus rigor permisit, omnes bonas artes non quidem comprehendisti, attigisti tamen. 4. Vtinam quidem uirorum optimus, pater meus, minus maiorum consuetudini deditus uoluisset te praeceptis sapientiae erudiri potius quam inbui! non parandum tibi nunc esset auxilium contra fortunam sed proferendum. Propter istas quae litteris non ad sapientiam utuntur sed ad luxuriam instruuntur minus te indulgere studiis passus est. Beneficio tamen rapacis ingenii plus quam pro tempore hausisti; iacta sunt disciplinarum omnium fundamenta: nunc ad illas reuertere; tutam te praestabunt. 5. Illae consolabuntur, illae delectabunt, illae si bona fide in animum tuum intrauerint, numquam amplius intrabit dolor, numquam sollicitudo, numquam afflictationis inritae superuacua uexatio. Nulli horum patebit pectus tuum; nam ceteris uitis iam pridem clusum est. Haec quidem certissima praesidia sunt et quae sola te fortunae eripere possint.

XVIII.

1. Sed quia, dum in illum portum quem tibi studia promittunt peruenis, adminiculis quibus innitaris opus est, uolo interim solacia tibi tua ostendere. 2. Respice fratres meos, quibus saluis fas tibi non est accusare fortunam. In utroque habes quod te diuersa uirtute delectet: alter honores industria consecutus est, alter sapienter contempsit. Adquiesce alterius fili dignitate, alterius quiete, utriusque pietate. Noui fratrum meorum intimos adfectus: alter in hoc dignitatem excolit ut tibi ornamento sit, alter in hoc se ad tranquillam quietamque uitam recepit ut tibi uacet. 3. Bene liberos tuos et in auxilium et in oblectamentum fortuna disposuit: potes alterius dignitate defendi, alterius otio frui. Certabunt in te officiis et unius desiderium duorum pietate supplebitur. Audacter possum promittere: nihil tibi deerit praeter numerum.

4. Ab his ad nepotes quoque respice: Marcum blandissimum puerum, ad cuius conspectum nulla potest durare tristitia; nihil tam magnum, nihil tam recens in cuiusquam pectore fuit quod non circumfusus ille permulceat. 5. Cuius non lacrimas illius hilaritas supprimat? Cuius non contractum sollicitudine animum illius argutiae soluant? Quem non in iocos euocabit illa lasciui? Quem non in se conuertet et abducat infixum cogitationibus illa neminem satiatura garrulitas? Deos oro, contingat hunc habere nobis superstitem! 6. In me omnis factorum crudelitas lassata consistat; quidquid matri dolendum fuit, in me transierit, quidquid auiae, in me. Floreat reliqua in suo statu turba: nihil de orbitate, nihil de condicione mea querar, fuerim tantum nihil amplius doliturae domus piammentum. 7. Tene in gremio cito tibi daturam pronepotes Nouatillam, quam sic in me transtuleram, sic mihi adscripseram, ut possit uideri, quod me amisit, quamuis saluo patre pupilla; hanc et pro me dilige. Abstulit illi nuper fortuna matrem: tua potest efficere pietas ut perdidisse se matrem doleat tantum, non et sentiat. 8. Nunc mores eius compone, nunc forma: altius praecepta descendunt quae teneris inprimuntur aetatibus. Tuis adsuescat sermonibus, ad tuum fingatur arbitrium: multum illi dabis, etiam si nihil dederis praeter exemplum. Hoc tibi tam sollemne officium pro remedio erit; non

potest enim animum pie dolentem a sollicitudine auertere nisi aut ratio aut honesta occupatio.

9. Numerarem inter magna solacia patrem quoque tuum, nisi abesset. Nunc tamen ex adfectu tuo qui illius in te sit cogita: intelleges quanto iustius sit te illi seruari quam mihi inpendi. Quotiens te inmodica uis doloris inuaserit et sequi se iubebit, patrem cogita. Cui tu quidem tot nepotes pronepotesque dando effecisti ne unica esses; consummatio tamen aetatis actae feliciter in te uertitur. Illo uiuo nefas est te quod uixeris queri.

XIX.

1. Maximum adhuc solacium tuum tacueram, sororem tuam, illud fidelissimum tibi pectus, in quod omnes curae tuae pro indiuiso transferuntur, illum animum omnibus nobis maternum. Cum hac tu lacrimas tuas miscuisti, in huius primum respirasti sinu. 2. Illa quidem adfectus tuos semper sequitur; in mea tamen persona non tantum pro te dolet. Illius manibus in urbem perlatum sum, illius pio maternoque nutricio per longum tempus aeger conualui; illa pro quaestura mea gratiam suam extendit et, quae ne sermonis quidem aut clarae salutationis sustinuit audaciam, pro me uicit indulgentia uerecundiam. Nihil illi seductum uitae genus, nihil modestia in tanta feminarum petulantia rustica, nihil quies, nihil secreti et ad otium repositi mores obstiterunt quominus pro me etiam ambitiosa fieret. 3. Hoc est, mater carissima, solacium quo reficiaris: illi te quantum potes iunge, illius artissimis amplexibus alliga. Solent maerentes ea quae maxime diligunt fugere et libertatem dolori suo quaerere: tu ad illam te, quidquid cogitaueris, confer; siue seruare istum habitum uoles siue deponere, apud illam inuenies uel finem doloris tui uel comitem. 4. Sed si prudentiam perfectissimae feminae noui, non patietur te nihil profuturo maerore consumi et exemplum tibi suum, cuius ego etiam spectator fui, narrabit.

Carissimum uirum amiserat, auunculum nostrum, cui uirgo nupserat, in ipsa quidem nauigatione; tulit tamen eodem tempore et luctum et metum euictisque tempestatibus corpus eius naufraga euexit. 5. O quam multarum egregia opera in obscuro iacent! Si huic illa simplex admirandis uirtutibus contigisset antiquitas, quanto ingeniorum certamine celebraretur uxor quae oblita inbecillitatis, oblita metuendi etiam firmissimis maris, caput suum periculis pro sepultura obiecit et, dum cogitat de uiri funere, nihil de suo timuit! Nobilitatur carminibus omnium quae se pro coniuge uicariam dedit: hoc amplius est, discrimine uitae sepulcrum uiro quaerere; maior est amor qui pari periculo minus redimit.

6. Post hoc nemo miretur quod per sedecim annos quibus Aegyptum maritus eius optinuit numquam in publico conspecta est, neminem prouincialem domum suam admisit, nihil a uiro petit, nihil

a se peti passa est. Itaque loquax et in contumelias praefectorum ingeniosa prouincia, in qua etiam qui uitauerunt culpam non effugerunt infamiam, uelut unicum sanctitatis exemplum suspexit et, quod illi difficillimum est cui etiam periculosi sales placent, omnem uerborum licentiam continuit et hodie similem illi, quamuis numquam speret, semper optat. Multum erat, si per sedecim annos illam prouincia probasset: plus est quod ignorauit. 7. Haec non ideo refero ut laudes eius exequar, quas circumscribere est tam parce transcurrere, sed ut intellegas magni animi esse feminam quam non ambitio, non auaritia, comites omnis potentiae et pestes, uicerunt, non metus mortis iam exarmata naue naufragium suum spectantem deterruit quominus exanimi uiro haerens non quaereret quemadmodum inde exiret sed quemadmodum efferret. Huic parem uirtutem exhibeas oportet et animum a luctu recipias et id agas ne quis te putet partus tui paenitere.

XX.

1. Ceterum quia necesse est, cum omnia feceris, cogitationes tamen tuas subinde ad me recurrere nec quemquam nunc ex liberis tuis frequentius tibi obuersari, non quia illi minus cari sunt sed quia naturale est manum saepius ad id referre quod dolet, qualem me cogites accipe: laetum et alacrem uelut optimis rebus. Sunt enim optimae, quoniam animus omnis occupationis expers operibus suis uacat et modo se leuioribus studiis oblectat, modo ad considerandam suam uniuersique naturam ueri auidus insurgit. 2. Terras primum situmque earum quaerit, deinde condicionem circumfusi maris cursusque eius alternos et recursus; tunc quidquid inter caelum terrasque plenum formidinis interiacet perspicit et hoc tonitribus fulminibus uentorum flatibus ac nimborum niuisque et grandinis iactu tumultuosum spatium; tum peragratis humilioribus ad summa perrumpit et pulcherrimo diuinorum spectaculo fruitur, aeternitatis suae memor in omne quod fuit futurumque est uadit omnibus saeculis.

TO POLYBIUS, ON CONSOLATION — De Consolatione ad Polybium

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I.

* * * nostrae compares, firma sunt; si redigas ad condicionem naturae omnia destruentis et unde edidit eodem revocantis, caduca sunt. Quid enim immortale manus mortales fecerunt? Septem illa miracula et si qua his multo mirabiliora sequentium annorum exstruxit ambitio aliquando solo aequata visentur. Ita est: nihil perpetuum, pauca diuturna sunt; aliud alio modo fragile est, rerum exitus variantur, ceterum quicquid coepit et desinit. Mundo quidam minantur interitum et huc universum, quod omnia divina humanaque complectitur, si fas putas credere, dies aliquis dissipabit et in confusionem veterem tenebrasque demerget: eat nunc aliquis et singulas compleret animas; Carthaginis ac Numantiae Corinthique cinerem et si quid aliud altius cecidit lamentetur, cum etiam hoc quod non habet quo cadat sit interiturum; eat aliquis et fata tantum aliquando nefas ausura sibi non pepercisse conqueratur. Quis tam superbae impotentisque adrogantiae est, ut in hac naturae necessitate omnia ad eundem finem revocantis se unum ac suos seponi velit ruinaeque etiam ipsi mundo imminenti aliquam domum subtrahat? Maximum ergo solacium est cogitare id sibi accidisse, quod omnes ante se passi sunt omnesque passuri; et ideo mihi videtur rerum natura, quod gravissimum fecerat, commune fecisse, ut crudelitatem fati consolaretur aequalitas.

II.

Illud quoque te non minimum adiuverit, si cogitaveris nihil profuturum dolorem tuum nec illi, quem desideras, nec tibi; noles enim longum esse, quod inritum est. Nam si quicquam tristitia profecturi sumus, non recuso quicquid lacrimarum fortunae meae superfuit tuae fundere; inveniam etiamnunc per hos exhaustos iam fletibus domesticis oculos quod effluat, si modo id tibi futurum bono est. Quid cessas? Conqueramur, atque adeo ipse hanc litem meam faciam: 'iniquissima omnium iudicio Fortuna, adhuc videbaris sinu eum hominem continuisse, qui munere tuo tantam venerationem receperat, ut, quod raro ulli contigit, felicitas eius effugeret invidiam: ecce eum dolorem illi, quem salvo Caesare accipere maximum poterat, impressisti, et cum bene illum undequique circuisses, intellexisti hac parte tantummodo patere ictibus tuis. Quid enim illi aliud faceres? Pecuniam eriperes? Numquam illi obnoxius fuit; nunc quoque, quantum potest, illam a se abigit et in tanta facilitate acquirendi nullum maiorem ex ea fructum quam contemptum eius petit. Eriperes illi amicos? Sciebas tam amabilem esse, ut facile in locum amissorum posset alios substituere; unum enim hunc ex eis, quos in principali domo potentes vidi, cognovisse videor, quem omnibus amicis habere cum expediat, magis tamen etiam libet. Eriperes illi bonam opinionem? Solidior est haec apud eum, quam ut a te quoque ipsa concuti possit. Eriperes bonam valetudinem? Sciebas animum eius liberalibus disciplinis, quibus non innutritus tantum sed innatus est, sic esse fundatum, ut supra omnis corporis dolores emereret. Eriperes spiritum? Quantulum nocuisses! Longissimum illi ingeni aevum fama promisit; id egit ipse, ut meliore sui parte duraret et compositis eloquentiae praeclaris operibus a mortalitate se vindicaret. Quam diu fuerit ullus litteris honor, quam diu steterit aut Latinae linguae potentia aut Graecae gratia, vigebit cum maximis viris, quorum se ingeniis vel contulit vel, si hoc verecundia eius recusat, adplicuit. Hoc ergo unum excogitasti, quomodo maxime illi posses nocere; quo melior est enim quisque, hoc saepius ferre te consuevit sine ullo dilectu furem et inter ipsa beneficia metuendam. Quantulum erat tibi immunem ab

hac iniuria praestare eum hominem, in quem videbatur indulgentia
tua ratione certa pervenisse et non ex tuo more temere incidisse!’

III.

Adiciamus, si vis, ad has querellas ipsius adulescentis interceptam inter prima incrementa indolem: dignus fuit ille te fratre. Tu certe eras dignissimus, qui ne ex indigno quidem quicquam doleres fratre: redditur illi testimonium aequale omnium hominum; desideratur in tuum honorem, laudatur in suum. Nihil in illo fuit, quod non libenter agnosceres. Tu quidem etiam minus bono fratri fuisses bonus, sed in illo pietas tua idoneam nacta materiam multo se liberior exercuit. Nemo potentiam eius iniuria sensit, numquam ille te fratrem ulli minatus est; ad exemplum se modestiae tuae formaverat cogitabatque, quantum tu et ornamentum tuorum esses et onus: suffecit ille huic sarcinae. O dura fata et nullis aequa virtutibus! Antequam felicitatem suam nosset frater tuus, exemptus est. Parum autem me indignari scio; nihil est enim difficilius quam magno dolori paria verba reperire. Etiamnunc tamen, si quid proficere possumus, conqueramur: ‘quid tibi voluisti, tam iniusta et tam violenta Fortuna? Tam cito te indulgentiae tuae paenituit? Quae ista crudelitas est in medios fratres impetum facere et tam cruenta rapina concordissimam turbam imminuere, tam bene stipatum optimorum adulescentium domum, in nullo fratre degenerantem, turbare et sine ulla causa delibare [voluisti]! Nihil ergo prodest innocentia ad omnem legem exacta, nihil antiqua frugalitas, nihil felicitatis summae potentia summa conservata abstinencia, nihil sincerus et tutus litterarum amor, nihil ab omni labe mens vacans? Luget Polybius, et in uno fratre quid de reliquis possit metuere admonitus etiam de ipsis doloris sui solaciis timet. Facinus indignum! Luget Polybius et aliquid propitio dolet Caesare! Hoc sine dubio, impotens fortuna, captasti, ut ostenderes neminem contra te ne a Caesare quidem posse defendi.’

IV.

Diutius accusare fata possumus, mutare non possumus: stant dura et inexorabilia; nemo illa convicio, nemo fletu, nemo causa movet; nihil umquam ulli parcunt nec remittunt. Proinde parcamus lacrimis nihil proficientibus; facilius enim nos inferis dolor iste adiciet quam illos nobis reducet: qui si nos torquet, non adiuvat, primo quoque tempore deponendus est et ab inanibus solaciis atque amara quadam libidine dolendi animus recipiendus est. Nam lacrimis nostris nisi ratio finem fecerit, fortuna non faciet. Omnis aegedum mortalis circumspice, larga ubique flendi et adsidua materia est: alium ad cotidianum opus laboriosa egestas vocat, alium ambitio numquam quieta sollicitat, alius divitias, quas optaverat, metuit et voto laborat suo, alium solitudo [alium labor] torquet, alium semper vestibulum obsidens turba; hic habere se dolet liberos, hic perdidisse: lacrimae nobis deerunt ante quam causae dolendi. Non vides, qualem nobis vitam rerum natura promiserit, quae primum nascentium hominum fletum esse voluit? Hoc principio edimur, huic omnis sequentium annorum ordo consentit. Sic vitam agimus, ideoque moderate id fieri debet a nobis, quod saepe faciendum est, et respicientes, quantum a tergo rerum tristium immineat, si non finire lacrimas, at certe reservare debemus. Nulli parcendum est rei magis quam huic, cuius tam frequens usus est.

V.

Illud quoque te non minimum adiuverit, si cogitaveris nulli minus gratum esse dolorem tuum quam ei, cui praestari videtur: torqueri ille te aut non vult aut non intellegit. Nulla itaque eius officii ratio est, quod ei, cui praestatur, si nihil sentit, supervacuum est, si sentit, ingratum est. Neminem esse toto orbe terrarum, qui delectetur lacrimis tuis, audacter dixerim. Quid ergo? Quem nemo adversus te animum gerit, eum esse tu credis fratris tui, ut cruciatu tui noceat tibi, ut te velit abducere ab occupationibus tuis, id est a studio et a Caesare? Non est hoc simile veri. Ille enim indulgentiam tibi tamquam fratri praestitit, venerationem tamquam parenti, cultum tamquam superiori; ille desiderio tibi esse vult, tormento esse non vult. Quid itaque iuvat dolori intabescere, quem, si quis defunctis sensus est, finire frater tuus cupit? De alio fratre, cuius incerta posset voluntas videri, omnia haec in dubio ponerem et dicerem: 'sive te torqueri lacrimis numquam desinentibus frater tuus cupit, indignus hoc affectu tuo est; sive non vult, utrique vestrum inhaerentem dolorem dimitte; nec impius frater sic desiderari debet nec pius sic velit.' In hoc vero, cuius tam explorata pietas est, pro certo habendum est nihil esse illi posse acerbius, quam si tibi hic casus eius acerbus est, si te ullo modo torquet, si oculos tuos, indignissimos hoc malo, sine ullo flendi fine et conturbat idem et exhaurit. Pietatem tamen tuam nihil aequae a lacrimis tam inutilibus abducat, quam si cogitaveris fratribus te tuis exemplo esse debere fortiter hanc fortunae iniuriam sustinendi. Quod duces magni faciunt rebus adfectis, ut hilaritatem de industria simulent et adversas res adumbrata laetitia abscondant, ne militum animi, si fractam ducis sui mentem viderint, et ipsi conlabantur, id nunc tibi quoque faciendum est: indue dissimilem animo tuo vultum et, si potes, proice omnem ex toto dolorem, si minus, introrsus abde et contine, ne appareat, et da operam ut fratres tui te imitentur, qui honestum putabunt, quodcumque te facientem viderint, animumque ex vultu tuo sument. Et solacium debes esse illorum et consolator; non poteris autem horum maerori obstare, si tuo induleris.

VI.

Potest et illa res a luctu te prohibere nimio, si tibi ipse renuntiaveris nihil horum, quae facis, posse subduci. Magnam tibi personam hominum consensus imposuit: haec tibi tuenda est. Circumstat te omnis ista consolantium frequentia et in animum tuum inquit ac perspicit quantum roboris ille adversus dolorem habeat et utrumne tu tantum rebus secundis uti dextere scias, an et adversas possis viriliter ferre: observantur oculi tui. Liberiora sunt omnia iis, quorum adfectus tegi possunt; tibi nullum secretum liberum est. In multa luce fortuna te posuit; omnes scient, quomodo te in isto tuo gesseris vulnere, utrumne statim percussus arma summisseris an in gradu steteris. Olim te in altiorem ordinem et amor Caesaris extulit et tua studia eduxerunt. Nihil te plebeium decet, nihil humile. Quid autem tam humile ac muliebre est quam consumendum se dolori committere? Non idem tibi in luctu pari quod tuis fratribus licet; multa tibi non permittit opinio de studiis ac moribus tuis recepta, multum a te homines exigunt, multum expectant. Si volebas tibi omnia licere, non convertisses in te ora omnium: nunc tantum tibi praestandum est, quantum promisisti. Omnes illi, qui opera ingenii tui laudant, qui describunt, quibus, cum fortuna tua opus non sit, ingenio opus est, custodes animi tui sunt. Nihil umquam ita potes indignum facere perfecti et eruditi viri professione, ut non multos admirationis de te suae paeniteat. Non licet tibi flere immodice, nec hoc tantummodo non licet; ne somnum quidem extendere in partem diei licet aut a tumultu rerum in otium ruris quieti confugere aut adsidua laboriosi officii statione fatigatum corpus voluptaria peregrinatione recreare aut spectaculorum varietate animum detinere aut ex tuo arbitrio diem disponere. Multa tibi non licent, quae humillimis et in angulo iacentibus licent: magna servitus est magna fortuna. Non licet tibi quicquam arbitrio tuo facere: audienda sunt tot hominum milia, tot disponendi libelli; tantus rerum ex orbe toto coeuntium congestus, ut possit per ordinem suum principis maximi animo subici, exigendus est. Non licet tibi, inquam, flere: ut multos flentes audire possis, ut periclitantium et ad misericordiam mitissimi Caesaris pervenire cupientium [lacrimas siccare], lacrimae tibi tuae

adsiccandae sunt.

VII.

Haec tamen etiam nunc levioribus te remediis adiuvabunt; cum voles omnium rerum oblivisci, Caesarem cogita. Vide, quantam huius in te indulgentiae fidem, quantam industriam debeas: intelleges non magis tibi incurvari licere quam illi, si quis modo est fabulis traditus, cuius umeris mundus innititur. Caesari quoque ipsi, cui omnia licent, propter hoc ipsum multa non licent: omnium somnos illius vigilia defendit, omnium otium illius labor, omnium delicias illius industria, omnium vacationem illius occupatio. Ex quo se Caesar orbi terrarum dedicavit, sibi eripuit, et siderum modo, quae inrequieta semper cursus suos explicant, numquam illi licet subsistere nec quicquam suum facere. Ad quendam itaque modum tibi quoque eadem necessitas iniungitur: non licet tibi ad utilitates tuas, ad studia tua respicere. Caesare orbem terrarum possidente impertire te nec voluptati nec dolori nec ulli alii rei potes: totum te Caesari debes. Adice nunc quod, cum semper praedices cariorum tibi spiritu tuo Caesarem esse, fas tibi non est salvo Caesare de fortuna queri: hoc incolumi salvi tibi sunt tui, nihil perdidisti, non tantum siccos oculos tuos esse sed etiam laetos oportet; in hoc tibi omnia sunt, hic pro omnibus est. Quod longe a sensibus tuis pudentissimis piissimisque abest, adversus felicitatem tuam parum gratus es, si tibi quicquam hoc salvo flere permittis.

VIII.

Monstrabo etiamnunc non quidem firmitus remedium sed familiarius. Si quando te domum receperis, tunc erit tibi metuenda tristitia: nam quam diu numen tuum intueberis, nullum illa ad te inveniet accessum, omnia in te Caesar tenebit; cum ab illo discesseris, tunc velut occasione data insidiabitur solitudini tuae dolor et requiescenti animo tuo paulatim inrepet. Itaque non est quod ullum tempus vacare patiaris a studiis: tunc tibi litterae tuae tam diu ac tam fideliter amatae gratiam referrant, tunc te illae antistitem et cultorem suum vindicent, tunc Homerus et Vergilius tam bene de humano genere meriti, quam tu et de illis et de omnibus meruisti, quos pluribus notos esse voluisti quam scripserant, multum tecum morentur: tutum id erit omne tempus, quod illis tuendum commiseris; tunc Caesaris tui opera, ut per omnia saecula domestico narrentur praeconio, quantum potes, compone: nam ipse tibi optime formandi condendique res gestas et materiam dabit et exemplum. Non audeo te eo usque producere, ut fabellas quoque et Aesopeos logos, intemptatum Romanis ingeniis opus, solita tibi venustate connectas. Difficile est quidem, ut ad haec hilariora studia tam vehementer percussus animus tam cito possit accedere: hoc tamen argumentum habeto iam conroborati eius et redditum sibi, si poterit a severioribus scriptis ad haec solutiora procedere. In illis enim quamvis aegrum eum adhuc et secum reluctantem avocabit ipsa rerum, quas tractabit, austeritas; haec, quae remissa fronte commentanda sunt, non feret, nisi cum iam sibi ab omni parte constiterit. Itaque debebis eum severiore materia primum exercere, deinde hilariore temperare.

IX.

Illud quoque magno tibi erit levamento, si saepe te sic interrogaveris: 'utrumne meo nomine doleo an eius qui decessit? Si meo, perit indulgentiae iactatio et incipit dolor hoc uno excusatus, quod honestus est, cum ad utilitatem respicit, a pietate desciscere; nihil autem minus bono viro convenit quam in fratris luctu calculos ponere. Si illius nomine doleo, necesse est alterutrum ex his duobus esse iudicem: nam si nullus defunctis sensus superest, evasit omnia frater meus vitae incommoda et in eum restitutus est locum, in quo fuerat antequam nasceretur, et expers omnis mali nihil timet, nihil cupit, nihil patitur: quis iste furor est pro eo me numquam dolere desinere, qui numquam doliturus est? Si est aliquis defunctis sensus, nunc animus fratris mei velut ex diutino carcere emissus, tandem sui iuris et arbitrii, gestit et rerum naturae spectaculo fruitur et humana omnia ex loco superiore despicit, divina vero, quorum rationem tam diu frustra quaesierat, proprius intuetur. Quid itaque eius desiderio maceror, qui aut beatus aut nullus est? Beatum deflere invidia est, nullum dementia.' An hoc te movet, quod videtur ingentibus et cum maxime circumfusus bonis caruisse? Cum cogitaveris multa esse, quae perdidit, cogita plura esse, quae non timet: non ira eum torquebit, non morbus adfliget, non suspicio lacesset, non edax et inimica semper alienis processibus invidia consectabitur, non metus sollicitabit, non levitas Fortunae cito munera sua transferentis inquietabit. Si bene computes, plus illi remissum quam ereptum est. Non opibus fruatur, non tua simul ac sua gratia; non accipiet beneficia, non dabit: miserum putas, quod ista amisit, an beatum, quod non desiderat? Mihi crede, is beatior est, cui fortuna supervacua est, quam is, cui parata est. Omnia ista bona, quae nos speciosa sed fallaci voluptate delectant, pecunia, dignitas, potentia aliaque complura, ad quae generis humani caeca cupiditas obstupescit, cum labore possidentur, cum invidia conspiciuntur, eos denique ipsos, quos exornant, et premunt; plus minantur quam prosunt; lubrica et incerta sunt, numquam bene tenentur; nam ut nihil de tempore futuro timeatur, ipsa tamen magnae felicitatis tutela sollicita est. Si velis credere altius veritatem intuentibus, omnis vita supplicium est: in hoc

profundum inquietumque proiecti mare, alternis aestibus reciprocum et modo allevans nos subitis incrementis, modo maioribus damnis deferens adsidueque iactans, numquam stabili consistimus loco, pendemus et fluctuamur et alter in alterum illidimur et aliquando naufragium facimus, semper timemus; in hoc tam procelloso et ad omnes tempestates exposito mari navigantibus nullus portus nisi mortis est. Ne itaque invideris fratri tuo: quiescit. Tandem liber, tandem tutus, tandem aeternus est. Superstitem Caesarem omnemque eius prolem, superstitem te cum communibus habet fratribus. Antequam quicquam ex suo favore Fortuna mutaret, stantem adhuc illam et munera plena manu congerentem reliquit. Fruitur nunc aperto et libero caelo, ex humili atque depresso in eum emicuit locus, quisquis ille est, qui solutas vinculis animas beato recipit sinu, et nunc libere illic vagatur omniaque rerum naturae bona cum summa voluptate perspicit. Erras: non perdidit lucem frater tuus, sed sinceriores sortitus est. Omnibus illo nobis commune est iter: quid fata deflemus? Non reliquit ille nos sed antecessit. Est, mihi crede, magna felicitas in ipsa necessitate moriendi. Nihil ne in totum quidem diem certi est: quis in tam obscura et involuta veritate divinat, utrumne fratri tuo mors inviderit an consuluerit?

X.

Illud quoque, qua iustitia in omnibus rebus es, necesse est te adiuvet cogitantem non iniuriam tibi factam, quod talem fratrem amisisti, sed beneficium datum, quod tam diu tibi pietate eius uti fruique licuit. Iniquus est, qui muneris sui arbitrium danti non relinquit, avidus, qui non lucri loco habet, quod accepit, sed damni, quod reddidit. Ingratus est, qui iniuriam vocat finem voluptatis, stultus, qui nullum fructum esse putat bonorum nisi praesentium, qui non et in praeteritis adquiescit et ea iudicat certiora, quae abierunt, quia de illis ne desinant non est timendum. Nimis angustat gaudia sua, qui eis tantummodo, quae habet ac videt, frui se putat et habuisse eadem pro nihilo ducit; cito enim nos omnis voluptas relinquit, quae fluit et transit et paene ante quam veniat aufertur. Itaque in praeteritum tempus animus mittendus est et quicquid nos umquam delectavit reducendum ac frequenti cogitatione pertractandum est: longior fideliorque est memoria voluptatum quam praesentia. Quod habuisti ergo optimum fratrem, in summis bonis pone! Non est quod cogites, quanto diutius habere potueris, sed quam diu habueris. Rerum natura illum tibi sicut ceteris fratres suos non mancipio dedit, sed commodavit; cum visum est deinde, repetit nec tuam in eo satietatem secuta est sed suam legem. Si quis pecuniam creditam solvisse se moleste ferat, eam praesertim, cuius usum gratuitum acceperit, nonne iniustus vir habeatur? Dedit natura fratri tuo vitam, dedit et tibi: quae suo iure usa si a quo voluit debitum suum citius exegit, non illa in culpa est, cuius nota erat condicio, sed mortalis animi spes avida, quae subinde, quid rerum natura sit, obliviscitur nec umquam sortis suae meminit, nisi cum admonetur. Gaude itaque habuisse te tam bonum fratrem et usum fructumque eius, quamvis brevior voto tuo fuerit, boni consule. Cogita iucundissimum esse, quod habuisti, humanum, quod perdidisti: nec enim quicquam minus inter se consentaneum est quam aliquem moveri, quod sibi talis frater parum diu contigerit, non gaudere, quod tamen contigerit.

XI.

‘At inopinanti ereptus est.’ Sua quemque credulitas decipit et in eis, quae diligit, voluntaria mortalitatis oblivio: natura nulli se necessitatis suae gratiam facturam esse testata est. Cotidie praeter oculos nostros transeunt notorum ignotorumque funera, nos tamen aliud agimus et subitum id putamus esse, quod nobis tota vita denuntiatur futurum. Non est itaque ista factorum iniquitas, sed mentis humanae pravitas insatiabilis rerum omnium, quae indignatur inde excidere, quo admissa est precario. Quanto ille iustior, qui nuntiata filii morte dignam magno viro vocem emisit: ‘Ego cum genui, tum morituum scivi.’ Prorsus non mireris ex hoc natum esse, qui fortiter mori posset. Non accepit tamquam novum nuntium filii mortem; quid enim est novi hominem mori, cuius tota vita nihil aliud quam ad mortem iter est? ‘Ego cum genui, tum morituum scivi.’ Deinde adiecit rem maioris et prudentiae et animi: ‘et huic rei sustuli.’ Omnes huic rei tollimur; quisquis ad vitam editur, ad mortem destinatur. Gaudeamus [ergo] eo, quod dabitur, reddamusque id, cum reposcemur: alium alio tempore fata comprehendunt, neminem praeteribunt. In procinctu stet animus et id quod necesse est numquam timeat, quod incertum est semper expectet. Quid dicam duces ducumque progeniem et multis aut consulatibus conspicuos aut triumphis sorte defunctos inexorabili? Tota cum regibus regna populique cum [re]gentibus tulere fatum suum: omnes, immo omnia in ultimum diem spectant. Non idem universis finis est: alium in medio cursu vita deserit, alium in ipso aditu relinquit, alium in extrema senectute fatigatum iam et exire cupientem vix emittit; alio quidem atque alio tempore, omnes tamen in eundem locum tendimus; utrumne stultius sit nescio mortalitatis legem ignorare, an impudentius recusare. Agedum illa, quae multo ingenii tui labore celebrata sunt, in manus sume utriuslibet auctoris carmina, quae tu ita resolvisti, ut quamvis structura illorum recesserit, permaneat tamen gratia — sic enim illa ex alia lingua in aliam transtulisti, ut, quod difficillimum erat, omnes virtutes in alienam te orationem secutae sint -: nullus erit in illis scriptis liber, qui non plurima varietatis humanae incertorumque casuum et lacrimarum ex alia

atque alia causa fluentium exempla tibi suggerat. Lege, quanto spiritu ingentibus intonueris verbis: pudebit te subito deficere et ex tanta orationis magnitudine desciscere. Ne commiseris, ut quisquis exemplaris modo scripta tua mirabatur quaerat quomodo tam grandia tamque solida tam fragilis animus conceperit.

XII.

Potius ab istis te, quae torquent, ad haec tot et tanta, quae consolantur, converte ac respice optimos fratres, respice uxorem, filium respice: pro omnium horum salute hac tecum portione Fortuna decedit. Multos habes, in quibus adquiescas. Ab hac te infamia vindica, ne videatur omnibus plus apud te valere unus dolor quam haec tam multa solacia. Omnis istos una tecum percussos vides nec posse tibi subvenire, immo etiam ultro expectare, ut a te subleventur, intellegis; et ideo quanto minus in illis doctrinae minusque ingenii est, tanto magis obsistere te necesse est communi malo. Est autem hoc ipsum solacii loco, inter multos dolorem suum dividere; qui quia dispensatur inter plures, exigua debet apud te parte subsidere. Non desinam totiens tibi offerre Caesarem: illo moderante terras et ostendente quanto melius beneficiis imperium custodiatur quam armis, illo rebus humanis praeside[n]te non est periculum, ne quid perdidisse te sentias; in hoc uno tibi satis praesidi, solaci est. Attolle te et, quotiens lacrimae suboriuntur oculis tuis, totiens illos in Caesarem derige: siccabuntur maximi et clarissimi conspectu numinis; fulgor eius illos, ut nihil aliud possint aspicere, praestringet et in se haerentes detinebit. Hic tibi, quem tu diebus intueris ac noctibus, a quo numquam deicis animum, cogitandus est, hic contra fortunam advocandus. Nec dubito, cum tanta illi adversus omnes suos sit mansuetudo tantaque indulgentia, quin iam multis solaciis tuum istud vulnus obduxerit, iam multa, quae dolori obstarent tuo, congesserit. Quid porro? Ut nihil horum fecerit, nonne protinus ipse conspectus per se tantummodo cogitatusque Caesar maximo solacio tibi est? Dii illum deaeque terris diu commodent! Acta hic divi Augusti aequet, annos vincat! Quam diu inter mortales erit, nihil ex domo sua mortale esse sentiat! Rectorem Romano imperio filium longa fide adprobet et ante illud consortem patris quam successorem aspiciat! Sera et nepotibus demum nostris dies nota sit, qua illum gens sua caelo adserat!

XIII.

Abstine ab hoc manus tuas, Fortuna, nec in isto potentiam tuam nisi ea parte, qua prodes, ostenderis! Patere illum generi humano iam diu aegro et adfecto mederi, patere quicquid prioris principis furor concussit in suum locum restituere ac reponere! Sidus hoc, quod praecipitato in profundum et demerso in tenebras orbi refulsit, semper luceat! Hic Germaniam pacet, Britanniam aperiat, et patrios triumphos ducat et novos: quorum me quoque spectatorem futurum, quae ex virtutibus eius primum optinet locum, promittit clementia. Nec enim sic me deiecit, ut nollet erigere, immo ne deiecit quidem, sed impulsus a fortuna et cadentem sustinuit et in praeceps euntem leniter divinae manus usus moderatione deposuit: deprecatus est pro me senatum et vitam mihi non tantum dedit sed etiam petiit. Viderit: qualem volet esse, existimet causam meam; vel iustitia eius bonam perspiciat vel clementia faciat bonam: utrumque in aequo mihi eius beneficium erit, sive innocentem me scierit esse, sive voluerit. Interim magnum miseriarum mearum solacium est videre misericordiam eius totum orbem pervagantem: quae cum ex ipso angulo, in quo ego defixus sum, complures multorum iam annorum ruina obrutos effoderit et in lucem reduxerit, non vereor ne me unum transeat. Ipse autem optime novit tempus, quo cuique debeat succurrere; ego omnem operam dabo, ne pervenire ad me erubescat. O felicem clementiam tuam, Caesar, quae efficit, ut quietiorem sub te agant vitam exsules, quam nuper sub Gaio egere principes! Non trepidant nec per singulas horas gladium exspectant nec ad omnem navium conspectum pavent; per te habent ut fortunae saevientis modum ita spem quoque melioris eiusdem ac praesentis quietem. Scias licet ea demum fulmina esse iustissima, quae etiam percussi colunt.

XIV.

Hic itaque princeps, qui publicum omnium hominum solacium est, aut me omnia fallunt aut iam recreavit animum tuum et tam magno vulneri maiora adhibuit remedia. Iam te omni confirmavit modo, iam omnia exempla, quibus ad animi aequitatem compellereris, tenacissima memoria rettulit, iam omnium praecepta sapientum adsueta sibi facundia explicuit. Nullus itaque melius has adloquendi partes occupaverit: aliud habebunt hoc dicente pondus verba velut ab oraculo missa; omnem vim doloris tui divina eius contundet auctoritas. Hunc itaque tibi puta dicere: ‘non te solum fortuna desumpsit sibi, quem tam gravi afficeret iniuria; nulla domus in toto orbe terrarum aut est aut fuit sine aliqua comploratione. Transibo exempla vulgaria, quae etiam si minora, tamen innumera sunt, ad fastus te et annales perducam publicos. Vides omnes has imagines, quae implere Caesarum atrium? Nulla non harum aliquo suorum incommodo insignis est; nemo non ex istis in ornamentum saeculorum refulgentibus viris aut desiderio suorum tortus est aut a suis cum maximo animi cruciatu desideratus est. Quid tibi referam Scipionem Africanum, cui mors fratris in exilio nuntiata est? Is frater, qui eripuit fratrem carceri, non potuit eripere fato; et quam impatiens iuris aequi pietas Africani fuerit, cunctis apparuit: eodem enim die Scipio Africanus, quo viatoris manibus fratrem abstulerat, tribuno quoque plebis privatus intercessit. Tam magno tamen fratrem desideravit hic animo, quam defenderat. Quid referam Aemilianum Scipionem, qui uno paene eodemque tempore spectavit patris triumphum duorumque fratrum funera? Adulescentulus tamen ac propemodum puer tanto animo tulit illam familiae suae super ipsum Pauli triumphum concidentis subitam vastitatem, quanto debuit ferre vir in hoc natus, ne urbi Romanae aut Scipio deesset aut Carthago superesset.

XV.

Quid referam duorum Lucullorum diremptam morte concordiam? Quid Pompeios? Quibus ne hoc quidem saeviens reliquit fortuna, ut una eademque conciderent ruina: vixit Sextus Pompeius primum sorori superstes, cuius morte optime cohaerentis Romanae pacis vincula resoluta sunt, idemque hic vixit superstes optimo fratri, quem fortuna in hoc evexerat, ne minus alte eum deiceret, quam patrem deiecerat; et post hunc tamen casum Sextus Pompeius non tantum dolori, sed etiam bello suffecit. Innumerabilia undique exempla separatorum morte fratrum succurrunt, immo contra vix ulla umquam horum paria conspecta sunt una senescentia; sed contentus nostrae domus exemplis ero. Nemo enim tam expers erit sensus ac sanitatis, ut Fortunam ulli queratur luctum intulisse, quam sciet etiam Caesarum lacrimas concupisse. Divus Augustus amisit Octaviam sororem carissimam et ne ei quidem rerum natura lugendi necessitatem abstulit, cui caelum destinaverat, immo vero idem omni genere orbitatis vexatus sororis filium successioni praeparatum suae perdidit; denique ne singulos eius luctus enumerem, et generos ille amisit et liberos et nepotes, ac nemo magis ex omnibus mortalibus hominem esse se, dum inter homines erat, sensit. Tamen tot tantosque luctus cepit rerum omnium capacissimum eius pectus victorque divus Augustus non gentium tantummodo externarum, sed etiam dolorum fuit. Gaius Caesar, divi Augusti, avunculi mei magni, nepos, circa primos iuventae suae annos Lucium fratrem carissimum sibi princeps iuventutis principem eiusdem iuventutis amisit in apparatu Parthici belli et graviore multo animi vulnere quam postea corporis ictus est; quod utrumque et piissime idem et fortissime tulit. [Ti.] Caesar patruus meus Drusum Germanicum patrem meum, minorem natu quam ipse erat fratrem, intima Germaniae recludentem et gentes ferocissimas Romano subicientem imperio in complexu et in osculis suis amisit: modum tamen lugendi non sibi tantum sed etiam aliis fecit ac totum exercitum non solum maestum sed etiam attonitum corpus Drusi sui sibi vindicantem ad morem Romani luctus redegit iudicavitque non militandi tantum disciplinam esse servandam sed etiam dolendi. Non potuisset ille lacrimas alienas

compescere, nisi prius pressisset suas.

XVI.

M. Antonius avus meus, nullo minor nisi eo a quo victus est, tunc cum rem publicam constitueret et triumvirali potestate praeditus nihil supra se videret, exceptis vero duobus collegis omnia infra se cerneret, fratrem interfectum audivit. Fortuna impotens, quales ex humanis malis tibi ipsa ludos facis! Eo ipso tempore, quo M. Antonius civium suorum vitae sedebat mortisque arbiter, M. Antonii frater duci iuebatur ad supplicium! Tulit hoc tamen tam triste vulnus eadem magnitudine animi M. Antonius, qua omnia alia adversa toleraverat, et hoc fuit eius lugere viginti legionum sanguine fratri parentare. Sed ut omnia alia exempla praeteream, ut in me quoque ipso alia taceam funera, bis me fraterno luctu aggressa fortuna est, bis intellexit laedi me posse, vinci non posse: amisi Germanicum fratrem, quem quomodo amaverim, intellegit profecto quisquis cogitat, quomodo suos fratres pii fratres ament; sic tamen affectum meum rexi, ut nec relinquerem quicquam, quod exigi deberet a bono fratre, nec facerem, quod reprehendi posset in principe.'

Haec ergo puta tibi parentem publicum referre exempla, eundem ostendere, quam nihil sacrum intactumque sit Fortunae, quae ex eis penatibus ausa est funera ducere, ex quibus erat deos petitura. Nemo itaque miretur aliquid ab illa aut crudeliter fieri aut inique; potest enim haec adversus privatas domos ullam aequitatem nosse aut ullam modestiam, cuius implacabilis saevitia totiens ipsa funestavit pulvinaria? Faciamus licet illi convicium non nostro tantum ore sed etiam publico, non tamen mutabitur; adversus omnis se preces omnisque querimonias exiget. Hoc fuit in rebus humanis Fortuna, hoc erit: nihil inausum sibi reliquit, nihil intactum relinquet; ibit violentior per omnia, sicut solita est semper, eas quoque domos ausa iniuriae causa intrare, in quas per templa aditur, et atram laureatis foribus induet vestem. Hoc unum obtineamus ab illa votis ac precibus publicis, si nondum illi genus humanum placuit consumere, si Romanum adhuc nomen propitia respicit: hunc principem lapsis hominum rebus datum, sicut omnibus mortalibus, sibi esse sacratum velit! Discat ab illo clementiam fiatque mitissimo omnium principum

mitis!

XVII.

Debes itaque eos intueri omnes, quos paulo ante rettuli, aut adscitos caelo aut proximos, et ferre aequo animo Fortunam ad te quoque porrigentem manus, quas ne ab eis quidem, per quos iuramus, abstinet; debes illorum imitari firmitatem in perferendis et evincendis doloribus, in quantum modo homini fas est per divina ire vestigia. Quamvis [sint] in aliis rebus dignitatum ac nobilitatum magna discrimina, virtus in medio posita est: neminem dedignatur, qui modo dignum se illa iudicat. Optime certe illos imitaberis, qui cum indignari possent non esse ipsos exsortes huius mali, tamen in hoc uno se ceteris exaequari hominibus non iniuriam sed ius mortalitatis iudicaverunt tuleruntque nec nimis acerbe et aspere, quod acciderat, nec molliter et effeminate; nam et non sentire mala sua non est hominis et non ferre non est viri. Non possum tamen, cum omnes circumierim Caesares, quibus Fortuna fratres sororesque eripuit, hunc praeterire ex omni Caesarum numero excerpendum, quem rerum natura in exitium opprobriumque humani generis edidit, a quo imperium adustum atque eversum funditus principis mitissimi recreat clementia. C. Caesar amissa sorore Drusilla, is homo, qui non magis dolere quam gaudere principaliter posset, conspectum conversationemque civium suorum profugit, exsequiis sororis suae non interfuit, iusta sorori non praestitit, sed in Albano suo tesseris ac foro et pervolgatis huiusmodi aliis occupationibus acerbissimi funeris elevabat mala. Pro pudor imperii! Principis Romani lugentis sororem alea solacium fuit! Idem ille Gaius furiosa inconstantia modo barbam capillumque summittens tondens modo Italiae ac Siciliae oras errabundus permetiens et numquam satis certus, utrum lugeri vellet an coli sororem, eodem omni tempore, quo templa illi constituebat ac pulvinaria, eos qui parum maesti fuerant, crudelissima adficiebat animadversione; eadem enim intemperie animi adversarum rerum ictus ferebat, qua secundarum elatus eventu super humanum intumescebat modum. Procul istud exemplum ab omni Romano sit viro, luctum suum aut intempestivis sevocare lusibus aut sordium ac squaloris foeditate inritare aut alienis malis oblectare minime humano solacio.

XVIII.

Tibi vero nihil ex consuetudine mutandum est tua, quoniam quidem ea instituisti amare studia, quae et optime felicitatem extollunt et facillime minuunt calamitatem eademque et ornamenta maxima homini sunt et solacia. Nunc itaque te studiis tuis immerge altius, nunc illa tibi velut munimenta animi circumda, ne ex ulla tui parte inveniatur introitus dolor. Fratris quoque tui produci memoriam aliquo scriptorum monumento tuorum; hoc enim unum est [in] rebus humanis opus, cui nulla tempestas noceat, quod nulla consumat vetustas. Cetera, quae per constructionem lapidum et marmoreas moles aut terrenos tumulos in magnam eductos altitudinem constant, non propagant longam diem, quippe et ipsa intereunt: immortalis est ingeni memoria. Hanc tu fratri tuo largire, in hac eum conloca; melius illum duraturo semper consecrabis ingenio quam inuito dolore lugebis. Quod ad ipsam Fortunam pertinet, etiam si nunc agi apud te causa eius non potest — omnia enim illa, quae nobis dedit, ob hoc ipsum, quod aliquid eripuit, invisibilia sunt —, tunc tamen erit agenda, cum primum aequiorem te illi iudicem dies fecerit; tunc enim poteris in gratiam cum illa redire. Nam multa providit, quibus hanc emendaret iniuriam, multa etiam nunc dabit, quibus redimat; denique ipsum hoc, quod abstulit, ipsa dederat tibi. Noli ergo contra te ingenio uti tuo, noli adesse dolori tuo. Potest quidem eloquentia tua quae parva sunt adprobare pro magnis, rursus magna attenuare et ad minima deducere; sed alio istas vires servet suas, nunc tota se in solacium tuum conferat. Et tamen dispice, ne hoc iam quoque ipsum sit supervacuum; aliquid enim a nobis natura exigit, plus vanitate contrahitur. Numquam autem ego a te, ne ex toto maereas, exigam. Et scio inveniri quosdam durae magis quam fortis prudentiae viros, qui negent doliturum esse sapientem: hi non videntur mihi umquam in eiusmodi casum incidisse, alioquin excussisset illis fortuna superbam sapientiam et ad confessionem eos veri etiam invitos compulisset. Satis praestiterit ratio, si id unum ex dolore, quod et superest et abundat, exciderit: ut quidem nullum omnino esse eum patiat, nec sperandum ulli nec concupiscendum est. Hunc potius modum servet, qui nec impietatem imitetur nec insaniam et nos in eo

teneat habitu, qui et piaie mentis est nec motae: fluant lacrimae, sed eadem et desinant, trahantur ex imo gemitus pectore, sed idem et finantur; sic rege animum tuum, ut et sapientibus te adprobare possis et fratribus. Effice, ut frequenter fratris tui memoriam tibi velis occurrere, ut illum et sermonibus celebres et adsidua recordatione repraesentes tibi, quod ita demum consequi poteris, si tibi memoriam eius iucundam magis quam flebilem feceris; naturale est enim, ut semper animus ab eo refugiat, ad quod cum tristitia revertitur. Cogita modestiam eius, cogita in rebus agendis sollertiam, in exsequendis industriam, in promissis constantiam. Omnia dicta eius ac facta et aliis expone et tibimet ipse commemora. Qualis fuerit cogita qualisque sperari potuerit: quid enim de illo non tuto sponderi fratre posset?

Haec, utcumque potui, longo iam situ obsoleto et hebetato animo composui. Quae si aut parum respondere ingenio tuo aut parum mederi dolori videbuntur, cogita, quam non possit is alienae vacare consolationi, quem sua mala occupatum tenent, et quam non facile Latina ei homini verba succurrant, quem barbarorum inconditus et barbaris quoque humanioribus gravis fremitus circumsonat.

THE MORAL EPISTLES — *Epistulae morales* ad Lucilium

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LIBER VICENSIMVS SECVNDVS

EXCERPTA GELLII

LIBER PRIMUS

I. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Ita fac, mi Lucili: vindica te tibi, et tempus quod adhuc aut auferebatur aut subripiiebatur aut excidebat collige et serva. Persuade tibi hoc sic esse ut scribo: quaedam tempora eripiuntur nobis, quaedam subducuntur, quaedam effluunt. Turpissima tamen est iactura quae per neglegentiam fit. Et si volueris attendere, magna pars vitae elabitur male agentibus, maxima nihil agentibus, tota vita aliud agentibus. [2] Quem mihi dabis qui aliquod pretium tempori ponat, qui diem aestimet, qui intellegat se cotidie mori? In hoc enim fallimur, quod mortem prospicimus: magna pars eius iam praeterit; quidquid aetatis retro est mors tenet. Fac ergo, mi Lucili, quod facere te scribis, omnes horas complectere; sic fiet ut minus ex crastino pendeas, si hodierno manum inieceris. [3] Dum differtur vita transcurrit. Omnia, Lucili, aliena sunt, tempus tantum nostrum est; in huius rei unius fugacis ac lubricae possessionem natura nos misit, ex qua expellit quicumque vult. Et tanta stultitia mortalium est ut quae minima et vilissima sunt, certe reparabilia, imputari sibi cum impetravere patiantur, nemo se iudicet quicquam debere qui tempus accepit, cum interim hoc unum est quod ne gratus quidem potest reddere.

[4] Interrogabis fortasse quid ego faciam qui tibi ista praecipio. Fatebor ingenue: quod apud luxuriosum sed diligentem evenit, ratio mihi constat impensae. Non possum dicere nihil perdere, sed quid perdam et quare et quemadmodum dicam; causas paupertatis meae reddam. Sed evenit mihi quod plerisque non suo vitio ad inopiam redactis: omnes ignoscunt, nemo succurrit. [5] Quid ergo est? non puto pauperem cui quantulumcumque superest sat est; tu tamen malo serves tua, et bono tempore incipies. Nam ut visum est maioribus nostris, ‘sera parsimonia in fundo est’; non enim tantum minimum in imo sed pessimum remanet. Vale.

II. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Ex iis quae mihi scribis et ex iis quae audio bonam spem de te concipio: non discurreis nec locorum mutationibus inquietaris. Aegri animi ista iactatio est: primum argumentum compositae mentis existimo posse consistere et secum morari. [2] Illud autem vide, ne ista lectio auctorum multorum et omnis generis voluminum habeat aliquid vagum et instabile. Certis ingeniis immorari et innutriri oportet, si velis aliquid trahere quod in animo fideliter sedeat. Nusquam est qui ubique est. Vitam in peregrinatione exigentibus hoc evenit, ut multa hospitia habeant, nullas amicitias; idem accadat necesse est iis qui nullius se ingenio familiariter applicant sed omnia cursim et properantes transmittunt. [3] Non prodest cibus nec corpori accedit qui statim sumptus emittitur; nihil aequae sanitatem impedit quam remediorum crebra mutatio; non venit vulnus ad cicatricem in quo medicamenta temptantur; non convalescit planta quae saepe transfertur; nihil tam utile est ut in transitu prosit. Distingit librorum multitudo; itaque cum legere non possis quantum habueris, satis est habere quantum legas. [4] 'Sed modo' inquis 'hunc librum evolvere volo, modo illum.' Fastidientis stomachi est multa degustare; quae ubi varia sunt et diversa, inquinant non alunt. Probatos itaque semper lege, et si quando ad alios deverti libuerit, ad priores redi. Aliquid cotidie adversus paupertatem, aliquid adversus mortem auxili compara, nec minus adversus ceteras pestes; et cum multa percurreris, unum excerpe quod illo die concoquas. [5] Hoc ipse quoque facio; ex pluribus quae legi aliquid apprehendo. Hodiernum hoc est quod apud Epicurum nactus sum - soleo enim et in aliena castra transire, non tamquam transfuga, sed tamquam explorator -: 'honestas' inquit 'res est laeta paupertas'. [6] Illa vero non est paupertas, si laeta est; non qui parum habet, sed qui plus cupit, pauper est. Quid enim refert quantum illi in arca, quantum in horreis iaceat, quantum pascat aut feneret, si alieno imminet, si non acquisita sed acquirenda computat? Quis sit divitiarum modus quaeris? primus habere quod necesse est, proximus quod sat est. Vale.

III. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Epistulas ad me perferendas tradidisti, ut scribis, amico tuo; deinde admones me ne omnia cum eo ad te pertinentia communicem, quia non soleas ne ipse quidem id facere: ita eadem epistula illum et dixisti amicum et negasti. Itaque si proprio illo verbo quasi publico usus es et sic illum amicum vocasti quomodo omnes candidatos ‘bonos viros’ dicimus, quomodo obvios, si nomen non succurrit, ‘dominos’ salutamus, hac abierit. [2] Sed si aliquem amicum existimas cui non tantundem credis quantum tibi, vehementer erras et non satis nosti vim verae amicitiae. Tu vero omnia cum amico delibera, sed de ipso prius: post amicitiam credendum est, ante amicitiam iudicandum. Isti vero praepostero officia permiscunt qui, contra praecepta Theophrasti, cum amaverunt iudicant, et non amant cum iudicaverunt. Diu cogita an tibi in amicitiam aliquis recipiendus sit. Cum placuerit fieri, toto illum pectore admitte; tam audaciter cum illo loquere quam tecum. [3] Tu quidem ita vive ut nihil tibi committas nisi quod committere etiam inimico tuo possis; sed quia interveniunt quaedam quae consuetudo fecit arcana, cum amico omnes curas, omnes cogitationes tuas misce. Fidelem si putaveris, facies; nam quidam fallere docuerunt dum timent falli, et illi ius peccandi suspicando fecerunt. Quid est quare ego ulla verba coram amico meo retraham? quid est quare me coram illo non putem solum? [4] Quidam quae tantum amicis committenda sunt obviis narrant, et in quaslibet aures quidquid illos urit exonerant; quidam rursus etiam carissimorum conscientiam reformidant et, si possent, ne sibi quidem credituri interius premunt omne secretum. Neutrum faciendum est; utrumque enim vitium est, et omnibus credere et nulli, sed alterum honestius dixerim vitium, alterum tutius. [5] Sic utrosque reprehendas, et eos qui semper inquieti sunt, et eos qui semper quiescunt. Nam illa tumultu gaudens non est industria sed exagitatae mentis concursatio, et haec non est quies quae motum omnem molestiam iudicat, sed dissolutio et languor. [6] Itaque hoc quod apud Pomponium legi animo mandabitur: ‘quidam adeo in latebras refugerunt ut putent in turbido esse quidquid in luce est’. Inter se ista miscenda sunt: et quiescenti agendum et agenti quiescendum est.

Cum rerum natura delibera: illa dicet tibi et diem fecisse se et noctem. Vale.

IV. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Persevera ut coepisti et quantum potes propera, quo diutius frui emendato animo et composito possis. Frueris quidem etiam dum emendas, etiam dum componis: alia tamen illa voluptas est quae percipitur ex contemplatione mentis ab omni labe purae et splendidae. [2] Tenes utique memoria quantum senseris gaudium cum praetexta posita sumpsisti virilem togam et in forum deductus es: maius expecta cum puerilem animum deposueris et te in viros philosophia transcripserit. Adhuc enim non pueritia sed, quod est gravius, puerilitas remanet; et hoc quidem peior est, quod auctoritatem habemus senum, vitia puerorum, nec puerorum tantum sed infantum: illi levia, hi falsa formidant, nos utraque. [3] Profice modo: intelleges quaedam ideo minus timenda quia multum metus afferunt. Nullum malum magnum quod extremum est. Mors ad te venit: timenda erat si tecum esse posset: necesse est aut non perveniat aut transeat. [4] ‘Difficile est’ inquis ‘animum perducere ad contemtionem animae.’ Non vides quam ex frivolis causis contemnatur? Alius ante amicae fores laqueo pependit, alius se praecipitavit e tecto ne dominum stomachantem diutius audiret, alius ne reduceretur e fuga ferrum adegit in viscera: non putas virtutem hoc effecturam quod efficit nimia formido? Nulli potest segura vita contingere qui de producenda nimis cogitat, qui inter magna bona multos consules numerat. [5] Hoc cotidie meditare, ut possis aequo animo vitam relinquere, quam multi sic complectuntur et tenent quomodo qui aqua torrente rapiuntur spinas et aspera. Plerique inter mortis metum et vitae tormenta miseri fluctuantur et vivere nolunt, mori nesciunt. [6] Fac itaque tibi iucundam vitam omnem pro illa sollicitudinem deponendo. Nullum bonum adiuvat habentem nisi ad cuius amissionem praeparatus est animus; nullius autem rei facilior amissio est quam quae desiderari amissa non potest. Ergo adversus haec quae incidere possunt etiam potentissimis adhortare te et indura. [7] De Pompei capite pupillus et spado tulere sententiam, de Crasso crudelis et insolens Parthus; Gaius Caesar iussit Lepidum Dextro tribuno praebere cervicem, ipse Chaereae praestitit; neminem eo fortuna provexit ut non tantum illi minaretur quantum permiserat.

Noli huic tranquillitati confidere: momento mare evertitur; eodem die ubi luserunt navigia sorbentur. [8] Cogita posse et latronem et hostem admoveere iugulo tuo gladium; ut potestas maior absit, nemo non servus habet in te vitae necisque arbitrium. Ita dico: quisquis vitam suam contempsit tuae dominus est. Recognosce exempla eorum qui domesticis insidiis perierunt, aut aperta vi aut dolo: intelleges non pauciores servorum ira cecidisse quam regum. Quid ad te itaque quam potens sit quem times, cum id propter quod times nemo non possit? [9] At si forte in manus hostium incideris, victor te duci iubebit - eo nempe quo duceris. Quid te ipse decipis et hoc nunc primum quod olim patiebaris intellegis? Ita dico: ex quo natus es, duceris. Haec et eiusmodi versanda in animo sunt si volumus ultimam illam horam placidi exspectare cuius metus omnes alias inquietas facit.

[10] Sed ut finem epistolae imponam, accipe quod mihi hodierno die placuit - et hoc quoque ex alienis hortulis sumptum est: 'magnae divitiae sunt lege naturae composita paupertas'. Lex autem illa naturae scis quos nobis terminos statuatur? Non esurire, non sitire, non algere. Ut famem sitimque depellas non est necesse superbis assidere liminibus nec supercilium grave et contumeliosam etiam humanitatem pati, non est necesse maria temptare nec sequi castra: parabile est quod natura desiderat et appositum. [11] Ad supervacua sudatur; illa sunt quae togam conterunt, quae nos senescere sub tentorio cogunt, quae in aliena litora impingunt: ad manum est quod sat est. Cui cum paupertate bene convenit dives est. Vale.

V. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Quod pertinaciter studes et omnibus omissis hoc unum agis, ut te meliorem cotidie facias, et probo et gaudeo, nec tantum hortor ut perseveres sed etiam rogo. Illud autem te admoneo, ne eorum more qui non proficere sed conspici cupiunt facias aliqua quae in habitu tuo aut genere vitae notabilia sint; [2] asperum cultum et intonsum caput et neglegentiolem barbam et indictum argento odium et cubile humi positum et quidquid aliud ambitionem perversa via sequitur evita. Satis ipsum nomen philosophiae, etiam si modeste tractetur, invidiosum est: quid si nos hominum consuetudini coeperimus excerpere? Intus omnia dissimilia sint, frons populo nostra conveniat. [3] Non splendeat toga, ne sordeat quidem; non habeamus argentum in quod solidi auri caelatura descenderit, sed non putemus frugalitatis indicium auro argentoque caruisse. Id agamus ut meliorem vitam sequamur quam vulgus, non ut contrariam: alioquin quos emendari volumus fugamus a nobis et avertimus; illud quoque efficimus, ut nihil imitari velint nostri, dum timent ne imitanda sint omnia. [4] Hoc primum philosophia promittit, sensum communem, humanitatem et congregationem; a qua professione dissimilitudo nos separabit. Videamus ne ista per quae admirationem parare volumus ridicula et odiosa sint. Nempe propositum nostrum est secundum naturam vivere: hoc contra naturam est, torquere corpus suum et faciles odisse munditias et squalorem appetere et cibis non tantum vilibus uti sed taetris et horridis. [5] Quemadmodum desiderare delicatas res luxuriae est, ita usitatas et non magno parabiles fugere dementiae. Frugalitatem exigit philosophia, non poenam; potest autem esse non incompta frugalitas. Hic mihi modus placet: temperetur vita inter bonos mores et publicos; suspiciant omnes vitam nostram sed agnoscant. [6] ‘Quid ergo? eadem faciemus quae ceteri? nihil inter nos et illos intererit?’ Plurimum: dissimiles esse nos vulgo sciat qui inspexerit propius; qui domum intraverit nos potius miretur quam supellectilem nostram. Magnus ille est qui fictilibus sic utitur quemadmodum argento, nec ille minor est qui sic argento utitur quemadmodum fictilibus; infirmi animi est pati non posse divitias.

[7] Sed ut huius quoque diei lucellum tecum communicem, apud

Hecatonem nostrum inveni cupiditatum finem etiam ad timoris remedia proficere. 'Desines' inquit 'timere, si sperare desieris.' Dices, 'quomodo ista tam diversa pariter sunt?' Ita est, mi Lucili: cum videantur dissidere, coniuncta sunt. Quemadmodum eadem catena et custodiam et militem copulat, sic ista quae tam dissimilia sunt pariter incedunt: spem metus sequitur. [8] Nec miror ista sic ire: utrumque pendentis animi est, utrumque futuri expectatione solliciti. Maxima autem utriusque causa est quod non ad praesentia aptamur sed cogitationes in longinqua praemittimus; itaque providentia, maximum bonum condicionis humanae, in malum versa est. [9] Ferae pericula quae vident fugiunt, cum effugere, securae sunt: nos et venturo torquemur et praeterito. Multa bona nostra nobis nocent; timoris enim tormentum memoria reducit, providentia anticipat; nemo tantum praesentibus miser est. Vale.

VI. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Intellego, Lucili, non emendari me tantum sed transfigurari; nec hoc promitto iam aut spero, nihil in me superesse quod mutandum sit. Quidni multa habeam quae debeant colligi, quae extenuari, quae attolli? Et hoc ipsum argumentum est in melius translati animi, quod vitia sua quae adhuc ignorabat videt; quibusdam aegris gratulatio fit cum ipsi aegros se esse senserunt. [2] Cuperem itaque tecum communicare tam subitam mutationem mei; tunc amicitiae nostrae certiore fiduciam habere coepissem, illius verae quam non spes, non timor, non utilitatis suae cura divellit, illius cum qua homines moriuntur, pro qua moriuntur. [3] Multos tibi dabo qui non amico sed amicitia caruerint: hoc non potest accidere cum animos in societatem honesta cupiendi par voluntas trahit. Quidni non possit? sciunt enim ipsos omnia habere communia, et quidem magis adversa.

[4] Concipere animo non potes quantum momenti afferri mihi singulos dies videam. ‘Mitte’ inquis ‘et nobis ista quae tam efficacia expertus es.’ Ego vero omnia in te cupio transfundere, et in hoc aliquid gaudeo discere, ut doceam; nec me ulla res delectabit, licet sit eximia et salutaris, quam mihi uni sciturus sum. Si cum hac exceptione detur sapientia, ut illam inclusam teneam nec enuntiem, reiciam: nullius boni sine socio iucunda possessio est. [5] Mittam itaque ipsos tibi libros, et ne multum operae impendas dum passim profutura sectaris, imponam notas, ut ad ipsa protinus quae probo et miror accedas. Plus tamen tibi et viva vox et convictus quam oratio proderit; in rem praesentem venias oportet, primum quia homines amplius oculis quam auribus credunt, deinde quia longum iter est per praecepta, breve et efficax per exempla. [6] Zenonem Cleanthes non expressisset, si tantummodo audisset: vitae eius interfuit, secreta perspexit, observavit illum, an ex formula sua viveret. Platon et Aristoteles et omnis in diversum itura sapientium turba plus ex moribus quam ex verbis Socratis traxit; Metrodorum et Hermarchum et Polyaeum magnos viros non schola Epicuri sed contubernium fecit. Nec in hoc te accerso tantum, ut proficias, sed ut prosis; plurimum enim alter alteri conferemus.

[7] Interim quoniam diurnam tibi mercedulam debeo, quid me

hodie apud Hecatonem delectaverit dicam. ‘Quaeris’ inquit ‘quid profecerim? amicus esse mihi coepi.’ Multum profecit: numquam erit solus. Scito esse hunc amicum omnibus. Vale.

VII. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Quid tibi vitandum praecipue existimes quaeris? turbam. Nondum illi tuto committeris. Ego certe confitebor imbecillitatem meam: numquam mores quos extuli refero; aliquid ex eo quod composui turbatur, aliquid ex iis quae fugavi redit. Quod aegris evenit quos longa imbecillitas usque eo affecit ut nusquam sine offensa proferantur, hoc accidit nobis quorum animi ex longo morbo reficiuntur. [2] Inimica est multorum conversatio: nemo non aliquod nobis vitium aut commendat aut imprimit aut nescientibus allinit. Utique quo maior est populus cui miscemur, hoc periculi plus est. Nihil vero tam damnosum bonis moribus quam in aliquo spectaculo desidere; tunc enim per voluptatem facilius vitia subrepunt. [3] Quid me existimas dicere? avarior redeo, ambitiosior, luxuriosior? immo vero crudelior et inhumanior, quia inter homines fui. Casu in meridianum spectaculum incidi, lusus exspectans et sales et aliquid laxamenti quo hominum oculi ab humano cruore acquiescant. Contra est: quidquid ante pugnatum est misericordia fuit; nunc omissis nugis mera homicidia sunt. Nihil habent quo tegantur; ad ictum totis corporibus ex positi numquam frustra manum mittunt. [4] Hoc plerique ordinariis paribus et postulaticiis praeferunt. Quidni praeferant? non galea, non scuto repellitur ferrum. Quo munimenta? quo artes? omnia ista mortis morae sunt. Mane leonibus et ursis homines, meridie spectatoribus suis obiciuntur. Interfectores interfecturis iubent obici et victorem in aliam detinent caedem; exitus pugnantium mors est. Ferro et igne res geritur. [5] Haec fiunt dum vacat harena. ‘Sed latrocinium fecit aliquis, occidit hominem.’ Quid ergo? quia occidit, ille meruit ut hoc pateretur: tu quid meruisti miser ut hoc spectes? ‘Occide, verbera, ure! Quare tam timide incurrit in ferrum? quare parum audacter occidit? quare parum libenter moritur? Plagis agatur in vulnera, mutuos ictus nudis et obviis pectoribus excipiant.’ Intermissum est spectaculum: ‘interim iugulentur homines, ne nihil agatur’. Age, ne hoc quidem intellegitis, mala exempla in eos redundare qui faciunt? Agite dis immortalibus gratias quod eum docetis esse crudelem qui non potest discere.

[6] Subducendus populo est tener animus et parum tenax recti:

facile transitur ad plures. Socrati et Catoni et Laelio excutere morem suum dissimilis multitudo potuisset: adeo nemo nostrum, qui cum maxime concinnamus ingenium, ferre impetum vitiorum tam magno comitatu venientium potest. [7] Unum exemplum luxuriae aut avaritiae multum mali facit: convictor delicatus paulatim enervat et mollit, vicinus dives cupiditatem irritat, malignus comes quamvis candido et simplici rubiginem suam affricuit: quid tu accidere his moribus credis in quos publice factus est impetus? [8] Necesse est aut imiteris aut oderis. Utrumque autem devitandum est: neve similis malis fias, quia multi sunt, neve inimicus multis, quia dissimiles sunt. Recede in te ipse quantum potes; cum his versare qui te meliorem facturi sunt, illos admitte quos tu potes facere meliores. Mutuo ista fiunt, et homines dum docent discunt. [9] Non est quod te gloria publicandi ingenii producat in medium, ut recitare istis velis aut disputare; quod facere te vellem, si haberes isti populo idoneam mercem: nemo est qui intellegere te possit. Aliquis fortasse, unus aut alter incidet, et hic ipse formandus tibi erit instituendusque ad intellectum tui. 'Cui ergo ista didici?' Non est quod timeas ne operam perdidideris, si tibi didicisti.

[10] Sed ne soli mihi hodie didicerim, communicabo tecum quae occurrunt mihi egregie dicta circa eundem fere sensum tria, ex quibus unum haec epistula in debitum solvet, duo in antecessum accipe. Democritus ait, 'unus mihi pro populo est, et populus pro uno'. [11] Bene et ille, quisquis fuit - ambigitur enim de auctore -, cum quaereretur ab illo quo tanta diligentia artis spectaret ad paucissimos perventurae, 'satis sunt' inquit 'mihi pauci, satis est unus, satis est nullus'. Egregie hoc tertium Epicurus, cum uni ex consortibus studiorum suorum scriberet: 'haec' inquit 'ego non multis, sed tibi; satis enim magnum alter alteri theatrum sumus'. [12] Ista, mi Lucili, condenda in animum sunt, ut contemnas voluptatem ex plurium assensione venientem. Multi te laudant: ecquid habes cur placeas tibi, si is es quem intellegant multi? introrsus bona tua spectent. Vale.

VIII. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] ‘Tu me’ inquis ‘vitare turbam iubes, secedere et conscientia esse contentum? ubi illa praecepta vestra quae imperant in actu mori?’ Quid? ego tibi videor inertiam suadere? In hoc me recondidi et fores clusi, ut prodesse pluribus possem. Nullus mihi per otium dies exit; partem noctium studiis vindico; non vaco somno sed succumbo, et oculos vigilia fatigatos cadentesque in opere detineo. [2] Secessi non tantum ab hominibus sed a rebus, et in primis a meis rebus: posterorum negotium ago. Illis aliqua quae possint prodesse conscribo; salutare admonitiones, velut medicamentorum utilium compositiones, litteris mando, esse illas efficaces in meis ulceribus expertus, quae etiam si persanata non sunt, serpere desierunt. [3] Rectum iter, quod sero cognovi et lassus errando, aliis monstro. Clamo: ‘vitae quaecumque vulgo placent, quae casus attribuit; ad omne fortuitum bonum suspiciosi pavidique subsistite: et fera et piscis spe aliqua oblectante decipitur. Munera ista fortunae putatis? insidiae sunt. Quisquis vestrum tutam agere vitam volet, quantum plurimum potest ista viscata beneficia devitet in quibus hoc quoque miserrimi fallimur: habere nos putamus, haeremus. [4] In praecipitia cursus iste deducit; huius eminentis vitae exitus cadere est. Deinde ne resistere quidem licet, cum coepit transversos agere felicitas, aut saltem rectis aut semel ruere: non vertit fortuna sed cernulat et allidit. [5] Hanc ergo sanam ac salubrem formam vitae tenete, ut corpori tantum indulgeatis quantum bonae valetudini satis est. Durius tractandum est ne animo male pareat: cibus famem sedet, potio sitim exstinguat, vestis arceat frigus, domus munimentum sit adversus infesta temporis. Hanc utrum caespes erexerit an varius lapis gentis alienae, nihil interest: scitote tam bene hominem culmo quam auro tegi. Contemnite omnia quae supervacui labor velut ornamentum ac decus ponit; cogitate nihil praeter animum esse mirabile, cui magno nihil magnum est.’ [6] Si haec mecum, si haec cum posteris loquor, non videor tibi plus prodesse quam cum ad vadimonium advocatus descenderem aut tabulis testamenti anulum imprimerem aut in senatu candidato vocem et manum commodarem? Mihi crede, qui nihil agere videntur maiora agunt: humana divinaque simul tractant.

[7] Sed iam finis faciendus est et aliquid, ut institui, pro hac epistula dependendum. Id non de meo fiet: adhuc Epicurum compilamus, cuius hanc vocem hodierno die legi: 'philosophiae servias oportet, ut tibi contingat vera libertas'. Non differtur in diem qui se illi subiecit et tradidit: statim circumagitur; hoc enim ipsum philosophiae servire libertas est. [8] Potest fieri ut me interroges quare ab Epicuro tam multa bene dicta referam potius quam nostrorum: quid est tamen quare tu istas Epicuri voces putes esse, non publicas? Quam multi poetae dicunt quae philosophis aut dicta sunt aut dicenda! Non attingam tragicos nec togatas nostras - habent enim hae quoque aliquid severitatis et sunt inter comoedias ac tragoedias mediae -: quantum disertissimorum versuum inter mimos iacet! quam multa Publilii non excalceatis sed coturnatis dicenda sunt! [9] Unum versum eius, qui ad philosophiam pertinet et ad hanc partem quae modo fuit in manibus, referam, quo negat fortuita in nostro habenda:

alienum est omne quidquid optando evenit.

[10] Hunc sensum a te dici non paulo melius et adstrictius memini: non est tuum fortuna quod fecit tuum.

Illud etiam nunc melius dictum a te non praeteribo: dari bonum quod potuit auferri potest.

Hoc non imputo in solutum: de tuo tibi. Vale.

IX. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] An merito reprehendat in quadam epistula Epicurus eos qui dicunt sapientem se ipso esse contentum et propter hoc amico non indigere, desideras scire. Hoc obicitur Stilboni ab Epicuro et iis quibus summum bonum visum est animus in patiens. [2] In ambiguitatem incidendum est, si exprimere ‘ἀπὸ θεῶν’ uno verbo cito voluerimus et impatientiam dicere; poterit enim contrarium ei quod significare volumus intellegi. Nos eum volumus dicere qui respuat omnis mali sensum: accipietur is qui nullum ferre possit malum. Vide ergo num satius sit aut invulnerabilem animum dicere aut animum extra omnem patientiam positum. [3] Hoc inter nos et illos interest: noster sapiens vincit quidem incommodum omne sed sentit, illorum ne sentit quidem. Illud nobis et illis commune est, sapientem se ipso esse contentum. Sed tamen et amicum habere vult et vicinum et contubernalem, quamvis sibi ipse sufficiat. [4] Vide quam sit se contentus: aliquando sui parte contentus est. Si illi manum aut morbus aut hostis exciderit, si quis oculum vel oculos casus excusserit, reliquiae illi suae satisfacient et erit imminuto corpore et amputato tam laetus quam [in] integro fuit; sed <si> quae sibi desunt non desiderat, non deesse mavult. [5] Ita sapiens se contentus est, non ut velit esse sine amico sed ut possit; et hoc quod dico ‘possit’ tale est: amissum aequo animo fert. Sine amico quidem numquam erit: in sua potestate habet quam cito replet. Quomodo si perdiderit Phidias statuam protinus alteram faciet, sic hic faciendarum amicitiarum artifex substituet alium in locum amissi. [6] Quaeris quomodo amicum cito facturum sit? Dicam, si illud mihi tecum convenerit, ut statim tibi solvam quod debeo et quantum ad hanc epistulam paria faciamus. Hecaton ait, ‘ego tibi monstrabo amatorium sine medicamento, sine herba, sine ullius veneficae carmine: si vis amari, ama’. Habet autem non tantum usus amicitiae veteris et certae magnam voluptatem sed etiam initium et comparatio novae. [7] Quod interest inter metentem agricolam et serentem, hoc inter eum qui amicum paravit et qui parat. Attalus philosophus dicere solebat iucundius esse amicum facere quam habere, ‘quomodo artificii iucundius pingere est quam pinxisse’. Illa in opere suo occupata

sollicitudo ingens oblectamentum habet in ipsa occupatione: non aequè delectatur qui ab opere perfecto removet manum. Iam fructu artis suae fruitur: ipsa fruebatur arte cum pingeret. Fructuosior est adulescentia liberorum, sed infantia dulcior.

[8] Nunc ad propositum revertamur. Sapiens etiam si contentus est se, tamen habere amicum vult, si nihil aliud, ut exerceat amicitiam, ne tam magna virtus iaceat, non ad hoc quod dicebat Epicurus in hac ipsa epistula, ‘ut habeat qui sibi aegro assideat, succurrat in vincula coniecto vel inopi’, sed ut habeat aliquem cui ipse aegro assideat, quem ipse circumventum hostili custodia liberet. Qui se spectat et propter hoc ad amicitiam venit male cogitat. Quemadmodum coepit, sic desinet: paravit amicum adversum vincla laturum opem; cum primum crepuerit catena, discedet. [9] Hae sunt amicitiae quas temporarias populus appellat; qui utilitatis causa assumptus est tamdiu placebit quamdiu utilis fuerit. Hac re florentes amicorum turba circumsedet, circa eversos solitudo est, et inde amici fugiunt ubi probantur; hac re ista tot nefaria exempla sunt aliorum metu relinquentium, aliorum metu prodentium. Necesse est initia inter se et exitus congruant: qui amicus esse coepit quia expedit <et desinet quia expedit>; placebit aliquod pretium contra amicitiam, si ullum in illa placet praeter ipsam. [10] ‘In quid amicum paras?’ Ut habeam pro quo mori possim, ut habeam quem in exilium sequar, cuius me morti et opponam et impendam: ista quam tu describis negotiatio est, non amicitia, quae ad commodum accedit, quae quid consecutura sit spectat. [11] Non dubie habet aliquid simile amicitiae affectus amantium; possis dicere illam esse insanam amicitiam. Numquid ergo quisquam amat lucri causa? numquid ambitionis aut gloriae? Ipse per se amor, omnium aliarum rerum neglegens, animos in cupiditatem formae non sine spe mutuae caritatis accendit. Quid ergo? ex honestiore causa coit turpis affectus? [12] ‘Non agitur’ inquis ‘nunc de hoc, an amicitia propter se ipsam appetenda sit.’ Immo vero nihil magis probandum est; nam si propter se ipsam expetenda est, potest ad illam accedere qui se ipso contentus est. ‘Quomodo ergo ad illam accedit?’ Quomodo ad rem pulcherrimam, non lucro captus nec varietate fortunae perterritus; detrahit amicitiae maiestatem suam qui illam parat ad bonos casus.

[13] ‘Se contentus est sapiens.’ Hoc, mi Lucili, plerique perperam

interpretantur: sapientem undique submovent et intra cutem suam cogunt. Distinguendum autem est quid et quatenus vox ista promittat: se contentus est sapiens ad beate vivendum, non ad vivendum; ad hoc enim multis illi rebus opus est, ad illud tantum animo sano et erecto et despiciente fortunam. [14] Volo tibi Chrysippi quoque distinctionem indicare. Ait sapientem nulla re egere, et tamen multis illi rebus opus esse: ‘contra stulto nulla re opus est - nulla enim re uti scit - sed omnibus eget’. Sapienti et manibus et oculis et multis ad cotidianum usum necessariis opus est, eget nulla re; egere enim necessitatis est, nihil necesse sapienti est. [15] Ergo quamvis se ipso contentus sit, amicis illi opus est; hos cupit habere quam plurimos, non ut beate vivat; vivet enim etiam sine amicis beate. Summum bonum extrinsecus instrumenta non quaerit; domi colitur, ex se totum est; incipit fortunae esse subiectum si quam partem sui foris quaerit. [16] ‘Qualis tamen futura est vita sapientis, si sine amicis relinquatur in custodiam coniectus vel in aliqua gente aliena destitutus vel in navigatione longa retentus aut in desertum litus eiectus?’ Qualis est Iovis, cum resoluta mundo et dis in unum confusis paulisper cessante natura acquiescit sibi cogitationibus suis traditus. Tale quiddam sapiens facit: in se reconditur, secum est. [17] Quamdiu quidem illi licet suo arbitrio res suas ordinare, se contentus est et ducit uxorem; se contentus <est> et liberos tollit; se contentus est et tamen non viveret si foret sine homine victurus. Ad amicitiam fert illum nulla utilitas sua, sed naturalis irritatio; nam ut aliarum nobis rerum innata dulcedo est, sic amicitiae. Quomodo solitudinis odium est et appetitio societatis, quomodo hominem homini natura conciliat, sic inest huic quoque rei stimulus qui nos amicitiarum appetentes faciat. [18] Nihilominus cum sit amicorum amantissimus, cum illos sibi comparet, saepe praeferat, omne intra se bonum terminabit et dicet quod Stilbon ille dixit, Stilbon quem Epicuri epistula insequitur. Hic enim capta patria, amissis liberis, amissa uxore, cum ex incendio publico solus et tamen beatus exiret, interroganti Demetrio, cui cognomen ab exitio urbium Poliorcetes fuit, num quid perdidisset, ‘omnia’ inquit ‘bona mea mecum sunt’. [19] Ecce vir fortis ac strenuus! ipsam hostis sui victoriam vicit. ‘Nihil’ inquit ‘perdidi’: dubitare illum coegit an vicisset. ‘Omnia mea mecum sunt’: iustitia, virtus, prudentia, hoc ipsum, nihil bonum putare quod eripi possit.

Miramur animalia quaedam quae per medios ignes sine noxa corporum transeunt: quanto hic mirabilior vir qui per ferrum et ruinas et ignes inlaesus et indemnis evasit! Vides quanto facilius sit totam gentem quam unum virum vincere? Haec vox illi communis est cum Stoico: aequae et hic intacta bona per concrematas urbes fert; se enim ipse contentus est; hoc felicitatem suam fine designat. [20] Ne existimes nos solos generosa verba iactare, et ipse Stilbonis obiurgator Epicurus similem illi vocem emisit, quam tu boni consule, etiam si hunc diem iam expunxi. ‘Si cui’ inquit ‘sua non videntur amplissima, licet totius mundi dominus sit, tamen miser est.’ Vel si hoc modo tibi melius enuntiari videtur - id enim agendum est ut non verbis serviamus sed sensibus -, ‘miser est qui se non beatissimum iudicat, licet imperet mundo’. [21] Ut scias autem hos sensus esse communes, natura scilicet dictante, apud poetam comicum invenies:

non est beatus, esse se qui non putat.

Quid enim refert qualis status tuus sit, si tibi videtur malus ‘ [22] ‘Quid ergo?’ inquis ‘si beatum se dixerit ille turpiter dives et ille multorum dominus sed plurium servus, beatus sua sententia fiet?’ Non quid dicat sed quid sentiat refert, nec quid uno die sentiat, sed quid assidue. Non est autem quod verearis ne ad indignum res tanta perveniat: nisi sapienti sua non placent; omnis stultitia laborat fastidio sui. Vale.

X. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Sic est, non muto sententiam: fuge multitudinem, fuge paucitatem, fuge etiam unum. Non habeo cum quo te communicatum velim. Et vide quod iudicium meum habeas: audeo te tibi credere. Crates, ut aiunt, huius ipsius Stilbonis auditor, cuius mentionem priore epistula feci, cum vidisset adulescentulum secreto ambulans, interrogavit quid illic solus faceret. ‘Mecum’ inquit ‘loquor.’ Cui Crates ‘cave’ inquit ‘rogo et diligenter attende: cum homine malo loqueris’. [2] Lugentem timentemque custodire solemus, ne solitudine male utatur. Nemo est ex imprudentibus qui relinqui sibi debeat; tunc mala consilia agitant, tunc aut aliis aut ipsis futura pericula struunt, tunc cupiditates improbas ordinant; tunc quidquid aut metu aut pudore celabat animus exponit, tunc audaciam acuit, libidinem irritat, iracundiam instigat. Denique quod unum solitudo habet commodum, nihil ulli committere, non timere indicem, perit stulto: ipse se prodit. Vide itaque quid de te sperem, immo quid spondeam mihi - spes enim incerti boni nomen est -: non invenio cum quo te malim esse quam tecum. [3] Repeto memoria quam magno animo quaedam verba proieceris, quanti roboris plena: gratulatus sum protinus mihi et dixi, ‘non a summis labris ista venerunt, habent hae voces fundamentum; iste homo non est unus e populo, ad salutem spectat’. [4] Sic loquere, sic vive; vide ne te ulla res deprimat. Votorum tuorum veterum licet deis gratiam facias, alia de integro suscipe: roga bonam mentem, bonam valetudinem animi, deinde tunc corporis. Quidni tu ista vota saepe facias? Audacter deum roga: nihil illum de alieno rogaturus es.

[5] Sed ut more meo cum aliquo munusculo epistulam mittam, verum est quod apud Athenodorum inveni: ‘tunc scito esse te omnibus cupiditatibus solutum, cum eo perveneris ut nihil deum roges nisi quod rogare possis palam’. Nunc enim quanta dementia est hominum! turpissima vota dis insusurrant; si quis admoverit aurem, conticiscent, et quod scire hominem nolunt deo narrant. Vide ergo ne hoc praecipi salubriter possit: sic vive cum hominibus tamquam deus videat, sic loquere cum deo tamquam homines audiant. Vale.

XI. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Locutus est mecum amicus tuus bonae indolis, in quo quantum esset animi, quantum ingenii, quantum iam etiam profectus, sermo primus ostendit. Dedit nobis gustum, ad quem respondebit; non enim ex praeparato locutus est, sed subito deprehensus. Ubi se colligebat, verecundiam, bonum in adulescente signum, vix potuit excutere; adeo illi ex alto suffusus est rubor. Hic illum, quantum suspicor, etiam cum se confirmaverit et omnibus vitiis exuerit, sapientem quoque sequetur. Nulla enim sapientia naturalia corporis aut animi vitia ponuntur: quidquid infixum et ingenitum est lenitur arte, non vincitur. [2] Quibusdam etiam constantissimis in conspectu populi sudor erumpit non aliter quam fatigatis et aestuantibus solet, quibusdam tremunt genua dicturis, quorundam dentes colliduntur, lingua titubat, labra concurrunt: haec nec disciplina nec usus umquam excutit, sed natura vim suam exercet et illo vitio sui etiam robustissimos admonet. [3] Inter haec esse et ruborem scio, qui gravissimis quoque viris subitus affunditur. Magis quidem in iuvenibus apparet, quibus et plus caloris est et tenera frons; nihilominus et veteranos et senes tangit. Quidam numquam magis quam cum erubuerint timendi sunt, quasi omnem verecundiam effuderint; [4] Sulla tunc erat violentissimus cum faciem eius sanguis invaserat. Nihil erat mollius ore Pompei; numquam non coram pluribus rubuit, utique in contionibus. Fabianum, cum in senatum testis esset inductus, erubuisse memini, et hic illum mire pudor decuit. [5] Non accidit hoc ab infirmitate mentis sed a novitate rei, quae inexercitatos, etiam si non concutit, movet naturali in hoc facilitate corporis pronos; nam ut quidam boni sanguinis sunt, ita quidam incitati et mobilis et cito in os prodeuntis. [6] Haec, ut dixi, nulla sapientia abigit: alioquin haberet rerum naturam sub imperio, si omnia eraderet vitia. Quaecumque attribuit condicio nascendi et corporis temperatura, cum multum se diuque animus composuerit, haerebunt; nihil horum vetari potest, non magis quam accersi. [7] Artifices scaenici, qui imitantur affectus, qui metum et trepidationem exprimunt, qui tristitiam repraesentant, hoc indicio imitantur verecundiam. Deiciunt enim vultum, verba summittunt, figunt in

terram oculos et deprimunt: ruborem sibi exprimere non possunt; nec prohibetur hic nec adducitur. Nihil adversus haec sapientia promittit, nihil proficit: sui iuris sunt, iniussa veniunt, iniussa discedunt.

[8] Iam clausulam epistula poscit. Accipe, et quidem utilem ac salutarem, quam te affigere animo volo: ‘aliquis vir bonus nobis diligendus est ac semper ante oculos habendus, ut sic tamquam illo spectante vivamus et omnia tamquam illo vidente faciamus’. [9] Hoc, mi Lucili, Epicurus praecepit; custodem nobis et paedagogum dedit, nec immerito: magna pars peccatorum tollitur, si peccaturis testis assistit. Aliquem habeat animus quem vereatur, cuius auctoritate etiam secretum suum sanctius faciat. O felicem illum qui non praesens tantum sed etiam cogitatus emendat! O felicem qui sic aliquem vereri potest ut ad memoriam quoque eius se componat atque ordinet! Qui sic aliquem vereri potest cito erit verendus. [10] Elige itaque Catonem; si hic tibi videtur nimis rigidus, elige remissioris animi virum Laelium. Elige eum cuius tibi placuit et vita et oratio et ipse animum ante se ferens vultus; illum tibi semper ostende vel custodem vel exemplum. Opus est, inquam, aliquo ad quem mores nostri se ipsi exigant: nisi ad regulam prava non corriges. Vale.

XII. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Quocumque me verti, argumenta senectutis meae video. Veneram in suburbanum meum et querebar de impensis aedificii dilabentis. Ait vilicus mihi non esse negligentiae suae vitium, omnia se facere, sed villam veterem esse. Haec villa inter manus meas crevit: quid mihi futurum est, si tam putria sunt aetatis meae saxa? [2] Iratus illi proximam occasionem stomachandi arripio. ‘Apparet’ inquam ‘has platanos neglegi: nullas habent frondes. Quam nodosi sunt et retorridi rami, quam tristes et squalidi trunci! Hoc non accideret si quis has circumfoderet, si irrigaret.’ Iurat per genium meum se omnia facere, in nulla re cessare curam suam, sed illas vetulas esse. Quod intra nos sit, ego illas posueram, ego illarum primum videram folium. [3] Conversus ad ianuam ‘quis est iste?’ inquam ‘iste decrepitus et merito ad ostium admotus? foras enim spectat. Unde istunc nactus es? quid te delectavit: alienum mortuum tollere?’ At ille ‘non cognoscis me?’ inquit: ‘ego sum Felicio, cui solebas sigillaria afferre; ego sum Philositi vilici filius, deliciolum tuum’. ‘Perfecte’ inquam ‘iste delirat: pupulus, etiam delictum meum factus est? Prorsus potest fieri: dentes illi cum maxime cadunt.’

[4] Debeo hoc suburbano meo, quod mihi senectus mea quocumque adverteram apparuit. Complectamur illam et amemus; plena <est> voluptatis, si illa scias uti. Gratissima sunt poma cum fugiunt; pueritiae maximus in exitu decor est; deditos vino potio extrema delectat, illa quae mergit, quae ebrietati summam manum imponit; [5] quod in se iucundissimum omnis voluptas habet in finem sui differt. Iucundissima est aetas devexa iam, non tamen praeceps, et illam quoque in extrema tegula stantem iudico habere suas voluptates; aut hoc ipsum succedit in locum voluptatum, nullis egere. Quam dulce est cupiditates fatigasse ac reliquisse! [6] ‘Molestum est’ inquis ‘mortem ante oculos habere.’ Primum ista tam seni ante oculos debet esse quam iuveni - non enim citamur ex censu -; deinde nemo tam sene est ut improbe unum diem speret. Unus autem dies gradus vitae est. Tota aetas partibus constat et orbis habet circumductos maiores minoribus: est aliquis qui omnis complectatur et cingat - hic pertinet a natali ad diem extremum -; est alter qui

annos adulescentiae excludit; est qui totam pueritiam ambitu suo adstringit; est deinde per se annus in se omnia continens tempora, quorum multiplicatione vita componitur; mensis artiore praecingitur circulo; angustissimum habet dies gyrum, sed et hic ab initio ad exitum venit, ab ortu ad occasum. [7] Ideo Heraclitus, cui cognomen fecit orationis obscuritas, ‘unus’ inquit ‘dies par omni est’. Hoc alius aliter excepit. Dixit enim * * * parem esse horis, nec mentitur; nam si dies est tempus viginti et quattuor horarum, necesse est omnes inter se dies pares esse, quia nox habet quod dies perdidit. Alius ait parem esse unum diem omnibus similitudine; nihil enim habet longissimi temporis spatium quod non et in uno die invenias, lucem et noctem, et in alternas mundi vices plura facit ista, non <alia>: * * * alias contractior, alias productior. [8] Itaque sic ordinandus est dies omnis tamquam cogat agmen et consummet atque expleat vitam. Pacuvius, qui Syriam usu suam fecit, cum vino et illis funebribus epulis sibi parentaverat, sic in cubiculum ferebatur a cena ut inter plausus exoletorum hoc ad symphoniam caneretur: ‘beb’TMtai, beb’TMtai«. [9] Nullo non se die extulit. Hoc quod ille ex mala conscientia faciebat nos ex bona faciamus, et in somnum ituri laeti hilaresque dicamus,

vixi et quem dederat cursum fortuna peregi.

Crastinum si adiecerit deus, laeti recipiamus. Ille beatissimus est et securus sui possessor qui crastinum sine sollicitudine exspectat; quisquis dixit ‘vixi’ cotidie ad lucrum surgit.

[10] Sed iam debeo epistolam includere. ‘Sic’ inquis ‘sine ullo ad me peculio veniet?’ Noli timere: aliquid secum fert. Quare aliquid dixi? multum. Quid enim hac voce praeclarius quam illi trado ad te perferendam? ‘Malum est in necessitate vivere, sed in necessitate vivere necessitas nulla est.’ Quidni nulla sit? patent undique ad libertatem viae multae, breves faciles. Agamus deo gratias quod nemo in vita teneri potest: calcare ipsas necessitates licet. [11] ‘Epicurus’ inquis ‘dixit: quid tibi cum alieno?’ Quod verum est meum est; perseverabo Epicurum tibi ingerere, ut isti qui in verba iurant nec quid dicatur aestimant, sed a quo, sciant quae optima sunt esse communia. Vale.

LIBER SECUNDUS

XIII. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Multum tibi esse animi scio; nam etiam antequam instrueres te praeceptis salutaribus et dura vincentibus, satis adversus fortunam placebas tibi, et multo magis postquam cum illa manum conseruisti viresque expertus es tuas, quae numquam certam dare fiduciam sui possunt nisi cum multae difficultates hinc et illinc apparuerunt, aliquando vero et propius accesserunt. Sic verus ille animus et in alienum non venturus arbitrium probatur; haec eius obrussa est. [2] Non potest athleta magnos spiritus ad certamen afferre qui numquam suggillatus est: ille qui sanguinem suum vidit, cuius dentes crepuere sub pugno, ille qui subplantatus ad versarium toto tulit corpore nec proiecit animum proiectus, qui quotiens cecidit contumacior resurrexit, cum magna spe descendit ad pugnam. [3] Ergo, ut similitudinem istam prosequar, saepe iam fortuna supra te fuit, nec tamen tradidisti te, sed subsiluisti et acrior constitisti; multum enim adicit sibi virtus laccessita.

Tamen, si tibi videtur, accipe a me auxilia quibus munire te possis. [4] Plura sunt, Lucili, quae nos terrent quam quae premunt, et saepius opinione quam re laboramus. Non loquor tecum Stoica lingua, sed hac summissiore; nos enim dicimus omnia ista quae gemitus mugitusque exprimunt levia esse et contemnenda. Omittamus haec magna verba, sed, di boni, vera: illud tibi praecipio, ne sis miser ante tempus, cum illa quae velut imminetia expavisti fortasse numquam ventura sint, certe non venerint. [5] Quaedam ergo nos magis torquent quam debent, quaedam ante torquent quam debent, quaedam torquent cum omnino non debeant; aut augemus dolorem aut praecipimus aut fingimus.

Primum illud, quia res in controversia est et litem contestatam habemus, in praesentia differatur. Quod ego leve dixero tu gravissimum esse contendes; scio alios inter flagella ridere, alios gemere sub colapho. Postea videbimus utrum ista suis viribus valeant an imbecillitate nostra. [6] Illud praesta mihi, ut, quotiens circumsteterint qui tibi te miserum esse persuadeant, non quid audias sed quid sentias cogites, et cum patientia tua deliberes ac te ipse interroges, qui tua optime nosti, 'quid est quare isti me complorent?

quid est quod trepident, quod contagium quoque mei timeant, quasi transilire calamitas possit? est aliquid istic mali, an res ista magis infamis est quam mala?’ Ipse te interroga, ‘numquid sine causa crucior et maereo et quod non est malum facio?’ [7] ‘Quomodo’ inquis ‘intellegam, vana sint an vera quibus angor?’ Accipe huius rei regulam: aut praesentibus torquemur aut futuris aut utrisque. De praesentibus facile iudicium est: si corpus tuum liberum et sanum est, nec ullus ex iniuria dolor est, videbimus quid futurum sit: hodie nihil negotii habet. [8] ‘At enim futurum est.’ Primum dispice an certa argumenta sint venturi mali; plerumque enim suspicionibus laboramus, et illudit nobis illa quae conficere bellum solet fama, multo autem magis singulos conficit. Ita est, mi Lucili: cito accedimus opinioni; non coarguimus illa quae nos in metum adducunt nec excutimus, sed trepidamus et sic vertimus terga quemadmodum illi quos pulvis motus fuga pecorum exuit castris aut quos aliqua fabula sine auctore sparsa conterruit. [9] Nescio quomodo magis vana perturbant; vera enim modum suum habent: quidquid ex incerto venit coniecturae et paventis animi licentiae traditur. Nulli itaque tam perniciosi, tam inrevocabiles quam lymphatici metus sunt; ceteri enim sine ratione, hi sine mente sunt. [10] Inquiramus itaque in rem diligenter. Verisimile est aliquid futurum mali: non statim verum est. Quam multa non exspectata venerunt! quam multa exspectata nusquam comparuerunt! Etiam si futurum est, quid iuvat dolori suo occurrere? satis cito dolebis cum venerit: interim tibi meliora promitte. [11] Quid facies lucri? tempus. Multa intervenient quibus vicinum periculum vel prope admotum aut subsistat aut desinat aut in alienum caput transeat: incendium ad fugam patuit; quosdam molliter ruina deposuit; aliquando gladius ab ipsa cervice revocatus est; aliquis carnifici suo superstes fuit. Habet etiam mala fortuna levitatem. Fortasse erit, fortasse non erit: interim non est; meliora propone. [12] Nonnumquam, nullis apparentibus signis quae mali aliquid praenuntient, animus sibi falsas imagines fingit: aut verbum aliquod dubiae significationis detorquet in peius aut maiorem sibi offensam proponit alicuius quam est, et cogitat non quam iratus ille sit, sed quantum liceat irato. Nulla autem causa vitae est, nullus miseriarum modus, si timetur quantum potest. Hic prudentia prosit, hic robore animi evidentem quoque metum respue; si minus, vitio

vitium repelle, spe metum tempera. Nihil tam certum est ex his quae timentur ut non certius sit et formidata subsidere et sperata decipere.

[13] Ergo spem ac metum examina, et quotiens incerta erunt omnia, tibi fave: crede quod mavis. Si plures habebit sententias metus, nihilominus in hanc partem potius inclina et perturbare te desine ac subinde hoc in animo volve, maiorem partem mortalium, cum illi nec sit quicquam mali nec pro certo futurum sit, aestuare ac discurrere. Nemo enim resistit sibi, cum coepit impelli, nec timorem suum redigit ad verum; nemo dicit ‘vanus auctor est, vanus [est]: aut finxit aut credit’. Damus nos aurae ferendos; expavescimus dubia pro certis; non servamus modum rerum, statim in timorem venit scrupulus.

[14] Pudet me +ibi+ sic tecum loqui et tam lenibus te remediis focilare. Alius dicat ‘fortasse non veniet’: tu dic ‘quid porro, si veniet? videbimus uter vincat; fortasse pro me venit, et mors ista vitam honestabit’. Cicuta magnum Socratem fecit. Catoni gladium assertorem libertatis extorque: magnam partem detraxeris gloriae. [15] Nimium diu te cohortor, cum tibi admonitione magis quam exhortatione opus sit. Non in diversum te a natura tua ducimus: natus es ad ista quae dicimus; eo magis bonum tuum auge et exorna.

[16] Sed iam finem epistolae faciam, si illi signum suum in pressero, id est aliquam magnificam vocem perferendam ad te mandavero. ‘Inter cetera mala hoc quoque habet stultitia: semper incipit vivere.’ Considera quid vox ista significet, Lucili virorum optime, et intelleges quam foeda sit hominum levitas cotidie nova vitae fundamenta ponentium, novas spes etiam in exitu inchoantium.

[17] Circumspice tecum singulos: occurrent tibi senes qui se cum maxime ad ambitionem, ad peregrinationes, ad negotiandum parent. Quid est autem turpius quam senex vivere incipiens? Non adicerem auctorem huic voci, nisi esset secretior nec inter vulgata Epicuri dicta, quae mihi et laudare et adoptare permisi. Vale.

XIV. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Fateor insitam esse nobis corporis nostri caritatem; fateor nos huius gerere tutelam. Non nego indulgendum illi, serviendum nego; multis enim serviet qui corpori servit, qui pro illo nimium timet, qui ad illud omnia refert. [2] Sic gerere nos debemus, non tamquam propter corpus vivere debeamus, sed tamquam non possimus sine corpore; huius nos nimius amor timoribus inquietat, sollicitudinibus onerat, contumeliis obicit; honestum ei vile est cui corpus nimis carum est. Agatur eius diligentissime cura, ita tamen ut, cum exigit ratio, cum dignitas, cum fides, mittendum in ignes sit. [3] Nihilominus quantum possumus evitemus incommoda quoque, non tantum pericula, et in tutum nos reducamus, excogitantes subinde quibus possint timenda depelli. Quorum tria, nisi fallor, genera sunt: timetur inopia, timentur morbi, timentur quae per vim potentioris eveniunt. [4] Ex his omnibus nihil nos magis concutit quam quod ex aliena potentia impendit; magno enim strepitu et tumultu venit. Naturalia mala quae rettuli, inopia atque morbus, silentio subeunt nec oculis nec auribus quicquam terroris incutiunt: ingens alterius mali pompa est; ferrum circa se et ignes habet et catenas et turbam ferarum quam in viscera immittat humana. [5] Cogita hoc loco carcerem et cruces et eculeos et uncum et adactum per medium hominem qui per os emergeret stipitem et distracta in diversum actis curribus membra, illam tunicam alimentis ignium et illitam et textam, et quidquid aliud praeter haec commenta saevitia est. [6] Non est itaque mirum, si maximus huius rei timor est cuius et varietas magna et apparatus terribilis est. Nam quemadmodum plus agit tortor quo plura instrumenta doloris exposuit - specie enim vincuntur qui patientiae restitissent -, ita ex iis quae animos nostros subigunt et domant plus proficiunt quae habent quod ostendant. Illae pestes non minus graves sunt - famem dico et sitim et praecordiorum suppurationes et febrem viscera ipsa torrentem - sed latent, nihil habent quod intentent, quod praeferant: haec ut magna bella aspectu paratuque vicerunt.

[7] Demus itaque operam, abstineamus offensis. Interdum populus est quem timere debeamus; interdum, si ea civitatis disciplina est ut plurima per senatum transigantur, gratiosi in eo viri; interdum singuli

quibus potestas populi et in populum data est. Hos omnes amicos habere operosum est, satis est inimicos non habere. Itaque sapiens numquam potentium iras provocabit, immo [nec] declinabit, non aliter quam in navigando procellam. [8] Cum peteres Siciliam, traiecisti fretum Temerarius gubernator contempsit austri minas - ille est enim qui Siculum pelagus exasperet et in vertices cogat -; non sinistrum petit litus sed id a quo propior Charybdis maria convolvit. At ille cautior peritos locorum rogat quis aestus sit, quae signa dent nubes; longe ab illa regione verticibus infami cursum tenet. Idem facit sapiens: nocituram potentiam vitat, hoc primum cavens, ne vitare videatur; pars enim securitatis et in hoc est, non ex professo eam petere, quia quae quis fugit damnat. [9] Circumspiciendum ergo nobis est quomodo a vulgo tuti esse possimus. Primum nihil idem concupiscamus: rixa est inter competitores. Deinde nihil habeamus quod cum magno emolumento insidiantis eripi possit; quam minimum sit in corpore tuo spoliolum. Nemo ad humanum sanguinem propter ipsum venit, aut admodum pauci; plures computant quam oderunt. Nudum latro transmittit; etiam in obsessa via pauperi pax est. [10] Tria deinde ex praecepto veteri praestanda sunt ut vitentur: odium, invidia, contemptus. Quomodo hoc fiat sapientia sola monstrabit; difficile enim temperamentum est, verendumque ne in contemptum nos invidiae timor transferat, ne dum calcare nolumus videamur posse calcari. Multis timendi attulit causas timeri posse. Undique nos reducamus: non minus contemni quam suspici nocet. [11] Ad philosophiam ergo confugiendum est; haec litterae, non dico apud bonos sed apud mediocriter malos infularum loco sunt. Nam forensis eloquentia et quaecumque alia populum movet adversarios habet: haec quieta et sui negotii contemni non potest, cui ab omnibus artibus etiam apud pessimos honor est. Numquam in tantum convalescet nequitia, numquam sic contra virtutes coniurabitur, ut non philosophiae nomen venerabile et sacrum maneat. Ceterum philosophia ipsa tranquille modesteque tractanda est.

[12] 'Quid ergo?' inquis 'videtur tibi M. Cato modeste philosophari, qui bellum civile sententia reprimit? qui furentium principum armis medius intervenit? qui aliis Pompeium offendentibus, aliis Caesarem, simul lacessit duos?' [13] Potest aliquis

disputare an illo tempore capessenda fuerit sapienti res publica. Quid tibi vis, arce Cato? iam non agitur de libertate: olim pessum data est. Quaeritur utrum Caesar an Pompeius possideat rem publicam: quid tibi cum ista contentione? nullae partes tuae sunt. Dominus eligitur: quid tua, uter vincat? potest melior vincere, non potest non peior esse qui vicerit. Ultimas partes attingi Catonis; sed ne priores quidem anni fuerunt qui sapientem in illam rapinam rei publicae admitterent. Quid aliud quam vociferatus est Cato et misit irritas voces, cum modo per populi levatus manus et obrutus sputis exportandus extra forum traheretur, modo e senatu in carcerem duceretur?

[14] Sed postea videbimus an sapienti opera rei publicae danda sit: interim ad hos te Stoicos voco qui a re publica exclusi secesserunt ad colendam vitam et humano generi iura condenda sine ulla potentioris offensa. Non conturbabit sapiens publicos mores nec populum in se vitae novitate convertet. [15] ‘Quid ergo? utique erit tutus qui hoc propositum sequetur?’ Promittere tibi hoc non magis possum quam in homine temperanti bonam valetudinem, et tamen facit temperantia bonam valetudinem. Perit aliqua navis in portu: sed quid tu accidere in medio mari credis? Quanto huic periculum paratius foret multa agenti molientique, cui ne otium quidem tutum est? Pereunt aliquando innocentes - quis negat? -, nocentes tamen saepius. Ars ei constat qui per ornamenta percussus est. [16] Denique consilium rerum omnium sapiens, non exitum spectat; initia in potestate nostra sunt, de eventu fortuna iudicat, cui de me sententiam non do. ‘At aliquid vexationis afferet, aliquid adversi.’ Non damnat latro cum occidit.

[17] Nunc ad cotidianam stipem manum porrigis. Aurea te stipe implebo, et quia facta est auri mentio, accipe quemadmodum usus fructusque eius tibi esse gratior possit. ‘Is maxime divitiis fruitur qui minime divitiis indiget.’ ‘Ede’ inquis ‘auctorem.’ Ut scias quam benigni simus, propositum est aliena laudare: Epicuri est aut Metrodori aut alicuius ex illa officina. [18] Et quid interest quis dixerit? omnibus dixit. Qui eget divitiis timet pro illis; nemo autem sollicito bono fruitur. Adicere illis aliquid studet; dum de incremento cogitat, oblitus est usus. Rationes accipit, forum conterit, kalendarium versat: fit ex domino procurator. Vale.

XV. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Mos antiquis fuit, usque ad meam servatus aetatem, primis epistulae verbis adicere 'si vales bene est, ego valeo'. Recte nos dicimus 'si philosopharis, bene est'. Valere enim hoc demum est. Sine hoc aeger est animus; corpus quoque, etiam si magnas habet vires, non aliter quam furiosi aut frenetici validum est. [2] Ergo hanc praecipue valetudinem cura, deinde et illam secundam; quae non magno tibi constabit, si volueris bene valere. Stulta est enim, mi Lucili, et minime conveniens litterato viro occupatio exercendi lacertos et dilatandi cervicem ac latera firmandi; cum tibi feliciter sagina cesserit et tori creverint, nec vires umquam opimi bovis nec pondus aequabis. Adice nunc quod maiore corporis sarcina animus eliditur et minus agilis est. Itaque quantum potes circumscribe corpus tuum et animo locum laxa. [3] Multa sequuntur incommoda huic deditos curae: primum exercitationes, quarum labor spiritum exhaurit et inhabilem intentioni ac studiis acrioribus reddit; deinde copia ciborum subtilitas impeditur. Accedunt pessimae notae mancipia in magisterium recepta, homines inter oleum et vinum occupati, quibus ad votum dies actus est si bene desudaverunt, si in locum eius quod effluxit multum potionis altius in ieiuno iturae regesserunt. [4] Bibere et sudare vita cardiaci est. Sunt exercitationes et faciles et breves, quae corpus et sine mora lassent et tempori parcant, cuius praecipua ratio habenda est: cursus et cum aliquo pondere manus motae et saltus vel ille qui corpus in altum levat vel ille qui in longum mittit vel ille, ut ita dicam, saliaris aut, ut contumeliosius dicam, fullonius: quoslibet ex his elige +usum rude facile+. [5] Quidquid facies, cito redi a corpore ad animum; illum noctibus ac diebus exerce. Labore modico alitur ille; hanc exercitationem non frigus, non aestus impedit, ne senectus quidem. Id bonum cura quod vetustate fit melius. [6] Neque ego te iubeo semper imminere libro aut pugillaribus: dandum est aliquod intervallum animo, ita tamen ut non resolvatur, sed remittatur. Gestatio et corpus concutit et studio non officit: possis legere, possis dictare, possis loqui, possis audire, quorum nihil ne ambulatio quidem vetat fieri. [7] Nec tu intentionem vocis contempseris, quam veto te per gradus et certos modos

extollere, deinde deprimere. Quid si velis deinde quemadmodum ambules discere? Admitte istos quos nova artificia docuit fames: erit qui gradus tuos temperet et buccas edentis observet et in tantum procedat in quantum audaciam eius patientia et credulitate produxeris. Quid ergo? a clamore protinus et a summa contentione vox tua incipiet? usque eo naturale est paulatim incitari ut litigantes quoque a sermone incipiant, ad vociferationem transeant; nemo statim Quiritium fidem implorat. [8] Ergo utcumque tibi impetus animi suaserit, modo vehementius fac vitiis convicium, modo lentius, prout vox te quoque hortabitur +in id latus+; modesta, cum recipies illam revocarisque, descendat, non decadat; +mediatorisui habeat et hoc+ indocto et rustico more desaeviat. Non enim id agimus ut exerceatur vox, sed ut exerceat.

[9] Detraxi tibi non pusillum negotii: una mercedula et +unum graecum+ ad haec beneficia accedet. Ecce insigne praeceptum: ‘stulta vita ingrata est, trepida; tota in futurum fertur’. ‘Quis hoc’ inquis ‘dicit?’ idem qui supra. Quam tu nunc vitam dici existimas stultam? Babae et Isonis? Non ita est: nostra dicitur, quos caeca cupiditas in nocitura, certe numquam satiatura praecipitat, quibus si quid satis esse posset, fuisset, qui non cogitamus quam iucundum sit nihil poscere, quam magnificum sit plenum esse nec ex fortuna pendere. [10] Subinde itaque, Lucili, quam multa sis consecutus recordare; cum aspexeris quot te antecedant, cogita quot sequantur. Si vis gratus esse adversus deos et adversus vitam tuam, cogita quam multos antecesseris. Quid tibi cum ceteris? te ipse antecessisti. [11] Finem constitue quem transire ne possis quidem si velis; discedant aliquando ista insidiosa bona et sperantibus meliora quam assecutis. Si quid in illis esset solidi, aliquando et implerent: nunc haurientium sitim concitant. Mittantur speciosi apparatus; et quod futuri temporis incerta sors volvit, quare potius a fortuna impetrem ut det, quam a me ne petam? Quare autem petam? oblitus fragilitatis humanae congeram? in quid laborem? Ecce hic dies ultimus est; ut non sit, prope ab ultimo est. Vale.

XVI. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Liquere hoc tibi, Lucili, scio, neminem posse beate vivere, ne tolerabiliter quidem, sine sapientiae studio, et beatam vitam perfecta sapientia effici, ceterum tolerabilem etiam inchoata. Sed hoc quod liquet firmandum et altius cotidiana meditatione figendum est: plus operis est in eo ut proposita custodias quam ut honesta proponas. Perseverandum est et assiduo studio robur addendum, donec bona mens sit quod bona voluntas est.

[2] Itaque - non opus est - tibi apud me pluribus verbis aut affirmatione tam longa: intellego multum te profecisse. Quae scribis unde veniant scio; non sunt ficta nec colorata. Dicam tamen quid sentiam: iam de te spem habeo, nondum fiduciam. Tu quoque idem facias volo: non est quod tibi cito et facile credas. Excute te et varie scrutare et observa; illud ante omnia vide, utrum in philosophia an in ipsa vita profeceris. [3] Non est philosophia populare artificium nec ostentationi paratum; non in verbis sed in rebus est. Nec in hoc adhibetur, ut cum aliqua oblectatione consumatur dies, ut dematur otio nausia: animum format et fabricat, vitam disponit, actiones regit, agenda et omittenda demonstrat, sedet ad gubernaculum et per ancipitia fluctuantium derigit cursum. Sine hac nemo intrepide potest vivere, nemo secure; innumerabilia accidunt singulis horis quae consilium exigant, quod ab hac petendum est. [4] Dicet aliquis, 'quid mihi prodest philosophia, si fatum est? quid prodest, si deus rector est? quid prodest, si casus imperat? Nam et mutari certa non possunt et nihil praeparari potest adversus incerta, sed aut consilium meum occupavit deus decrevitque quid facerem, aut consilio meo nihil fortuna permittit.' [5] Quidquid est ex his, Lucili, vel si omnia haec sunt, philosophandum est; sive nos inexorabili lege fata constringunt, sive arbiter deus universi cuncta disposuit, sive casus res humanas sine ordine impellit et iactat, philosophia nos tueri debet. Haec adhortabitur ut deo libenter pareamus, ut fortunae contumaciter; haec docebit ut deum sequaris, feras casum. [6] Sed non est nunc in hanc disputationem transeundum, quid sit iuris nostri si providentia in imperio est, aut si factorum series illigatos trahit, aut si repentina ac subita dominantur: illo nunc revertor, ut te moneam et exhorter ne

patiaris impetum animi tui delabi et refrigescere. Contine illum et constitue, ut habitus animi fiat quod est impetus.

[7] Iam ab initio, si te bene novi, circumspicies quid haec epistula munusculi attulerit: excute illam, et invenies. Non est quod mireris animum meum: adhuc de alieno liberalis sum. Quare autem alienum dixi? quidquid bene dictum est ab ullo meum est. Istuc quoque ab Epicuro dictum est: 'si ad naturam vives, numquam eris pauper; si ad opiniones, numquam eris dives'. [8] Exiguum natura desiderat, opinio immensum. Congeratur in te quidquid multi locupletes possederant; ultra privatum pecuniae modum fortuna te provehat, auro tegat, purpura vestiat, eo deliciarum opumque perducatur ut terram marmoribus abscondas; non tantum habere tibi liceat sed calcare divitias; accedant statuae et picturae et quidquid ars ulla luxuriae elaboravit: maiora cupere ab his disces. [9] Naturalia desideria finita sunt: ex falsa opinione nascentia ubi desinant non habent; nullus enim terminus falso est. Via eunti aliquid extremum est: error immensus est. Retrahe ergo te a vanis, et cum voles scire quod petes, utrum naturalem habeat an caecam cupiditatem, considera num possit alicubi consistere: si longe progresso semper aliquid longius restat, scito id naturale non esse. Vale.

XVII. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Proice omnia ista, si sapis, immo ut sapias, et ad bonam mentem magno cursu ac totis viribus tende; si quid est quo teneris, aut expedi aut incide. ‘Moratur’ inquis ‘me res familiares; sic illam disponere volo ut sufficere nihil agenti possit, ne aut paupertas mihi oneri sit aut ego alicui.’ [2] Cum hoc dicis, non videris vim ac potentiam eius de quo cogitas boni nosse; et summam quidem rei pervides, quantum philosophia prosit, partes autem nondum satis subtiliter dispicis, necdum scis quantum ubique nos adiuvet, quemadmodum et in maximis, ut Ciceronis utar verbo, ‘opituletur’ <et> in minima descendat. Mihi crede, advoca illam in consilium: suadebit tibi ne ad calculos sedeas. [3] Nempe hoc quaeris et hoc ista dilatione vis consequi, ne tibi paupertas timenda sit: quid si appetenda est? Multis ad philosophandum obstitere divitiae: paupertas expedita est, segura est. Cum classicum cecinit, scit non se peti; cum aqua conclamata est, quomodo exeat, non quid efferat, quaerit; [ut] si navigandum est, non strepunt portus nec unius comitatu inquieta sunt litora; non circumstat illam turba servorum, ad quos pascendos transmarinarum regionum est optanda fertilitas. [4] Facile est pascere paucos ventres et bene institutos et nihil aliud desiderantes quam impleri: parvo fames constat, magno fastidium. Paupertas contenta est desiderii instantibus satis facere: quid est ergo quare hanc recuses contubernalem cuius mores sanus dives imitatur? [5] Si vis vacare animo, aut pauper sis oportet aut pauperi similis. Non potest studium salutare fieri sine frugalitatis cura; frugalitas autem paupertas voluntaria est. Tolle itaque istas excusationes: ‘nondum habeo quantum sat est; si ad illam summam pervenero, tunc me totum philosophiae dabo’. Atqui nihil prius quam hoc parandum est quod tu differs et post cetera paras; ab hoc incipiendum est. ‘Parare’ inquis ‘unde vivam volo.’ Simul et parare <te> discis: si quid te vetat bene vivere, bene mori non vetat. [6] Non est quod nos paupertas a philosophia revocet, ne egestas quidem. Toleranda est enim ad hoc properantibus vel fames; quam toleravere quidam in obsidionibus, et quod aliud erat illius patientiae praemium quam in arbitrium non cadere victoris? Quanto hoc maius est quod promittitur: perpetua

libertas, nullius nec hominis nec dei timor. Ecquid vel esurienti ad ista veniendum est? [7] Perpessi sunt exercitus inopiam omnium rerum, vixerunt herbarum radicibus et dictu foedis tulerunt famem; haec omnia passi sunt pro regno, quo magis mireris, alieno: dubitabit aliquis ferre paupertatem ut animum furoribus liberet? Non est ergo prius acquirendum: licet ad philosophiam etiam sine viatico pervenire. [8] Ita est? cum omnia habueris, tunc habere et sapientiam voles? haec erit ultimum vitae instrumentum et, ut ita dicam, additamentum? Tu vero, sive aliquid habes, iam philosophare - unde enim scis an iam nimis habeas? -, sive nihil, hoc prius quaere quam quicquam. [9] 'At necessaria deerunt.' Primum deesse non poterunt, quia natura minimum petit, naturae autem se sapiens accommodat. Sed si necessitates ultimae inciderint, iamdudum exhibit e vita et molestus sibi esse desinet. Si vero exiguum erit et angustum quo possit vita produci, id boni consulat nec ultra necessaria sollicitus aut anxius ventri et scapulis suum reddet et occupationes divitum concursationesque ad divitias euntium securus laetusque ridebit [10] ac dicet, 'quid in longum ipse te differs? expectabisne fenoris quaestum aut ex mercede compendium aut tabulas beati senis, cum fieri possis statim dives? Repraesentat opes sapientia, quas cuicumque fecit supervacuas dedit.' Haec ad alios pertinent: tu locupletibus propior es. Saeculum muta, nimis habes; idem est autem omni saeculo quod sat est.

[11] Poteram hoc loco epistulam claudere, nisi te male instituissem. Reges Parthos non potest quisquam salutare sine munere; tibi valedicere non licet gratis. Quid istic? ab Epicuro mutuum sumam: 'multis parasse divitias non finis miseriarum fuit sed mutatio'. [12] Nec hoc miror; non est enim in rebus vitium sed in ipso animo. Illud quod paupertatem nobis gravem fecerat et divitias graves fecit. Quemadmodum nihil refert utrum aegrum in ligneo lecto an in aureo colles - quocumque illum transtuleris, morbum secum suum transferet -, sic nihil refert utrum aeger animus in divitiis an in paupertate ponatur: malum illum suum sequitur. Vale.

XVIII. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] December est mensis: cum maxime civitas sudat. Ius luxuriae publice datum est; ingenti apparatu sonant omnia, tamquam quicquam inter Saturnalia intersit et dies rerum agendarum; adeo nihil interest ut <non> videatur mihi errasse qui dixit olim mensem Decembrem fuisse, nunc annum. [2] Si te hic haberem, libenter tecum conferrem quid existimares esse faciendum, utrum nihil ex cotidiana consuetudine movendum an, ne dissidere videremur cum publicis moribus, et hilarius cenandum et exuendam togam. Nam quod fieri nisi in tumultu et tristi tempore civitatis non solebat, voluptatis causa ac festorum dierum vestem mutavimus. [3] Si te bene novi, arbitri partibus functus nec per omnia nos similes esse pilleatae turbae voluisses nec per omnia dissimiles; nisi forte his maxime diebus animo imperandum est, ut tunc voluptatibus solus abstineat cum in illas omnis turba procubuit; certissimum enim argumentum firmitatis suae capit, si ad blanda et in luxuriam trahentia nec it nec abducitur. [4] Hoc multo fortius est, ebrio ac vomitante populo siccum ac sobrium esse, illud temperantius, non excerpere se nec insignire nec misceri omnibus et eadem sed non eodem modo facere; licet enim sine luxuria agere festum diem.

[5] Ceterum adeo mihi placet temptare animi tui firmitatem ut e praecepto magnorum virorum tibi quoque praecipiam: interponas aliquot dies quibus contentus minimo ac vilissimo cibo, dura atque horrida veste, dicas tibi ‘hoc est quod timebatur?’ [6] In ipsa securitate animus ad difficilia se praeparet et contra iniurias fortunae inter beneficia firmetur. Miles in media pace decurrit, sine ullo hoste vallum iacit, et supervacuo labore lassatur ut sufficere necessario possit; quem in ipsa re trepidare nolueris, ante rem exerceas. Hoc secuti sunt qui omnibus mensibus paupertatem imitati prope ad inopiam accesserunt, ne umquam expavescerent quod saepe didicissent. [7] Non est nunc quod existimes me dicere Timoneas cenas et pauperum cellas et quidquid aliud est per quod luxuria divitiarum taedio ludit: grabattus ille verus sit et sagum et panis durus ac sordidus. Hoc triduo et quadriduo fer, interdum pluribus diebus, ut non lusus sit sed experimentum: tunc, mihi crede, Lucili,

exultabis dipondio satur et intelleges ad securitatem non opus esse fortuna; hoc enim quod necessitati sat est dabit et irata. [8] Non est tamen quare tu multum tibi facere videaris - facies enim quod multa milia servorum, multa milia pauperum faciunt -: illo nomine te Cuspice, quod facies non coactus, quod tam facile erit tibi illud pati semper quam aliquando experiri. Exerceamur ad palum, et ne imparatos fortuna deprehendat, fiat nobis paupertas familiaris; securius divites erimus si scierimus quam non sit grave pauperes esse. [9] Certos habebat dies ille magister voluptatis Epicurus quibus maligne famem exstingueret, visurus an aliquid deesset ex plena et consummata voluptate, vel quantum deesset, et an dignum quod quis magno labore pensaret. Hoc certe in iis epistulis ait quas scripsit Charino magistratu ad Polyaeum; et quidem gloriatur non toto asse <se> pasci, Metrodorum, qui nondum tantum profecerit, toto. [10] In hoc tu victu saturitatem putas esse? Et voluptas est; voluptas autem non illa levis et fugax et subinde reficienda, sed stabilis et certa. Non enim iucunda res est aqua et polenta aut frustum hordeacii panis, sed summa voluptas est posse capere etiam ex his voluptatem et ad id se deduxisse quod eripere nulla fortunae iniquitas possit. [11] Liberaliora alimenta sunt carceris, sepositos ad capitale supplicium non tam anguste qui occisurus est pascit: quanta est animi magnitudo ad id sua sponte descendere quod ne ad extrema quidem decretis timendum sit! hoc est praeoccupare tela fortunae. [12] Incipe ergo, mi Lucili, sequi horum consuetudinem et aliquos dies destina quibus secedas a tuis rebus minimoque te facias familiarem; incipe cum paupertate habere commercium;

aude, hospes, contemnere opes et te quoque dignum
finge deo.

[13] Nemo alius est deo dignus quam qui opes contempsit; quarum possessionem tibi non interdico, sed efficere volo ut illas intrepide possideas; quod uno consequeris modo, si te etiam sine illis beate victurum persuaseris tibi, si illas tamquam exituras semper aspexeris.

[14] Sed iam incipiamus epistulam complicare. 'Prius' inquis 'redde quod debes.' Delegabo te ad Epicurum, ab illo fiet numeratio: 'immodica ira gignit insaniam'. Hoc quam verum sit necesse est

scias, cum habueris et servum et inimicum. [15] In omnes personas hic exardescit affectus; tam ex amore nascitur quam ex odio, non minus inter seria quam inter lusus et iocos; nec interest ex quam magna causa nascatur sed in qualem perveniat animum. Sic ignis non refert quam magnus sed quo incidat; nam etiam maximum solida non receperunt, rursus arida et corripui facilia scintillam quoque foveant usque in incendium. Ita est, mi Lucili: ingentis irae exitus furor est, et ideo ira vitanda est non moderationis causa sed sanitatis. Vale.

XIX. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Exulto quotiens epistulas tuas accipio; implent enim me bona spe, et iam non promittunt de te sed spondent. Ita fac, oro atque obsecro - quid enim habeo melius quod amicum rogem quam quod pro ipso rogaturus sum? si potes, subducte istis occupationibus; si minus, eripe. Satis multum temporis sparsimus: incipiamus vasa in senectute colligere. [2] Numquid invidiosum est? in freto viximus, moriamur in portu. Neque ego suaserim tibi nomen ex otio petere, quod nec iactare debes nec abscondere; numquam enim usque eo te abigam generis humani furore damnato ut latebram tibi aliquam parari et oblivionem velim: id age ut otium tuum non emineat sed appareat. [3] Deinde videbunt de isto quibus integra sunt et prima consilia an velint vitam per obscurum transmittere: tibi liberum non est. In medium te protulit ingenii vigor, scriptorum elegantia, clarae et nobiles amicitiae; iam notitia te invasit; ut in extrema mergaris ac penitus recondaris, tamen priora monstrabunt. [4] Tenebras habere non potes; sequetur quocumque fugeris multum pristinae lucis: quietem potes vindicare sine ullius odio, sine desiderio aut morsu animi tui. Quid enim relinques quod invitus relictum a te possis cogitare? Clientes? quorum nemo te ipsum sequitur, sed aliquid ex te; amicitia olim petebatur, nunc praeda; mutabunt testamenta destituti senes, migrabit ad aliud limen salutator. Non potest parvo res magna constare: aestima utrum te relinquere an aliquid ex tuis malis. [5] Utinam quidem tibi senescere contigisset intra natalium tuorum modum, nec te in altum fortuna misisset! Tulit te longe a conspectu vitae salubris rapida felicitas, provincia et procuratio et quidquid ab istis promittitur; maiora deinde officia te excipient et ex aliis alia: quis exitus erit? [6] quid exspectas donec desinas habere quod cupias? numquam erit tempus. Qualem dicimus seriem esse causarum ex quibus nectitur fatum, talem esse * * * cupiditatum: altera ex fine alterius nascitur. In eam demissus es vitam quae numquam tibi terminum miseriarum ac servitutis ipsa factura sit: subduc cervicem iugo tritam; semel illam incidi quam semper premi satius est. [7] Si te ad privata rettuleris, minora erunt omnia, sed affatim implebunt: at nunc plurima et undique ingesta non satiant.

Utrum autem mavis ex inopia saturitatem an in copia famem? Et avida felicitas est et alienae aviditati exposita; quamdiu tibi satis nihil fuerit, ipse aliis non eris. [8] ‘Quomodo’ inquis ‘exibo?’ Utcumque. Cogita quam multa temere pro pecunia, quam multa laboriose pro honore temptaveris: aliquid et pro otio audendum est, aut in ista sollicitudine procurationum et deinde urbanorum officiorum senescendum, in tumultu ac semper novis fluctibus quos effugere nulla modestia, nulla vitae quiete contingit. Quid enim ad rem pertinet an tu quiescere velis? fortuna tua non vult. Quid si illi etiam nunc permiseris crescere? quantum ad successus accesserit accedet ad metus. [9] Volo tibi hoc loco referre dictum Maecenatis vera in ipso eculeo elocuti: ‘ipsa enim altitudo attonat summa’. Si quaeris in quo libro dixerit, in eo qui Prometheus inscribitur. Hoc voluit dicere, attonita habet summa. Est ergo tanti ulla potentia ut sit tibi tam ebrius sermo? Ingeniosus ille vir fuit, magnum exemplum Romanae eloquentiae daturus nisi illum enervasset felicitas, immo castrasset. Hic te exitus manet nisi iam contrahas vela, nisi, quod ille sero voluit, terram leges.

[10] Poteram tecum hac Maecenatis sententia parem facere rationem, sed movebis mihi controversiam, si novi te, nec voles quod debeo <nisi> in aspero et probo accipere. Ut se res habet, ab Epicuro versura facienda est. ‘Ante’ inquit ‘circumspiciendum est cum quibus edas et bibas quam quid edas et bibas; nam sine amico visceratio leonis ac lupi vita est.’ [11] Hoc non continget tibi nisi secesseris: alioquin habebis convivas quos ex turba salutantium nomenclator digesserit; errat autem qui amicum in atrio quaerit, in convivio probat. Nullum habet maius malum occupatus homo et bonis suis obsessus quam quod amicos sibi putat quibus ipse non est, quod beneficia sua efficacia iudicat ad conciliandos animos, cum quidam quo plus debent magis oderint: leve aes alienum debitorem facit, grave inimicum. [12] ‘Quid ergo? beneficia non parant amicitias?’ Parant, si accepturos licuit eligere, si collocata, non sparsa sunt. Itaque dum incipis esse mentis tuae, interim hoc consilio sapientium utere, ut magis ad rem existimes pertinere quis quam quid acceperit. Vale.

XX. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Si vales et te dignum putas qui aliquando fias tuus, gaudeo; mea enim gloria erit, si te istinc ubi sine spe exeundi fluctuaris extraxero. Illud autem te, mi Lucili, rogo atque hortor, ut philosophiam in praecordia ima demittas et experimentum profectus tui capias non oratione nec scripto, sed animi firmitate, cupiditatum deminutione: verba rebus proba. [2] Aliud propositum est declamantibus et assensionem coronae captantibus, aliud his qui iuvenum et otiosorum aures disputatione varia aut volubili detinent: facere docet philosophia, non dicere, et hoc exigit, ut ad legem suam quisque vivat, ne orationi vita dissentiat vel ipsa inter se vita; <ut> unus sit omnium actio[dissentio]num color [sit]. Maximum hoc est et officium sapientiae et indicium, ut verbis opera concordent, ut ipse ubique par sibi idemque sit. 'Quis hoc praestabit?' Pauci, aliqui tamen. Est enim difficile [hoc]; nec hoc dico, sapientem uno semper iturum gradu, sed una via. [3] Observa te itaque, numquid vestis tua domusque dissentiant, numquid in te liberalis sis, in tuos sordidus, numquid cenes frugaliter, aedifices luxuriose; unam semel ad quam vivas regulam prende et ad hanc omnem vitam tuam exaequa. Quidam se domi contrahunt, dilatant foris et extendunt: vitium est haec diversitas et signum vacillantis animi ac nondum habentis tenorem suum. [4] Etiam nunc dicam unde sit ista inconstantia et dissimilitudo rerum consiliorumque: nemo proponit sibi quid velit, nec si proposuit perseverat in eo, sed transilit; nec tantum mutat sed redit et in ea quae deseruit ac damnavit revolvitur. [5] Itaque ut relinquam definitiones sapientiae veteres et totum complectar humanae vitae modum, hoc possum contentus esse: quid est sapientia? semper idem velle atque idem nolle. Licet illam exceptiunculam non adicias, ut rectum sit quod velis; non potest enim cuiquam idem semper placere nisi rectum. [6] Nesciunt ergo homines quid velint nisi illo momento quo volunt; in totum nulli velle aut nolle decretum est; variatur cotidie iudicium et in contrarium vertitur ac plerisque agitur vita per lusum. Preme ergo quod coepisti, et fortasse perduceris aut ad summum aut eo quod summum nondum esse solus intellegas.

[7] ‘Quid fiet’ inquis ‘huic turbae familiarium sine re familiari?’ Turba ista cum a te pasci desierit, ipsa se pascet, aut quod tu beneficio tuo non potes scire, paupertatis scies: illa veros certosque amicos retinebit, discedet quisquis non te se aliud sequebatur. Non est autem vel ob hoc unum amanda paupertas, quod a quibus ameris ostendet? O quando ille veniet dies quo nemo in honorem tuum mentiat! [8] Huc ergo cogitationes tuae tendant, hoc cura, hoc opta, omnia alia vota deo remissurus, ut contentus sis temet ipso et ex te nascentibus bonis. Quae potest esse felicitas propior? Redige te ad parva ex quibus cadere non possis, idque ut libentius facias, ad hoc pertinebit tributum huius epistolae, quod statim conferam.

[9] Inideas licet, etiam nunc libenter pro me dependet Epicurus. ‘Magnificentior, mihi crede, sermo tuus in grabatto videbitur et in panno; non enim dicentur tantum illa sed probabuntur.’ Ego certe aliter audio quae dicit Demetrius noster, cum illum vidi nudum, quanto minus quam [in] stramentis incubantem: non praeceptor veri sed testis est. [10] ‘Quid ergo? non licet divitias in sinu positas contemnere?’ Quidni liceat? Et ille ingentis animi est qui illas circumfusas sibi, multum diuque miratus quod ad se venerint, ridet suasque audit magis esse quam sentit. Multum est non corrumpi divitiarum contubernio; magnus ille qui in divit’is pauper est. [11] ‘Nescio’ inquis ‘quomodo paupertatem iste laturus sit, si in illam inciderit.’ Nec ego, Epicure, an +gulus+ [si] iste pauper contempturus sit divitias, si in illas inciderit; itaque in utroque mens aestimanda est inspiciendumque an ille paupertati indulgeat, an hic divitiis non indulgeat. Alioquin leve argumentum est bonae voluntatis grabattus aut pannus, nisi apparuit aliquem illa non necessitate pati sed malle. [12] Ceterum magnae indolis est ad ista non properare tamquam meliora, sed praeparari tamquam ad facilia. Et sunt, Lucili, facilia; cum vero multum ante meditatus accesseris, iucunda quoque; inest enim illis, sine qua nihil est iucundum, securitas. [13] Necessarium ergo iudico id quod tibi scripsi magnos viros saepe fecisse, aliquos dies interponere quibus nos imaginaria paupertate exerceamus ad veram; quod eo magis faciendum est quod deliciis permaduimus et omnia dura ac difficilia iudicamus. Potius excitandus e somno et vellicandus est animus admonendusque naturam nobis minimum constituisse. Nemo nascitur dives; quisquis

exit in lucem iussus est lacte et panno esse contentus: ab his initiis
nos regna non capiunt. Vale.

XXI SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Cum istis tibi esse negotium iudicas de quibus scripseras? Maximum negotium tecum habes, tu tibi molestus es. Quid velis nescis, melius probas honesta quam sequeris, vides ubi sit posita felicitas sed ad illam pervenire non audes. Quid sit autem quod te impediatur, quia parum ipse dispicis, dicam: magna esse haec existimas quae relicturus es, et cum proposuisti tibi illam securitatem ad quam transiturus es, retinet te huius vitae a qua recessurus es fulgor tamquam in sordida et obscura casurum. [2] Erras, Lucili: ex hac vita ad illam ascenditur. Quod interest inter splendorem et lucem, cum haec certam originem habeat ac suam, ille niteatur alieno, hoc inter hanc vitam et illam: haec fulgore extrinsecus veniente percussa est, crassam illi statim umbram faciet quisquis obstiterit: illa suo lumine illustris est. Studia te tua clarum et nobilem efficient. [3] Exemplum Epicuri referam. Cum Idomeneo scriberet et illum a vita speciosa ad fidelem stabilemque gloriam revocaret, regiae tunc potentiae ministrum et magna tractantem, 'si gloria' inquit 'tangeris, notiores te epistulae meae facient quam omnia ista quae colis et propter quae coleris'. [4] Numquid ergo mentitus est? quis Idomeneae nosset nisi Epicurus illum litteris suis incidisset? Omnes illos megistanas et satrapas et regem ipsum ex quo Idomenei titulus petebatur oblivio alta suppressit. Nomen Attici perire Ciceronis epistulae non sinunt. Nihil illi profuisset gener Agrippa et Tiberius progener et Drusus Caesar pronepos; inter tam magna nomina taceretur nisi <sibi> Cicero illum applicuisset. [5] Profunda super nos altitudo temporis veniet, pauca ingenia caput exserent et in idem quandoque silentium abitura oblivioni resistent ac se diu vindicabunt. Quod Epicurus amico suo potuit promittere, hoc tibi promitto, Lucili: habebis apud posteros gratiam, possum mecum duratura nomina educere. Vergilius noster duobus memoriam aeternam promisit et praestat:

fortunati ambo! si quid mea carmina possunt,
nulla dies umquam memori vos eximet aeo,
dum domus Aeneae Capitoli immobile saxum

accolet imperiumque pater Romanus habebit.

[6] Quoscumque in medium fortuna protulit, quicumque membra ac partes alienae potentiae fuerant, horum gratia vixit, domus frequentata est, dum ipsi steterunt: post ipsos cito memoria defecit. Ingeniorum crescit dignatio nec ipsis tantum honor habetur, sed quidquid illorum memoriae adhaesit excipitur.

[7] Ne gratis Idomeneus in epistulam meam venerit, ipse eam de suo redimet. Ad hunc Epicurus illam nobilem sententiam scripsit qua hortatur ut Pythoclea locupletem non publica nec ancipiti via faciat. 'Si vis' inquit 'Pythoclea divitem facere, non pecuniae adiciendum sed cupiditati detrahendum est.' [8] Et apertior ista sententia est quam <ut> interpretanda sit, et disertior quam ut adiuvanda. Hoc unum te admoneo, ne istud tantum existimes de divit'is dictum: quocumque transtuleris, idem poterit. Si vis Pythoclea honestum facere, non honoribus adiciendum est sed cupiditatibus detrahendum; si vis Pythoclea esse in perpetua voluptate, non voluptatibus adiciendum est sed cupiditatibus detrahendum; si vis Pythoclea senem facere et implere vitam, non annis adiciendum est sed cupiditatibus detrahendum. [9] Has voces non est quod Epicuri esse iudices: publicae sunt. Quod fieri in senatu solet faciendum ego in philosophia quoque existimo: cum censuit aliquis quod ex parte mihi placeat, iubeo illum dividere sententiam et sequor quod probo.

Eo libentius Epicuri egregia dicta commemoro, ut istis qui ad illum confugiunt spe mala inducti, qui velamentum ipsos vitiorum suorum habituros existimant, probent quocumque ierint honeste esse vivendum. [10] Cum adieris eius hortulos +et inscriptum hortulis+ 'HOSPES HIC BENE MANEBIS, HIC SVMMVM BONVM VOLVPTAS EST' paratus erit istius domicilii custos hospitalis, humanus, et te polenta excipiet et aquam quoque large ministrabit et dicet, 'ecquid bene acceptus es?' 'Non irritant' inquit 'hi hortuli famem sed exstinguunt, nec maiorem ipsis potionibus sitim faciunt, sed naturali et gratuito remedio sedant; in hac voluptate consenui.' [11] De his tecum desideriis loquor quae consolationem non recipiunt, quibus dandum est aliquid ut desinant. Nam de illis extraordinariis quae licet differre, licet castigare et opprimere, hoc unum commonefaciam: ista voluptas naturalis est, non necessaria. Huic

nihil debes; si quid impendis, voluntarium est. Venter praecepta non audit: poscit, appellat. Non est tamen molestus creditor: parvo dimittitur, si modo das illi quod debes, non quod potes. Vale.

LIBER TERTIUS

[1] Iam intellegis educendum esse te ex istis occupationibus speciosis et malis, sed quomodo id consequi possis quaeris. Quaedam non nisi a praesente monstrantur; non potest medicus per epistulas cibi aut balinei tempus eligere: vena tangenda est. Vetus proverbium est gladiatorem in harena capere consilium: aliquid adversarii vultus, aliquid manus mota, aliquid ipsa inclinatio corporis intuentem monet.

[2] Quid fieri soleat, quid oporteat, in universum et mandari potest et scribi; tale consilium non tantum absentibus, etiam posteris datur: illud alterum, quando fieri debeat aut quemadmodum, ex longinquo nemo suadebit, cum rebus ipsis deliberandum est. [3] Non tantum praesentis sed vigilantis est occasionem observare properantem; itaque hanc circumspecte, hanc si videris prende, et toto impetu, totis viribus id age ut te istis officiis exuas. Et quidem quam sententiam feram attende: censeo aut ex ista vita tibi aut e vita exeundum. Sed idem illud existimo, leni eundum via, ut quod male implicuisti solvas potius quam abrumpas, dummodo, si alia solvendi ratio non erit, vel abrumpas. Nemo tam timidus est ut malit semper pendere quam semel cadere. [4] Interim, quod primum est, impedire te noli; contentus esto negotiis in quae descendisti, vel, quod videri mavis, incidisti. Non est quod ad ulteriora nitaris, aut perdes excusationem et apparebit te non incidisse. Ista enim quae dici solent falsa sunt: 'non potui aliter. Quid si nollem? necesse erat.' Nulli necesse est felicitatem cursu sequi: est aliquid, etiam si non repugnare, subsistere nec instare fortunae ferenti.

[5] Numquid offenderis si in consilium non venio tantum sed advoco, et quidem prudentiores quam ipse sum, ad quos soleo deferre si quid delibero? Epicuri epistulam ad hanc rem pertinentem lege, Idomeneo quae inscribitur, quem rogat ut quantum potest fugiat et properet, antequam aliqua vis maior interveniat et auferat libertatem recedendi. [6] Idem tamen subicit nihil esse temptandum nisi cum apte poterit tempestiveque temptari; sed cum illud tempus captatum diu venerit, exsiliendum ait. Dormitare de fuga cogitantem vetat et sperat salutarem etiam ex difficillimis exitum, si nec properemus ante tempus nec cessemus in tempore. [7] Puto, nunc et

Stoicam sententiam quaeris. Non est quod quisquam illos apud te temeritatis infamet: cautiores quam fortiores sunt. Exspectas forsitan ut tibi haec dicant: ‘turpe est cedere oneri; luctare cum officio quod semel recepisti. Non est vir fortis ac strenuus qui laborem fugit, nisi crescit illi animus ipsa rerum difficultate.’ [8] Dicentur tibi ista, si operae pretium habebit perseverantia, si nihil indignum bono viro faciendum patiendumve erit; alioqui sordido se et contumelioso labore non conteret nec in negotiis erit negotii causa. Ne illud quidem quod existimas facturum eum faciet, ut ambitiosis rebus implicitus semper aestus earum ferat; sed cum viderit gravia in quibus volutatur, incerta, ancipitia, referet pedem, non vertet terga, sed sensim recedet in tutum. [9] Facile est autem, mi Lucili, occupationes evadere, si occupationum pretia contempseris; illa sunt quae nos morantur et detinent. ‘Quid ergo? tam magnas spes relinquam? ab ipsa messe discedam? nudum erit latus, incommitata lectica, atrium vacuum?’ Ab his ergo inviti homines recedunt et mercedem miseriarum amant, ipsas execrantur. Sic de ambitione quo modo de amica queruntur, id est, si verum affectum eorum inspicias, non oderunt sed litigant. Excute istos qui quae cupiere deplorant et de earum rerum loquuntur fuga quibus carere non possunt, videbis voluntariam esse illis in eo moram quod aegre ferre ipsos et misere loquuntur. Ita est, Lucili: paucos servitus, plures servitatem tenent. Sed si deponere illam in animo est et libertas bona fide placuit, in hoc autem unum advocationem petis, ut sine perpetua sollicitudine id tibi facere contingat, quidni tota te cohors Stoicorum probatura sit? omnes Zenones et Chrysippi moderata, honesta, tua suadebunt. Sed si propter hoc tergiversaris, ut circumaspicias quantum feras tecum et quam magna pecunia instruas otium, numquam exitum invenies: nemo cum sarcinis enatat. Emerge ad meliorem vitam propitiis diis, sed non sic quomodo istis propitii sunt quibus bono ac benigno vultu mala magnifica tribuerunt, ob hoc unum excusati, quod ista quae urunt, quae excruciant, optantibus data sunt.

[13] Iam imprimebam epistolae signum: resolvenda est, ut cum sollempni ad te munusculo veniat et aliquam magnificam vocem ferat secum; et occurrit mihi ecce nescio utrum verior an eloquentior. ‘Cuius?’ inquis. Epicuri; adhuc enim alienas +sarcinas adoro+:

‘nemo non ita exit e vita tamquam modo intraverit’. Quemcumque vis occupa, adulescentem, senem, medium: invenies aequè timidum mortis, aequè inscium vitae. Nemo quicquam habet facti; in futurum enim nostra distulimus. Nihil me magis in ista voce delectat quam quod exprobratur senibus infantia. ‘Nemo’ inquit ‘aliter quam quomodo natus est exit e vita.’ Falsum est: peiores morimur quam nascimur. Nostrum istud, non naturae vitium est. Illa nobiscum queri debet et dicere, ‘quid hoc est? sine cupiditatibus vos genui, sine timoribus, sine superstitione, sine perfidia ceterisque pestibus: quales intrastis exite’. Percepit sapientiam, si quis tam securus moritur quam nascitur; nunc vero trepidamus cum periculum accessit, non animus nobis, non color constat, lacrimae nihil profuturæ cadunt. Quid est turpius quam in ipso limine securitatis esse sollicitum? Causa autem hæc est, quod inanes omnium bonorum sumus, vitæ <iactura> laboramus. Non enim apud nos pars eius ulla subsedit: transmissa est et effluxit. Nemo quam bene vivat sed quam diu curat, cum omnibus possit contingere ut bene vivant, ut diu nulli. Vale.

XXIII. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Putas me tibi scripturum quam humane nobiscum hiemps gerit, quae et remissa fuit et brevis, quam malignum ver sit, quam praeposterum frigus, et alias ineptias verba quaerentium? Ego vero aliquid quod et mihi et tibi prodesse possit scribam. Quid autem id erit nisi ut te exhorter ad bonam mentem? Huius fundamentum quod sit quaeris? ne gaudeas vanis. Fundamentum hoc esse dixi: culmen est. Ad summa pervenit qui scit quo gaudeat, qui felicitatem suam in aliena potestate non posuit; sollicitus est et incertus sui quem spes aliqua proritat, licet ad manum sit, licet non ex difficili petatur, licet numquam illum sperata deceperint. [3] Hoc ante omnia fac, mi Lucili: discce gaudere. Existimas nunc me detrahare tibi multas voluptates qui fortuita summoveo, qui spes, dulcissima oblectamenta, devitandas existimo? immo contra nolo tibi umquam deesse laetitiam. Volo illam tibi domi nasci: nascitur si modo intra te ipsum fit. Ceterae hilaritates non implent pectus; frontem remittunt, leves sunt, nisi forte tu iudicas eum gaudere qui ridet: animus esse debet alacer et fidens et supra omnia erectus. [4] Mihi crede, verum gaudium res severa est. An tu existimas quemquam soluto vultu et, ut isti delicati loquuntur, hilariculo mortem contemnere, paupertati domum aperire, voluptates tenere sub freno, meditari dolorum patientiam? Haec qui apud se versat in magno gaudio est, sed parum blando. In huius gaudii possessione esse te volo: numquam deficiet, cum semel unde petatur inveneris. [5] Levium metallorum fructus in summo est: illa opulentissima sunt quorum in alto latet vena assidue plenius responsura fodienti. Haec quibus delectatur vulgus tenuem habent ac perfusoriam voluptatem, et quodcumque invecitium gaudium est fundamento caret: hoc de quo loquor, ad quod te conor perducere, solidum est et quod plus pateat introrsus. [6] Fac, oro te, Lucili carissime, quod unum potest praestare felicem: dissice et conculca ista quae extrinsecus splendent, quae tibi promittuntur ab alio vel ex alio; ad verum bonum specta et de tuo gaude. Quid est autem hoc ‘de tuo’? te ipso et tui optima parte. Corpusculum bonum esse credideris: veri boni aviditas tuta est. [7] Quod sit istud interrogas, aut unde subeat? Dicam: ex bona conscientia, ex honestis consiliis, ex rectis

actionibus, ex contemptu fortuitorum, ex placido vitae et continuo tenore unam prementis viam. Nam illi qui ex aliis propositis in alia transiliunt aut ne transiliunt quidem sed casu quodam transmittuntur, quomodo habere quicquam certum mansurumve possunt suspensi et vagi? [8] Pauci sunt qui consilio se suaque disponant: ceteri, eorum more quae fluminibus innatant, non eunt sed feruntur; ex quibus alia lenior unda detinuit ac mollius vexit, alia vehementior rapuit, alia proxima ripae cursu languescente deposuit, alia torrens impetus in mare eiecit. Ideo constituendum est quid velimus et in eo perseverandum.

[9] Hic est locus solvendi aeris alieni. Possum enim tibi vocem Epicuri tui reddere et hanc epistulam liberare: ‘molestum est semper vitam inchoare’; aut si hoc modo magis sensus potest exprimi, ‘male vivunt qui semper vivere incipiunt’. [10] ‘Quare?’ inquis; desiderat enim explanationem ista vox. Quia semper illis imperfecta vita est; non potest autem stare paratus ad mortem qui modo incipit vivere. Id agendum est ut satis vixerimus: nemo hoc praestat qui orditur cum maxime vitam. [11] Non est quod existimes paucos esse hos: propemodum omnes sunt. Quidam vero tunc incipiunt cum desinendum est. Si hoc iudicas mirum, adiciam quod magis admireris: quidam ante vivere desierunt quam inciperent. Vale.

XXIV. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Sollicitum esse te scribis de iudici eventu quod tibi furor inimici denuntiat; existimas me suasurum ut meliora tibi ipse proponas et acquiescas spei blandae. Quid enim necesse est mala accersere, satis cito patienda cum venerint praesumere, ac praesens tempus futuri metu perdere? Est sine dubio stultum, quia quandoque sis futurus miser, esse iam miserum. [2] Sed ego alia te ad securitatem via ducam: si vis omnem sollicitudinem exuere, quidquid vereris ne eveniat eventurum utique propone, et quodcumque est illud malum, tecum ipse metire ac timorem tuum taxa: intelleges profecto aut non magnum aut non longum esse quod metuis. [3] Nec diu exempla quibus confirmeris colligenda sunt: omnis illa aetas tulit. In quamcumque partem rerum vel civilium vel externarum memoriam miseris, occurrent tibi ingenia aut profectus aut impetus magni. Numquid accidere tibi, si damnaris, potest durius quam ut mittaris in exilium, ut ducaris in carcerem? Numquid ultra quicquam ulli timendum est quam ut uratur, quam ut pereat? Singula ista constitue et contemptores eorum cita, qui non quaerendi sed eligendi sunt. [4] Damnationem suam Rutilius sic tulit tamquam nihil illi molestum aliud esset quam quod male iudicaretur. Exilium Metellus fortiter tulit, Rutilius etiam libenter; alter ut rediret rei publicae praestitit, alter reditum suum Sullae negavit, cui nihil tunc negabatur. In carcere Socrates disputavit et exire, cum essent qui promitterent fugam, noluit remansitque, ut duarum rerum gravissimarum hominibus metum demeret, mortis et carceris. [5] Mucius ignibus manum imposuit. Acerbum est uri: quanto acerbius si id te faciente patiaris! Vides hominem non eruditum nec ullis praeceptis contra mortem aut dolorem subornatum, militari tantum robore instructum, poenas a se irriti conatus exigentem; spectator destillantis in hostili foculo dexterae stetit nec ante removit nudis ossibus fluentem manum quam ignis illi ab hoste subductus est. Facere aliquid in illis castris felicius potuit, nihil fortius. Vide quanto acrior sit ad occupanda pericula virtus quam crudelitas ad irroganda: facilius Porsina Mucio ignovit quod voluerat occidere quam sibi Mucius quod non occiderat.

[6] ‘Decantatae’ inquis ‘in omnibus scholis fabulae istae sunt; iam mihi, cum ad contemnendam mortem ventum fuerit, Catonem narrabis.’ Quidni ego narrem ultima illa nocte Platonis librum legentem posito ad caput gladio? Duo haec in rebus extremis instrumenta prospexerat, alterum ut vellet mori, alterum ut posset. Compositis ergo rebus, utcumque componi fractae atque ultimae poterant, id agendum existimavit ne cui Catonem aut occidere liceret aut servare contingeret; [7] et stricto gladio quem usque in illum diem ab omni caede purum servaverat, ‘nihil’ inquit ‘egisti, fortuna, omnibus conatibus meis obstando. Non pro mea adhuc sed pro patriae libertate pugnavi, nec agebam tanta pertinacia ut liber, sed ut inter liberos, viverem: nunc quoniam deploratae sunt res generis humani, Cato deducatur in tutum.’ [8] Impressit deinde mortiferum corpori vulnus; quo obligato a medicis cum minus sanguinis haberet, minus virium, animi idem, iam non tantum Caesari sed sibi iratus nudas in vulnus manus egit et generosum illum contemptoremque omnis potentiae spiritum non emisit sed eiecit.

[9] Non in hoc exempla nunc congero ut ingenium exerceam, sed ut te adversus id quod maxime terribile videtur exhorter; facilius autem exhortabor, si ostendero non fortes tantum viros hoc momentum efflandae animae contempsisse sed quosdam ad alia ignavos in hac re aequare animum fortissimorum, sicut illum Cn. Pompei socerum Scipionem, qui contrario in Africam vento relatus cum teneri navem suam vidisset ab hostibus, ferro se transverberavit et quaerentibus ubi imperator esset, ‘imperator’ inquit ‘se bene habet’. [10] Vox haec illum parem maioribus fecit et fatalem Scipionibus in Africa gloriam non est interrumpi passa. Multum fuit Carthaginem vincere, sed amplius mortem. ‘Imperator’ inquit ‘se bene habet’: an aliter debebat imperator, et quidem Catonis, mori? [11] Non revoco te ad historias nec ex omnibus saeculis contemptores mortis, qui sunt plurimi, colligo; respice ad haec nostra tempora, de quorum languore ac delicis querimur: omnis ordinis homines suggerent, omnis fortunae, omnis aetatis, qui mala sua morte praeciderint. Mihi crede, Lucili, adeo mors timenda non est ut beneficio eius nihil timendum sit. [12] Securum itaque inimici minas audi; et quamvis conscientia tibi tua fiduciam faciat, tamen, quia multa extra causam valent, et quod aequissimum est spera et ad id te

quod est iniquissimum compara. Illud autem ante omnia memento, demere rebus tumultum ac videre quid in quaque re sit: scies nihil esse in istis terribile nisi ipsum timorem. [13] Quod vides accidere pueris, hoc nobis quoque maiusculis pueris evenit: illi quos amant, quibus assueverunt, cum quibus ludunt, si personatos vident, expavescunt: non hominibus tantum sed rebus persona demenda est et reddenda facies sua. [14] Quid mihi gladios et ignes ostendis et turbam carnificum circa te frementem? Tolle istam pompam sub qua lates et stultos territas: mors es, quam nuper servus meus, quam ancilla contempsit. Quid tu rursus mihi flagella et eculeos magno apparatu explicas? quid singulis articulis singula machinamenta quibus extorqueantur aptata et mille alia instrumenta excarnificandi particulatim hominis? Pone ista quae nos obstupefaciunt; iube contiscere gemitus et exclamationes et vocum inter lacerationem elisarum acerbitatem: nempe dolor es, quem podagricus ille contemnit, quem stomachicus ille in ipsis delicis perfert, quem in puerperio puella perpetitur. Levis es si ferre possum; brevis es si ferre non possum.

[15] Haec in animo voluta, quae saepe audisti, saepe dixisti; sed an vere audieris, an vere dixeris, effectu proba; hoc enim turpissimum est quod nobis obici solet, verba nos philosophiae, non opera tractare. Quid? tu nunc primum tibi mortem imminere scisti, nunc exilium, nunc dolorem? in haec natus es; quidquid fieri potest quasi futurum cogitemus. [16] Quod facere te moneo scio certe fecisse: nunc admoneo ut animum tuum non mergas in istam sollicitudinem; hebetabitur enim et minus habebit vigoris cum exsurgendum erit. Abduc illum a privata causa ad publicam; dic mortale tibi et fragile corpusculum esse, cui non ex iniuria tantum aut ex potentioribus viribus denuntiabitur dolor: ipsae voluptates in tormenta vertuntur, epulae cruditatem afferunt, ebrietates nervorum torporem tremoremque, libidines pedum, manuum, articularum omnium depravationes. [17] Pauper fiam: inter plures ero. Exul fiam: ibi me natum putabo quo mittar. Alligabor: quid enim? nunc solutus sum? ad hoc me natura grave corporis mei pondus adstrinxit. Moriar: hoc dicis, desinam aegrotare posse, desinam alligari posse, desinam mori posse.

[18] Non sum tam ineptus ut Epicuream cantilenam hoc loco

persequar et dicam vanos esse inferorum metus, nec Ixionem rota volvi nec saxum umeris Sisyphi trudi in adversum nec ullius viscera et renasci posse cotidie et carpi: nemo tam puer est ut Cerberum timeat et tenebras et larvalem habitum nudis ossibus cohaerentium. Mors nos aut consumit aut exuit; emissis meliora restant onere detracto, consumptis nihil restat, bona pariter malaque summoti sunt. [19] Permite mihi hoc loco referre versum tuum, si prius admonuero ut te iudices non aliis scripsisse ista sed etiam tibi. Turpe est aliud loqui, aliud sentire: quanto turpius aliud scribere, aliud sentire! Memini te illum locum aliquando tractasse, non repente nos in mortem incidere sed minutatim procedere. [20] Cotidie morimur; cotidie enim demitur aliqua pars vitae, et tunc quoque cum crescimus vita decrescit. Infantiam amisimus, deinde pueritiam, deinde adulescentiam. Usque ad hesternum quidquid transiit temporis perit; hunc ipsum quem agimus diem cum morte dividimus. Quemadmodum clepsydra non extremum stilicidium exhaurit sed quidquid ante defluxit, sic ultima hora qua esse desinimus non sola mortem facit sed sola consummat; tunc ad illam pervenimus, sed diu venimus. [21] Haec cum descripsisses quo soles ore, semper quidem magnus, numquam tamen acrior quam ubi veritati commodas verba, dixisti,

mors non una venit, sed quae rapit ultima mors est.

Malo te legas quam epistolam meam; apparebit enim tibi hanc quam timeamus mortem extremam esse, non solam.

[22] Video quo spectes: quaeris quid huic epistolae infulserim, quod dictum alicuius animosum, quod praeceptum utile. Ex hac ipsa materia quae in manibus fuit mittetur aliquid. Obiurgat Epicurus non minus eos qui mortem concupiscunt quam eos qui timent, et ait: ‘ridiculum est currere ad mortem taedio vitae, cum genere vitae ut currendum ad mortem esset effeceris’. [23] Item alio loco dicit: ‘quid tam ridiculum quam appetere mortem, cum vitam inquietam tibi feceris metu mortis?’ His adicias et illud eiusdem notae licet, tantam hominum imprudentiam esse, immo dementiam, ut quidam timore mortis cogantur ad mortem. [24] Quidquid horum tractaveris, confirmabis animum vel ad mortis vel ad vitae patientiam; [at] in utrumque enim monendi ac firmandi sumus, et ne nimis amemus vitam et ne nimis oderimus. Etiam cum ratio suadet finire se, non

temere nec cum procursu capiendus est impetus. [25] Vir fortis ac sapiens non fugere debet e vita sed exire; et ante omnia ille quoque vitetur affectus qui multos occupavit, libido moriendi. Est enim, mi Lucili, ut ad alia, sic etiam ad moriendum inconsulta animi inclinatio, quae saepe generosos atque acerrimae indolis viros corripit, saepe ignavos iacentesque: illi contemnunt vitam, hi gravantur. [26] Quosdam subit eadem faciendi videndique satietas et vitae non odium sed fastidium, in quod prolabimur ipsa impellente philosophia, dum dicimus ‘quousque eadem? nempe ex pergiscar dormiam, <edam> esuriam, algebo aestuabo. Nullius rei finis est, sed in orbem nexa sunt omnia, fugiunt ac sequuntur; diem nox premit, dies noctem, aestas in autumnum desinit, autumnus hiemps instat, quae vere compescitur; omnia sic transeunt ut revertantur. Nihil novi facio, nihil novi video: fit aliquando et huius rei nausia.’ Multi sunt qui non acerbum iudicent vivere sed supervacuum. Vale.

XXV. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Quod ad duos amicos nostros pertinet, diversa via eundum est; alterius enim vitia emendanda, alterius frangenda sunt. Utar libertate tota: non amo illum nisi offendo. 'Quid ergo?' inquis 'quadragenarium pupillum cogitas sub tutela tua continere? Respice aetatem eius iam duram et intractabilem: non potest reformari; tenera finguntur.' [2] An profecturus sim nescio: malo successum mihi quam fidem deesse. Nec desperaveris etiam diutinos aegros posse sanari, si contra intemperantiam steteris, si multa invitos et facere coegeris et pati. Ne de altero quidem satis fiducia habeo, excepto eo quod adhuc peccare erubescit; nutriendus est hic pudor, qui quamdiu in animo eius duraverit, aliquis erit bonae spei locus. Cum hoc veterano parcius agendum puto, ne in desperationem sui veniat; [3] nec ullum tempus aggrediendi fuit melius quam hoc, dum interquiescit, dum emendato similis est. Aliis haec intermissio eius imposuit, mihi verba non dat: exspecto cum magno fenore vitia reditura, quae nunc scio cessare, non deesse. Impendam huic rei dies et utrum possit aliquid agi an non possit experiri.

[4] Tu nobis te, ut facis, fortem praesta et sarcinas contrahe; nihil ex his quae habemus necessarium est. Ad legem naturae revertamur; divitiae paratae sunt. Aut gratuitum est quo egemus, aut vile: panem et aquam natura desiderat. Nemo ad haec pauper est, intra quae quisquis desiderium suum clusit cum ipso Iove de felicitate contendat, ut ait Epicurus, cuius aliquam vocem huic epistolae involvam. [5] 'Sic fac' inquit 'omnia tamquam spectet Epicurus.' Prodest sine dubio custodem sibi imposuisse et habere quem respicias, quem interesse cogitationibus tuis iudices. Hoc quidem longe magnificentius est, sic vivere tamquam sub alicuius boni viri ac semper praesentis oculis, sed ego etiam hoc contentus sum, ut sic facias quaecumque facies tamquam spectet aliquis: omnia nobis mala solitudo persuadet. [6] Cum iam profeceris tantum ut sit tibi etiam tui reverentia, licebit dimittas paedagogum: interim aliquorum te auctoritate custodi - aut Cato ille sit aut Scipio aut Laelius aut alius cuius interventu perdit quoque homines vitia supprimerent, dum te efficis eum cum quo peccare non audeas. Cum hoc effeceris et aliqua

coeperit apud te tui esse dignatio, incipiam tibi permittere quod idem suadet Epicurus: 'tunc praecipue in te ipse secede cum esse cogeris in turba'. [7] Dissimilem te fieri multis oportet, dum tibi tutum [non] sit ad te recedere. Circumspice singulos: nemo est cui non satius sit cum quolibet esse quam secum. 'Tunc praecipue in te ipse secede cum esse cogeris in turba' - si bonus vir <es>, si quietus, si temperans. Alioquin in turbam tibi a te recedendum est: istic malo viro propius es. Vale.

XXVI. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Modo dicebam tibi in conspectu esse me senectutis: iam vereor ne senectutem post me reliquerim. Aliud iam his annis, certe huic corpori, vocabulum convenit, quoniam quidem senectus lassae aetatis, non fractae nomen est: inter decrepitos me numera et extrema tangentis. [2] Gratias tamen mihi apud te ago: non sentio in animo aetatis iniuriam, cum sentiam in corpore. Tantum vitia et vitiorum ministeria senuerunt: viget animus et gaudet non multum sibi esse cum corpore; magnam partem oneris sui posuit. Exsultat et mihi facit controversiam de senectute: hunc ait esse florem suum. Credamus illi: bono suo utatur. [3] Ire in cogitationem iubet et dispicere quid ex hac tranquillitate ac modestia morum sapientiae debeam, quid aetati, et diligenter excutere quae non possim facere, quae nolim, proinde habiturus atque si nolim quidquid non posse me gaudeo: quae enim querela est, quod incommodum, si quidquid debebat desinere defecit? [4] 'Incommodum summum est' inquis 'minui et deperire et, ut proprie dicam, liquescere. Non enim subito impulsus ac prostratus sum: carpinur, singuli dies aliquid subtrahunt viribus.' Ecquis exitus est melior quam in finem suum natura solvente dilabi? non quia aliquid mali ictus <est> et e vita repentinus excessus, sed quia lenis haec est via, subduci. Ego certe, velut appropinquet experimentum et ille laturus sententiam de omnibus annis meis dies venerit, ita me observo et alloquor: [5] 'nihil est' inquam 'adhuc quod aut rebus aut verbis exhibuimus; levia sunt ista et fallacia pignora animi multisque involuta lenociniis: quid profecerim morti crediturus sum. Non timide itaque componor ad illum diem quo remotis strophis ac fucis de me iudicaturus sum, utrum loquar fortia an sentiam, numquid simulatio fuerit et mimus quidquid contra fortunam iactavi verborum contumacium. [6] Remove existimationem hominum: dubia semper est et in partem utramque dividitur. Remove studia tota vita tractata: mors de te pronuntiatura est. Ita dico: disputationes et litterata colloquia et ex praeceptis sapientium verba collecta et eruditus sermo non ostendunt verum robur animi; est enim oratio etiam timidissimis audax. Quid egeris tunc apparebit cum animam ages. Accipio condicionem, non reformido iudicium.' [7]

Haec mecum loquor, sed tecum quoque me locutum puta. Iuvenior es: quid refert? non dinumerantur anni. Incertum est quo loco te mors exspectet; itaque tu illam omni loco exspecta.

[8] Desinere iam volebam et manus spectabat ad clausulam, sed conficienda sunt aera et huic epistulae viaticum dandum est. Puta me non dicere unde sumpturus sim mutuum: scis cuius arca utar. Exspecta me pusillum, et de domo fiet numeratio; interim commodabit Epicurus, qui ait ‘meditare mortem’, vel si commodius sic transire ad nos hic potest sensus: ‘egregia res est mortem condiscere’. [9] Supervacuum forsitan putas id discere quod semel utendum est. Hoc est ipsum quare meditari debeamus: semper discendum est quod an sciamus experiri non possumus. [10] ‘Meditare mortem’: qui hoc dicit meditari libertatem iubet. Qui mori didicit servire dedidicit; supra omnem potentiam est, certe extra omnem. Quid ad illum carcer et custodia et claustra? liberum ostium habet. Una est catena quae nos alligatos tenet, amor vitae, qui ut non est abiciendus, ita minuendus est, ut si quando res exiget, nihil nos detineat nec impediat quominus parati simus quod quandoque faciendum est statim facere. Vale.

XXVII. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] ‘Tu me’ inquis ‘mones? iam enim te ipse monuisti, iam correxisti? ideo aliorum emendationi vacas?’ Non sum tam improbus ut curationes aeger obeam, sed, tamquam in eodem valetudinario iaceam, de communi tecum malo colloquor et remedia communico. Sic itaque me audi tamquam mecum loquar; in secretum te meum admitto et te adhibito mecum exigo. [2] Clamo mihi ipse, ‘numera annos tuos, et pudebit eadem velle quae volueras puer, eadem parare. Hoc denique tibi circa mortis diem praesta: moriantur ante te vitia. Dimitte istas voluptates turbidas, magno luendas: non venturae tantum sed praeteritae nocent. Quemadmodum scelera etiam si non sunt deprehensa cum fierent, sollicitudo non cum ipsis abit, ita improbarum voluptatum etiam post ipsas paenitentia est. Non sunt solidae, non sunt fideles; etiam si non nocent, fugiunt. [3] Aliquod potius bonum mansurum circumspice; nullum autem est nisi quod animus ex se sibi invenit. Sola virtus praestat gaudium perpetuum, securum; etiam si quid obstat, nubium modo intervenit, quae infra feruntur nec umquam diem vincunt.’ [4] Quando ad hoc gaudium pervenire continget? non quidem cessatur adhuc, sed festinetur. Multum restat operis, in quod ipse necesse est vigiliam, ipse laborem tuum impendas, si effici cupis; delegationem res ista non recipit. [5] Aliud litterarum genus adiutorium admittit Calvisius Sabinus memoria nostra fuit dives; et patrimonium habebat libertini et ingenium; numquam vidi hominem beatum indecentius. Huic memoria tam mala erat ut illi nomen modo Ulixis excideret, modo Achillis, modo Priami, quos tam bene noverat quam paedagogos nostros novimus. Nemo vetulus nomenclator, qui nomina non reddit sed imponit, tam perperam tribus quam ille Troianos et Achivos persalutabat. [6] Nihilominus eruditus volebat videri. Hanc itaque compendariam excogitavit: magna summa emit servos, unum qui Homerum teneret, alterum qui Hesiodum; novem praeterea lyricis singulos assignavit. Magno emissee illum non est quod mireris: non invenerat, faciendos locavit. Postquam haec familia illi comparata est, coepit convivas suos inquietare. Habebat ad pedes hos, a quibus subinde cum peteret versus quos referret, saepe in medio verbo

excidebat. [7] Suasit illi Satellius Quadratus, stultorum divitum arrosor et, quod sequitur, arrisor, et, quod duobus his adiunctum est, derisor, ut grammaticos haberet analectas. Cum dixisset Sabinus centenis millibus sibi constare singulos servos, 'minoris' inquit 'totidem scrinia emissas'. Ille tamen in ea opinione erat ut putaret se scire quod quisquam in domo sua sciret. [8] Idem Satellius illum hortari coepit ut luctaretur, hominem aegrum, pallidum, gracilem. Cum Sabinus respondisset, 'et quomodo possum? vix vivo', 'noli, obsecro te' inquit 'istuc dicere: non vides quam multos servos valentissimos habeas?' Bona mens nec commodatur nec emitur; et puto, si venalis esset, non haberet emptorem: at mala cotidie emitur.

[9] Sed accipe iam quod debeo et vale. 'Divitiae sunt ad legem naturae composita paupertas.' Hoc saepe dicit Epicurus aliter atque aliter, sed numquam nimis dicitur quod numquam satis discitur; quibusdam remedia monstranda, quibusdam inculcanda sunt. Vale.

XXVIII. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Hoc tibi soli putas accidisse et admiraris quasi rem novam quod peregrinatione tam longa et tot locorum varietatibus non discussisti tristitiam gravitatemque mentis? Animum debes mutare, non caelum. Licet vastum traieceris mare, licet, ut ait Vergilius noster,

terraeque urbesque recedant,

sequentur te quocumque perveneris vitia. [2] Hoc idem querenti cuidam Socrates ait, 'quid miraris nihil tibi peregrinationes prodesse, cum te circumferas? premit te eadem causa quae expulit'. Quid terrarum iuvare novitas potest? quid cognitio urbium aut locorum? in irritum cedit ista iactatio. Quaeris quare te fuga ista non adiuvet? tecum fugis. Onus animi deponendum est: non ante tibi ullus placebit locus. [3] Talem nunc esse habitum tuum cogita qualem Vergilius noster vatis inducit iam concitatae et instigatae multumque habentis se spiritus non sui:

bacchatur vates, magnum si pectore possit
excussisse deum.

Vadis huc illuc ut excutias insidens pondus quod ipsa iactatione incommodius fit, sicut in navi onera immota minus urgent, inaequaliter convoluta citius eam partem in quam incubuere demergunt. Quidquid facis, contra te facis et motu ipso noces tibi; aegrum enim concutis. [4] At cum istuc exemeris malum, omnis mutatio loci iucunda fiet; in ultimas expellaris terras licebit, in quolibet barbariae angulo colloceris, hospitalis tibi illa qualiscumque sedes erit. Magis quis veneris quam quo interest, et ideo nulli loco addicere debemus animum. Cum hac persuasione vivendum est: 'non sum uni angulo natus, patria mea totus hic mundus est'. [5] Quod si liqueret tibi, non admirareris nil adiuvari te regionum varietatibus in quas subinde priorum taedio migras; prima enim quaeque placuisset si omnem tuam crederes. Nunc <non> peregrinaris sed erras et ageris ac locum ex loco mutas, cum illud quod quaeris, bene vivere, omni loco positum sit. [6] Num quid tam turbidum fieri potest quam forum? ibi quoque licet quiete vivere, si necesse sit. Sed si liceat disponere

se, conspectum quoque et viciniam fori procul fugiam; nam ut loca gravia etiam firmissimam valetudinem temptant, ita bonae quoque menti necdum adhuc perfectae et convalescenti sunt aliqua parum salubria. [7] Dissentio ab his qui in fluctus medios eunt et tumultuosam probantes vitam cotidie cum difficultatibus rerum magno animo colluctantur. Sapiens feret ista, non eliget, et malet in pace esse quam in pugna; non multum prodest vitia sua proiecisce, si cum alienis rixandum est. [8] ‘Triginta’ inquit ‘tyranni Socraten circumsteterunt nec potuerunt animum eius infringere.’ Quid interest quot domini sint? servitus una est; hanc qui contempsit in quanta libet turba dominantium liber est.

[9] Tempus est desinere, sed si prius portorium solvero. ‘Initium est salutis notitia peccati.’ Egregie mihi hoc dixisse videtur Epicurus; nam qui peccare se nescit corrigi non vult; deprehendas te oportet antequam emendes. [10] Quidam vitiis gloriantur: tu existimas aliquid de remedio cogitare qui mala sua virtutum loco numerant? Ideo quantum potes te ipse coargue, inquire in te; accusatoris primum partibus fungere, deinde iudicis, novissime deprecatoris; aliquando te offende. Vale.

XXIX. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] De Marcellino nostro quaeris et vis scire quid agat. Raro ad nos venit, non ulla alia ex causa quam quod audire verum timet, a quo periculo iam abest; nulli enim nisi audituro dicendum est. Ideo de Diogene nec minus de aliis Cynicis qui libertate promiscua usi sunt et obvios <quosque> monuerunt dubitari solet an hoc facere debuerint. Quid enim, si quis surdos obiurget aut natura morbove mutos? [2] 'Quare' inquis 'verbis parcam? gratuita sunt. Non possum scire an ei profuturus sim quem admoneo: illud scio, alicui me profuturum, si multos admonuero. Spargenda manus est: non potest fieri ut non aliquando succedat multa temptanti.' [3] Hoc, mi Lucili, non existimo magno viro faciendum: diluitur eius auctoritas nec habet apud eos satis ponderis quos posset minus obsolecta corrigere. Sagittarius non aliquando ferire debet, sed aliquando deerrare; non est ars quae ad effectum casu venit. Sapientia ars est: certum petat, eligat profecturos, ab iis quos desperavit recedat, non tamen cito relinquat et in ipsa desperatione extrema remedia temptet.

[4] Marcellinum nostrum ego nondum despero; etiam nunc servari potest, sed si cito illi manus porrigitur. Est quidem periculum ne porrigentem trahat; magna in illo ingeni vis est, sed iam tendentis in pravum. Nihilominus adibo hoc periculum et audebo illi mala sua ostendere. [5] Faciet quod solet: advocabit illas facetias quae risum evocare lugentibus possunt, et in se primum, deinde in nos iocabitur; omnia quae dicturus sum occupabit. Scrutabitur scholas nostras et obiciet philosophis congiaria, amicas, gulam; [6] ostendet mihi alium in adulterio, alium in popina, alium in aula; ostendet mihi lepidum philosophum Aristonem, qui in gestatione disserebat - hoc enim ad edendas operas tempus exceperat. De cuius secta cum quaereretur, Scaurus ait 'utique Peripateticus non est'. De eodem cum consuleretur Iulius Graecinus, vir egregius, quid sentiret, 'non possum' inquit 'tibi dicere; nescio enim quid de gradu faciat', tamquam de essedario interrogaretur. [7] Hos mihi circulatores qui philosophiam honestius neglexissent quam vendunt in faciem ingeret. Constitui tamen contumelias perpeti: moveat ille mihi risum, ego fortasse illi lacrimas movebo, aut si ridere perseverabit, gaudebo

tamquam in malis quod illi genus insaniae hilare contigerit. Sed non est ista hilaritas longa: observa, videbis eosdem intra exiguum tempus acerrime ridere et acerrime rabere. [8] Propositum est aggredi illum et ostendere quanto pluris fuerit cum multis minoris videretur. Vitia eius etiam si non excidero, inhibebo; non desinent, sed intermittent fortasse autem et desinent, si intermittendi consuetudinem fecerint. Non est hoc ipsum fastidiendum, quoniam quidem graviter affectis sanitatis loco est bona remissio.

[9] Dum me illi paro, tu interim, qui potes, qui intellegis unde quo evaseris et ex eo suspicaris quousque sis evasurus, compone mores tuos, attolle animum, adversus formidata consiste; numerare eos noli qui tibi metum faciunt. Nonne videatur stultus, si quis multitudinem eo loco timeat per quem transitus singulis est? aequae ad tuam mortem multis aditus non est licet illam multi minentur. Sic istuc natura disposuit: spiritum tibi tam unus eripiet quam unus dedit.

[10] Si pudorem haberes, ultimam mihi pensionem remisisses; sed ne ego quidem me sordide geram in finem aeris alieni et tibi quod debeo impingam. 'Numquam volui populo placere; nam quae ego scio non probat populus, quae probat populus ego nescio.' [11] 'Quis hoc?' inquis, tamquam nescias cui imperem. Epicurus; sed idem hoc omnes tibi ex omni domo conclamabunt, Peripatetici, Academici, Stoici, Cynici. Quis enim placere populo potest cui placet virtus? malis artibus popularis favor quaeritur. Similem te illis facias oportet: non probabunt nisi agnoverint. Multo autem ad rem magis pertinet qualis tibi videaris quam aliis; conciliari nisi turpi ratione amor turpium non potest. [12] Quid ergo illa laudata et omnibus praeferenda artibus rebusque philosophia praestabit? scilicet ut malis tibi placere quam populo, ut aestimes iudicia, non numeres, ut sine metu deorum hominumque vivas, ut aut vincas mala aut finias. Ceterum, si te videro celebrem secundis vocibus vulgi, si intrante te clamor et plausus, pantomimica ornamenta, obstrepuerint, si tota civitate te feminae puerique laudaverint, quidni ego tui miserear, cum sciam quae via ad istum favorem ferat? Vale.

LIBER QUARTUS

XXX. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Bassum Aufidium, virum optimum, vidi quassum, aetati obluctantem. Sed iam plus illum degravat quam quod possit attolli; magno senectus et universo pondere incubuit. Scis illum semper infirmi corporis et exsucti fuisse; diu illud continuit et, ut verius dicam, concinnavit: subito defecit. Quemadmodum in nave quae sentinam trahit uni rimae aut alteri obsistitur, ubi plurimis locis laxari coepit et cedere, succurri non potest navigio dehiscenti, ita in senili corpore aliquatenus imbecillitas sustineri et fulciri potest. Ubi tamquam in putri aedificio omnis iunctura diducitur, et dum alia excipitur, alia discinditur, circumspiciendum est quomodo exeas. Bassus tamen noster alacer animo est: hoc philosophia praestat, in conspectu mortis hilarem <esse> et in quocumque corporis habitu fortem laetumque nec deficientem quamvis deficiatur. Magnus gubernator et scisso navigat velo et, si exarmavit, tamen reliquias navigii aptat ad cursum. Hoc facit Bassus noster et eo animo vultuque finem suum spectat quo alienum spectare nimis securi putares. Magna res est, Lucili, haec et diu discenda, cum adventat hora illa inevitabilis, aequo animo abire. Alia genera mortis spei mita sunt: desinit morbus, incendium exstinguitur, ruina quos videbatur oppressura deposuit; mare quos hauserat eadem vi qua sorbebat eiecit incolumes; gladium miles ab ipsa perituri cervice re vocavit: nil habet quod speret quem senectus ducit ad mortem; huic uni intercedi non potest. Nullo genere homines mollius moriuntur sed nec diutius.

[5] Bassus noster videbatur mihi prosequi se et componere et vivere tamquam superstes sibi et sapienter ferre desiderium sui. Nam de morte multa loquitur et id agit sedulo ut nobis persuadeat, si quid incommodi aut metus in hoc negotio est, morientis vitium esse, non mortis; non magis in ipsa quicquam esse molestiae quam post ipsam.

[6] Tam demens autem est qui timet quod non est passurus quam qui timet quod non est sensurus. An quis quam hoc futurum credit, ut per quam nihil sentiatur, ea sentiatur? 'Ergo' inquit 'mors adeo extra omne malum est ut sit extra omnem malorum metum.' [7] Haec ego scio et saepe dicta et saepe dicenda, sed neque cum legerem aequae mihi profuerunt neque cum audirem iis dicentibus qui negabant

timenda a quorum metu aberant: hic vero plurimum apud me auctoritatis habuit, cum loqueretur de morte vicina. [8] Dicam enim quid sentiam: puto fortiores esse eum qui in ipsa morte est quam qui circa mortem. Mors enim admota etiam imperitis animum dedit non vitandi inevitabilia; si gladiator tota pugna timidissimus iugulum adversario praestat et errantem gladium sibi attemperat. At illa quae in propinquo est utique ventura desiderat lentam animi firmitatem, quae est rarior nec potest nisi a sapiente praestari. [9] Libentissime itaque illum audiebam quasi ferentem de morte: sententiam et qualis esset eius natura velut propius inspectae indicantem. Plus, ut puto, fidei haberet apud te, plus ponderis, si quis revixisset et in morte nihil mali esse narraret expertus: accessus mortis quam perturbationem afferat optime tibi hi dicent qui secundum illam steterunt, qui venientem et viderunt et receperunt. [10] Inter hos Bassum licet numeres, qui nos decipi noluit. Is ait tam stultum esse qui mortem timeat quam qui senectutem; nam quemadmodum senectus adulescentiam sequitur, ita mors senectutem. Vivere noluit qui mori non vult; vita enim cum exceptione mortis data est; ad hanc itur. Quam ideo timere dementis est quia certa exspectantur, dubia metuuntur. [11] Mors necessitatem habet aequam et invictam: quis queri potest in ea condicione se esse in qua nemo non est? prima autem pars est aequitatis aequalitas. Sed nunc supervacuum est naturae causam agere, quae non aliam voluit legem nostram esse quam suam: quid quid composuit resolvit, et quidquid resolvit componit iterum. [12] Iam vero si cui contigit ut illum senectus leviter emitteret, non repente avulsum vitae sed minutatim subductum, o ne ille agere gratias diis omnibus debet quod satius ad requiem homini necessariam, lasso gratam perductus est. Vides quosdam optantes mortem, et quidem magis quam rogari solet vita. Nescio utros existimem maiorem nobis animum dare, qui deposcunt mortem an qui hilares eam quietique opperiantur, quoniam illud ex rabie interdum ac repentina indignatione fit, haec ex iudicio certo tranquillitas est. Venit aliquis ad mortem iratus: mortem venientem nemo hilaris excepit nisi qui se ad illam diu composuerat.

[13] Fateor ergo ad hominem mihi carum ex pluribus me causis frequentius venisse, ut scirem an illum totiens eundem invenirem, numquid cum corporis viribus minueretur animi vigor; qui sic

crescebat illi quomodo manifestior notari solet agitatorum laetitia cum septimo spatio palmae appropinquat. [14] Dicebat quidem ille Epicuri praeceptis obsequens, primum sperare se nullum dolorem esse in illo extremo anhelitu; si tamen esset, habere aliquantum in ipsa brevitate solacii; nullum enim dolorem longum esse qui magnus est. Ceterum succursurum sibi etiam in ipsa distractione animae corporis que, si cum cruciatu id fieret, post illum dolorem se dolere non posse. Non dubitare autem se quin senilis anima in primis labris esset nec magna vi distraheretur a corpore. ‘Ignis qui alentem materiam occupavit aqua et interdum ruina exstinguendus est: ille qui alimentis deficitur sua sponte subsidit.’ [15] Libenter haec, mi Lucili, audio non tamquam nova, sed tamquam in rem praesentem perductus. Quid ergo? non multos spectavi abrumpentes vitam? Ego vero vidi, sed plus momenti apud me habent qui ad mortem veniunt sine odio vitae et admittunt illam, non attrahunt. [16] Illud quidem aiebat tormentum nostra nos sentire opera, quod tunc trepidamus cum prope a nobis esse credimus mortem: a quo enim non prope est, parata omnibus locis omnibusque momentis? ‘Sed consideremus’ inquit ‘tunc cum aliqua causa moriendi videtur accedere, quanto aliae propiores sint quae non timentur.’ [17] Hostis alicui mortem minabatur, hanc cruditas occupavit. Si distinguere voluerimus causas metus nostri, inveniemus alias esse, alias videri. Non mortem timemus sed cogitationem mortis; ab ipsa enim semper tantundem absumus. Ita si timenda mors est, semper timenda est: quod enim morti tempus exemptum est?

[18] Sed vereri debeo ne tam longas epistulas peius quam mortem oderis. Itaque finem faciam: tu tamen mortem ut numquam timeas semper cogita. Vale.

XXXI. SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

[1] Agnosco Lucilium meum: incipit quem promiserat exhibere. Sequere illum impetum animi quo ad optima quaeque calcatis popularibus bonis ibas: non desidero maiorem melioremque te fieri quam moliebaris. Fundamenta tua multum loci occupaverunt: tantum effice quantum conatus es, et illa quae tecum in animo tulisti tracta.

[2] Ad summam sapiens eris, si cluseris aures, quibus ceram parum est obdere: firmiore spissamento opus est quam in sociis usum Ulixem ferunt. Illa vox quae timebatur erat blanda, non tamen publica: at haec quae timenda est non ex uno scopulo sed ex omni terrarum parte circumsonat. Praetervehere itaque non unum locum insidiosa voluptate suspectum, sed omnes urbes. Surdum te amantissimis tuis praesta: bono animo mala precantur. Et si esse vis felix, deos ora ne quid tibi ex his quae optantur eveniat. [3] Non sunt ista bona quae in te isti volunt congeri: unum bonum est, quod beatæ vitae causa et firmamentum est, sibi fidere. Hoc autem contingere non potest, nisi contemptus est labor et in eorum numero habitus quae neque bona sunt neque mala; fieri enim non potest ut una ulla res modo mala sit, modo bona, modo levis et perferenda, modo expavescenda. [4] Labor bonum non est: quid ergo est bonum? laboris contemptio. Itaque in vanum operosos culpaverim: rursus ad honesta nitentes, quanto magis incubuerint minus que sibi vinci ac strigare permiserint, admirabor et clamabo, 'tanto melior, surge et inspira et clivum istum uno si potes spiritu exsupera'. [5] Generosos animos labor nutrit. Non est ergo quod ex illo <voto> veterum parentum tuorum eligas quid contingere tibi velis, quid optes; et in totum iam per maxima acto viro turpe est etiam nunc deos fatigare. Quid votis opus est? fac te ipse felicem; facies autem, si intellexeris bona esse quibus admixta virtus est, turpia quibus malitia coniuncta est. Quemadmodum sine mixtura lucis nihil splendidum est, nihil atrum nisi quod tenebras habet aut aliquid in se traxit obscuri, quemadmodum sine adiutorio ignis nihil calidum est, nihil sine aere frigidum, ita honesta et turpia virtutis ac malitiae societas efficit. [6] Quid ergo est bonum? rerum scientia. Quid malum est? rerum imperitia. Ille prudens atque artifex pro tempore quaeque repellat aut

eliget; sed nec quae repellit timet nec miratur quae eligit, si modo magnus illi et invictus animus est. Summitti te ac deprimi veto. Laborem si non recuses, parum est: posce. [7] ‘Quid ergo?’ inquis ‘labor frivolus et supervacuus et quem humiles causae evocaverunt non est malus?’ Non magis quam ille qui pulchris rebus impenditur, quoniam animi est ipsa tolerantia quae se ad dura et aspera hortatur ac dicit, ‘quid cessas? non est viri timere sudorem’. [8] Huc et illud accedat, ut perfecta virtus sit, aequalitas ac tenor vitae per omnia consonans sibi, quod non potest esse nisi rerum scientia contingit et ars per quam humana ac divina noscantur. Hoc est summum bonum; quod si occupas, incipis deorum socius esse, non supplex. [9] ‘Quomodo’ inquis ‘isto pervenitur?’ Non per Poeninum Graiumve montem nec per deserta Candaviae; nec Syrtes tibi nec Scylla aut Charybdis adeundae sunt, quae tamen omnia transisti procuratiunculae pretio: tutum iter est, iucundum est, ad quod natura te instruxit. Dedit tibi illa quae si non deserueris, par deo surges. [10] Parem autem te deo pecunia non faciet: deus nihil habet Praetexta non faciet: deus nudus est. Fama non faciet nec ostentatio tui et in populos nominis dimissa notitia: nemo novit deum, multi de illo male existimant, et impune. Non turba servorum lecticam tuam per itinera urbana ac peregrina portantium: deus ille maximus potentissimusque ipse vehit omnia. Ne forma quidem et vires beatum te facere possunt: nihil horum patitur vetustatem. [11] Quaerendum est quod non fiat in dies peius, cui non possit obstari. Quid hoc est? animus, sed hic rectus, bonus, magnus. Quid aliud voces hunc quam deum in corpore humano hospitantem? Hic animus tam in equitem Romanum quam in libertinum, quam in servum potest cadere. Quid est enim eques Romanus aut libertinus aut servus? nomina ex ambitione aut iniuria nata. Subsilire in caelum ex angulo licet: exsurge modo

[...] et te quoque dignum
finge deo.

Finges autem non auro vel argento: non potest ex hac materia imago deo exprimi similis; cogita illos, cum propitii essent, fictiles fuisse. Vale.

XXXII. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Inquiro de te et ab omnibus sciscitor qui ex ista regione veniunt quid agas, ubi et cum quibus moreris. Verba dare non potes: tecum sum. Sic vive tamquam quid facias auditorus sim, immo tamquam visurus. Quaeris quid me maxime ex iis quae de te audio delectet? quod nihil audio, quod plerique ex iis quos interrogo nesciunt quid agas. [2] Hoc est salutare, non conversari dissimilibus et diversa cupientibus. Habeo quidem fiduciam non posse te detorqueri mansurumque in proposito, etiam si sollicitantium turba circumeat. Quid ergo est? non timeo ne mutant te, timeo ne impediant. Multum autem nocet etiam qui moratur, utique in tanta brevitate vitae, quam breviorē inconstantia facimus, aliud eius subinde atque aliud facientes initium; diducimus illam in particulas ac lancinamus. [3] Propera ergo, Lucili carissime, et cogita quantum additurus celeritati fueris, si a tergo hostis instaret, si equitem adventare suspicareris ac fugientium premer vestigia. Fit hoc, premeris: accelera et evade, perduc te in tutum et subinde considera quam pulchra res sit consummare vitam ante mortem, deinde exspectare securum reliquam temporis sui partem, nihil sibi, in possessione beatæ vitae positum, quae beatior non fit si longior. [4] O quando illud videbis tempus quo scies tempus ad te non pertinere, quo tranquillus placidusque eris et crastini neglegens et in summa tui satietate! Vis scire quid sit quod faciat homines avidos futuri? nemo sibi contigit. Optaverunt itaque tibi alia parentes tui; sed ego contra omnium tibi eorum contemptum opto quorum illi copiam. Vota illorum multos compilant ut te locupletent; quidquid ad te transferunt alicui detrahendum est. [5] Opto tibi tui facultatem, ut vagis cogitationibus agitata mens tandem resistat et certa sit, ut placeat sibi et intellectis veris bonis, quae simul intellecta sunt possidentur, aetatis adiectione non egeat. Ille demum necessitates supergressus est et exauctoratus ac liber qui vivit vita peracta.

XXXIII. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Desideras his quoque epistulis sicut prioribus adscribi aliquas voces nostrorum procerum. Non fuerunt circa flosculos occupati: totus contextus illorum virilis est. Inaequalitatem scias esse ubi quae eminent notabilia sunt: non est admirationi una arbor ubi in eandem altitudinem tota silva surrexit. [2] Eiusmodi vocibus referta sunt carmina, refertae historiae. Itaque nolo illas Epicuri existimes esse: publicae sunt et maxime nostrae, sed <in> illo magis adnotantur quia rarae interim interveniunt, quia inexpectatae, quia mirum est fortiter aliquid dici ab homine mollitiam professo. Ita enim plerique iudicant: apud me Epicurus est et fortis, licet manuleatus sit; fortitudo et industria et ad bellum prompta mens tam in Persas quam in alte cinctos cadit. [3] Non est ergo quod exigas excerpta et repetita: continuum est apud nostros quidquid apud alios excerpitur. Non habemus itaque ista oculiferia nec emptorem decipimus nihil inventurum cum intraverit praeter illa quae in fronte suspensa sunt: ipsis permittimus unde velint sumere exemplar. [4] Iam puta nos velle singulares sententias ex turba separare: cui illas assignabimus? Zenoni an Cleanthi an Chrysippo an Panaetio an Posidonio Non sumus sub rege: sibi quisque se vindicat. Apud istos quidquid Hermarchus dixit, quidquid Metrodorus, ad unum refertur; omnia quae quisquam in illo contubernio locutus est unius ductu et auspiciis dicta sunt. Non possumus, inquam, licet temptemus, educere aliquid ex tanta rerum aequalium multitudine:

pauperis est numerare pecus.

Quocumque miseris oculum, id tibi occurret quod eminere posset nisi inter paria legeretur. [5] Quare depone istam spem posse te summatim degustare ingenia maximorum virorum: tota tibi inspicienda sunt, tota tractanda. <Continuando> res geritur et per lineamenta sua ingenii opus nequitur ex quo nihil subduci sine ruina potest. Nec recuso quominus singula membra, dummodo in ipso homine, consideres: non est. formonsa cuius crus laudatur aut brachium, sed illa cuius universa facies admirationem partibus singulis abstulit. [6] Si tamen exegeris, non tam mendice tecum agam, sed plena manu fiet; ingens eorum turba est passim iacentium;

sumenda erunt, non colligenda. Non enim excidunt sed fluunt; perpetua et inter se contexta sunt. Nec dubito quin multum conferant rudibus adhuc et extrinsecus auscultantibus; facilius enim singula insidunt circumscripta et carminis modo inclusa. [7] Ideo pueris et sententias ediscendas damus et has quas Graeci chrias vocant, quia complecti illas puerilis animus potest, qui plus adhuc non capit. Certi profectus viro captare flosculos turpe est et fulcire se notissimis ac paucissimis vocibus et memoria stare: sibi iam innitatur. Dicat ista, non teneat; turpe est enim seni aut prospicienti senectutem ex commentario sapere. ‘Hoc Zenon dixit’: tu quid? ‘Hoc Cleanthes’: tu quid? Quousque sub alio moveris? impera et dic quod memoriae tradatur, aliquid et de tuo profer. [8] Omnes itaque istos, numquam auctores, semper interpretes, sub aliena umbra latentes, nihil existimo habere generosi, numquam ausos aliquando facere quod diu didicerant. Memoriam in alienis exercuerunt; aliud autem est meminisse, aliud scire. Meminisse est rem commissam memoriae custodire; at contra scire est et sua facere quaeque nec ad exemplar pendere et totiens respicere ad magistrum. [9] ‘Hoc dixit Zenon, hoc Cleanthes.’ Aliquid inter te intersit et librum. Quousque discas? iam et praecipe. Quid est quare audiam quod legere possum? ‘Multum’ inquit ‘viva vox facit.’ Non quidem haec quae alienis verbis commodatur et actuari vice fungitur. [10] Adice nunc quod isti qui numquam tutelae suae fiunt primum in ea re sequuntur priores in qua nemo non a priore descivit; deinde in ea re sequuntur quae adhuc quaeritur. Numquam autem invenietur, si contenti fuerimus inventis. Praeterea qui alium sequitur nihil invenit, immo nec quaerit. [11] Quid ergo? non ibo per priorum vestigia? ego vero utar via vetere, sed si propiorem planioremque invenero, hanc muniam. Qui ante nos ista moverunt non domini nostri sed duces sunt. Patet omnibus veritas; nondum est occupata; multum ex illa etiam futuris relictum est. Vale.

XXXIV. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Cresco et exulto et discussa senectute recalesco quotiens ex iis quae agis ac scribis intellego quantum te ipse - nam turbam olim reliqueras - superieceris. Si agricolam arbor ad fructum perducta delectat, si pastor ex fetu gregis sui capit voluptatem, si alumnum suum nemo aliter intuetur quam ut adulescentiam illius suam iudicet, quid evenire credis iis qui ingenia educaverunt et quae tenera formaverunt adulta subito vident? [2] Assero te mihi; meum opus es. Ego cum vidissem indolem tuam, inieci manum, exhortatus sum, addidi stimulos nec lente ire passus sum sed subinde incitavi; et nunc idem facio, sed iam currentem hortor et invicem hortantem. [3] 'Quid illud?' inquis 'adhuc volo.' In hoc plurimum est, non sic quomodo principia totius operis dimidium occupare dicuntur. Ista res animo constat; itaque pars magna bonitatis est velle fieri bonum. Scis quem bonum dicam? perfectum, absolutum, quem malum facere nulla vis, nulla necessitas possit. [4] Hunc te prospicio, si perseveraveris et incubueris et id egeris ut omnia facta dictaque tua inter se congruant ac respondeant sibi et una forma percussa sint. Non est huius animus in recto cuius acta discordant. Vale.

XXXV. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Cum te tam valde rogo ut studeas, meum negotium ago: habere amicum volo, quod contingere mihi, nisi pergis ut coepisti excolere te, non potest. Nunc enim amas me, amicus non es. 'Quid ergo? haec inter se diversa sunt?' immo dis similia. Qui amicus est amat; qui amat non utique amicus est; itaque amicitia semper prodest, amor aliquando etiam nocet. [2] Si nihil aliud, ob hoc profice, ut amare discas. Festina ergo dum mihi proficis, ne istuc alteri didiceris. Ego quidem percipio iam fructum, cum mihi fingo uno nos animo futuros et quidquid aetati meae vigoris abscessit, id ad me et tua, quamquam non multum abest, rediturum; sed tamen re quoque ipsa esse laetus volo. [3] Venit ad nos ex iis quos amamus etiam absentibus gaudium, sed id leve et evanidum: conspectus et praesentia et conversatio habet aliquid vivae voluptatis, utique si non tantum quem velis sed qualem velis videas. Affer itaque te mihi, ingens munus, et quo magis instes, cogita te mortalem esse, me senem. [4] Propera ad me, sed ad te prius. Profice et ante omnia hoc cura, ut constes tibi. Quotiens experiri voles an aliquid actum sit, observa an eadem hodie velis quae heri: mutatio voluntatis indicat animum natare, aliubi atque aliubi apparere, prout tulit ventus. Non vagatur quod fixum atque fundatum est: istud sapienti perfecto contingit, aliquatenus et proficienti provectoque. Quid ergo interest? hic commovetur quidem, non tamen transit, sed suo loco nutat; ille ne commovetur quidem. Vale.

XXXVI. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Amicum tuum hortare ut istos magno animo contemnat qui illum obiurgant quod umbram et otium petierit, quod dignitatem suam destituerit et, cum plus consequi posset, praetulerit quietem omnibus; quam utiliter suum negotium gesserit cotidie illis ostendet. Hi quibus invidetur non desinent transire: alii elidentur, alii cadent. Res est inquieta felicitas; ipsa se exagitat. Movet cerebrum non uno genere: alios in aliud irritat, hos in impotentiam, illos in luxuriam; hos inflat, illos mollit et totos resolvit. [2] 'At bene aliquis illam fert.' Sic, quomodo vinum. Itaque non est quod tibi isti persuadeant eum esse felicem qui a multis obsidetur: sic ad illum quemadmodum ad lacum concurritur, quem exhaustiunt et turbant. 'Nugatorium et inertem vocant.' Scis quosdam perverse loqui et significare contraria. Felicem vocabant: quid ergo? erat? [3] Ne illud quidem curo, quod quibusdam nimis horridi animi videtur et tetrici. Ariston aiebat malle se adolescentem tristem quam hilarem et amabilem turbae; vinum enim bonum fieri quod recens durum et asperum visum est; non pati aetatem quod in dolio placuit. Sine eum tristem appellent et inimicum processibus suis: bene se dabit in vetustate ipsa tristitia, perseveret modo colere virtutem, perbibere liberalia studia, non illa quibus perfundi satis est, sed haec quibus tingendus est animus. [4] Hoc est discendi tempus. 'Quid ergo? aliquod est quo non sit discendum?' Minime; sed quemadmodum omnibus annis studere honestum est, ita non omnibus institui. Turpis et ridicula res est elementarius senex: iuveni parandum, seni utendum est. Facies ergo rem utilissimam tibi, si illum quam optimum feceris; haec aiunt beneficia esse expetenda tribuendaque, non dubie primae sortis, quae tam dare prodest quam accipere. [5] Denique nihil illi iam liberi est, spopondit; minus autem turpe est creditori quam spei bonae decoquere. Ad illud aes alienum solvendum opus est negotianti navigatione prospera, agrum colenti ubertate eius quam colit terrae, caeli favore: ille quod debet sola potest voluntate persolvi. [6] In mores fortuna ius non habet. Hos disponat ut quam tranquillissimus ille animus ad perfectum veniat, qui nec ablatum sibi quicquam sentit nec adiectum, sed in eodem habitu est quomodocumque res cedunt;

cui sive aggeruntur vulgaria bona, supra res suas eminet, sive aliquid ex istis vel omnia casus excussit, minor non fit.

[7] Si in Parthia natus esset, arcum infans statim tenderet; si in Germania, protinus puer tenerum hastile vibraret; si avorum nostrorum temporibus fuisset, equitare et hostem comminus percutere didicisset. Haec singulis disciplina gentis suae suadet atque imperat. [8] Quid ergo huic meditandum est? quod adversus omnia tela, quod adversus omne hostium genus bene facit, mortem contemnere, quae quin habeat aliquid in se terribile, ut et animos nostros quos in amorem sui natura formavit offendat, nemo dubitat; nec enim opus esset in id comparari et acui in quod instinctu quodam voluntario iremus, sicut feruntur omnes ad conservationem sui. [9] Nemo discit ut si necesse fuerit aequo animo in rosa iaceat, sed in hoc duratur, ut tormentis non summittat fidem, ut si necesse fuerit stans etiam aliquando saucius pro vallo pervigilet et ne pilo quidem incumbat, quia solet obrepere interim somnus in aliquod adminiculum reclinatis. Mors nullum habet incommodum; esse enim debet aliquid cuius sit incommodum. [10] Quod si tanta cupiditas te longioris aevi tenet? cogita nihil eorum quae ab oculis abeunt et in rerum naturam, ex qua prodierunt ac mox processura sunt, reconduntur consumi: desinunt ista, non pereunt, et mors, quam pertimescimus ac recusamus, intermittit vitam, non eripit; veniet iterum qui nos in lucem reponat dies, quem multi recusarent nisi oblitos reduceret. [11] Sed postea diligentius docebo omnia quae videntur perire mutari. Aequo animo debet rediturus exire. Observa orbem rerum in se remeantium: videbis nihil in hoc mundo exstingui sed vicibus descendere ac surgere. Aestas abit, sed alter illam annus adducet; hiemps cecidit, referent illam sui menses; solem nox obruit, sed ipsam statim dies abiget. Stellarum iste discursus quidquid praeterit repetit; pars caeli levatur assidue, pars mergitur.

[12] Denique finem faciam, si hoc unum adiecero, nec infantes [nec] pueros nec mente lapsos timere mortem et esse turpissimum si eam securitatem nobis ratio non praestat ad quam stultitia perducit. Vale.

XXXVII. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Quod maximum vinculum est ad bonam mentem, promisisti virum bonum, sacramento rogatus es. Deridebit te, si quis tibi dixerit mollem esse militiam et facilem. Nolo te decipi. Eadem honestissimi huius et illius turpissimi auctoramenti verba sunt: ‘uri, vinciri ferroque necari’. [2] Ab illis qui manus harenae locant et edunt ac bibunt quae per sanguinem reddant cavetur ut ista vel inviti patiantur: a te ut volens libensque patiaris. Illis licet arma summittere, misericordiam populi temptare: tu neque summittes nec vitam rogabis; recta tibi invictoque moriendum est. Quid porro prodest paucos dies aut annos lucrificare? sine missione nascimur. [3] ‘Quomodo ergo’ inquis ‘me expediam?’ Effugere non potes necessitates, potes vincere.

Fit via <vi>;

et hanc tibi viam dabit philosophia. Ad hanc te confer si vis salvus esse, si securus, si beatus, denique si vis esse, quod est maximum, liber; hoc contingere aliter non potest. [4] Humilis res est stultitia, abiecta, sordida, servilis, multis affectibus et sacrissimis subiecta. Hos tam graves dominos, interdum alternis imperantes, interdum pariter, dimittit a te sapientia, quae sola libertas est. Una ad hanc fert via, et quidem recta; non aberrabis; vade certo gradu. Si vis omnia tibi subicere, te subice rationi; multos reges, si ratio te rexerit. Ab illa disces quid et quemadmodum aggredi debeas; non incides rebus. [5] Neminem mihi dabis qui sciat quomodo quod vult coeperit velle: non consilio adductus illo sed impetu impactus est. Non minus saepe fortuna in nos incurrit quam nos in illam. Turpe est non ire sed ferri, et subito in medio turbine rerum stupentem quaerere, ‘huc ego quemadmodum veni?’ Vale.

XXXVIII. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Merito exigis ut hoc inter nos epistularum commercium frequentemus. Plurimum proficit sermo, quia minutatim irrepit animo: disputationes praeparatae et effusae audiente populo plus habent strepitus, minus familiaritatis. Philosophia bonum consilium est: consilium nemo clare dat. Aliquando utendum est et illis, ut ita dicam, contionibus, ubi qui dubitat impellendus est; ubi vero non hoc agendum est, ut velit discere, sed ut discat, ad haec submissiora verba veniendum est. Facilius intrant et haerent; nec enim multis opus est sed efficacibus. [2] Seminis modo spargenda sunt, quod quamvis sit exiguum, cum occupavit idoneum locum, vires suas explicat et ex minimo in maximos auctus diffunditur. Idem facit ratio: non late patet, si aspicias; in opere crescit. Pauca sunt quae dicuntur, sed si illa animus bene exceperit, convalescunt et exsurgunt. Eadem est, inquam, praeceptorum condicio quae seminum: multum efficiunt, et angusta sunt. Tantum, ut dixi, idonea mens rapiat illa et in se trahat; multa invicem et ipsa generabit et plus reddet quam acceperit. Vale.

XXXIX. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Commentarios quos desideras, diligenter ordinatos et in angustum coactos, ego vero componam; sed vide ne plus profutura sit ratio ordinaria quam haec quae nunc vulgo breviarium dicitur, olim cum latine loqueremur summarium vocabatur. Illa res discenti magis necessaria est, haec scienti; illa enim docet, haec admonet. Sed utriusque rei tibi copiam faciam. Tu a me non est quod illum aut illum exigas: qui notorem dat ignotus est. [2] Scribam ergo quod vis, sed meo more; interim multos habes quorum scripta nescio an satis ordinentur. Sume in manus indicem philosophorum: haec ipsa res expergisci te coget, si videris quam multi tibi laboraverint. Concupisces et ipse ex illis unus esse; habet enim hoc optimum in se generosus animus, quod concitatur ad honesta. Neminem excelsi ingenii virum humilia delectant et sordida: magnarum rerum species ad se vocat et extollit. [3] Quemadmodum flamma surgit in rectum, iacere ac deprimi non potest, non magis quam quiescere, ita noster animus in motu est, eo mobiliior et actuosior quo vehementior fuerit. Sed felix qui ad meliora hunc impetum dedit: ponet se extra ius dicionemque fortunae; secunda temperabit, adversa comminuet et aliis admiranda despiciet. [4] Magni animi est magna contemnere ac mediocria malle quam nimia; illa enim utilia vitaliaque sunt, at haec eo quod superfluunt nocent. Sic segetem nimia sternit ubertas, sic rami onere franguntur, sic ad maturitatem non pervenit nimia fecunditas. Idem animis quoque evenit quos immoderata felicitas rumpit, qua non tantum in aliorum iniuriam sed etiam in suam utuntur. [5] Qui hostis in quemquam tam contumeliosus fuit quam in quosdam voluptates suae sunt? quorum impotentiae atque insanae libidini ob hoc unum possis ignoscere, quod quae fecere patiuntur. Nec immerito hic illos furor vexat; necesse est enim in immensum exeat cupiditas quae naturalem modum transilit. Ille enim habet suum finem, inania et ex libidine orta sine termino sunt. [6] Necessaria metitur utilitas: supervacua quo redigis? Voluptatibus itaque se mergunt quibus in consuetudinem adductis carere non possunt, et ob hoc miserrimi sunt, quod eo pervenerunt ut illis quae supervacua fuerant facta sint necessaria. Serviunt itaque voluptatibus, non

fruuntur, et mala sua, quod malorum ultimum est, et amant; tunc autem est consummata infelicitas, ubi turpia non solum delectant sed etiam placent, et desinit esse remedio locus ubi quae fuerant vitia mores sunt. Vale.

XL. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Quod frequenter mihi scribis gratias ago; nam quo uno modo potes te mihi ostendis. Numquam epistulam tuam accipio ut non protinus una simus. Si imagines nobis amicorum absentium iucundae sunt, quae memoriam renovant et desiderium [absentiae] falso atque inani solacio levant, quanto iucundiores sunt litterae, quae vera amici absentis vestigia, veras notas afferunt? Nam quod in conspectu dulcissimum est, id amici manus epistulae impressa praestat, agnoscere.

[2] Audisse te scribis Serapionem philosophum, cum istuc applicuisset: 'solet magno cursu verba convellere, quae non effundit +ima+ sed premit et arguet; plura enim veniunt quam quibus vox una sufficiat'. Hoc non probo in philosopho, cuius pronuntiatio quoque, sicut vita, debet esse composita; nihil autem ordinatum est quod praecipitatur et properat. Itaque oratio illa apud Homerum concitata et sine intermissione in morem nivis superveniens oratori data est, lenis et melle dulcior seni profluit. [3] Sic itaque habe: [ut] istam vim dicendi rapidam atque abundantem aptiorem esse circulanti quam agenti rem magnam ac seriam docentique. Aequae stillare illum nolo quam currere; nec extendat aures nec obruat. Nam illa quoque inopia et exilitas minus intentum auditorem habet taedio interruptae tarditatis; facilius tamen insidit quod exspectatur quam quod praetervolat. Venique tradere homines discipulis praecepta dicuntur: non traditur quod fugit. [4] Adice nunc quod quae veritati operam dat oratio incompressa esse debet et simplex: haec popularis nihil habet veri. Movere vult turbam et inconsultas aures impetu rapere, tractandam se non praebet, aufertur: quomodo autem regere potest quae regi non potest? Quid quod haec oratio quae sanandis mentibus adhibetur descendere in nos debet? remedia non prosunt nisi immorantur. [5] Multum praeterea habet inanitatis et vani, plus sonat quam valet. Lenienda sunt quae me exterrant, compescenda quae irritant, discutienda quae fallunt, inhibenda luxuria, corripienda avaritia: quid horum raptim potest fieri? quis medicus aegros in transitu curat? Quid quod ne voluptatem quidem ullam habet talis verborum sine dilectu ruentium strepitus? [6] Sed ut pleraque quae

fieri posse non crederes cognovisse satis est, ita istos qui verba exercuerunt abunde est semel audisse. Quid enim quis discere, quid imitari velit? quid de eorum animo iudicet quorum oratio perturbata et immissa est nec potest reprimi? [7] Quemadmodum per proclive currentium non ubi visum est gradus sistitur, sed incitato corporis ponderi servit ac longius quam voluit effertur, sic ista dicendi celeritas nec in sua potestate est nec satis decora philosophiae, quae ponere debet verba, non proicere, et pedetemptim procedere. [8] ‘Quid ergo? non aliquando et insurget?’ Quidni? sed salva dignitate morum, quam violenta ista et nimia vis exuit. Habeat vires magnas, moderatas tamen; perennis sit unda, non torrens. Vix oratori permiserim talem dicendi velocitatem inrevocabilem ac sine lege vadentem: quemadmodum enim iudex subsequi poterit aliquando etiam imperitus et rudis? Tum quoque, cum illum aut ostentatio abstulerit aut affectus impotens sui, tantum festinet atque ingerat quantum aures pati possunt.

[9] Recte ergo facies si non audieris istos qui quantum dicant, non quemadmodum quaerunt, et ipse malueris, si necesse est, +vel P. Vinicius dicere qui itaque+. Cum quaeretur quomodo P. Vinicius diceret, Asellius ait ‘tractim’. Nam Geminus Varius ait, ‘quomodo istum disertum dicatis nescio: tria verba non potest iungere’. Quidni malis tu sic dicere quomodo Vinicius? [10] Aliquis tam insulsus intervenerit quam qui illi singula verba vellenti, tamquam dictaret, non diceret, ait ‘dic, +numquam dicas+?’ Nam Q. Hateri cursum, suis temporibus oratoris celeberrimi, longe abesse ab homine sano volo: numquam dubitavit, numquam intermisit; semel incipiebat, semel desinebat.

[11] Quaedam tamen et nationibus puto magis aut minus convenire. In Graecis hanc licentiam tuleris: nos etiam cum scribimus interpungere assuevimus. Cicero quoque noster, a quo Romana eloquentia exsiluit, gradarius fuit. Romanus sermo magis se circumspicit et aestimat praebetque aestimandum. [12] Fabianus, vir egregius et vita et scientia et, quod post ista est, eloquentia quoque, disputabat expedite magis quam concitate, ut posses dicere facilitatem esse illam, non celeritatem. Hanc ego in viro sapiente recipio, non exigo; ut oratio eius sine impedimento exeat, proferatur tamen malo quam profluat. [13] Eo autem magis te deterreo ab isto

morbo quod non potest tibi ista res contingere aliter quam si te pudere desierit: perfrices frontem oportet et te ipse non audias; multa enim inobservatus ille cursus feret quae reprehendere velis. [14] Non potest, inquam, tibi contingere res ista salva verecundia. Praeterea exercitatione opus est cotidiana et a rebus studium transferendum est ad verba. Haec autem etiam si aderunt et poterunt sine ullo tuo labore decurrere, tamen temperanda sunt; nam quemadmodum sapienti viro incessus modestior convenit, ita oratio pressa, non audax. Summa ergo summarum haec erit: tardilocum esse te iubeo. Vale.

XLI. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Facis rem optimam et tibi salutarem si, ut scribis, perseveras ire ad bonam mentem, quam stultum est optare cum possis a te impetrare. Non sunt ad caelum elevandae manus nec exorandus aedituus ut nos ad aurem simulacri, quasi magis exaudiri possimus, admittat: prope est a te deus, tecum est, intus est. [2] Ita dico, Lucili: sacer intra nos spiritus sedet, malorum bonorumque nostrorum observator et custos; hic prout a nobis tractatus est, ita nos ipse tractat. Bonus vero vir sine deo nemo est: an potest aliquis supra fortunam nisi ab illo adiutus exsurgere? Ille dat consilia magnifica et erecta. In unoquoque virorum bonorum

[quis deus incertum est] habitat deus.

[3] Si tibi occurrerit vetustis arboribus et solitam altitudinem egressis frequens lucus et conspectum caeli <densitate> ramorum aliorum alios protegentium summovens, illa proceritas silvae et secretum loci et admiratio umbrae in aperto tam densae atque continuae fidem tibi numinis faciet. Si quis specus saxis penitus exesis montem suspenderit, non manu factus, sed naturalibus causis in tantam laxitatem excavatus, animum tuum quadam religionis suspicione percutiet. Magnorum fluminum capita veneramur; subita ex abdito vasti amnis eruptio aras habet; coluntur aquarum calentium fontes, et stagna quaedam vel opacitas vel immensa altitudo sacravit.

[4] Si hominem videris interritum periculis, intactum cupiditatibus, inter adversa felicem, in mediis tempestatibus placidum, ex superiore loco homines videntem, ex aequo deos, non subibit te veneratio eius? non dices, ‘ista res maior est altiorque quam ut credi similis huic in quo est corpusculo possit’? [5] Vis isto divina descendit; animum excellentem, moderatum, omnia tamquam minora transeuntem, quidquid timemus optamusque ridentem, caelestis potentia agit. Non potest res tanta sine adminiculo numinis stare; itaque maiore sui parte illic est unde descendit. Quemadmodum radii solis contingunt quidem terram sed ibi sunt unde mittuntur, sic animus magnus ac sacer et in hoc demissus, ut propius [quidem] divina nossemus, conversatur quidem nobiscum sed haeret origini suae; illinc pendet, illuc spectat ac nititur, nostris tamquam melior interest. [6] Quis est

ergo hic animus? qui nullo bono nisi suo nitet. Quid enim est stultius quam in homine aliena laudare? quid eo dementius qui ea miratur quae ad alium transferri protinus possunt? Non faciunt meliorem equum aurei freni. Aliter leo aurata iuba mittitur, dum contractatur et ad patientiam recipiendi ornamenti cogitur fatigatus, aliter incultus, integri spiritus: hic scilicet impetu acer, qualem illum natura esse voluit, speciosus ex horrido, cuius hic decor est, non sine timore aspici, praefertur illi languido et bratteato. [7] Nemo gloriari nisi suo debet. Vitem laudamus si fructu palmites onerat, si ipsa pondere [ad terram] eorum quae tulit adminicula deducit: num quis huic illam praeferret vitem cui aureae uvae, aurea folia dependent? Propria virtus est in vite fertilitas; in homine quoque id laudandum est quod ipsius est. Familiam formonsam habet et domum pulchram, multum serit, multum fenerat: nihil horum in ipso est sed circa ipsum. [8] Lauda in illo quod nec eripi potest nec dari, quod proprium hominis est. Quaeris quid sit? animus et ratio in animo perfecta. Rationale enim animal est homo; consummatur itaque bonum eius, si id implevit cui nascitur. Quid est autem quod ab illo ratio haec exigit? rem facillimam, secundum naturam suam vivere. Sed hanc difficilem facit communis insania: in vitia alter alterum trudimus. Quomodo autem revocari ad salutem possunt quos nemo retinet, populus impellit? Vale.

LIBER QUINTUS

XLII. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Iam tibi iste persuasit virum se bonum esse? Atqui vir bonus tam cito nec fieri potest nec intellegi. Scis quem nunc virum bonum dicam? hunc secundae notae; nam ille alter fortasse tamquam phoenix semel anno quingentesimo nascitur. Nec est mirum ex intervallo magna generari: mediocria et in turbam nascentia saepe fortuna producit, eximia vero ipsa raritate commendat. [2] Sed iste multum adhuc abest ab eo quod profitetur; et si sciret quid esset vir bonus, nondum esse se crederet, fortasse etiam fieri posse desperaret. ‘At male existimat de malis.’ Hoc etiam mali faciunt, nec ulla maior poena nequitiae est quam quod sibi ac suis displicet. [3] ‘At odit eos qui subita et magna potentia impotenter utuntur.’ Idem faciet cum idem potuerit. Multorum quia imbecilla sunt latent vitia, non minus ausura cum illis vires suae placuerint quam illa quae iam felicitas aperuit. Instrumenta illis explicandae nequitiae desunt. [4] Sic tuto serpens etiam pestifera tractatur dum riget frigore: non desunt tunc illi venena sed torpent. Multorum crudelitas et ambitio et luxuria, ut paria pessimis audeat, fortunae favore deficitur. Eadem velle [subaudi si] cognoscas: da posse quantum volunt. [5] Meministi, cum quendam affirmares esse in tua potestate, dixisse me volaticum esse ac levem et te non pedem eius tenere sed pinnam? Mentitus sum: pluma tenebatur, quam remisit et fugit. Scis quos postea tibi exhibuerit ludos, quam multa in caput suum casura temptaverit. Non videbat se per aliorum pericula in suum ruere non cogitabat quam onerosa essent quae petebat, etiam si supervacua non essent.

[6] Hoc itaque in his quae affectamus, ad quae labore magno contendimus, inspicere debemus, aut nihil in illis commodi esse aut plus incommodi: quaedam supervacua sunt, quaedam tanti non sunt. Sed hoc non pervidemus et gratuita nobis videntur quae carissime constant. [7] Ex eo licet stupor noster appareat, quod ea sola putamus emi pro quibus pecuniam solvimus, ea gratuita vocamus pro quibus nos ipsos impendimus. Quae emere nollemus si domus nobis nostra pro illis esset danda, si amoenum aliquod fructuosumve praedium, ad ea paratissimi sumus pervenire cum sollicitudine, cum periculo, cum iactura pudoris et libertatis et temporis; adeo nihil est cuique se

vilius. [8] Idem itaque in omnibus consiliis rebusque faciamus quod solemus facere quotiens ad institorem alicuius mercis accessimus: videamus hoc quod concupiscimus quanti deferatur. Saepe maximum pretium est pro quo nullum datur. Multa possum tibi ostendere quae acquisita acceptaque libertatem nobis extorserint; nostri essemus, si ista nostra non essent. [9] Haec ergo tecum ipse versa, non solum ubi de incremento agetur, sed etiam ubi de iactura. ‘Hoc perituum est.’ Nempe adventicium fuit; tam facile sine isto vives quam vixisti. Si diu illud habuisti, perdis postquam satiatus es; si non diu, perdis antequam assuescas. ‘Pecuniam minorem habebis.’ Nempe et molestiam. [10] ‘Gratiam minorem.’ Nempe et invidiam. Circumspice ista quae nos agunt in insaniam, quae cum plurimis lacrimis amittimus: scies non damnum in iis molestum esse, sed opinionem damni. Nemo illa perisse sentit sed cogitat. Qui se habet nihil perdidit: sed quoto cuique habere se contigit? Vale.

XLIII. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Quomodo hoc ad me pervenerit quaeris, quis mihi id te cogitare narraverit quod tu nulli narraveras? Is qui scit plurimum, rumor. ‘Quid ergo?’ inquis ‘tantus sum ut possim excitare rumorem?’ Non est quod te ad hunc locum respiciens metiaris: ad istum respice in quo moraris. [2] Quidquid inter vicina eminet magnum est illic ubi eminet; nam magnitudo non habet modum certum: comparatio illam aut tollit aut deprimit. Navis quae in flumine magna est in mari parvula est; gubernaculum quod alteri navi magnum alteri exiguum est. [3] Tu nunc in provincia, licet contemnas ipse te, magnus es. Quid agas, quemadmodum cenes, quemadmodum dormias, quaeritur, scitur: eo tibi diligentius vivendum est. Tunc autem felicem esse te iudica cum poteris in publico vivere, cum te parietes tui tegent, non abscondent, quos plerumque circumdatos nobis iudicamus non ut tutius vivamus, sed ut peccemus occultius. [4] Rem dicam ex qua mores aestimes nostros: vix quemquam invenies qui possit aperto ostio vivere. Ianitores conscientia nostra, non superbia opposuit: sic vivimus ut deprendi sit subito aspici. Quid autem prodest recondere se et oculos hominum auresque vitare? [5] Bona conscientia turbam advocat, mala etiam in solitudine anxia atque sollicita est. Si honesta sunt quae facis, omnes sciant; si turpia, quid refert neminem scire cum tu scias? O te miserum si contemnis hunc testem! Vale.

XLIV. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Iterum tu mihi te pusillum facis et dicis malignius tecum egisse naturam prius, deinde fortunam, cum possis eximere te vulgo et ad felicitatem hominum maximam emergere. Si quid est aliud in philosophia boni, hoc est, quod stemma non inspicit; omnes, si ad originem primam revocantur, a dis sunt. [2] Eques Romanus es, et ad hunc ordinem tua te perduxit industria; at mehercules multis quattuordecim clausa sunt, non omnes curia admittit, castra quoque quos ad laborem et periculum recipiant fastidiose legunt: bona mens omnibus patet, omnes ad hoc sumus nobiles. Nec reicit quemquam philosophia nec eligit: omnibus lucet. [3] Patricius Socrates non fuit; Cleanthes aquam traxit et rigando horto locavit manus; Platonem non accepit nobilem philosophia sed fecit: quid est quare desperes his te posse fieri parem? Omnes hi maiores tui sunt, si te illis geris dignum; geres autem, si hoc protinus tibi ipse persuaseris, a nullo te nobilitate superari. [4] Omnibus nobis totidem ante nos sunt; nullius non origo ultra memoriam iacet. Platon ait neminem regem non ex servis esse oriundum, neminem non servum ex regibus. Omnia ista longa varietas miscuit et sursum deorsum fortuna versavit. [5] Quis est generosus? ad virtutem bene a natura compositus. Hoc unum intuendum est: alioquin si ad vetera revocas, nemo non inde est ante quod nihil est. A primo mundi ortu usque in hoc tempus perduxit nos ex splendidis sordidisque alternata series. Non facit nobilem atrium plenum fumosis imaginibus; nemo in nostram gloriam vixit nec quod ante nos fuit nostrum est: animus facit nobilem, cui ex quacumque condicione supra fortunam licet surgere. [6] Puta itaque te non equitem Romanum esse sed libertinum: potes hoc consequi, ut solus sis liber inter ingenuos. 'Quomodo?' inquis. Si mala bonaque non populo auctore distineris. Intuendum est non unde veniant, sed quo eant. Si quid est quod vitam beatam potest facere, id bonum est suo iure; depravari enim in malum non potest. [7] Quid est ergo in quo erratur, cum omnes beatam vitam optent? quod instrumenta eius pro ipsa habent et illam dum petunt fugiunt. Nam cum summa vitae beatae sit solida securitas et eius inconcussa fiducia, sollicitudinis colligunt causas et per insidiosum iter vitae non tantum ferunt

sarcinas sed trahunt; ita longius ab effectu eius quod petunt semper abscedunt et quo plus operae impenderunt, hoc se magis impediunt et feruntur retro. Quod evenit in labyrintho properantibus: ipsa illos velocitas implicat. Vale.

XLV. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Librorum istic inopiam esse quereris. Non refert quam multos sed quam bonos habeas: lectio certa prodest, varia delectat. Qui quo destinavit pervenire vult unam sequatur viam, non per multas vagetur: non ire istuc sed errare est. [2] ‘Vellem’ inquis ‘<non> magis consilium mihi quam libros dares.’ Ego vero quoscumque habeo mittere paratus sum et totum horreum excutere; me quoque isto, si possem, transferrem, et nisi mature te finem officii sperarem impetraturum, hanc senilem expeditionem indixissem mihi nec me Charybdis et Scylla et fabulosum istud fretum deterrire potuissent. Transassem ista, non solum traiecissem, dummodo te complecti possem et praesens aestimare quantum animo crevisses.

[3] Ceterum quod libros meos tibi mitti desideras, non magis ideo me disertum puto quam formosum putarem si imaginem meam peteres. Indulgentiae scio istud esse, non iudici; et si modo iudici est, indulgentia tibi imposuit. [4] Sed qualescumque sunt, tu illos sic lege tamquam verum quaeram adhuc, non sciam, et contumaciter quaeram. Non enim me cuiquam emancipavi, nullius nomen fero; multum magnorum virorum iudicio credo, aliquid et meo vindico. Nam illi quoque non inventa sed quaerenda nobis reliquerunt, et invenissent forsitan necessaria nisi et supervacua quaesissent. [5] Multum illis temporis verborum cavillatio eripuit, captiosae disputationes quae acumen irritum exercent. Nectimus nodos et ambiguam significationem verbis illigamus ac deinde dissolvimus: tantum nobis vacat? iam vivere, iam mori scimus? Tota illo mente pergendum est ubi provideri debet ne res nos, non verba decipiant. [6] Quid mihi vocum similitudines distinguis, quibus nemo umquam nisi dum disputat captus est? Res fallunt: illas discerne. Pro bonis mala amplectimur; optamus contra id quod optavimus; pugnant vota nostra cum votis, consilia cum consilis. [7] Adulatio quam similis est amicitiae! Non imitatur tantum illam sed vincit et praeterit; apertis ac propitiis auribus recipitur et in praecordia ima descendit, eo ipso gratiosa quo laedit: doce quemadmodum hanc similitudinem possim dinoscere. Venit ad me pro amico blandus inimicus; vitia nobis sub virtutum nomine obrepunt: temeritas sub titulo fortitudinis latet,

moderatio vocatur ignavia, pro cauto timidus accipitur. In his magno periculo erramus: his certas notas imprime. [8] Ceterum qui interrogatur an cornua habeat non est tam stultus ut frontem suam temptet, nec rursus tam ineptus aut hebes ut nesciat <nisi> tu illi subtilissima collectione persuaseris. Sic ista sine noxa decipiunt quomodo praestigiatorum acetabula et calculi, in quibus me fallacia ipsa delectat. Effice ut quomodo fiat intellegam: perdidici lusum. Idem de istis captionibus dico - quo enim nomine potius sophismata appellem? -: nec ignorantia nocent nec scientiam iuvant.

[9] Si utique vis verborum ambiguitates diducere, hoc nos doce, beatum non eum esse quem vulgus appellat, ad quem pecunia magna confluit, sed illum cui bonum omne in animo est, erectum et excelsum et mirabilia calcantem, qui neminem videt cum quo se commutatum velit, qui hominem ea sola parte aestimat qua homo est, qui natura magistra utitur, ad illius leges componitur, sic vivit quomodo illa praescripsit; cui bona sua nulla vis excutit, qui mala in bonum vertit, certus iudicii, inconcussus, intrepidus; quem aliqua vis movet, nulla perturbat; quem fortuna, cum quod habuit telum nocentissimum vi maxima intorsit, pungit, non vulnerat, et hoc raro; nam cetera eius tela, quibus genus humanum debellatur, grandinis more dissultant, quae incussa tectis sine ullo habitatoris incommodo crepitat ac solvitur. [10] Quid me detines in eo quem tu ipse pseudomenon appellas, de quo tantum librorum compositum est? Ecce tota mihi vita mentitur: hanc coargue, hanc ad verum, si acutus es, redige. Necessaria iudicat quorum magna pars supervacua est; etiam quae non est supervacua nihil in se momenti habet in hoc, ut possit fortunatum beatumque praestare. Non enim statim bonum est, si quid necessarium est: aut proicimus bonum, si hoc nomen pani et polentae damus et ceteris sine quibus vita non ducitur. [11] Quod bonum est utique necessarium est: quod necessarium est non utique bonum est, quoniam quidem necessaria sunt quaedam eademque vilissima. Nemo usque eo dignitatem boni ignorat ut illud ad haec in diem utilia demittat. [12] Quid ergo? non eo potius curam transferes, ut ostendas omnibus magno temporis impendio quaeri supervacua et multos transisse vitam dum vitae instrumenta conquirunt? Recognosce singulos, considera universos: nullius non vita spectat in crastinum. [13] Quid in hoc sit mali quaeris? Infinitum. Non enim

vivunt sed victuri sunt: omnia differunt. Etiam si attenderemus, tamen nos vita praecurreret; nunc vero cunctantes quasi aliena transcurrit et ultimo die finitur, omni perit.

Sed ne epistolae modum excedam, quae non debet sinistram manum legentis implere, in alium diem hanc litem cum dialecticis differam nimium subtilibus et hoc solum curantibus, non et hoc. Vale.

XLVI. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Librum tuum quem mihi promiseras accepi et tamquam lecturus ex commodo adaperui ac tantum degustare volui; deinde blanditus est ipse ut procederem longius. Qui quam disertus fuerit ex hoc intellegas licet: levis mihi visus est, cum esset nec mei nec tui corporis, sed qui primo aspectu aut Titi Livii aut Epicuri posset videri. Tanta autem dulcedine me tenuit et traxit ut illum sine ulla dilatione perlegerim. Sol me invitabat, fames admonebat, nubes minabantur; tamen exhausti totum. [2] Non tantum delectatus sed gavisus sum. Quid ingenii iste habuit, quid animi! Dicerem 'quid impetus!', si interquievisset, si <ex> intervallo surrexisset; nunc non fuit impetus sed tenor. Compositio virilis et sancta; nihilominus interveniebat dulce illud et loco lene. Grandis, erectus es; hoc te volo tenere, sic ire. Fecit aliquid et materia; ideo eligenda est fertilis, quae capiat ingenium, quae incitet.

[3] <De> libro plura scribam cum illum retractavero; nunc parum mihi sedet iudicium, tamquam audierim illa, non legerim. Sine me et inquirere. Non est quod verearis: verum audies. O te hominem felicem, quod nihil habes propter quod quisquam tibi tam longe mentiatur! nisi quod iam etiam ubi causa sublata est mentimur consuetudinis causa. Vale.

XLVII. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Libenter ex iis qui a te veniunt cognovi familiariter te cum servis tuis vivere: hoc prudentiam tuam, hoc eruditionem decet. 'Servi sunt.' Immo homines. 'Servi sunt.' Immo contubernales. 'Servi sunt.' Immo humiles amici. 'Servi sunt.' Immo conservi, si cogitaveris tantundem in utrosque licere fortunae. [2] Itaque rideo istos qui turpe existimant cum servo suo cenare: quare, nisi quia superbissima consuetudo cenanti domino stantium servorum turbam circumdedit? Est ille plus quam capit, et ingenti aviditate onerat distentum ventrem ac desuetum iam ventris officio, ut maiore opera omnia egerat quam ingessit. [3] At infelicibus servis movere labra ne in hoc quidem ut loquantur, licet; virga murmur omne compescitur, et ne fortuita quidem verberibus excepta sunt, tussis, sternumenta, singultus; magno malo ulla voce interpellatum silentium luitur; nocte tota ieiuni mutique perstant. [4] Sic fit ut isti de domino loquantur quibus coram domino loqui non licet. At illi quibus non tantum coram dominis sed cum ipsis erat sermo, quorum os non consuebatur, parati erant pro domino porrigere cervicem, periculum imminens in caput suum avertere; in conviviis loquebantur, sed in tormentis tacebant. [5] Deinde eiusdem arrogantiae proverbium iactatur, totidem hostes esse quot servos: non habemus illos hostes sed facimus. Alia interim crudelia, inhumana praetereo, quod ne tamquam hominibus quidem sed tamquam iumentis abutimur. [quod] Cum ad cenandum discubuimus, alius sputa deterget, alius reliquias temulentorum <toro> subditus colligit. [6] Alius pretiosas aves scindit; per pectus et clunes certis ductibus circumferens eruditam manum frustra excutit, infelix, qui huic uni rei vivit, ut altitia decenter secet, nisi quod miserior est qui hoc voluptatis causa docet quam qui necessitatis discit. [7] Alius vini minister in muliebrem modum ornatus cum aetate luctatur: non potest effugere pueritiam, retrahitur, iamque militari habitu glaber retrit pilis aut penitus evulsis tota nocte pervigilat, quam inter ebrietatem domini ac libidinem dividit et in cubiculo vir, in convivio puer est. [8] Alius, cui convivarum censura permissa est, perstat infelix et exspectat quos adulatio et intemperantia aut gulae aut linguae revocet in crastinum. Adice

obsonatores quibus dominici palati notitia subtilis est, qui sciunt cuius illum rei sapor excitet, cuius delectet aspectus, cuius novitate nauseabundus erigi possit, quid iam ipsa satietate fastidiat, quid illo die esuriat. Cum his cenare non sustinet et maiestatis suae deminutionem putat ad eandem mensam cum servo suo accedere. Di melius! quot ex istis dominos habet! [9] Stare ante limen Callisti domini suum vidi et eum qui illi impegerat titulum, qui inter reicula manicipia produxerat, aliis intransitibus excludi. Rettulit illi gratiam servus ille in primam decuriam coniectus, in qua vocem praeco experitur: et ipse illum invicem apologavit, et ipse non iudicavit domo sua dignum. Dominus Callistum vendidit: sed domino quam multa Callistus!

[10] Vis tu cogitare istum quem servum tuum vocas ex isdem seminibus ortum eodem frui caelo, aequae spirare, aequae vivere, aequae mori! tam tu illum videre ingenuum potes quam ille te servum. Variana clade multos splendidissime natos, senatorium per militiam auspicantes gradum, fortuna depressit: alium ex illis pastorem, alium custodem casae fecit. Contemne nunc eius fortunae hominem in quam transire dum contemnis potes.

[11] Nolo in ingentem me locum immittere et de usu servorum disputare, in quos superbissimi, crudelissimi, contumeliosissimi sumus. Haec tamen praecepti mei summa est: sic cum inferiore vivas quemadmodum tecum superiorem velis vivere. Quotiens in mentem venerit quantum tibi in servum <tuum> liceat, veniat in mentem tantundem in te domino tuo licere. [12] ‘At ego’ inquis ‘nullum habeo dominum.’ Bona aetas est: forsitan habebis. Nescis qua aetate Hecuba servire coeperit, qua Croesus, qua Darei mater, qua Platon, qua Diogenes? [13] Vive cum servo clementer, comiter quoque, et in sermonem illum admitte et in consilium et in convictum.

Hoc loco acclamabit mihi tota manus delicatarum ‘nihil hac re humilior, nihil turpius’. Hos ego eosdem deprehendam alienorum servorum osculantes manum. [14] Ne illud quidem videtis, quam omnem invidiam maiores nostri dominis, omnem contumeliam servis detraxerint? Dominum patrem familiae appellaverunt, servos - quod etiam in mimis adhuc durat - familiares; instituerunt diem festum, non quo solo cum servis domini vescerentur, sed quo utique; honores illis in domo gerere, ius dicere permiserunt et domum pusillam rem

publicam esse iudicaverunt. [15] ‘Quid ergo? omnes servos admovebo mensae meae?’ Non magis quam omnes liberos. Erras si existimas me quosdam quasi sordidioris operae reiecturum, ut puta illum mulionem et illum bubulcum. Non ministeriis illos aestimabo sed moribus: sibi quisque dat mores, ministeria casus assignat. Quidam cenent tecum quia digni sunt, quidam ut sint; si quid enim in illis ex sordida conversatione servile est, honestiorum convictus excutiet. [16] Non est, mi Lucili, quod amicum tantum in foro et in curia quaeras: si diligenter attenderis, et domi invenies. Saepe bona materia cessat sine artifice: tempta et experire. Quemadmodum stultus est qui equum empturus non ipsum inspicit sed stratum eius ac frenos, sic stultissimus est qui hominem aut ex veste aut ex condicione, quae vestis modo nobis circumdata est, aestimat. [17] ‘Servus est.’ Sed fortasse liber animo. ‘Servus est.’ Hoc illi nocebit? Ostende quis non sit: alius libidini servit, alius avaritiae, alius ambitioni, <omnes spei>, omnes timori. Dabo consularem aniculae servientem, dabo ancillulae divitem, ostendam nobilissimos iuvenes mancipia pantomimorum: nulla servitus turpior est quam voluntaria. Quare non est quod fastidiosi isti te deterreant quominus servis tuis hilarem te praestes et non superbe superiorem: colant potius te quam timeant.

[18] Dicit aliquis nunc me vocare ad pilleum servos et dominos de fastigio suo deicere, quod dixi, ‘colant potius dominum quam timeant’. ‘Ita’ inquit ‘prorsus? colant tamquam clientes, tamquam salutatores?’ Hoc qui dixerit obliviscetur id dominis parum non esse quod deo sat est. Qui colitur, et amatur: non potest amor cum timore misceri. [19] Rectissime ergo facere te iudico quod timeri a servis tuis non vis, quod verborum castigatione uteris: verberibus muta admonentur. Non quidquid nos offendit et laedit; sed ad rabiem cogunt pervenire deliciae, ut quidquid non ex voluntate respondit iram evocet. [20] Regum nobis induimus animos; nam illi quoque obliti et suarum virium et imbecillitatis alienae sic excandescunt, sic saeviunt, quasi iniuriam acceperint, a cuius rei periculo illos fortunae suae magnitudo tutissimos praestat. Nec hoc ignorant, sed occasionem nocendi captant querendo; acceperunt iniuriam ut facerent.

[21] Diutius te morari nolo; non est enim tibi exhortatione opus. Hoc habent inter cetera boni mores: placent sibi, permanent. Levis

est malitia, saepe mutatur, non in melius sed in aliud. Vale.

XLVIII. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Ad epistulam quam mihi ex itinere misisti, tam longam quam ipsum iter fuit, postea rescribam; seducere me debeo et quid suadeam circumspicere. Nam tu quoque, qui consulis, diu an consuleres cogitasti: quanto magis hoc mihi faciendum est, cum longiore mora opus sit ut solvas quaestionem quam ut proponas? utique cum aliud tibi expediat, aliud mihi. [2] Iterum ego tamquam Epicureus loquor? mihi vero idem expedit quod tibi: aut non sum amicus, nisi quidquid agitur ad te pertinens meum est. Consortium rerum omnium inter nos facit amicitia; nec secundi quicquam singulis est nec adversi; in commune vivitur. Nec potest quisquam beate degere qui se tantum intuetur, qui omnia ad utilitates suas convertit: alteri vivas oportet, si vis tibi vivere. [3] Haec societas diligenter et sancte observata, quae nos homines hominibus miscet et iudicat aliquod esse commune ius generis humani, plurimum ad illam quoque de qua loquebar interiorem societatem amicitiae colendam proficit; omnia enim cum amico communia habebit qui multa cum homine.

[4] Hoc, Lucili virorum optime, mihi ab istis subtilibus praecipi malo, quid amico praestare debeam, quid homini, quam quot modis ‘amicus’ dicatur, et ‘homo’ quam multa significet. In diversum ecce sapientia et stultitia discedunt! cui accedo? in utram ire partem iubes? Illi homo pro amico est, huic amicus non est pro homine; ille amicum sibi parat, hic se amico: tu mihi verba distorques et syllabas digeris. [5] Scilicet nisi interrogationes vaferrimas struxero et conclusione falsa a vero nascens mendacium adstrinxero, non potero a fugiendis petenda secernere. Pudet me: in re tam seria senes ludimus. [Vale. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM.]

[6] ‘Mus syllaba est; mus autem caseum rodit; syllaba ergo caseum rodit.’ Puta nunc me istuc non posse solvere: quod mihi ex ista inscientia periculum imminet? quod incommodum? Sine dubio verendum est ne quando in muscipulo syllabas capiam, aut ne quando, si negligentior fuero, caseum liber comedat. Nisi forte illa acutior est collectio: ‘mus syllaba est; syllaba autem caseum non rodit; mus ergo caseum non rodit’. [7] O pueriles ineptias! in hoc supercilia subduximus? in hoc barbam demisimus? hoc est quod

tristes docemus et pallidi? Vis scire quid philosophia promittat generi humano? consilium. Alium mors vocat, alium paupertas urit, alium divitiae vel alienae torquent vel suae; ille malam fortunam horret, hic se felicitati suae subducere cupit; hunc homines male habent, illum dii. Quid mihi lusoria ista componis? non est iocandi locus: ad miseros advocatus es. Opem laturum te naufragis, captis, aegris, egentibus, intentae securi subiectum praestantibus caput pollicitus es: quo diverteris? quid agis? Hic cum quo ludis timet: succurre, quidquid Ålaqueti respondentium poenisÅ. Omnes undique ad te manus tendunt, perditae vitae perituraeque auxilium aliquod implorant, in te spes opesque sunt; rogant ut ex tanta illos volutatione extrahas, ut disiectis et errantibus clarum veritatis lumen ostendas. [9] Dic quid natura necessarium fecerit, quid supervacuum, quam faciles <leges> posuerit, quam iucunda sit vita, quam expedita illas sequentibus, quam acerba et implicita eorum qui opinioni plus quam naturae crediderunt * * * si prius docueris quam partem eorum levatura sint. Quid istorum cupiditates demit? quid temperat? Utinam tantum non prodessent! nocent. Hoc tibi cum voles manifestissimum faciam, comminui et debilitari generosam indolem in istas argutias coniectam. [10] Pudet dicere contra fortunam militaturis quae porrigant tela, quemadmodum illos subornent. Hac ad summum bonum itur? per istud philosophiae ‘sive nive’ et turpes infamesque etiam ad album sedentibus exceptiones? Quid enim aliud agitis, cum eum quem interrogatis scientes in fraudem inducitis, quam ut formula cecidisse videatur? Sed quemadmodum illos praetor, sic hos philosophia in integrum restituit. [11] Quid disceditis ab ingentibus promissis et grandia locuti, effecturos vos ut non magis auri fulgor quam gladii praestringat oculos meos, ut ingenti constantia et quod omnes optant et quod omnes timent calcem, ad grammaticorum elementa descenditis? Quid dicitis?

sic itur ad astra

Hoc enim est quod mihi philosophia promittit, ut parem deo faciat; ad hoc invitatus sum, ad hoc veni: fidem praesta.

[12] Quantum potes ergo, mi Lucili, reduc te ab istis exceptionibus et praescriptionibus philosophorum: aperta decent et simplicia bonitatem. Etiam si multum superesset aetatis, parce dispensandum erat ut sufficeret necessariis: nunc quae dementia est supervacua

discere in tanta temporis egestate! Vale.

XLIX. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Est quidem, mi Lucili, supinus et negligens qui in amici memoriam ab aliqua regione admonitus reducitur; tamen repositum in animo nostro desiderium loca interdum familiaria evocant, nec exstinctam memoriam reddunt sed quiescentem irritant, sicut dolorem lugentium, etiam si mitigatus est tempore, aut servulus familiaris amisso aut vestis aut domus renovat. Ecce Campania et maxime Neapolis ac Pompeiorum tuorum conspectus incredibile est quam recens desiderium tui fecerint: totus mihi in oculis es. Cum maxime a te discedo; video lacrimas combibentem et affectibus tuis inter ipsam coercionem exeuntibus non satis resistantem.

[2] Modo amisisse te videor; quid enim non 'modo' est, si recorderis? Modo apud Sotionem philosophum puer sedi, modo causas agere coepi, modo desii velle agere, modo desii posse. Infinita est velocitas temporis, quae magis apparet respicientibus. Nam ad praesentia intentos fallit; adeo praecipitis fugae transitus lenis est. [3] Causam huius rei quaeris? quidquid temporis transit eodem loco est; pariter aspicitur, una iacet; omnia in idem profundum cadunt. Et alioqui non possunt longa intervalla esse in ea re quae tota brevis est. Punctum est quod vivimus et adhuc puncto minus; sed et hoc minimum specie quadam longioris spatii natura derisit: aliud ex hoc infantiam fecit, aliud pueritiam, aliud adulescentiam, aliud inclinationem quandam ab adulescentia ad senectutem, aliud ipsam senectutem. In quam angusto quodam quot gradus posuit! [4] Modo te prosecutus sum; et tamen hoc 'modo' aetatis nostrae bona portio est, cuius breviter aliquando defecturam cogitemus. Non solebat mihi tam velox tempus videri: nunc incredibilis cursus apparet, sive quia admoveri lineas sentio, sive quia attendere coepi et computare damnum meum.

Eo magis itaque indignor aliquos ex hoc tempore quod sufficere ne ad necessaria quidem potest, [5] etiam si custoditum diligentissime fuerit, in supervacua maiorem partem erogare. Negat Cicero, si duplicetur sibi aetas, habiturum se tempus quo legat lyricos: eodem loco <pono> dialecticos: tristius inepti sunt. Illi ex professo lasciviunt, hi agere ipsos aliquid existimant. [6] Nec ego nego

prospicienda ista, sed prospicienda tantum et a limine salutanda, in hoc unum, ne verba nobis dentur et aliquid esse in illis magni ac secreti boni iudicemus. Quid te torques et maceras in ea quaestione quam subtilius est contempsisse quam solvere? Securi est et ex commodo migrantis minuta conquirere: cum hostis instat a tergo et movere se iussus est miles, necessitas excutit quidquid pax otiosa collegerat. [7] Non vacat mihi verba dubie cadentia consecrari et vafritiam in illis meam experiri.

Aspice qui coeant populi, quae moenia clusis
ferrum acuant portis.

Magno mihi animo strepitus iste belli circumsonantis exaudiendus est. [8] Demens omnibus merito viderer, si cum saxa in munimentum murorum senes feminaeque congererent, cum iuventus intra portas armata signum eruptionis exspectaret aut posceret, cum hostilia in portis tela vibrarent et ipsum solum suffossionibus et cuniculis tremere, sederem otiosus et eiusmodi quaestiunculas ponens: ‘quod non perdidisti habes; cornua autem non perdidisti; cornua ergo habes’ aliaque ad exemplum huius acutae delirationis concinnata. [9] Atqui aequae licet tibi demens videar si istis impendero operam: et nunc obsideor. Tunc tamen periculum mihi obsessio externum immineret, murus me ab hoste secerneret: nunc mortifera mecum sunt. Non vaco ad istas ineptias; ingens negotium in manibus est. Quid agam? mors me sequitur, fugit vita. [10] Adversus haec me doce aliquid; effice ut ego mortem non fugiam, vita me non effugiat. Exhortare adversus difficilia, [de aequanimitate] adversus inevitabilia; angustias temporis mei laxa. Doce non esse positum bonum vitae in spatio eius sed in usu posse fieri, immo saepissime fieri, ut qui diu vixit parum vixerit. Dic mihi dormituro ‘potes non expergisci’; dic experrecto ‘potes non dormire amplius’. Dic exeunti ‘potes non reverti’; dic redeunti ‘potes non exire’. [11] Erras si in navigatione tantum existimas minimum esse quo <a> morte vita diducitur: in omni loco aequae tenue intervallum est. Non ubique se mors tam prope ostendit: ubique tam prope est. Has tenebras discute, et facilius ea trades ad quae praeparatus sum. Dociles natura nos edidit, et rationem dedit imperfectam, sed quae perfici posset. [12] De

iustitia mihi, de pietate disputa, de frugalitate, de pudicitia utraque, et illa cui alieni corporis abstinencia est, et hac cui sui cura. Si me nolueris per devia ducere, facilius ad id quo tendo perveniam; nam, ut ait ille tragicus, 'veritatis simplex oratio est', ideoque illam implicari non oportet; nec enim quicquam minus convenit quam subdola ista calliditas animis magna conantibus. Vale.

L. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Epistulam tuam accepi post multos menses quam miseras; supervacuum itaque putavi ab eo qui afferebat quid ageres quaerere. Valde enim bonae memoriae est, si meminit; et tamen spero te sic iam vivere ut, ubicumque eris, sciam quid agas. Quid enim aliud agis quam ut meliorem te ipse cotidie facias, ut aliquid ex erroribus ponas, ut intellegas tua vitia esse quae putas rerum? Quaedam enim locis et temporibus adscribimus; at illa, quocumque transierimus, secutura sunt. [2] Harpasten, uxoris meae fatuam, scis hereditarium onus in domo mea remansisse. Ipse enim aversissimus ab istis prodigiis sum; si quando fatuo delectari volo, non est mihi longe quaerendus: me rideo. Haec fatua subito desiit videre. Incredibilem rem tibi narro, sed veram: nescit esse se caecam; subinde paedagogum suum rogat ut migret, ait domum tenebricosam esse. [3] Hoc quod in illa ridemus omnibus nobis accidere liqueat tibi: nemo se avarum esse intellegit, nemo cupidum. Caeci tamen ducem quaerunt, nos sine duce erramus et dicimus, 'non ego ambitiosus sum, sed nemo aliter Romae potest vivere; non ego sumptuosus sum, sed urbs ipsa magnas impensas exigit; non est meum vitium quod iracundus sum, quod nondum constitui certum genus vitae: adulescentia haec facit'.

[4] Quid nos decipimus? non est extrinsecus malum nostrum: intra nos est, in visceribus ipsis sedet, et ideo difficulter ad sanitatem pervenimus quia nos aegrotare nescimus. Si curari coeperimus, quando tot morborum tantas vires discutiemus? Nunc vero ne quaerimus quidem medicum, qui minus negotii haberet si adhiberetur ad recens vitium; sequerentur teneri et rudes animi recta monstrantem. [5] Nemo difficulter ad naturam reducitur nisi qui ab illa defecit: erubescimus discere bonam mentem. At mehercules, <si> turpe est magistrum huius rei quaerere, illud desperandum est, posse nobis casu tantum bonum influere: laborandum est et, ut verum dicam, ne labor quidem magnus est, s modo, ut dixi, ante animum nostrum formare incipimus et recorrigere quam indurescat pravitas eius. [6] Sed nec indurata despero: nihil est quod non expugnet pertinax opera et intenta ac diligens cura. Robora m rectum quamvis

flexa revocabis; curvatas trabes calor explicat et aliter natae in id finguntur quod usus noster exigit: quanto facilius animus accipit formam, flexibilis et omni umore obsequentior! Quid enim est aliud animus quam quodam modo se habens spiritus? vides autem tanto spiritum esse faciliorem omni alia materia quanto tenuior est. [7] Illud, mi Lucili, non est quod te impediat quominus de nobis bene speres, quod malitia nos iam tenet, quod diu in possessione nostri est: ad neminem ante bona mens venit quam mala; omnes praeoccupati sumus; virtutes discere vitia dediscere <est>. [8] Sed eo maiore animo ad emendationem nostri debemus accedere quod semel traditi nobis boni perpetua possessio est; non dediscitur virtus. Contraria enim male in alieno haerent, ideo depelli et exturbari possunt; fideliter sedent quae in locum suum veniunt. Virtus secundum naturam est, vitia inimica et infesta sunt. [9] Sed quemadmodum virtutes receptae exire non possunt facilisque earum tutela est, ita initium ad illas eundi arduum, quia hoc proprium imbecillae mentis atque aegrae est, formidare inexperta; itaque cogenda est ut incipiat. Deinde non est acerba medicina; protinus enim delectat, dum sanat. Aliorum remediorum post sanitatem voluptas est, philosophia pariter et salutaris et dulcis est. Vale.

LI. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Quomodo quisque potest, mi Lucili: tu istic habes Aetnam, <et illuc> nobilissimum Siciliae montem - quem quare dixerit Messala unicum, sive Valgius, apud utrumque enim legi, non reperio, cum plurima loca evomant ignem, non tantum edita, quod crebrius evenit, videlicet quia ignis in altissimum effertur, sed etiam iacentia -, nos, utcumque possumus, contenti sumus Bais; quas postero die quam attigeram reliqui, locum ob hoc devitandum, cum habeat quasdam naturales dotes, quia illum sibi celebrandum luxuria desumpsit.

[2] 'Quid ergo? ulli loco indicendum est odium?' Minime; sed quemadmodum aliqua vestis sapienti ac probo viro magis convenit quam aliqua, nec ullum colorem ille odit sed aliquem parum putat aptum esse frugalitatem professo, sic regio quoque est quam sapiens vir aut ad sapientiam tendens declinet tamquam alienam bonis moribus. [3] Itaque de secessu cogitans numquam Canopum eliget, quamvis neminem Canopus esse frugi vetet, ne Baias quidem: deversorium vitiorum esse coeperunt. Illic sibi plurimum luxuria permittit, illic, tamquam aliqua licentia debeatur loco, magis solvitur.

[4] Non tantum corpori sed etiam moribus salubrem locum eligere debemus; quemadmodum inter tortores habitare nolim, sic ne inter popinas quidem. Videre ebrios per litora errantes et comessiones navigantium et symphoniarum cantibus strepentes lacus et alia quae velut soluta legibus luxuria non tantum peccat sed publicat, quid necesse est?

[5] Id agere debemus ut irritamenta vitiorum quam longissime profugiamus; indurandus est animus et a blandimentis voluptatum procul abstrahendus. Una Hannibalem hiberna solverunt et indomitum illum nivibus atque Alpibus virum enervaverunt fomenta Campaniae: armis vicit, vitiis victus est. [6] Nobis quoque militandum est, et quidem genere militiae quo numquam quies, numquam otium datur: debellandae sunt in primis voluptates, quae, ut vides, saeva quoque ad se ingenia rapuerunt. Si quis sibi proposuerit quantum operis aggressus sit, sciet nihil delicate, nihil molliter esse faciendum. Quid mihi cum istis calentibus stagnis? quid cum sudatoriis, in quae siccus vapor corpora exhausurus includitur? omnis sudor per laborem exeat. [7] Si faceremus quod fecit Hannibal,

ut interrupto cursu rerum omissoque bello fovendis corporibus operam daremus, nemo non intempestivam desidiam, victori quoque, nedum vincenti, periculosam, merito reprehenderet: minus nobis quam illis Punica signa sequentibus licet, plus periculi restat cedentibus, plus operis etiam perseverantibus. [8] Fortuna mecum bellum gerit: non sum imperata facturus; iugum non recipio, immo, quod maiore virtute faciendum est, excutio. Non est emolliendus animus: si voluptati cessero, cedendum est dolori, cedendum est labori, cedendum est paupertati; idem sibi in me iuris esse volet et ambitio et ira; inter tot affectus distrahar, immo discerpar. [9] Libertas proposita est; ad hoc praemium laboratur. Quae sit libertas quaeris? Nulli rei servire, nulli necessitati, nullis casibus, fortunam in aequum deducere. Quo die illam intellexero plus posse, nil poterit: ego illam feram, cum in manu mors sit?

[10] His cogitationibus intentum loca seria sanctaque eligere oportet; effeminat animos amoenitas nimia, nec dubie aliquid ad corrumpendum vigorem potest regio. Quamlibet viam iumenta patiuntur quorum durata in aspero ungula est: in molli palustrique pascuo saginata cito subteruntur. Et fortior miles ex confragoso venit: segnis est urbanus et verna. Nullum laborem recusant manus quae ad arma ab aratro transferuntur: in primo deficit pulvere ille unctus et nitidus. [11] Severior loci disciplina firmat ingenium aptumque magnis conatibus reddit. Literni honestius Scipio quam Bais exulabat: ruina eiusmodi non est tam molliter collocanda. Illi quoque ad quos primos fortuna populi Romani publicas opes transtulit, C. Marius et Cn. Pompeius et Caesar, extruxerunt quidem villas in regione Baiana, sed illas imposuerunt summis iugis montium: videbatur hoc magis militare, ex edito speculari late longeque subiecta. Aspice quam positionem elegerint, quibus aedificia excitaverint locis et qualia: scies non villas esse sed castra.

[12] Habitaturum tu putas umquam fuisse illic M. Catonem, ut praenavigantes adulteras dinumeraret et tot genera cumbarum variis coloribus picta et fluviantem toto lacu rosam, ut audiret canentium nocturna convicia? nonne ille manere intra vallum maluisset, quod in unam noctem manu sua ipse duxisset? Quidni mallet, quisquis vir est, somnum suum classico quam symphonia rumpi?

[13] Sed satis diu cum Bais litigavimus, numquam satis cum vitiis,

quae, oro te, Lucili, persequere sine modo, sine fine; nam illis quoque nec finis est nec modus. Proice quaecumque cor tuum laniant, quae si aliter extrahi nequirent, cor ipsum cum illis reveliendum erat. Voluptates praecipue exturba et invisissimas habe: latronum more, quos ‘philêtas’ Aegyptii vocant, in hoc nos amplectuntur, ut strangulent. Vale.

LII. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Quid est hoc, Lucili, quod nos alio tendentes alio trahit et eo unde recedere cupimus impellit? quid colluctatur cum animo nostro nec permittit nobis quicquam semel velle? Fluctuamur inter varia consilia; nihil libere volumus, nihil absolute, nihil semper. [2] ‘Stultitia’ inquis ‘est cui nihil constat, nihil diu placet.’ Sed quomodo nos aut quando ab illa revellemus? Nemo per se satis valet ut emergat; oportet manum aliquis porrigat, aliquis educat. [3] Quosdam ait Epicurus ad veritatem sine ullius adiutorio exisse, fecisse sibi ipsos viam; hos maxime laudat quibus ex se impetus fuit, qui se ipsi protulerunt: quosdam indigere ope aliena, non ituros si nemo praecesserit, sed bene secuturos. Ex his Metrodorum ait esse; egregium hoc quoque, sed secundae sortis ingenium. Nos ex illa prima nota non sumus; bene nobiscum agitur, si in secundam recipimur. Ne hunc quidem contempseris hominem qui alieno beneficio esse salvus potest; et hoc multum est, velle servari. [4] Praeter haec adhuc invenies genus aliud hominum ne ipsum quidem fastidiendum eorum qui cogi ad rectum compellique possunt, quibus non duce tantum opus sit sed adiutore et, ut ita dicam, coactore; hic tertius color est. Si quaeris huius quoque exemplar, Hermarchum ait Epicurus talem fuisse. Itaque alteri magis gratulatur, alterum magis suspicit; quamvis enim ad eundem finem uterque pervenerit, tamen maior est laus idem effecisse in difficiliore materia. [5] Puta enim duo aedificia excitata esse, ambo paria, aequae excelsa atque magnifica. Alter puram aream accepit, illic protinus opus crevit; alterum fundamenta lassarunt in mollem et fluvidam humum missa multumque laboris exhaustum est dum pervenitur ad solidum: intuentibus quidquid fecit <alter> * * * alterius magna pars et difficilior latet. [6] Quaedam ingenia facilia, expedita, quaedam manu, quod aiunt, facienda sunt et in fundamentis suis occupata. Itaque illum ego feliciorem dixerim qui nihil negotii secum habuit, hunc quidem melius de se meruisse qui malignitatem naturae suae vicit et ad sapientiam se non perduxit sed extraxit.

[7] Hoc durum ac laboriosum ingenium nobis datum scias licet; imus per obstantia. Itaque pugnemus, aliquorum invocemus

auxilium. ‘Quem’ inquis ‘invocabo? Hunc aut illum?’ Tu vero etiam ad priores revertere, qui vacant; adjuvare nos possunt non tantum qui sunt, sed qui fuerunt. [8] Ex his autem qui sunt eligamus non eos qui verba magna celeritate praecipitant et communes locos volvunt et in privato circulantur, sed eos qui vita docent, qui cum dixerunt quid faciendum sit probant faciendo, qui docent quid vitandum sit nec umquam in eo quod fugiendum dixerunt deprehenduntur; eum elige adiutorem quem magis admireris cum videris quam cum audieris. [9] Nec ideo te prohibuerim hos quoque audire quibus admittere populum ac disserere consuetudo est, si modo hoc proposito in turbam prodeunt, ut meliores fiant faciantque meliores, si non ambitionis hoc causa exercent. Quid enim turpius philosophia captante clamores? numquid aeger laudat medicum secantem? [10] Tacete, favete et praebete vos curationi; etiam si exclamaveritis, non aliter audiam quam si ad tactum vitiorum vestrorum ingemescatis. Testari vultis attendere vos moverique rerum magnitudine? sane liceat: ut quidem iudicetis et feratis de meliore suffragium, quidni non permittam? Apud Pythagoram discipulis quinque annis tacendum erat: numquid ergo existimas statim illis et loqui et laudare licuisse?

[11] Quanta autem dementia eius est quem clamores imperitorum hilarem ex auditorio dimittunt! Quid laetaris quod ab hominibus his laudatus es quos non potes ipse laudare? Disserebat populo Fabianus, sed audiebatur modeste; erumpebat interdum magnus clamor laudantium, sed quem rerum magnitudo evocaverat, non sonus inoffense ac molliter orationis elapsae. [12] Intersit aliquid inter clamorem theatri et scholae: est aliqua et laudandi elegantia. Omnia rerum omnium, si observentur, indicia sunt, et argumentum morum ex minimis quoque licet capere: impudicum et incessus ostendit et manus mota et unum interdum responsum et relatus ad caput digitus et flexus oculorum; improbum risus, insanum vultus habitusque demonstrat. Illa enim in apertum per notas exeunt: qualis quisque sit scies, si quemadmodum laudet, quemadmodum laudetur aspexeris. [13] Hinc atque illinc philosopho manus auditor intentat et super ipsum caput mirantium turba consistit: non laudatur ille nunc, si intellegis, sed conclamatur. Relinquantur istae voces illis artibus quae propositum habent populo placere: philosophia adoretur. [14]

Permittendum erit aliquando iuvenibus sequi impetum animi, tunc autem cum hoc ex impetu facient, cum silentium sibi imperare non poterunt; talis laudatio aliquid exhortationis affert ipsis audientibus et animos adolescentium exstimulat. <At> ad rem commoveantur, non ad verba composita; alioquin nocet illis eloquentia, si non rerum cupiditatem facit sed sui.

[15] Differam hoc in praesentia; desiderat enim propriam et longam executionem, quemadmodum populo disserendum, quid sibi apud populum permittendum sit, quid populo apud se. Damnum quidem fecisse philosophiam non erit dubium postquam prostituta est; sed potest in penetralibus suis ostendi, si modo non institorem sed antistitem nancata est. Vale.

LIBER SEXTUS

LIII. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Quid non potest mihi persuaderi, cui persuasum est ut navigarem? Solvi mari languido; erat sine dubio caelum grave sordidis nubibus, quae fere aut in aquam aut in ventum resolvuntur, sed putavi tam pauca milia a Parthenope tua usque Puteolos subripi posse, quamvis dubio et imminente caelo. Itaque quo celerius evaderem, protinus per altum ad Nesida derexi praecisurus omnes sinus. [2] Cum iam eo processissem ut mea nihil interesset utrum irem an redirem, primum aequalitas illa quae me corruerat periit; nondum erat tempestas, sed iam inclinatio maris ac subinde crebrior fluctus. Coepi gubernatorem rogare ut me in aliquo litore exponeret: aiebat ille aspera esse et importuosa nec quicquam se aequae in tempestate timere quam terram. [3] Peius autem vexabar quam ut mihi periculum succurreret; nausia enim me segnitis haec et sine exitu torquebat, quae bilem movet nec effundit. Institi itaque gubernatori et illum, vellet nollet, coegi, peteret litus. Cuius ut viciniam attigimus, non exspecto ut quicquam ex praeceptis Vergilii fiat,

obvertunt pelago proras

aut

ancora de prora iacitur:

memor artificii mei vetus frigidae cultor mitto me in mare, quomodo psychrolutam decet, gausapatus. [4] Quae putas me passum dum per aspera erepo, dum viam quaero, dum facio? Intellexi non immerito nautis terram timeri. Incredibilia sunt quae tulerim, cum me ferre non possem: illud scito, Ulixem non fuisse tam irato mari natum ut ubique naufragia faceret: nausiator erat. Et ego quocumque navigare debuero vicensimo anno perveniam.

[5] Ut primum stomachum, quem scis non cum mari nausiam effugere, collegi, ut corpus unctione recreavi, hoc coepi mecum cogitare, quanta nos vitiorum nostrorum sequeretur oblivio, etiam corporalium, quae subinde admonent sui, nedum illorum quae eo magis latent quo maiora sunt. [6] Levis aliquem motiuncula decipit; sed cum crevit et vera febris exarsit, etiam duro et perpessio confessionem exprimit. Pedes dolent, articuli punctiunculas sentiunt: adhuc dissimulamus et aut talum extorsisse dicimus nos aut in

exercitatione aliqua laborasse. Dubio et incipiente morbo quaeritur nomen, qui ubi ut talaria coepit intendere et utrosque distortos pedes fecit, necesse est podagram fateri.

[7] Contra evenit in his morbis quibus afficiuntur animi: quo quis peius se habet, minus sentit. Non est quod mireris, Lucili carissime; nam qui leviter dormit, et species secundum quietem capit et aliquando dormire se dormiens cogitat: gravis sopor etiam somnia exstinguit animumque altius mergit quam ut in ullo intellectu sui sit.

[8] Quare vitia sua nemo confitetur? quia etiam nunc in illis est: somnium narrare vigilantis est, et vitia sua confiteri sanitatis indicium est. Expergiscamur ergo, ut errores nostros coarguere possimus. Sola autem nos philosophia excitabit, sola somnum excutiet gravem: illi te totum dedica. Dignus illa es, illa digna te est: ite in complexum alter alterius. Omnibus aliis rebus te nega, fortiter, aperte; non est quod precario philosopheris. [9] Si aeger esses, curam intermisisses rei familiaris et forensia tibi negotia excidissent nec quemquam tanti putares cui advocatus in remissione descenderes; toto animo id ageres ut quam primum morbo liberareris. Quid ergo? non et nunc idem facies? omnia impedimenta dimitte et vaca bonae menti: nemo ad illam pervenit occupatus. Exercet philosophia regnum suum; dat tempus, non accipit; non est res subsiciva; ordinaria est, domina est, adest et iubet. [10] Alexander cuidam civitati partem agrorum et dimidium rerum omnium promittenti 'eo' inquit 'proposito in Asiam veni, ut non id acciperem quod dedissetis, sed ut id haberetis quod reliquissetem'. Idem philosophia rebus omnibus: 'non sum hoc tempus acceptura quod vobis superfuert, sed id vos habebitis quod ipsa reiecerō'. [11] Totam huc converte mentem, huic asside, hanc cole: ingens intervallum inter te et ceteros fiet; omnes mortales multo antecedes, non multo te dii antecedent. Quaeris quid inter te et illos interfuturum sit? diutius erunt. At mehercules magni artificis est cluisse totum in exiguo; tantum sapienti sua quantum deo omnis aetas patet. Est aliquid quo sapiens antecedit deum: ille naturae beneficio non timet, suo sapiens. [12] Ecce res magna, habere imbecillitatem hominis, securitatem dei. Incredibilis philosophiae vis est ad omnem fortuitam vim retundendam. Nullum telum in corpore eius sedet; munita est, solida; quaedam defetigat et velut levia tela laxo sinu eludit, quaedam discutit et in eum usque qui miserat

respuit. Vale.

LIV. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Longum mihi commeatum dederat mala valetudo; repente me invasit. ‘Quo genere?’ inquis. Prorsus merito interrogas: adeo nullum mihi ignotum est. Uni tamen morbo quasi assignatus sum, quem quare Graeco nomine appellem nescio; satis enim apte dici suspirium potest. Brevis autem valde et procellae similis est impetus; intra horam fere desinit: quis enim diu expirat? [2] Omnia corporis aut incommoda aut pericula per me transierunt: nullum mihi videtur molestius. Quidni? aliud enim quidquid est aegrotare est, hoc animam egerere. Itaque medici hanc ‘meditationem mortis’ vocant; facit enim aliquando spiritus ille quod saepe conatus est. Hilarem me putas haec tibi scribere quia effugi? [3] Tam ridicule facio, si hoc fine quasi bona valetudine delector, quam ille, quisquis vicisse se putat cum vadimonium distulit.

Ego vero et in ipsa suffocatione non desii cogitationibus laetis ac fortibus acquiescere. [4] ‘Quid hoc est?’ inquam ‘tam saepe mors experitur me? Faciat: [at] ego illam diu expertus sum.’ ‘Quando?’ inquis. Antequam nascerer. Mors est non esse. Id quale sit iam scio: hoc erit post me quod ante me fuit. Si quid in hac re tormenti est, necesse est et fuisse, antequam prodiremus in lucem; atqui nullam sensimus tunc vexationem. [5] Rogo, non stultissimum dicas si quis existimet lucernae peius esse cum exstincta est quam antequam accenditur? Nos quoque et exstinguimur et accendimur: medio illo tempore aliquid patimur, utrimque vero alta securitas est. In hoc enim, mi Lucili, nisi fallor, erramus, quod mortem iudicamus sequi, cum illa et praecesserit et secutura sit. Quidquid ante nos fuit mors est; quid enim refert non incipias an desinas, cum utriusque rei hic sit effectus, non esse?

[6] His et eiusmodi exhortationibus - tacitis scilicet, nam verbis locus non erat - alloqui me non desii; deinde paulatim suspirium illud, quod esse iam anhelitus coeperat, intervalla maiora fecit et retardatum est. At remansit, nec adhuc, quamvis desierit, ex natura fluit spiritus; sentio haesitationem quandam eius et moram. Quomodo volet, dummodo non ex animo suspirem. [7] Hoc tibi de me recipe: non trepidabo ad extrema, iam praeparatus sum, nihil cogito

de die toto. Illum tu lauda et imitare quem non piget mori, cum iuvet vivere: quae est enim virtus, cum eiciaris, exire? Tamen est et hic virtus: eicior quidem, sed tamquam exeam. Et ideo numquam eicitur sapiens quia eici est inde expelli unde invitatus recedas: nihil invitatus facit sapiens; necessitatem effugit, quia vult quod coactura est. Vale.

LV. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] A gestatione cum maxime venio, non minus fatigatus quam si tantum ambulassem quantum sedi; labor est enim et diu ferri, ac nescio an eo maior quia contra naturam est, quae pedes dedit ut per nos ambularemus, oculos ut per nos videremus. Debilitatem nobis indixere deliciae, et quod diu noluimus posse desimus. [2] Mihi tamen necessarium erat concutere corpus, ut, sive bilis insederat faucibus, discuteretur, sive ipse ex aliqua causa spiritus densior erat, extenuaret illum iactatio, quam profuisse mihi sensi. Ideo diutius vehi perseveravi invitante ipso litore, quod inter Cumas et Servili Vatae villam curvatur et hinc mari, illinc lacu velut angustum iter cluditur. Erat autem a recenti tempestate spissum; fluctus enim illud, ut scis, frequens et concitatus exaequat, longior tranquillitas solvit, cum harenis, quae umore alligantur, sucus abscessit.

[3] Ex consuetudine tamen mea circumspicere coepi an aliquid illic invenirem quod mihi posset bono esse, et derexi oculos in villam quae aliquando Vatae fuit. In hac ille praetorius dives, nulla alia re quam otio notus, consenuit, et ob hoc unum felix habebatur. Nam quotiens aliquos amicitiae Asinii Galli, quotiens Seiani odium, deinde amor merserat - aequae enim offendisse illum quam amasse periculosum fuit -, exclamabant homines, 'o Vatia, solus scis vivere'.

[4] At ille latere sciebat, non vivere; multum autem interest utrum vita tua otiosa sit an ignava. Numquam aliter hanc villam Vatia vivo praeteribam quam ut dicerem, 'Vatia hic situs est'. Sed adeo, mi Lucili, philosophia sacrum quiddam est et venerabile ut etiam si quid illi simile est mendacio placeat. Otiosum enim hominem seductum existimat vulgus et securum et se contentum, sibi viventem, quorum nihil ulli contingere nisi sapienti potest. Ille solus scit sibi vivere; ille enim, quod est primum, scit vivere. [5] Nam qui res et homines fugit, quem cupiditatum suarum infelicitas relegavit, qui alios feliciores videre non potuit, qui velut timidum atque iners animal metu oblituit, ille sibi non vivit, sed, quod est turpissimum, ventri, somno, libidini; non continuo sibi vivit qui nemini. Adeo tamen magna res est constantia et in proposito suo perseverantia ut habeat auctoritatem inertia quoque pertinax.

[6] De ipsa villa nihil tibi possum certi scribere; frontem enim eius tantum novi et exposita, quae ostendit etiam transeuntibus. Speluncae sunt duae magni operis, cuivis laxo atrio pares, manu factae, quarum altera solem non recipit, altera usque in occidentem tenet. Platanona medius rivus et a mari et ab Acherusio lacu receptus euripi modo dividit, alendis piscibus, etiam si assidue exhauriatur, sufficiens. Sed illi, cum mare patet, parcuritur: cum tempestas piscatoribus dedit ferias, manus ad parata porrigitur. [7] Hoc tamen est commodissimum in villa, quod Baias trans parietem habet: incommodis illarum caret, voluptatibus fruitur. Has laudes eius ipse novi: esse illam totius anni credo; occurrit enim Favonio et illum adeo excipit ut Bais neget. Non stulte videtur elegisse hunc locum Vatia in quem otium suum pigrum iam et senile conferret.

[8] Sed non multum ad tranquillitatem locus confert: animus est qui sibi commendet omnia. Vidi ego in villa hilari et amoena maestos, vidi in media solitudine occupatis similes. Quare non est quod existimes ideo parum bene compositum esse te quod in Campania non es. Quare autem non es? huc usque cogitationes tuas mitte. [9] Conversari cum amicis absentibus licet, et quidem quotiens velis, quamdiu velis. Magis hac voluptate, quae maxima est, fruimur dum absumus; praesentia enim nos delicatos facit, et quia aliquando una loquimur, ambulamus, consedimus, cum diducti sumus nihil de iis quos modo vidimus cogitamus. [10] Et ideo aequo animo ferre debemus absentiam, quia nemo non multum etiam praesentibus abest. Pone hic primum noctes separatas, deinde occupationes utrique diversas, deinde studia secreta, suburbanas profectiones: videbis non multum esse quod nobis peregrinatio eripiat. [11] Amicus animo possidendus est; hic autem numquam abest; quemcumque vult cotidie videt. Itaque mecum stude, mecum cena, mecum ambula: in angusto vivebamus, si quicquam esset cogitationibus clusum. Video te, mi Lucili; cum maxime audio; adeo tecum sum ut dubitem an incipiam non epistulas sed codicillos tibi scribere. Vale.

LVI. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Peream si est tam necessarium quam videtur silentium in studia seposito. Ecce undique me varius clamor circumsonat: supra ipsum balneum habito. Propone nunc tibi omnia genera vocum quae in odium possunt aures adducere: cum fortiores exercentur et manus plumbo graves iactant, cum aut laborant aut laborantem imitantur, gemitus audio, quotiens retentum spiritum remiserunt, sibilos et acerbissimas respiraciones; cum in aliquem inertem et hac plebeia unctione contentum incidi, audio crepitum illisae manus umeris, quae prout plana pervenit aut concava, ita sonum mutat. Si vero pilicrepus supervenit et numerare coepit pilas, actum est. [2] Adice nunc scordalum et furem deprensus et illum cui vox sua in balineo placet, adice nunc eos qui in piscinam cum ingenti impulsae aquae sono saliunt. Praeter istos quorum, si nihil aliud, rectae voces sunt, alipilum cogita tenuem et stridulam vocem quo sit notabilior subinde exprimentem nec umquam tacentem nisi dum vellit alas et alium pro se clamare cogit; iam biberari varias exclamaciones et botularium et crustularium et omnes popinarum institores mercem sua quadam et insignita modulatione vendentis.

[3] ‘O te’ inquis ‘ferreum aut surdum, cui mens inter tot clamores tam varios, tam dissonos constat, cum Chrysippum nostrum assidua salutatio perducatur ad mortem.’ At mehercules ego istum fremitum non magis curo quam fluctum aut deiectum aquae, quamvis audiam cuidam genti hanc unam fuisse causam urbem suam transferendi, quod fragorem Nili cadentis ferre non potuit. [4] Magis mihi videtur vox avocare quam crepitus; illa enim animum adducit, hic tantum aures implet ac verberat. In his quae me sine avocatione circumstrepunt essedas transcurrentes pono et fabrum inquilinum et serrarium vicinum, aut hunc qui ad Metam Sudantem tubulas experitur et tibias, nec cantat sed exclamat: [5] etiam nunc molestior est mihi sonus qui intermittitur subinde quam qui continuatur. Sed iam me sic ad omnia ista duravi ut audire vel pausarium possim voce acerbissima remigibus modos dantem. Animum enim cogo sibi intentum esse nec avocari ad externa; omnia licet foris resonent, dum intus nihil tumultus sit, dum inter se non rixentur cupiditas et timor,

dum avaritia luxuriaque non dissideant nec altera alteram vexet. Nam quid prodest totius regionis silentium, si affectus fremunt?

[6] Omnia noctis erant placida composta quiete.

Falsum est: nulla placida est quies nisi quam ratio composuit; nox exhibet molestiam, non tollit, et sollicitudines muta. Nam dormientium quoque insomnia tam turbulenta sunt quam dies: illa tranquillitas vera est in quam bona mens explicatur. [7] Aspice illum cui somnus laxae domus silentio quaeritur, cuius aures ne quis agitet sonus, omnis servorum turba conticuit et suspensum accedentium propius vestigium ponitur: huc nempe versatur atque illuc, somnum inter aegritudines levem captans; quae non audit audisse se queritur.

[8] Quid in causa putas esse? Animus illi obstrepit. Hic placandus est, huius compescenda seditio est, quem non est quod existimes placidum, si iacet corpus: interdum quies inquieta est; et ideo ad rerum actus excitandi ac tractatione bonarum artium occupandi sumus, quotiens nos male habet inertia sui impatiens. [9] Magni imperatores, cum male parere militem vident, aliquo labore compescunt et expeditionibus detinent: numquam vacat lascivire districtis, nihilque tam certum est quam otii vitia negotio discuti. Saepe videmur taedio rerum civilium et infelicis atque ingratae stationis paenitentia secessisse; tamen in illa latebra in quam nos timor ac lassitudo coniecit interdum recrudescit ambitio. Non enim excisa desit, sed fatigata aut etiam obirata rebus parum sibi cedentibus. [10] Idem de luxuria dico, quae videtur aliquando cessisse, deinde frugalitatem professos sollicitat atque in media parsimonia voluptates non damnatas sed relictas petit, et quidem eo vehementius quo occultius. Omnia enim vitia in aperto leniora sunt; morbi quoque tunc ad sanitatem inclinant cum ex abdito erumpunt ac vim sui proferunt. Et avaritiam itaque et ambitionem et cetera mala mentis humanae tunc perniciosissima scias esse cum simulata sanitate subsidunt. [11] Otiosi videmur, et non sumus. Nam si bona fide sumus, si receptui cecinimus, si speciosa contempsimus, ut paulo ante dicebam, nulla res nos avocabit, nullus hominum aviumque concentus interrumpet cogitationes bonas, solidasque iam et certas. [12] Leve illud ingenium est nec sese adhuc reduxit introsus quod ad vocem et accidentia erigitur; habet intus aliquid sollicitudinis et habet aliquid concepti pavoris quod illum curiosum facit, ut ait

Vergilius noster:

et me, quem dudum non ulla iniecta movebant
tela neque adverso glomerati e agmine Grai,
nunc omnes terrent aerae, sonus excitat omnis
suspensum et pariter comitique onerique timentem.

[13] Prior ille sapiens est, quem non tela vibrantia, non arietata
inter <se> arma agminis densi, non urbis impulsae fragor territat: hic
alter imperitus est, rebus suis timet ad omnem crepitum expavescens,
quem una quaelibet vox pro fremitu accepta deiecit, quem motus
levissimi exanimant; timidum illum sarcinae faciunt. [14]
Quemcumque ex istis felicibus elegeris, multa trahentibus, multa
portantibus, videbis illum 'comitique onerique timentem'. Tunc ergo
te scito esse compositum cum ad te nullus clamor pertinebit, cum te
nulla vox tibi excutiet, non si blandietur, non si minabitur, non si
inani sono vana circumstrepet. [15] 'Quid ergo? non aliquando
commodius est et carere convicio?' Fateor; itaque ego ex hoc loco
migrabo. Experiri et exercere me volui: quid necesse est diutius
torqueri, cum tam facile remedium Ulixes sociis etiam adversus
Sirenas invenerit Vale.

LVII. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Cum a Bais deberem Neapolim repetere, facile credidi tempestatem esse, ne iterum navem experirer; et tantum luti tota via fuit ut possim videri nihilominus navigasse. Totum athletarum fatum mihi illo die perpetiendum fuit: a ceromate nos haphe excepit in crypta Neapolitana. [2] Nihil illo carcere longius, nihil illis facibus obscurius, quae nobis praestant non ut per tenebras videamus, sed ut ipsas. Ceterum etiam si locus haberet lucem, pulvis auferret, in aperto quoque res gravis et molesta: quid illic, ubi in se volutatur et, cum sine ullo spiramento sit inclusus, in ipsos a quibus excitatus est recidit? Duo incommoda inter se contraria simul pertulimus: eadem via, eodem die et luto et pulvere laboravimus.

[3] Aliquid tamen mihi illa obscuritas quod cogitare dedit: sensi quendam ictum animi et sine metu mutationem quam insolitae rei novitas simul ac foeditas fecerat. Non de me nunc tecum loquor, qui multum ab homine tolerabili, nedum a perfecto absum, sed de illo in quem fortuna ius perdidit: huius quoque ferietur animus, mutabitur color. [4] Quaedam enim, mi Lucili, nulla effugere virtus potest; admonet illam natura mortalitatis suae. Itaque et vultum adducet ad tristitia et inhorrescet ad subita et caligabit, si vastam altitudinem in crepidine eius constitutus despexerit: non est hoc timor, sed naturalis affectio inexpugnabilis rationi. [5] Itaque fortes quidam et paratissimi fundere suum sanguinem alienum videre non possunt; quidam ad vulneris novi, quidam ad veteris et purulenti tractationem inspectionemque succidunt ac linquntur animo; alii gladium facilius recipiunt quam vident. [6] Sensi ergo, ut dicebam, quandam non quidem perturbationem, sed mutationem: rursus ad primum conspectum redditae lucis alacritas rediit incogitata et iniussa. Illud deinde mecum loqui coepi, quam inepte quaedam magis aut minus timeremus, cum omnium idem finis esset. Quid enim interest utrum supra aliquem vigilarium ruat an mons? nihil invenies. Erunt tamen qui hanc ruinam magis timeant, quamvis utraque mortifera aequae sit; adeo non effectum, sed efficientiam timor spectat.

[7] Nunc me putas de Stoicis dicere, qui existimant animam hominis magno pondere extriti permanere non posse et statim spargi,

quia non fuerit illi exitus liber? Ego vero non facio: qui hoc dicunt videntur mihi errare. [8] Quemadmodum flamma non potest opprimi - nam circa id diffugit quo urgetur -, quemadmodum aer verberare atque ictu non laeditur, ne scinditur quidem, sed circa id cui cessit refunditur, sic animus, qui ex tenuissimo constat, deprehendi non potest nec intra corpus effligi, sed beneficio subtilitatis suae per ipsa quibus premitur erumpit. Quomodo fulmini, etiam cum latissime percussit ac fulsit, per exiguum foramen est reductus, sic animo, qui adhuc tenuior est igne, per omne corpus fuga est. [9] Itaque de illo quaerendum est, an possit immortalis esse. Hoc quidem certum habet: si superstes est corpori, opteri illum nullo genere posse, [propter quod non perit] quoniam nulla immortalitas cum exceptione est, nec quicquam noxium aeterno est. Vale.

LVIII. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Quanta verborum nobis paupertas, immo egestas sit, numquam magis quam hodierno die intellexi. Mille res inciderunt, cum forte de Platone loqueremur, quae nomina desiderarent nec haberent, quaedam vero <quae> cum habuissent fastidio nostro perdidissent. Quis autem ferat in egestate fastidium? [2] Hunc quem Graeci ‘oestron’ vocant, pecora peragentem et totis saltibus dissipantem, ‘asilum’ nostri vocabant. Hoc Vergilio licet credas:

est lucum Silari iuxta ilicibusque virentem
plurimus Alburnum volitans, cui nomen asilo
Romanum est, oestrum Grai vertere vocantes,
asper, acerba sonans, quo tota exterrita silvis
diffugiunt armenta.

[3] Puto intellegi istud verbum interisse. Ne te longe differam, quaedam simplicia in usu erant, sicut ‘cernere ferro inter se’ dicebant. Idem Vergilius hoc probabit tibi:

ingentis, genitos diversis partibus orbis,
inter se coiisse viros et cernere ferro.

Quod nunc ‘decernere’ dicimus: simplicis illius verbi usus amissus est. [4] Dicebant antiqui ‘si iusso’, id est ‘iussero’. Hoc nolo mihi credas, sed eidem Vergilio:

cetera, qua iusso, mecum manus inferat arma.

[5] Non id ago nunc hac diligentia ut ostendam quantum tempus apud grammaticum perdiderim, sed ut ex hoc intellegas quantum apud Ennium et Accium verborum situs occupaverit, cum apud hunc quoque, qui cotidie excutitur, aliqua nobis subducta sint. [6] ‘Quid sibi’ inquis ‘ista praeparatio vult? quo spectat?’ Non celabo te: cupio, si fieri potest, propitiis auribus tuis ‘essentiam’ dicere; si minus, dicam et iratis. Ciceronem auctorem huius verbi habeo, puto locupletem; si recentiorem quaeris, Fabianum, disertum et elegantem, orationis etiam ad nostrum fastidium nitidae. Quid enim

fiet, mi Lucili? quomodo dicetur 'ousia', res necessaria, natura continens fundamentum omnium? Rogo itaque permittas mihi hoc verbo uti. Nihilominus dabo operam ut ius a te datum parcissime exerceam; fortasse contentus ero mihi licere. [7] Quid proderit facilitas tua, cum ecce id nullo modo Latine exprimere possim propter quod linguae nostrae convicium feci? Magis damnabis angustias Romanas, si scieris unam syllabam esse quam mutare non possum. Quae sit haec quaeris? 'to on'. Duri tibi videor ingenii: in medio positum, posse sic transferri ut dicam 'quod est'. Sed multum interesse video: cogor verbum pro vocabulo ponere; sed si ita necesse est, ponam 'quod est'.

[8] Sex modis hoc a Platone dici amicus noster, homo eruditissimus, hodierno die dicebat. Omnes tibi exponam, si ante indicavero esse aliquid genus, esse et speciem. Nunc autem primum illud genus quaerimus ex quo ceterae species suspensae sunt, a quo nascitur omnis divisio, quo universa comprehensa sunt. Invenietur autem si coeperimus singula retro legere; sic enim perducemur ad primum. [9] Homo species est, ut Aristoteles ait; equus species est; canis species est. Ergo commune aliquod quaerendum est his omnibus vinculum, quod illa complectatur et sub se habeat. Hoc quid est? animal. Ergo genus esse coepit horum omnium quae modo rettuli - hominis, equi, canis - animal. [10] Sed quaedam [quae] animum habent nec sunt animalia; placet enim satis et arbustis animam inesse; itaque et vivere illa et mori dicimus. Ergo animantia superiorem tenebunt locum, quia et animalia in hac forma sunt et sata. Sed quaedam anima carent, ut saxa; itaque erit aliquid animantibus antiquius, corpus scilicet. Hoc sic dividam ut dicam corpora omnia aut animantia esse aut inanima. [11] Etiam nunc est aliquid superius quam corpus; dicimus enim quaedam corporalia esse, quaedam incorporalia. Quid ergo erit ex quo haec deducantur? illud cui nomen modo parum proprium imposuimus, 'quod est'. Sic enim in species secabitur ut dicamus: 'quod est' aut corporale est aut incorporale. [12] Hoc ergo est genus primum et antiquissimum et, ut ita dicam, generale; cetera genera quidem sunt, sed specialia. Tamquam homo genus est; habet enim in se nationum species, Graecos, Romanos, Parthos; colorum, albos, nigros, flavos; habet singulos, Catonem, Ciceronem, Lucretium. Ita qua multa continet, in

genus cadit; qua sub alio est, in speciem. Illud genus 'quod est' generale supra se nihil habet; initium rerum est; omnia sub illo sunt. [13] Stoici volunt superponere huic etiam nunc aliud genus magis principale; de quo statim dicam, si prius illud genus de quo locutus sum merito primum poni docuero, cum sit rerum omnium capax. [14] 'Quod est' in has species divido, ut sint corporalia aut incorporalia; nihil tertium est. Corpus quomodo divido? ut dicam: aut animantia sunt aut inanima. Rursus animantia quemadmodum divido? ut dicam: quaedam animum habent, quaedam tantum animam, at sic: quaedam impetum habent, incedunt, transeunt, quaedam solo affixa radicibus aluntur, crescunt. Rursus animalia in quas species seco? aut mortalia sunt aut immortalia. [15] Primum genus Stoicis quibusdam videtur 'quid'; quare videatur subiciam. 'In rerum' inquiunt 'natura quaedam sunt, quaedam non sunt, et haec autem quae non sunt rerum natura complectitur, quae animo succurrunt, tamquam Centauri, Gigantes et quidquid aliud falsa cogitatione formatum habere aliquam imaginem coepit, quamvis non habeat substantiam.'

[16] Nunc ad id quod tibi promisi revertor, quomodo quaecumque sunt in sex modos Plato partiatur. Primum illud 'quod est' nec visu nec tactu nec ullo sensu comprehenditur: cogitabile est. Quod generaliter est, tamquam homo generalis, sub oculos non venit; sed specialis venit, ut Cicero et Cato. Animal non videtur: cogitatur. Videtur autem species eius, equus et canis. [17] Secundum ex his quae sunt ponit Plato quod eminet et exsuperat omnia; hoc ait per excellentiam esse. Poeta communiter dicitur - omnibus enim versus facientibus hoc nomen est - sed iam apud Graecos in unius notam cessit: Homerum intellegas, cum audieris poetam. Quid ergo hoc est? deus scilicet, maior ac potentior cunctis. [18] Tertium genus est eorum quae proprie sunt; innumerabilia haec sunt, sed extra nostrum posita conspectum. Quae sint interrogas? Propria Platonis supellex est: 'ideas' vocat, ex quibus omnia quaecumque videmus fiunt et ad quas cuncta formantur. Hae immortales, immutabiles, inviolabiles sunt. [19] Quid sit idea, id est quid Platoni esse videatur, audi: 'idea est eorum quae natura fiunt exemplar aeternum'. Adiciam definitioni interpretationem, quo tibi res apertior fiat. Volo imaginem tuam facere. Exemplar picturae te habeo, ex quo capit aliquem habitum mens nostra quem operi suo imponat; ita illa quae me docet et

instruit facies, a qua petitur imitatio, idea est. Talia ergo exemplaria infinita habet rerum natura, hominum, piscium, arborum, ad quae quodcumque fieri ab illa debet exprimitur. [20] Quartum locum habebit idos. Quid sit hoc idos attendas oportet, et Platoni imputes, non mihi, hanc rerum difficultatem; nulla est autem sine difficultate subtilitas. Paulo ante pictoris imagine utebar. Ille cum reddere Vergilium coloribus vellet, ipsum intuebatur. Idea erat Vergilii facies, futuri operis exemplar; ex hac quod artifex trahit et operi suo imposuit idos est. Quid intersit quaeris? Alterum exemplar est, alterum forma ab exemplari sumpta et operi imposita; alteram artifex imitatur, alteram facit. Habet aliquam faciem statua: haec est idos. Habet aliquam faciem exemplar ipsum quod intuens opifex statuam figuravit: haec idea est. Etiam nunc si aliam desideras distinctionem, idos in opere est, idea extra opus, nec tantum extra opus est, sed ante opus. [22] Quintum genus est eorum quae communiter sunt; haec incipiunt ad nos pertinere; hic sunt omnia, homines, pecora, res. Sextum genus <est> eorum quae quasi sunt, tamquam inane, tamquam tempus.

Quaecumque videmus aut tangimus Plato in illis non numerat quae esse proprie putat; fluunt enim et in assidua deminutione atque adiectione sunt. Nemo nostrum idem est in senectute qui fuit iuvenis; nemo nostrum est idem mane qui fuit pridie. Corpora nostra rapiuntur fluminum more. Quidquid vides currit cum tempore; nihil ex iis quae videmus manet; ego ipse, dum loquor mutari ista, mutatus sum. [23] Hoc est quod ait Heraclitus: 'in idem flumen bis descendimus et non descendimus'. Manet enim idem fluminis nomen, aqua transmissa est. Hoc in amne manifestius est quam in homine; sed nos quoque non minus velox cursus praetervehit, et ideo admiror dementiam nostram, quod tantopere amamus rem fugacissimam, corpus, timemusque ne quando moriamur, cum omne momentum mors prioris habitus sit: vis tu non timere ne semel fiat quod cotidie fit! [24] De homine dixi, fluvida materia et caduca et omnibus obnoxia causis: mundus quoque, aeterna res et invicta, mutatur nec idem manet. Quamvis enim omnia in se habeat quae habuit, aliter habet quam habuit: ordinem mutat.

[25] 'Quid ista' inquis 'mihi subtilitas proderit?' Si me interrogas, nihil; sed quemadmodum ille caelator oculos diu intentos ac fatigatos

remittit atque avocat et, ut dici solet, pascit, sic nos animum aliquando debemus relaxare et quibusdam oblectamentis reficere. Sed ipsa oblectamenta opera sint; ex his quoque, si observaveris, sumes quod possit fieri salutare. [26] Hoc ego, Lucili, facere soleo: ex omni notione, etiam si a philosophia longissime aversa est, eruere aliquid conor et utile efficere. Quid istis quae modo tractavimus remotius a reformatione morum? quomodo meliorem me facere ideae Platonicae possunt? quid ex istis traham quod cupiditates meas comprimat? Vel hoc ipsum, quod omnia ista quae sensibus serviunt, quae nos accendunt et irritant, negat Plato ex iis esse quae vere sint. [27] Ergo ista imaginaria sunt et ad tempus aliquam faciem ferunt, nihil horum stabile nec solidum est; et nos tamen cupimus tamquam aut semper futura aut semper habituri. Imbecilli fluvidique inter vana constitimus: ad illa mittamus animum quae aeterna sunt. Miremur in sublimi volitantes rerum omnium formas deumque inter illa versantem et hoc providentem, quemadmodum quae immortalia facere non potuit, quia materia prohibebat, defendat a morte ac ratione vitium corporis vincat. [28] Manent enim cuncta, non quia aeterna sunt, sed quia defenduntur cura regentis: immortalia tutore non egerent. Haec conservat artifex fragilitatem materiae vi sua vincens. Contemnamus omnia quae adeo pretiosa non sunt ut an sint omnino dubium sit. [29] Illud simul cogitemus, si mundum ipsum, non minus mortalem quam nos sumus, providentia periculis eximit, posse aliquatenus nostra quoque providentia longiorem prorogari huic corpusculo moram, si voluptates, quibus pars maior perit, potuerimus regere et coercere. [30] Plato ipse ad senectutem se diligentia protulit. Erat quidem corpus validum ac forte sortitus et illi nomen latitudo pectoris fecerat, sed navigationes ac pericula multum detraxerant viribus; parsimonia tamen et eorum quae aviditatem evocant modus et diligens sui tutela perduxit illum ad senectutem multis prohibentibus causis. [31] Nam hoc scis, puto, Platoni diligentiae suae beneficio contigisse quod natali suo decessit et annum unum atque octogensimum implevit sine ulla deductione. Ideo magi, qui forte Athenis erant, immolaverunt defuncto, amplioris fuisse sortis quam humanae rati, quia consummasset perfectissimum numerum, quem novem novies multiplicata componunt. Non dubito quin paratus sis et paucos dies ex ista summa et sacrificium remittere. [32] Potest

frugalitas producere senectutem, quam ut non puto concupiscendam, ita ne recusandam quidem; iucundum est secum esse quam diutissime, cum quis se dignum quo frueretur effecit.

Itaque de isto feremus sententiam, an oporteat fastidire senectutis extrema et finem non opperiri sed manu facere. Prope est a timente qui fatum segnīs exspectat, sicut ille ultra modum deditus vino est qui amphoram exsiccat et faecem quoque exsorbet. [33] De hoc tamen quaeremus, pars summa vitae utrum faex sit an liquidissimum ac purissimum quiddam, si modo mens sine iniuria est et integri sensus animum iuvant nec defectum et praemortuum corpus est; plurimum enim refert, vitam aliquis extendat an mortem. [34] At si inutile ministeriis corpus est, quidni oporteat educere animum laborantem? et fortasse paulo ante quam debet faciendum est, ne cum fieri debebit facere non possis; et cum maius periculum sit male vivendi quam cito moriendi, stultus est qui non exigua temporis mercede magnae rei aleam redimit. Paucos longissima senectus ad mortem sine iniuria pertulit, multis iners vita sine usu sui iacuit: quanto deinde crudelius iudicas aliquid ex vita perdidisse quam ius finiendae? [35] Noli me invitus audire, tamquam ad te iam pertineat ista sententia, et quid dicam aestima: non relinquam senectutem, si me totum mihi reservabit, totum autem ab illa parte meliore; at si coeperit concutere mentem, si partes eius convellere, si mihi non vitam reliquerit sed animam, prosiliam ex aedificio putri ac ruenti. [36] Morbum morte non fugiam, dumtaxat sanabilem nec officientem animo. Non afferam mihi manus propter dolorem: sic mori vinci est. Hunc tamen si sciero perpetuo mihi esse patiendum, exhibo, non propter ipsum, sed quia impedimento mihi futurus est ad omne propter quod vivitur; imbecillus est et ignavus qui propter dolorem moritur, stultus qui doloris causa vivit.

[37] Sed in longum exeo; est praeterea materia quae ducere diem possit: et quomodo finem imponere vitae poterit qui epistulae non potest? Vale ergo: quod libentius quam mortes meras lecturus es. Vale.

LIX. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Magnam ex epistula tua percepi voluptatem; permitte enim mihi uti verbis publicis nec illa ad significationem Stoicam revoca. Vitium esse voluptatem credimus. Sit sane; ponere tamen illam solemus ad demonstrandam animi hilarem affectionem. [2] Scio, inquam, et voluptatem, si ad nostrum album verba derigimus, rem infamem esse et gaudium nisi sapienti non contingere; est enim animi elatio suis bonis verisque fidentis. Vulgo tamen sic loquimur ut dicamus magnum gaudium nos ex illius consulatu aut nuptiis aut ex partu uxoris percepisse, quae adeo non sunt gaudia ut saepe initia futurae tristitiae sint; gaudio autem iunctum est non desinere nec in contrarium verti. [3] Itaque cum dicit Vergilius noster

et mala mentis
gaudia,

diserte quidem dicit, sed parum proprie; nullum enim malum gaudium est. Voluptatibus hoc nomen imposuit et quod voluit expressit; significavit enim homines malo suo laetos. [4] Tamen ego non immerito dixeram cepisse me magnam ex epistula tua voluptatem; quamvis enim ex honesta causa imperitus homo gaudeat, tamen affectum eius impotentem et in diversum statim inclinaturum voluptatem voco, opinione falsi boni motam, immoderatam et immodicam.

Sed ut ad propositum revertar, audi quid me in epistula tua delectaverit: habes verba in potestate, non effert te oratio nec longius quam destinasti trahit. [5] Multi sunt qui ad id quod non proposuerant scribere alicuius verbi placentis decore vocentur, quod tibi non evenit: pressa sunt omnia et rei aptata; loqueris quantum vis et plus significas quam loqueris. Hoc maioris rei indicium est: apparet animum quoque nihil habere supervacui, nihil tumidi. [6] Invenio tamen translationes verborum ut non temerarias ita quae periculum sui fecerint; invenio imagines, quibus si quis nos uti vetat et poetis illas solis iudicat esse concessas, neminem mihi videtur ex antiquis legisse, apud quos nondum captabatur plausibilis oratio: illi, qui

simpliciter et demonstrandae rei causa eloquebantur, parabolis referti sunt, quas existimo necessarias, non ex eadem causa qua poetis, sed ut imbecillitas nostrae adminicula sint, ut et dicentem et audientem in rem praesentem adducant.

[7] Sextium ecce cum maxime lego, virum acrem, Graecis verbis, Romanis moribus philosophantem. Movit me imago ab illo posita: ire quadrato agmine exercitum, ubi hostis ab omni parte suspectus est, pugnae paratum. ‘Idem’ inquit ‘sapiens facere debet: omnis virtutes suas undique expandat, ut ubicumque infesti aliquid orietur, illic parata praesidia sint et ad nutum regentis sine tumultu respondeant.’ Quod in exercitibus iis quos imperatores magni ordinant fieri videmus, ut imperium ducis simul omnes copiae sentiant, sic dispositae ut signum ab uno datum peditem simul equitemque percurrat, hoc aliquanto magis necessarium esse nobis ait. [8] Illi enim saepe hostem timuere sine causa, tutissimumque illis iter quod suspectissimum fuit: nihil stultitia pacatum habet; tam superne illi metus est quam infra; utrumque trepidat latus; sequuntur pericula et occurrunt; ad omnia pavet, imparata est et ipsis terretur auxiliis. Sapiens autem, ad omnem incursum munitus, intentus, non si paupertas, non si luctus, non si ignominia, non si dolor impetum faciat, pedem referet: interritus et contra illa ibit et inter illa. [9] Nos multa alligant, multa debilitant. Diu in istis vitiis iacuimus, elui difficile est; non enim inquinati sumus sed infecti.

Ne ab alia imagine ad aliam transeamus, hoc quaeram quod saepe mecum dispicio, quid ita nos stultitia tam pertinaciter teneat? Primo quia non fortiter illam repellimus nec toto ad salutem impetu nitimur, deinde quia illa quae a sapientibus viris reperta sunt non satis credimus nec apertis pectoribus haurimus leviterque tam magnae rei insistimus. [10] Quemadmodum autem potest aliquis quantum satis sit adversus vitia discere, qui quantum a vitiis vacat discit? Nemo nostrum in altum descendit; summa tantum decerpsimus et exiguum temporis inpendisse philosophiae satis abundeque occupatis fuit. [11] Illud praecipue inpedit, quod cito nobis placemus; si invenimus qui nos bonos viros dicat, qui prudentes, qui sanctos, adgnosimus. Non sumus modica laudatione contenti: quidquid in nos adlatio sine pudore congestit tamquam debitum prendimus. Optimos nos esse, sapientissimos adfirmantibus adsentimur, cum sciamus illos saepe

multa mentiri; adeoque indulgemus nobis ut laudari velimus in id cui contraria cum maxime facimus. Mitissimum ille se in ipsis suppliciis audit, in rapinis liberalissimum et in ebrietatibus ac libidinibus temperantissimum; sequitur itaque ut ideo mutari nolimus quia nos optimos esse credidimus. [12] Alexander cum iam in India vagaretur et gentes ne finitimis quidem satis notas bello vastaret, in obsidione cuiusdam urbis, <dum> circumit muros et inbecillissima moenium quaerit, sagitta ictus diu persedere et incepta agere perseveravit. Deinde cum represso sanguine sicci vulneris dolor cresceret et crus suspensum equo paulatim obtorpuisset, coactus absistere ‘omnes’ inquit ‘iurant esse me Iovis filium, sed vulnus hoc hominem esse me clamat’. [13] Idem nos faciamus. Pro sua quemque portione adulatio infatuat: dicamus, ‘vos quidem dicitis me prudentem esse, ego autem video quam multa inutilia concupiscam, nocitura optem. Ne hoc quidem intellego quod animalibus satietas monstrat, quis cibo debeat esse, quis potioni modus; quantum capiam adhuc nescio.’

[14] Iam docebo quemadmodum intellegas te non esse sapientem. Sapiens ille plenus est gaudio, hilaris et placidus, inconcussus; cum dis ex pari vivit. Nunc ipse te consule: si numquam maestus es, <si> nulla spes animum tuum futuri expectatione sollicitat, si per dies noctesque par et aequalis animi tenor erecti et placentis sibi est, pervenisti ad humani boni summam; sed si appetis voluptates et undique et omnes, scito tantum tibi ex sapientia quantum ex gaudio deesse. Ad hoc cupis pervenire, sed erras, qui inter divitias illuc venturum esse te speras, inter honores, id est gaudium inter sollicitudines quaeris: ista, quae sic petis tamquam datura laetitiam ac voluptatem, causae dolorum sunt. [15] Omnes, inquam, illo tendunt ad gaudium, sed unde stabile magnumque consequantur ignorant: ille ex conviviis et luxuria, ille ex ambitione et circumfusa clientium turba, ille ex amica, alius ex studiorum liberalium vana ostentatione et nihil sanantibus litteris - omnes istos oblectamenta fallacia et brevia decipiunt, sicut ebrietas, quae unius horae hilarem insaniam longi temporis taedio pensat, sicut plausus et acclamationis secundae favor, qui magna sollicitudine et partus est et expiandus. [16] Hoc ergo cogita, hunc esse sapientiae effectum, gaudii aequalitatem. Talis est sapientis animus qualis mundus super lunam: semper illic serenum est. Habes ergo et quare velis sapiens esse, si numquam sine gaudio

est. Gaudium hoc non nascitur nisi ex virtutum conscientia: non potest gaudere nisi fortis, nisi iustus, nisi temperans. [17] ‘Quid ergo’ inquis, ‘stulti ac mali non gaudent?’ Non magis quam praedam nacti leones: cum fatigaverunt se vino ac libidinibus, cum illos nox inter vitia defecit, cum voluptates angusto corpori ultra quam capiebat ingestae suppurare coeperunt, tunc exclamant miseri Vergilianum illum versum:

namque ut supremam falsa inter gaudia noctem
egerimus nosti.

[18] Omnem luxuriosi noctem inter falsa gaudia et quidem tamquam supremam agunt: illud gaudium quod deos deorumque aemulos sequitur non interrumpitur, non desinit; desineret, si sumptum esset aliunde. Quia non est alieni muneris, ne arbitrii quidem alieni est: quod non dedit fortuna non eripit. Vale.

LX. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Queror, litigo, irascor. Etiam nunc optas quod tibi optavit nutrix tua aut paedagogus aut mater? nondum intellegis quantum mali optaverint? O quam inimica nobis sunt vota nostrorum! eo quidem inimiciora quo cessere felicius. Iam non admiror si omnia nos a prima pueritia mala sequuntur: inter execrationes parentum crevimus. Exaudiant di quandoque nostram pro nobis vocem gratuitam. [2] Quousque poscemus aliquid deos? [quasi] ita nondum ipsi alere nos possumus? Quamdiu sationibus implebimus magnarum urbium campos? quamdiu nobis populus metet? quamdiu unius mensae instrumentum multa navigia et quidem non ex uno mari subvehent? Taurus paucissimorum iugerum pascuo impletur; una silva elephantis pluribus sufficit: homo et terra et mari pascitur. [3] Quid ergo? tam insatiabilem nobis natura alvum dedit, cum tam modica corpora dedisset, ut vastissimorum edacissimorumque animalium aviditatem vinceremus? Minime; quantulum est enim quod naturae datur! Parvo illa dimittitur: non fames nobis ventris nostri magno constat sed ambitio. [4] Hos itaque, ut ait Sallustius, ‘ventri oboedientes’ animalium loco numeremus, non hominum, quosdam vero ne animalium quidem, sed mortuorum. Vivit is qui multis usui est, vivit is qui se utitur; qui vero latitant et torpent sic in domo sunt quomodo in conditivo. Horum licet in limine ipso nomen marmori inscribas: mortem suam antecesserunt. Vale.

LXI. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Desinamus quod voluimus velle. Ego certe id ago <ne> senex eadem velim quae puer volui. In hoc unum eunt dies, in hoc noctes, hoc opus meum est, haec cogitatio, imponere veteribus malis finem. Id ago ut mihi instar totius vitae dies sit; nec mehercules tamquam ultimum rapio, sed sic illum aspicio tamquam esse vel ultimus possit.

[2] Hoc animo tibi hanc epistulam scribo, tamquam me cum maxime scribentem mors evocatura sit; paratus exire sum, et ideo fruar vita quia quam diu futurum hoc sit non nimis pendeo. Ante senectutem curavi ut bene viverem, in senectute ut bene moriar; bene autem mori est libenter mori. [3] Da operam ne quid umquam invitus facias; quidquid necesse futurum est repugnanti, id volenti necessitas non est. Ita dico: qui imperia libens excipit partem acerbissimam servitutis effugit, facere quod nolit; non qui iussus aliquid facit miser est, sed qui invitus facit. Itaque sic animum componamus ut quidquid res exiget, id velimus, et in primis ut finem nostri sine tristitia cogitemus. [4] Ante ad mortem quam ad vitam praeparandi sumus. Satis instructa vita est, sed nos in instrumenta eius avidi sumus; deesse aliquid nobis videtur et semper videbitur: ut satis vixerimus, nec anni nec dies faciunt sed animus. Vixi, Lucili carissime, quantum satis erat; mortem plenus exspecto. Vale.

LXII. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Mentiuntur qui sibi obstare ad studia liberalia turbam negotiorum videri volunt: simulant occupationes et augent et ipsi se occupant. Vaco, Lucili, vaco, et ubicumque sum, ibi meus sum. Rebus enim me non trado sed commodo, nec consector perdendi temporis causas; et quocumque constitui loco, ibi cogitationes meas tracto et aliquid in animo salutare converso. [2] Cum me amicis dedi, non tamen mihi abduco nec cum illis moror quibus me tempus aliquod congregavit aut causa ex officio nata civili, sed cum optimo quoque sum; ad illos, in quocumque loco, in quocumque saeculo fuerunt, animum meum mitto. [3] Demetrium, virorum optimum, mecum circumfero et relictis conchyliatis cum illo seminudo loquor, illum admiror. Quidni admirer? vidi nihil ei deesse. Contemnere aliquis omnia potest, omnia habere nemo potest: brevissima ad divitias per contemptum divitiarum via est. Demetrius autem noster sic vivit, non tamquam contempserit omnia, sed tamquam aliis habenda permiserit. Vale.

LIBER SEPTIMUS

LXIII. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Molestē fero decessisse Flaccum, amicum tuum, plus tamen aequo dolere te nolo. Illud, ut non doleas, vix audebo exigere; et esse melius scio. Sed cui ista firmitas animi continget nisi iam multum supra fortunam elato? illum quoque ista res vellicabit, sed tantum vellicabit. Nobis autem ignosci potest prolapsis ad lacrimas, si non nimiae decucurrerunt, si ipsi illas repressimus. Nec sicci sint oculi amisso amico nec fluant; lacrimandum est, non plorandum. [2] Duram tibi legem videor ponere, cum poetarum Graecorum maximus ius flendi dederit in unum dumtaxat diem, cum dixerit etiam Niobam de cibo cogitasse? Quaeris unde sint lamentationes, unde immodici fletus? per lacrimas argumenta desiderii quaerimus et dolorem non sequimur sed ostendimus; nemo tristis sibi est. O infelicem stultitiam! est aliqua et doloris ambitio. [3] ‘Quid ergo?’ inquis ‘obliviscar amici?’ Brevem illi apud te memoriam promittis, si cum dolore mansura est: iam istam frontem ad risum quaelibet fortuita res transferet. Non differo in longius tempus quo desiderium omne mulcetur, quo etiam acerrimi luctus residunt: cum primum te observare desieris, imago ista tristitiae discedet. Nunc ipse custodis dolorem tuum; sed custodienti quoque elabitur, eoque citius quo est acrior desinit. [4] Id agamus ut iucunda nobis amissorum fiat recordatio. Nemo libenter ad id redit quod non sine tormento cogitaturus est, sicut illud fieri necesse est, ut cum aliquo nobis morsu amissorum quos amavimus nomen occurrat; sed hic quoque morsus habet suam voluptatem. [5] Nam, ut dicere solebat Attalus noster, ‘sic amicorum defunctorum memoria iucunda est quomodo poma quaedam sunt suaviter aspera, quomodo in vino nimis veteri ipsa nos amaritudo delectat; cum vero intervenit spatium, omne quod angebat exstinguitur et pura ad nos voluptas venit’. [6] Si illi credimus, ‘amicos incolumes cogitare melle ac placenta frui est: eorum qui fuerunt retractatio non sine acerbitate quadam iuvat. Quis autem negaverit haec acria quoque et habentia austeritatis aliquid stomachum excitare?’ [7] Ego non idem sentio: mihi amicorum defunctorum cogitatio dulcis ac blanda est; habui enim illos tamquam amissurus, amisi tamquam habeam.

Fac ergo, mi Lucili, quod aequitatem tuam decet, desine beneficium fortunae male interpretari: abstulit, sed dedit. [8] Ideo amicis avide fruamur quia quamdiu contingere hoc possit incertum est. Cogitemus quam saepe illos reliquerimus in aliquam peregrinationem longinquam exituri, quam saepe eodem morantes loco non viderimus: intellegemus plus nos temporis in vivis perdidisse. [9] Feras autem hos qui negligentissime amicos habent, miserrime lugent, nec amant quemquam nisi perdiderunt? ideoque tunc effusius maerent quia verentur ne dubium sit an amaverint; sera indicia affectus sui quaerunt. [10] Si habemus alios amicos, male de iis et meremur et existimamus, qui parum valent in unius elati solacium; si non habemus, maiorem iniuriam ipsi nobis fecimus quam a fortuna accepimus: illa unum abstulit, nos quemcumque non fecimus. [11] Deinde ne unum quidem nimis amavit qui plus quam unum amare non potuit. Si quis despoliatus amissa unica tunica complorare se malit quam circumspicere quomodo frigus effugiat et aliquid inveniat quo tegat scapulas, nonne tibi videatur stultissimus? Quem amabas extulisti: quaere quem ames. Satius est amicum reparare quam flere.

[12] Scio pertritum iam hoc esse quod adiecturus sum, non ideo tamen praetermittam quia ab omnibus dictum est: finem dolendi etiam qui consilio non fecerat tempore invenit. Turpissimum autem est in homine prudente remedium maeroris lassitudo maerendi: malo relinquo dolorem quam ab illo relinquare; et quam primum id facere desiste quod, etiam si voles, diu facere non poteris. [13] Annum feminis ad lugendum constituere maiores, non ut tam diu lugerent, sed ne diutius: viris nullum legitimum tempus est, quia nullum honestum. Quam tamen mihi ex illis mulierculis dabis vix retractis a rogo, vix a cadavere revulsis, cui lacrimae in totum mensem duraverint? Nulla res citius in odium venit quam dolor, qui recens consolatorem invenit et aliquos ad se adducit, inveteratus vero deridetur, nec immerito; aut enim simulatus aut stultus est.

[14] Haec tibi scribo, is qui Annaeum Serenum carissimum mihi tam immodice flevi ut, quod minime velim, inter exempla sim eorum quos dolor vicit. Hodie tamen factum meum damno et intellego maximam mihi causam sic lugendi fuisse quod numquam cogitaveram mori eum ante me posse. Hoc unum mihi occorrebat, minorem esse et multo minorem - tamquam ordinem fata servarent!

[15] Itaque assidue cogitemus de nostra quam omnium quos diligimus mortalitate. Tunc ego debui dicere, 'minor est Serenus meus: quid ad rem pertinet? post me mori debet, sed ante me potest'. Quia non feci, imparatum subito fortuna percussit. Nunc cogito omnia et mortalia esse et incerta lege mortalia; hodie fieri potest quidquid umquam potest. [16] Cogitemus ergo, Lucili carissime, cito nos eo perventuros quo illum pervenisse maeremus; et fortasse, si modo vera sapientium fama est recipitque nos locus aliquis, quem putamus perisse praemissus est. Vale.

LXIV. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Fuisti here nobiscum. Potes queri, si here tantum; ideo adieci ‘nobiscum’; mecum enim semper es. Intervenerant quidam amici propter quos maior fumus fieret, non hic qui erumpere ex lautorum culinis et terrere vigiles solet, sed hic modicus qui hospites venisse significet. [2] Varius nobis fuit sermo, ut in convivio, nullam rem usque ad exitum adducens sed aliunde alio transiliens. Lectus est deinde liber Quinti Sextii patris, magni, si quid mihi credis, viri, et licet neget Stoici. [3] Quantus in illo, di boni, vigor est, quantum animi! Hoc non in omnibus philosophis invenies: quorundam scripta clarum habentium nomen exanguia sunt. Instituunt, disputant, cavillantur, non faciunt animum quia non habent: cum legeris Sextium, dices, ‘vivit, viget, liber es, supra hominem est, dimittit me plenum ingentis fiduciae’. [4] In qua positione mentis sim cum hunc lego fatebor tibi: libet omnis casus provocare, libet exclamare, ‘quid cessas, fortuna? congregere: paratum vides’. Illius animum induo qui quaerit ubi se experiatur, ubi virtutem suam ostendat,

spumantemque dari pecora inter inertia votis
optat aprum aut fulvum descendere monte leonem.

[5] Libet aliquid habere quod vincam, cuius patientia exercear. Nam hoc quoque egregium Sextius habet, quod et ostendet tibi beatae vitae magnitudinem et desperationem eius non faciet: scies esse illam in excelso, sed volenti penetrabilem. [6] Hoc idem virtus tibi ipsa praestabit, ut illam admireris et tamen speres. Mihi certe multum auferre temporis solet contemplatio ipsa sapientiae; non aliter illam intueor obstupefactus quam ipsum interim mundum, quem saepe tamquam spectator novus video. [7] Veneror itaque inventa sapientiae inventoresque; adire tamquam multorum hereditatem iuvat. Mihi ista acquisita, mihi laborata sunt. Sed agamus bonum patrem familiae, faciamus ampliora quae accepimus; maior ista hereditas a me ad posteros transeat. Multum adhuc restat operis multumque restabit, nec ulli nato post mille saecula praecludetur occasio aliquid adhuc adiciendi. [8] Sed etiam si omnia a

veteribus inventa sunt, hoc semper novum erit, usus et inventorum ab aliis scientia ac dispositio. Puta relicta nobis medicamenta quibus sanarentur oculi: non opus est mihi alia quaerere, sed haec tamen morbis et temporibus aptanda sunt. Hoc asperitas oculorum collevatur; hoc palpebrarum crassitudo tenuatur; hoc vis subita et umor avertitur; hoc acuetur visus: teras ista oportet et eligas tempus, adhibeas singulis modum. Animi remedia inventa sunt ab antiquis; quomodo autem admoveantur aut quando nostri operis est quaerere.

[9] Multum egerunt qui ante nos fuerunt, sed non peregerunt. Suspiciendi tamen sunt et ritu deorum colendi. Quidni ego magnorum virorum et imagines habeam incitamenta animi et natales celebrem? quidni ego illos honoris causa semper appellem? Quam venerationem praeceptoribus meis debeo, eandem illis praeceptoribus generis humani, a quibus tanti boni initia fluxerunt. [10] Si consulem videro aut praetorem, omnia quibus honor haberi honori solet faciam: equo desiliam, caput adaperiam, semita cedam. Quid ergo? Marcum Catonem utrumque et Laelium Sapientem et Socraten cum Platone et Zenonem Cleanthenque in animum meum sine dignatione summa recipiam? Ego vero illos veneror et tantis nominibus semper assurgo. Vale.

LXV. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Hesternum diem divisi cum mala valetudine: antemeridianum illa sibi vindicavit, postmeridiano mihi cessit. Itaque lectione primum temptavi animum; deinde, cum hanc recepisset, plus illi imperare ausus sum, immo permittere: aliquid scripsi et quidem intentius quam soleo, dum cum materia difficili contendo et vinci nolo, donec intervenerunt amici qui mihi vim afferrent et tamquam aegrum intemperantem coercerent. [2] In locum stili sermo successit, ex quo eam partem ad te perferam quae in lite est. Te arbitrum addiximus. Plus negotii habes quam existimas: triplex causa est.

Dicunt, ut scis, Stoici nostri duo esse in rerum natura ex quibus omnia fiant, causam et materiam. Materia iacet iners, res ad omnia parata, cessatura si nemo moveat; causa autem, id est ratio, materiam format et quocumque vult versat, ex illa varia opera producit. Esse ergo debet unde fiat aliquid, deinde a quo fiat: hoc causa est, illud materia. [3] Omnis ars naturae imitatio est; itaque quod de universo dicebam ad haec transfer quae ab homine facienda sunt. Statua et materiam habuit quae pateretur artificem, et artificem qui materiae daret faciem; ergo in statua materia aes fuit, causa opifex. Eadem condicio rerum omnium est: ex eo constant quod fit, et ex eo quod facit.

[4] Stoicis placet unam causam esse, id quod facit. Aristoteles putat causam tribus modis dici: ‘prima’ inquit ‘causa est ipsa materia, sine qua nihil potest effici; secunda opifex; tertia est forma, quae unicuique operi imponitur tamquam statuae’. Nam hanc Aristoteles ‘idos’ vocat. ‘Quarta quoque’ inquit ‘his accedit, propositum totius operis.’ [5] Quid sit hoc aperiam. Aes prima statuae causa est; numquam enim facta esset, nisi fuisset id ex quo funderetur ducereturve. Secunda causa artifex est; non potuisset enim aes illud in habitum statuae figurari, nisi accessissent peritae manus. Tertia causa est forma; neque enim statua ista ‘doryphoros’ aut ‘diadumenos’ vocaretur, nisi haec illi esset impressa facies. Quarta causa est faciendi propositum; nam nisi hoc fuisset, facta non esset. [6] Quid est propositum? quod invitavit artificem, quod ille secutus fecit: vel pecunia est haec, si venditurus fabricavit, vel gloria, si

laboravit in nomen, vel religio, si donum templo paravit. Ergo et haec causa est propter quam fit: an non putas inter causas facti operis esse numerandum quo remoto factum non esset?

[7] His quintam Plato adicit exemplar, quam ipse 'idean' vocat; hoc est enim ad quod respiciens artifex id quod destinabat effecit. Nihil autem ad rem pertinet utrum foris habeat exemplar ad quod referat oculos an intus, quod ibi ipse concepit et posuit. Haec exemplaria rerum omnium deus intra se habet numerosque universorum quae agenda sunt et modos mente complexus est; plenus his figuris est quas Plato 'ideas' appellat, immortales, immutabiles, infatigabiles. Itaque homines quidem pereunt, ipsa autem humanitas, ad quam homo effingitur, permanet, et hominibus laborantibus, intereuntibus, illa nihil patitur. [8] Quinque ergo causae sunt, ut Plato dicit: id ex quo, id a quo, id in quo, id ad quod, id propter quod; novissime id quod ex his est. Tamquam in statua - quia de hac loqui coepimus - id ex quo aes est, id a quo artifex est, id in quo forma est quae aptatur illi, id ad quod exemplar est quod imitatur is qui facit, id propter quod facientis propositum est, id quod ex istis est ipsa statua <est>. [9] Haec omnia mundus quoque, ut ait Plato, habet: facientem, hic deus est; ex quo fit, haec materia est; formam, haec est habitus et ordo mundi quem videmus; exemplar, scilicet ad quod deus hanc magnitudinem operis pulcherrimi fecit; propositum, propter quod fecit. [10] Quaeris quod sit propositum deo? bonitas. Ita certe Plato ait: 'quae deo faciendi mundum fuit causa? bonus est; bono nulla cuiusquam boni invidia est; fecit itaque quam optimum potuit'.

Fer ergo iudex sententiam et pronuntia quis tibi videatur verisimillimum dicere, non quis verissimum dicat; id enim tam supra nos est quam ipsa veritas.

[11] Haec quae ab Aristotele et Platone ponitur turba causarum aut nimium multa aut nimium pauca comprehendit. Nam si quocumque remoto quid effici non potest, id causam iudicant esse faciendi, pauca dixerunt. Ponant inter causas tempus: nihil sine tempore potest fieri. Ponant locum: si non fuerit ubi fiat aliquid, ne fiet quidem. Ponant motum: nihil sine hoc nec fit nec perit; nulla sine motu ars, nulla mutatio est. [12] Sed nos nunc primam et generalem quaerimus causam. Haec simplex esse debet; nam et materia simplex est.

Quaerimus quid sit causa? ratio scilicet faciens, id est deus; ista enim quaecumque rettulistis non sunt multae et singulae causae, sed ex una pendent, ex ea quae facit. [13] Formam dicis causam esse? hanc imponit artifex operi: pars causae est, non causa. Exemplar quoque non est causa, sed instrumentum causae necessarium. Sic necessarium est exemplar artificis quomodo scalprum, quomodo lima: sine his procedere ars non potest, non tamen hae partes artis aut causae sunt. [14] ‘Propositum’ inquit ‘artificis, propter quod ad faciendum aliquid accedit, causa est.’ Ut sit causa, non est efficiens causa, sed superveniens. Hae autem innumerabiles sunt: nos de causa generali quaerimus. Illud vero non pro solita ipsis subtilitate dixerunt, totum mundum et consummatum opus causam esse; multum enim interest inter opus et causam operis.

[15] Aut fer sententiam aut, quod facilius in eiusmodi rebus est, nega tibi liquere et nos reverti iube. ‘Quid te’ inquis ‘delectat tempus inter ista contere, quae tibi nullum affectum eripiunt, nullam cupiditatem abigunt?’ Ego quidem [peiora] illa ago ac tracto quibus pacatur animus, et me prius scrutor, deinde hunc mundum. [16] Ne nunc quidem tempus, ut existimas, perdo; ista enim omnia, si non concidantur nec in hanc subtilitatem inutilem distrahantur, attollunt et levant animum, qui gravi sarcina pressus explicari cupit et reverti ad illa quorum fuit. Nam corpus hoc animi pondus ac poena est; premente illo urguetur, in vinclis est, nisi accessit philosophia et illum respirare rerum naturae spectaculo iussit et a terrenis ad divina dimisit. Haec libertas eius est, haec evagatio; subducit interim se custodiae in qua tenetur et caelo reficitur. [17] Quemadmodum artifices [ex] alicuius rei subtilioris quae intentione oculos defetigat, si malignum habent et precarium lumen, in publicum prodeunt et in aliqua regione ad populi otium dedicata oculos libera luce delectant, sic animus in hoc tristi et obscuro domicilio clusus, quotiens potest, apertum petit et in rerum naturae contemplatione requiescit. [18] Sapiens assectatorque sapientiae adhaeret quidem in corpore suo, sed optima sui parte abest et cogitationes suas ad sublimia intendit. Velut sacramento rogatus hoc quod vivit stipendium putat; et ita formatus est ut illi nec amor vitae nec odium sit, patiturque mortalia quamvis sciat ampliora superesse. [19] Interdicis mihi inspectione rerum naturae, a toto abductum redigis in partem? Ego non quaeram quae

sint initia universorum? quis rerum formator? quis omnia in uno mersa et materia inerti convoluta discreverit? Non quaeram quis sit istius artifex mundi? qua ratione tanta magnitudo in legem et ordinem venerit? quis sparsa collegerit, confusa distinxerit, in una deformitate iacentibus faciem dividerit? unde lux tanta fundatur? ignis sit, an aliquid igne lucidius? [20] Ego ista non quaeram? ego nesciam unde descenderim? semel haec mihi videnda sint, an saepe nascendum? quo hinc iturus sim? quae sedes exspectet animam solutam legibus servitutis humanae? Vetas me caelo interesse, id est iubes me vivere capite demisso? [21] Maior sum et ad maiora genitus quam ut mancipium sim mei corporis, quod equidem non aliter aspicio quam vinculum aliquod libertati meae circumdatum; hoc itaque oppono fortunae, in quo resistat, nec per illud ad me ullum transire vulnus sino. Quidquid in me potest iniuriam pati hoc est in hoc obnoxio domicilio animus liber habitat. [22] Numquam me caro ista compellet ad metum, numquam ad indignam bono simulationem; numquam in honorem huius corpusculi mentiar. Cum visum erit, distraham cum illo societatem; et nunc tamen, dum haeremus, non erimus aequis partibus socii: animus ad se omne ius ducet. Contemptus corporis sui certa libertas est.

[23] Ut ad propositum revertar, huic libertati multum conferet et illa de qua modo loquebamur inspectio; nempe universa ex materia et ex deo constant. Deus ista temperat quae circumfusa rectorem sequuntur et ducem. Potentius autem est ac pretiosius quod facit, quod est deus, quam materia patiens dei. [24] Quem in hoc mundo locum deus obtinet, hunc in homine animus; quod est illic materia, id in nobis corpus est. Serviant ergo deteriora melioribus; fortes simus adversus fortuita; non contremescamus iniurias, non vulnera, non vincula, non egestatem. Mors quid est? aut finis aut transitus. Nec desinere timeo - idem est enim quod non coepisse -, nec transire, quia nusquam tam anguste ero. Vale.

LXVI. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Claranum condiscipulum meum vidi post multos annos: non, puto, exspectas ut adiciam senem, sed mehercules viridem animo ac vigentem et cum corpusculo suo colluctantem. Inique enim se natura gessit et talem animum male collocavit; aut fortasse voluit hoc ipsum nobis ostendere, posse ingenium fortissimum ac beatissimum sub qualibet cute latere. Vicit tamen omnia impedimenta et ad cetera contemnenda a contemptu sui venit. [2] Errare mihi visus est qui dixit gratior et pulchro veniens e corpore virtus

Non enim ullo honestamento eget: ipsa magnum sui decus est et corpus suum consecrat. Aliter certe Claranum nostrum coepi intueri: formosus mihi videtur et tam rectus corpore quam est animo. [3] Potest ex casa vir magnus exire, potest et ex deformi humilique corpusculo formosus animus ac magnus. Quosdam itaque mihi videtur in hoc tales natura generare, ut approbet virtutem omni loco nasci. Si posset per se nudos edere animos, fecisset; nunc quod amplius est facit: quosdam enim edit corporibus impeditos, sed nihilominus perrumpentis obstantia. [4] Claranus mihi videtur in exemplar editus, ut scire possemus non deformitate corporis foedari animum, sed pulchritudine animi corpus ornari. Quamvis autem paucissimos una fecerimus dies, tamen multi nobis sermones fuerunt, quos subinde egeram et ad te permittam. [5] Hoc primo die quaesitum est, quomodo possint paria bona esse, si triplex eorum condicio est. Quaedam, ut nostris videtur, prima bona sunt, tamquam gaudium, pax, salus patriae; quaedam secunda, in materia infelici expressa, tamquam tormentorum patientia et in morbo gravi temperantia. Illa bona directo optabimus nobis, haec, si necesse erit. Sunt adhuc tertia, tamquam modestus incessus et compositus ac probus vultus et conveniens prudenti viro gestus. [6] Quomodo ista inter se paria esse possunt, cum alia optanda sint, alia aversanda?

Si volumus ista distinguere, ad primum bonum revertamur et consideremus id quale sit. Animus intuens vera, peritus fugiendorum ac petendorum, non ex opinione sed ex natura pretia rebus imponens, toti se inserens mundo et in omnis eius actus contemplationem suam mittens, cogitationibus actionibusque intentus ex aequo, magnus ac

vehemens, asperis blandisque pariter invictus, neutri se fortunae summittens, supra omnia quae contingunt acciduntque eminens, pulcherrimus, ordinatissimus cum decore tum viribus, sanus ac siccus, imperturbatus intrepidus, quem nulla vis frangat, quem nec attollant fortuita nec deprimant - talis animus virtus est. [7] Haec eius est facies, si sub unum veniat aspectum et semel tota se ostendat. Ceterum multae eius species sunt, quae pro vitae varietate et pro actionibus explicantur: nec minor fit aut maior ipsa. Decrescere enim summum bonum non potest nec virtuti ire retro licet; sed in alias atque alias qualitates convertitur, ad rerum quas actura est habitum figurata. [8] Quidquid attingit in similitudinem sui adducit et tingit; actiones, amicitias, interdum domos totas quas intravit disposuitque condecorat; quidquid tractavit, id amabile, conspicuum, mirabile facit. Itaque vis eius et magnitudo ultra non potest surgere, quando incrementum maximo non est: nihil invenies rectius recto, non magis quam verius vero, quam temperato temperatius. [9] Omnis in modo est virtus; modo certa mensura est; constantia non habet quo procedat, non magis quam fiducia aut veritas aut fides. Quid accedere perfecto potest? nihil, aut perfectum non erat cui accessit; ergo ne virtuti quidem, cui si quid adici potest, defuit. Honestum quoque nullam accessionem recipit; honestum est enim propter ista quae rettuli. Quid porro? decorum et iustum et legitimum non eiusdem esse formae putas, certis terminis comprehensum? Crescere posse imperfectae rei signum est. [10] Bonum omne in easdem cadit leges: iuncta est privata et publica utilitas, tam mehercules quam inseparabile est laudandum petendumque. Ergo virtutes inter se pares sunt et opera virtutis et omnes homines quibus illae contingere. [11] Satorum vero animaliumque virtutes, cum mortales sint, fragiles quoque caducaeque sunt et incertae; exsiliunt residuntque et ideo non eodem pretio aestimantur. Una inducitur humanis virtutibus regula; una enim est ratio recta simplexque. Nihil est divino divinius, caelesti caelestius. [12] Mortalia minuuntur cadunt, deteruntur crescunt, exhauriuntur implentur; itaque illis in tam incerta sorte inaequalitas est: divinorum una natura est. Ratio autem nihil aliud est quam in corpus humanum pars divini spiritus mersa; si ratio divina est, nullum autem bonum sine ratione est, bonum omne divinum est. Nullum porro inter divina discrimen est; ergo nec inter bona. Paria

itaque sunt et gaudium et fortis atque obstinata tormentorum perpressio; in utroque enim eadem est animi magnitudo, in altero remissa et laxa, in altero pugnat et intenta. [13] Quid? tu non putas parem esse virtutem eius qui fortiter hostium moenia expugnat, et eius qui obsidionem patientissime sustinet? [et] Magnus Scipio, qui Numantiam cludit et comprimit cogitque invictas manus in exitium ipsas suum verti, magnus ille obsessorum animus, qui scit non esse clusum cui mors aperta est, et in complexu libertatis expirat. Aequae reliqua quoque inter se paria sunt, tranquillitas, simplicitas, liberalitas, constantia, aequanimitas, tolerantia; omnibus enim istis una virtus subest, quae animum rectum et indeclinabilem praestat.

[14] ‘Quid ergo? nihil interest inter gaudium et dolorum inflexibilem patientiam?’ Nihil, quantum ad ipsas virtutes: plurimum inter illa in quibus virtus utraque ostenditur; in altero enim naturalis est animi remissio ac laxitas, in altero contra naturam dolor. Itaque media sunt haec quae plurimum intervalli recipiunt: virtus in utroque par est. [15] Virtutem materia non mutat: nec peiorem facit dura ac difficilis nec meliorem hilaris et laeta; necessest ergo par sit. In utraque enim quod fit aequae recte fit, aequae prudenter, aequae honeste; ergo aequalia sunt bona, ultra quae nec hic potest se melius in hoc gaudio gerere nec ille melius in illis cruciatibus; duo autem quibus nihil fieri melius potest paria sunt. [16] Nam si quae extra virtutem posita sunt aut minuere illam aut augere possunt, desinit unum bonum esse quod honestum. Si hoc concesseris, omne honestum perit. Quare? dicam: quia nihil honestum est quod ab invito, quod a coacto fit; omne honestum voluntarium est. Admisce illi pigritiam, querelam, tergiversationem, metum: quod habet in se optimum perdidit, sibi placere. Non potest honestum esse quod non est liberum; nam quod timet servit. [17] Honestum omne securum est, tranquillum est: si recusat aliquid, si complorat, si malum iudicat, perturbationem recepit et in magna discordia volutatur; hinc enim species recti vocat, illinc suspicio mali retrahit. Itaque qui honeste aliquid facturus est, quidquid opponitur, id etiam si incommodum putat, malum non putet, velit, libens faciat. Omne honestum iniussum incoactumque est, sincerum et nulli malo mixtum.

[18] Scio quid mihi responderi hoc loco possit: ‘hoc nobis persuadere conaris, nihil interesse utrum aliquis in gaudio sit an in

eculeo iaceat ac tortorem suum lasset?'. Poteram respondere: Epicurus quoque ait sapientem, si in Phalaridis tauro peruratur, exclamaturum, 'dulce est et ad me nihil pertinet'. Quid miraris si ego paria bona dico <alterius in convivio iacentis, alterius inter tormenta fortissime stantis, cum quod incredibilius est dicat Epicurus, dulce esse torrerii? [19] Sed hoc respondeo, plurimum interesse inter gaudium et dolorem; si quaeratur electio, alterum petam, alterum vitabo: illud secundum naturam est, hoc contra. Quamdiu sic aestimantur, magno inter se dissident spatio: cum ad virtutem ventum est, utraque par est, et quae per laeta procedit et quae per tristitia. [20] Nullum habet momentum vexatio et dolor et quidquid aliud incommodi est; virtute enim obruitur. Quemadmodum minuta lumina claritas solis obscurat, sic dolores, molestias, iniurias virtus magnitudine sua elidit atque opprimit; et quocumque affulsit, ibi quidquid sine illa apparet exstinguitur, nec magis ullam portionem habent incommoda, cum in virtutem inciderunt, quam in mari nimbus. [21] Hoc ut scias ita esse, ad omne pulchrum vir bonus sine ulla cunctatione procurret: stet illic licet carnifex, stet tortor atque ignis, perseverabit nec quid passurus sed quid facturum sit aspiciet, et se honestae rei tamquam bono viro credet; utilem illam sibi iudicabit, tutam, prosperam. Eundem locum habebit apud illum honesta res, sed tristis atque aspera, quem vir bonus pauper aut exul <aut exilis> ac pallidus. [22] Agedum pone ex alia parte virum bonum divitiis abundantem, ex altera nihil habentem, sed in se omnia: uterque aequè vir bonus erit, etiam si fortuna dispari utetur. Idem, ut dixi, in rebus iudicium est quod in hominibus: aequè laudabilis virtus est in corpore valido ac libero posita quam in morbo ac vincto. [23] Ergo tuam quoque virtutem non magis laudabis si corpus illi tuum integrum fortuna praestiterit quam si ex aliqua parte mutilatum: alioqui hoc erit ex servorum habitu dominum aestimare. Omnia enim ista in quae dominium casus exercet serva sunt, pecunia et corpus et honores, imbecilla, fluida, mortalia, possessionis incertae: illa rursus libera et invicta opera virtutis, quae non ideo magis appetenda sunt si benignius a fortuna tractantur, nec minus si aliqua iniquitate rerum premuntur. [24] Quod amicitia in hominibus est, hoc in rebus appetitio. Non, puto, magis amares virum bonum locupletem quam pauperem, nec robustum et lacertosum quam gracilem et languidi

corporis; ergo ne rem quidem magis appetes aut amabis hilarem ac pacatam quam distractam et operosam. [25] Aut si hoc est, magis diliges ex duobus aequae bonis viris nitidum et unctum quam pulverulentum et horrentem; deinde hoc usque pervenies ut magis diligas integrum omnibus membris et illaesum quam debilem aut luscum; paulatim fastidium tuum illo usque procedet ut ex duobus aequae iustis ac prudentibus comatum et crispulum malis. Ubi par in utroque virtus est, non comparet aliarum rerum inaequalitas; omnia enim alia non partes sed accessiones sunt. [26] Num quis tam iniquam censuram inter, suos agit ut sanum filium quam aegrum magis diligat, procerumve et excelsum quam brevem aut modicum? Fetus suos non distinguunt ferae et se in alimentum pariter omnium sternunt; aves ex aequo partiuntur cibos. Ulixes ad Ithacae suae saxa sic properat quemadmodum Agamemnon ad Mycenarum nobiles muros; nemo enim patriam quia magna est amat, sed quia sua. [27] Quorsus haec pertinent? ut scias; virtutem omnia opera velut fetus suos isdem oculis intueri, aequae indulgere omnibus, et quidem impensius laborantibus, quoniam quidem etiam parentium amor magis in ea quorum miseretur inclinatur. Virtus quoque opera sua quae videt affici et premi non magis amat, sed parentium bonorum more magis complectitur ac fovet.

[28] Quare non est ullum bonum altero maius? quia non est quicquam apto aptius, quia plano nihil est planius. Non potes dicere hoc magis par esse alicui quam illud; ergo nec honesto honestius quicquam est. [29] Quod si par omnium virtutum natura est, tria genera bonorum in aequo sunt. Ita dico: in aequo est moderate gaudere et moderate dolere. Laetitia illa non vincit hanc animi firmitatem sub tortore gemitus devorantem: illa bona optabilia, haec mirabilia sunt, utraque nihilominus paria, quia quidquid incommodi est vi tanto maioris boni tegitur. [30] Quisquis haec imparia iudicat ab ipsis virtutibus avertit oculos et exteriora circumspicit. Bona vera idem pendent, idem patent: illa falsa multum habent vani; itaque speciosa et magna contra visentibus, cum ad pondus revocata sunt, fallunt. [31] Ita est, mi Lucili: quidquid vera ratio commendat solidum et aeternum est, firmat animum attollitque semper futurum in excelso. illa quae temere laudantur et vulgi sententia bona sunt inflant inanibus laetos; rursus ea quae timentur tamquam mala

iniciunt formidinem mentibus et illas non aliter quam animalia specie periculi agitant. [32] Utraque ergo res sine causa animum et diffundit et mordet: nec illa gaudio nec haec metu digna est. Sola ratio immutabilis et iudicii tenax est; non enim servit sed imperat sensibus. Ratio rationi par est, sicut rectum recto; ergo et virtus virtuti; nihil enim aliud est virtus quam recta ratio. Omnes virtutes rationes sunt; rationes sunt, si rectae sunt; si rectae sunt, et pares sunt. [33] Qualis ratio est, tales et actiones sunt; ergo omnes pares sunt; nam cum similes rationi sint, similes et inter se sunt. Pares autem actiones inter se esse dico qua honestae rectaeque sunt; ceterum magna habebunt discrimina variante materia, quae modo latior est, modo angustior, modo illustris, modo ignobilis, modo ad multos pertinens, modo ad paucos. In omnibus tamen istis id quod optimum est par est: honestae sunt. [34] Tamquam viri boni omnes pares sunt qua boni sunt, sed habent differentias aetatis: alius senior est, alius iunior; habent corporis: alius formosus, alius deformis est; habent fortunae: ille dives, hic pauper est, ille gratosus, potens, urbibus notus et populis, hic ignotus plerisque et obscurus. Sed per illud quo boni sunt pares sunt.

[35] De bonis ac malis sensus non iudicat; quid utile sit, quid inutile, ignorat. Non potest ferre sententiam nisi in rem praesentem perductus est; nec futuri providus est nec praeteriti memor; quid sit consequens nescit. Ex hoc autem rerum ordo seriesque contexitur et unitas vitae per rectum iturae. Ratio ergo arbitra est bonorum ac malorum; aliena et externa pro vilibus habet, et ea quae neque bona sunt neque mala accessiones minimas ac levissimas iudicat; omne enim illi bonum in animo est. [36] Ceterum bona quaedam prima existimat, ad quae ex proposito venit, tamquam victoriam, bonos liberos, salutem patriae; quaedam secunda, quae non apparent nisi in rebus adversis, tamquam aequo animo pati morbum, ignem, exilium; quaedam media, quae nihilo magis secundum naturam sunt quam contra naturam, tamquam prudenter ambulare, composite sedere. Non enim minus secundum naturam est sedere quam stare aut ambulare. [37] Duo illa bona superiora diversa sunt: prima enim secundum naturam sunt, gaudere liberorum pietate, patriae incolumitate; secunda contra naturam sunt, fortiter obstare tormentis et sitim perpeti morbo urente praecordia. [38] 'Quid ergo? aliquid

contra naturam bonum est?’ Minime; sed id aliquando contra naturam est in quo bonum illud existit. Vulnerari enim et subiecto igne tabescere et adversa valetudine affligi contra naturam est, sed inter ista servare animum infatigabilem secundum naturam est. [39] Et ut quod volo exprimam breviter, materia boni aliquando contra naturam est bonum numquam, quoniam bonum sine ratione nullum est, sequitur autem ratio naturam. ‘Quid est ergo ratio?’ Naturae imitatio. ‘Quod est summum hominis bonum?’ Ex naturae voluntate se gerere.

[40] ‘Non est’ inquit ‘dubium quin felicior pax sit numquam lacessita quam multo reparata sanguine. Non est dubium’ inquit ‘quin felicior res sit inconcussa valetudo quam ex gravibus morbis et extrema minitantibus in tutum vi quadam et patientia educta. Eodem modo non erit dubium quin maius bonum sit gaudium quam obnixus animus ad perpetiendos cruciatus vulnerum aut ignium.’ [41] Minime; illa enim quae fortuita sunt plurimum discriminis recipiunt; aestimantur enim utilitate sumentium. Bonorum unum propositum est consentire naturae; hoc [contingere] in omnibus par est. Cum alicuius in senatu sententiam sequimur, non potest dici: ille magis assentitur quam ille. Ab omnibus in eandem sententiam itur. Idem de virtutibus dico: omnes naturae assentiuntur. Idem de bonis dico: omnia naturae assentiuntur. [42] Alter adulescens decessit, alter senex, aliquis protinus infans, cui nihil amplius contigit quam prospicere vitam: omnes hi aequae fuere mortales, etiam si mors aliorum longius vitam passa est procedere, aliorum in medio flore praecidit, aliorum interrupt ipsa principia. [43] Alius inter cenandum solutus est; alterius continuata mors somno est; aliquem concubitus exstinxit. His oppone ferro transfossos aut exanimatos serpentium morsu aut fractos ruina aut per longam nervorum contractionem extortos minutatim. Aliquorum melior dici, aliquorum peior potest exitus: mors quidem omnium par est. Per quae veniunt diversa sunt; in [id] quod desinunt unum est. Mors nulla maior aut minor est; habet enim eundem in omnibus modum, finisse vitam. [44] Idem tibi de bonis dico: hoc bonum inter meras voluptates, hoc est inter tristia et acerba; illud fortunae indulgentiam rexit, hoc violentiam domuit: utrumque aequae bonum est, quamvis illud plana et molli via ierit, hoc aspera. Idem enim finis omnium est: bona sunt, laudanda sunt, virtutem

rationemque comitantur; virtus aequat inter se quidquid agnoscit.

[45] Nec est quare hoc inter nostra placita mireris: apud Epicurum duo bona sunt, ex quibus summum illud beatumque componitur, ut corpus sine dolore sit, animus sine perturbatione. Haec bona non crescunt si plena sunt: quo enim crescit quod plenum est? Dolore corpus caret: quid ad hanc accedere indolentiam potest? Animus constat sibi et placidus est: quid accedere ad hanc tranquillitatem potest? [46] Quemadmodum serenitas caeli non recipit maiorem adhuc claritatem in sincerissimum nitorem repurgata, sic hominis corpus animumque curantis et bonum suum ex utroque nectentis perfectus est status, et summam voti sui invenit si nec aestus animo est nec dolor corpori. Si qua extra blandimenta contingunt, non augment summum bonum, sed, ut ita dicam, condiunt et oblectant; absolutum enim illud humanae naturae bonum corporis et animi pace contentum est.

[47] Dabo apud Epicurum tibi etiam nunc simillimam huic nostrae divisionem bonorum. Alia enim sunt apud illum quae malit contingere sibi, ut corporis quietem ab omni incommodo liberam et animi remissionem bonorum suorum contemplatione gaudentis; alia sunt quae, quamvis nolit accidere, nihilominus laudat et comprobat, tamquam illam quam paulo ante dicebam malae valetudinis et dolorum gravissimorum perpessionem, in qua Epicurus fuit illo summo ac fortunatissimo die suo. Ait enim se vesicae et exulcerati ventris tormenta tolerare ulteriorem doloris accessionem non recipientia, esse nihilominus sibi illum beatum diem. Beatum autem diem agere nisi qui est in summo bono non potest. [48] Ergo et apud Epicurum sunt haec bona, quae malles non experiri, sed, quia ita res tulit, et amplexanda et laudanda et exaequanda summis sunt. Non potest dici hoc non esse par maximis bonum quod beatæ vitæ clausulam imposuit, cui Epicurus extrema voce gratias egit.

[49] Permite mihi, Lucili virorum optime, aliquid audacius dicere: si ulla bona maiora esse aliis possent, haec ego quae tristitia videntur mollioribus illis et delicatis praetulissem, haec maiora dixissem. Maius est enim difficilia perfringere quam laeta moderari. [50] Eadem ratione fit, scio, ut aliquis felicitatem bene et ut calamitatem fortiter ferat. Aequè esse fortis potest qui pro vallo securus excubuit nullis hostibus castra temptantibus et qui succisis poplitibus in genua se

excepit nec arma dimisit: ‘macte virtute esto’ sanguinulentis et ex acie redeuntibus dicitur. Itaque haec magis laudaverim bona exercitata et fortia et cum fortuna rixata. [51] Ego dubitem quin magis laudem truncam illam et retorridam manum Mucii quam cuiuslibet fortissimi salvam? Stetit hostium flammaramque contemptor et manum suam in hostili foculo destillantem perspectavit, donec Porsina cuius poenae favebat gloriae invidit et ignem invito eripi iussit. [52] Hoc bonum quidni inter prima numerem tantoque maius putem quam illa segura et intemptata fortunae quanto rarius est hostem amissa manu vicisse quam armata? ‘Quid ergo?’ inquis ‘hoc bonum tibi optabis?’ Quidni? hoc enim nisi qui potest et optare, non potest facere. [53] An potius optem ut malaxandos articulos exoletis meis porrigam? ut muliercula aut aliquis in mulierculam ex viro versus digitulos meos ducat? Quidni ego feliciorem putem Mucium, quod sic tractavit ignem quasi illam manum tractatori praestitisset? In integrum restituit quidquid erraverat: confecit bellum inermis ac mancus et illa manu trunca reges duos vicit. Vale.

LXVII. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Ut a communibus initium faciam, ver aperire se coepit, sed iam inclinatum in aestatem, quo tempore calere debebat, intepuit nec adhuc illi fides est; saepe enim in hiemem revolvitur. Vis scire quam dubium adhuc sit? nondum me committo frigidae verae, adhuc rigorem eius infringo. ‘Hoc est’ inquis ‘nec calidum nec frigidum pati.’ Ita est, mi Lucili: iam aetas mea contenta est suo frigore; vix media regelatur aestate. Itaque maior pars in vestimentis degitur. [2] Ago gratias senectuti quod me lectulo affixit: quidni gratias illi hoc nomine agam? Quidquid debebam nolle, non possum. Cum libellis mihi plurimus sermo est. Si quando intervenerunt epistulae tuae, tecum esse mihi videor et sic afficior animo tamquam tibi non rescribam sed respondeam. Itaque et de hoc quod quaeris, quasi colloquar tecum, quale sit una scrutabimur.

[3] Quaeris an omne bonum optabile sit. ‘Si bonum est’ inquis ‘fortiter torqueri et magno animo uri et patienter aegrotare, sequitur ut ista optabilia sint; nihil autem video ex istis voto dignum. Neminem certe adhuc scio eo nomine votum solvisse quod flagellis caesus esset aut podagra distortus aut eculeo longior factus.’ [4] Distingue, mi Lucili, ista, et intelleges esse in iis aliquid optandum. Tormenta abesse a me velim; sed si sustinenda fuerint, ut me in illis fortiter, honeste, animose geram optabo. Quidni ego malim non incidere bellum? sed si inciderit, ut vulnera, ut famem et omnia quae bellorum necessitas affert generose feram optabo. Ton sum tam demens ut aegrotare cupiam; sed si aegrotandum fuerit, ut nihil intemperanter, nihil effeminate faciam optabo. Ita non incommoda optabilia sunt, sed virtus qua perferuntur incommoda.

[5] Quidam ex nostris existimant omnium istorum fortem tolerantiam non esse optabilem, sed ne abominandam quidem, quia voto purum bonum peti debet et tranquillum et extra molestiam positum. Ego dissentio. Quare? primum quia fieri non potest ut aliqua res bona quidem sit sed optabilis non sit; deinde si virtus optabilis est, nullum autem sine virtute bonum, et omne bonum optabile est; deinde etiam si * * * tormentorum fortis patientia optabilis est. [6] Etiam nunc interrogo: nempe fortitudo optabilis est?

Atqui pericula contemnit et provocat; pulcherrima pars eius maximeque mirabilis illa est, non cedere ignibus, obviam ire vulneribus, interdum tela ne vitare quidem sed pectore excipere. Si fortitudo optabilis est, et tormenta patienter ferre optabile est; hoc enim fortitudinis pars est. Sed separa ista, ut dixi: nihil erit quod tibi faciat errorem. Non enim pati tormenta optabile est, sed pati fortiter: illud opto 'fortiter', quod est virtus. [7] 'Quis tamen umquam hoc sibi optavit?' Quaedam vota aperta et professa sunt, cum particulatim fiunt; quaedam latent, cum uno voto multa comprehensa sunt. Tamquam opto mihi vitam honestam; vita autem honesta actionibus variis constat: in hac es Reguli arca, Catonis scissum manu sua vulnus, Rutili exsilium, calix venenatus qui Socraten transtulit e carcere in caelum. Ita cum optavi mihi vitam honestam, et haec optavi sine quibus interdum honesta non potest esse.

[8] O terque quaterque beati,
quis ante ora patrum Troiae sub moenibus altis
contigit oppetere!

Quid interest, optes hoc alicui an optabile fuisse fatearis? [9] Decius se pro re publica devovit et in medios hostes concitato equo mortem petens irruit. Alter post hunc, paternae virtutis aemulus, conceptis sollemnibus ac iam familiaribus verbis in aciem confertissimam incucurrit, de hoc sollicitus tantum, ut litaret, optabilem rem putans bonam mortem. Dubitas ergo an optimum sit memorabilem mori et in aliquo opere virtutis? [10] Cum aliquis tormenta fortiter patitur, omnibus virtutibus utitur. Fortasse una in promptu sit et maxime appareat, patientia; ceterum illic est fortitudo, cuius patientia et perpressio et tolerantia rami sunt; illic est prudentia, sine qua nullum initur consilium, quae suadet quod effugere non possis quam fortissime ferre; illic est constantia, quae deici loco non potest et propositum nulla vi extorquente dimittit; illic est individuus ille comitatus virtutum. Quidquid honeste fit una virtus facit, sed ex consilii sententia; quod autem ab omnibus virtutibus comprobatur, etiam si ab una fieri videtur, optabile est.

[11] Quid? tu existimas ea tantum optabilia esse quae per voluptatem et otium veniunt, quae excipiuntur foribus ornatis? Sunt

quaedam tristis vultus bona; sunt quaedam vota quae non gratulantium coetu, sed adorantium venerantiumque celebrantur. [12] Ita tu non putas Regulum optasse ut ad Poenos perveniret? Indue magni viri animum et ab opinionibus vulgi secede paulisper; cape, quantam debes, virtutis pulcherrimae ac magnificentissimae speciem, quae nobis non ture nec sertis, sed sudore et sanguine colenda est. [13] Aspice M. Catonem sacro illi pectori purissimas manus admoventem et vulnera parum alte demissa laxantem. Utrum tandem illi dicturus es ‘vellem quae velles’ et ‘moleste fero’ an ‘feliciter quod agis’? [14] Hoc loco mihi Demetrius noster occurrit, qui vitam securam et sine ullis fortunae incursionibus mare mortuum vocat. Nihil habere ad quod exciteris, ad quod te concites, cuius denuntiatione et incursu firmitatem animi tui temptes, sed in otio inconcusso iacere non est tranquillitas: malacia est. [15] Attalus Stoicus dicere solebat, ‘malo me fortuna in castris suis quam in deliciis habeat. Torqueor, sed fortiter: bene est. Occidor, sed fortiter: bene est.’ Audi Epicurum, dicet et ‘dulce est’. Ego tam honestae rei ac severae numquam molle nomen imponam. [16] Uror, sed invictus: quidni hoc optabile sit? - non quod urit me ignis, sed quod non vincit. Nihil est virtute praestantius, nihil pulchrius; et bonum est et optabile quidquid ex huius geritur imperio. Vale.

LXVIII. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Consilio tuo accedo: absconde te in otio, sed et ipsum otium absconde. Hoc te facturum Stoicorum etiam si non praecepto, at exemplo licet scias; sed ex praecepto quoque facies: et tibi et cui voles approbaris. [2] Nec ad omnem rem publicam mittimus nec semper nec sine ullo fine; praeterea, cum sapienti rem publicam ipso dignam dedimus, id est mundum, non est extra rem publicam etiam si recesserit, immo fortasse relicto uno angulo in maiora atque ampliora transit et caelo impositus intellegit, cum sellam aut tribunal ascenderet, quam humili loco sederit. Depone hoc apud te, numquam plus agere sapientem quam cum in conspectum eius divina atque humana venerunt.

[3] Nunc ad illud revertor quod suadere tibi coeperam, ut otium tuum ignotum sit. Non est quod inscribas tibi philosophiam ac quietem: aliud proposito tuo nomen impone, valetudinem et imbecillitatem vocato et desidiam. Gloriari otio iners ambitio est. [4] Animalia quaedam, ne inveniri possint, vestigia sua circa ipsum cubile confundunt: idem tibi faciendum est, alioqui non deerunt qui persequantur. Multi aperta transeunt, condita et abstrusa rimantur; furem signata sollicitant. Vile videtur quidquid patet; aperta effractarius praeterit. Hos mores habet populus, hos imperitissimus quisque: in secreta irrumpere cupit. [5] Optimum itaque est non iactare otium suum; iactandi autem genus est nimis latere et a conspectu hominum secedere. Ille Tarentum se abdidit, ille Neapoli inclusus est, ille multis annis non transit domus suae limen: convocat turbam quisquis otio suo aliquam fabulam imposuit.

[6] Cum secesseris, non est hoc agendum, ut de te homines loquantur, sed ut ipse tecum loquaris. Quid autem loqueris? quod homines de aliis libentissime faciunt, de te apud te male existima: assuesces et dicere verum et audire. Id autem maxime tracta quod in te esse infirmissimum senties. [7] Nota habet sui quisque corporis vitia. Itaque alius vomitu levat stomachum, alius frequenti cibo fulcit, alius interposito ieiunio corpus exhaurit et purgat; ii quorum pedes dolor repetit aut vino aut balineo abstinent: in cetera negligentes huic a quo saepe infestantur occurrunt. Sic in animo

nostro sunt quaedam quasi causariae partes quibus adhibenda curatio est. [8] Quid in otio facio? ulcus meum curo. Si ostenderem tibi pedem turgidum, lividam manum, aut contracti cruris aridos nervos, permitteres mihi uno loco iacere et fovere morbum meum: maius malum est hoc, quod non possum tibi ostendere: in pectore ipso collectio et vomica est. Nolo nolo laudes, nolo dicas, 'o magnum virum! contempsit omnia et damnatis humanae vitae furoribus fugit'. Nihil damnavi nisi me. [9] Non est quod proficiendi causa venire ad me velis. Erras, qui hinc aliquid auxili speras: non medicus sed aeger hic habitat. Malo illa, cum discesseris, dicas: 'ego istum beatum hominem putabam et eruditum, erexeram aures: destitutus sum, nihil vidi, nihil audivi quod concupiscerem, ad quod reverterer'. Si hoc sentis, si hoc loqueris, aliquid profectum est: malo ignoscas otio meo quam inideas.

[10] 'Otium' inquis 'Seneca, commendas mihi? ad Epicureas voces delaberis?' Otium tibi commendo, in quo maiora agas et pulchriora quam quae reliquisti: pulsare superbas potentiorum fores, digerere in litteram senes orbos, plurimum in foro posse invidiosa potentia ac brevis est et, si verum aestimes, sordida. [11] Ille me gratia forensi longe antecedit, ille stipendiis militaribus et quaesita per hoc dignitate, ille clientium turba. [cui in turba] Par esse non possum, plus habent gratiae: est tanti ab omnibus vinci, dum a me fortuna vincatur. [12] Utinam quidem hoc propositum sequi olim fuisset animus tibi! utinam de vita beata non in conspectu mortis ageremus! Sed nunc quoque non moramur; multa enim quae supervacua esse et inimica credituri fuimus rationi, nunc experientiae credimus. [13] Quod facere solent qui serius exierunt et volunt tempus celeritate reparare, calcar addamus. Haec aetas optime facit ad haec studia: iam despumavit, iam vitia primo fervore adulescentiae indomita lassavit; non multum superest ut exstinguat. [14] 'Et quando' inquis 'tibi proderit istud quod in exitu discis, aut in quam rem?' In hanc, ut exeam melior. Non est tamen quod existimes ullam aetatem aptiorem esse ad bonam mentem quam quae se multis experimentis, longa ac frequenti rerum paenitentia domuit, quae ad salutaria mitigatis affectibus venit. Hoc est huius boni tempus: quisquis senex ad sapientiam pervenit, annis pervenit. Vale.

LXIX. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Mutare te loca et aliunde alio transilire nolo, primum quia tam frequens migratio instabilis animi est: coalescere otio non potest nisi desit circumspicere et errare. Ut animum possis continere, primum corporis tui fugam siste. [2] Deinde plurimum remedia continuata proficiunt: interrumpenda non est quies et vitae prioris oblivio; sine dediscere oculos tuos, sine aures assuescere sanioribus verbis. Quotiens processeris, in ipso transitu aliqua quae renovent cupiditates tuas tibi occurrent. [3] Quemadmodum ei qui amorem exuere conatur evitanda est omnis admonitio dilecti corporis - nihil enim facilius quam amor recrudesceat -, ita qui deponere vult desideria rerum omnium quarum cupiditate flagravimus et oculos et aures ab iis quae reliquit avertat. [4] Cito rebellat affectus. Quocumque se verterit, pretium aliquod praesens occupationis suae aspiciet. Nullum sine auctoramento malum est: avaritia pecuniam promittit, luxuria multas ac varias voluptates, ambitio purpuram et plausum et ex hoc potentiam et quidquid <potest> potentia. [5] Mercede te vitia sollicitant: hic tibi gratis vivendum est. Vix effici toto saeculo potest ut vitia tam longa licentia tumida subigantur et iugum accipiant, nedum si tam breve tempus intervallis discindimus; unam quamlibet rem vix ad perfectum perducit assidua vigilia et intentio. [6] Si me quidem velis audire, hoc meditare et exerce, ut mortem et excipias et, si ita res suadebit, accersas: interest nihil, illa ad nos veniat an ad illam nos. Illud imperitissimi cuiusque verbum falsum esse tibi ipse persuade: 'bella res est mori sua morte'. Nemo moritur nisi sua morte. Illud praeterea tecum licet cogites: nemo nisi suo die moritur. Nihil perdis ex tuo tempore; nam quod relinquis alienum est. Vale.

LIBER OCTAVUS

LXX. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Post longum intervallum Pompeios tuos vidi. In conspectum adulescentiae meae reductus sum; quidquid illic iuvenis feceram videbar mihi facere adhuc posse et paulo ante fecisse. [2] Praenavigavimus, Lucili, vitam et quemadmodum in mari, ut ait Vergilius noster,

terraeque urbesque recedunt,

sic in hoc cursu rapidissimi temporis primum pueritiam abscondimus, deinde adulescentiam, deinde quidquid est illud inter iuvenem et senem medium, in utriusque confinio positum, deinde ipsius senectutis optimos annos; novissime incipit ostendi publicus finis generis humani. [3] Scopulum esse illum putamus dementissimi: portus est, aliquando petendus, numquam recusandus, in quem si quis intra primos annos delatus est, non magis queri debet quam qui cito navigavit. Alium enim, ut scis, venti segnes ludunt ac detinent et tranquillitatis lentissimae taedio lassant, alium pertinax flatus celerrime perfert. [4] Idem evenire nobis puta: alios vita velocissime adduxit quo veniendum erat etiam cunctantibus, alios maceravit et coxit. Quae, ut scis, non semper retinenda est; non enim vivere bonum est, sed bene vivere.

Itaque sapiens vivet quantum debet, non quantum potest. [5] Videbit ubi victurus sit, cum quibus, quomodo, quid acturus. Cogitat semper qualia vita, non quanta sit. [sit] Si multa occurrunt molesta et tranquillitatem turbantia, emittit se; nec hoc tantum in necessitate ultima facit, sed cum primum illi coepit suspecta esse fortuna, diligenter circumspicit numquid illic desinendum sit. Nihil existimat sua referre, faciat finem an accipiat, tardius fiat an citius: non tamquam de magno detrimento timet; nemo multum ex stilicidio potest perdere. [6] Citius mori aut tardius ad rem non pertinet, bene mori aut male ad rem pertinet; bene autem mori est effugere male vivendi periculum. Itaque effeminatissimam vocem illius Rhodii existimo, qui cum in caveam coniectus esset a tyranno et tamquam ferum aliquod animal aleretur, suadenti cuidam ut abstineret cibo, ‘omnia’ inquit ‘homini, dum vivit, speranda sunt’. [7] Ut sit hoc verum, non omni pretio vita emenda est. Quaedam licet magna, licet

certa sint, tamen ad illa turpi infirmitatis confessione non veniam: ego cogitem in eo qui vivit omnia posse fortunam, potius quam cogitem in eo qui scit mori nil posse fortunam?

[8] Aliquando tamen, etiam si certa mors instabit et destinatum sibi supplicium sciet, non commodabit poenae suae manum: sibi commodaret. Stultitia est timore mortis mori: venit qui occidat, exspecta. Quid occupas? quare suscipis alienae crudelitatis procurationem? utrum invides carnifici tuo an parcis? [9] Socrates potuit abstinencia finire vitam et inedia potius quam veneno mori; triginta tamen dies in carcere et in exspectatione mortis exegit, non hoc animo tamquam omnia fieri possent, tamquam multas spes tam longum tempus reciperet, sed ut praeberet se legibus, ut fruendum amicis extremum Socraten daret. Quid erat stultius quam mortem contemnere, venenum timere? [10] Scribonia, gravis femina, amita Drusi Libonis fuit, adulescentis tam stolidi quam nobilis, maiora sperantis quam illo saeculo quisquam sperare poterat aut ipse ullo. Cum aeger a senatu in lectica relatus esset non sane frequentibus exsequis - omnes enim necessarii deseruerant impie iam non reum sed funus -, habere coepit consilium utrum conscisceret mortem an exspectaret. Cui Scribonia 'quid te' inquit 'delectat alienum negotium agere?' Non persuasit illi: manus sibi attulit, nec sine causa. Nam post diem tertium aut quartum inimici moriturus arbitrio si vivit, alienum negotium agit.

[11] Non possis itaque de re in universum pronuntiare, cum mortem vis externa denuntiat, occupanda sit an exspectanda; multa enim sunt quae in utramque partem trahere possunt. Si altera mors cum tormento, altera simplex et facilis est, quidni huic inicienda sit manus? Quemadmodum navem eligam navigaturus et domum habitaturus, sic mortem exiturus e vita. [12] Praeterea quemadmodum non utique melior est longior vita, sic peior est utique mors longior. In nulla re magis quam in morte morem animo gerere debemus. Exeat qua impetum cepit: sive ferrum appetit sive laqueum sive aliquam potionem venas occupantem, pergat et vincula servitutis abrumpat. Vitam et aliis approbare quisque debet, mortem sibi: optima est quae placet. [13] Stulte haec cogitantur: 'aliquis dicet me parum fortiter fecisse, aliquis nimis temere, aliquis fuisse aliquod genus mortis animosius'. Vis tu cogitare id in manibus esse

consilium ad quod fama non pertinet! Hoc unum intueri, ut te fortunae quam celerrime eripias; alioquin aderunt qui de facto tuo male existiment.

[14] Invenies etiam profectos sapientiam qui vim afferendam vitae suae negent et nefas iudicent ipsum interemptorem sui fieri: exspectandum esse exitum quem natura decrevit. Hoc qui dicit non videt se libertatis viam cludere: nihil melius aeterna lex fecit quam quod unum introitum nobis ad vitam dedit, exitus multos. [15] Ego exspectem vel morbi crudelitatem vel hominis, cum possim per media exire tormenta et adversa discutere? Hoc est unum cur de vita non possimus queri: neminem tenet. Bono loco res humanae sunt, quod nemo nisi vitio suo miser est. Placet? vive: non placet? licet eo reverti unde venisti. [16] Ut dolorem capitis levares, sanguinem saepe misisti; ad extenuandum corpus vena percutitur. Non opus est vasto vulnere dividere praecordia: scalpello aperitur ad illam magnam libertatem via et puncto securitas constat. Quid ergo est quod nos facit pigros inertesque? Nemo nostrum cogitat quandoque sibi ex hoc domicilio exeundum; sic veteres inquilinos indulgentia loci et consuetudo etiam inter iniurias detinet. [17] Vis adversus hoc corpus liber esse? tamquam migraturus habita. Propone tibi quandoque hoc contubernio carendum: fortior eris ad necessitatem exeundi. Sed quemadmodum suus finis veniet in mentem omnia sine fine concupiscentibus? [18] Nullius rei meditatio tam necessaria est; alia enim fortasse exercentur in supervacuum. Adversus paupertatem praeparatus est animus: permansere divitiae. Ad contemptum nos doloris armavimus: numquam a nobis exegit huius virtutis experimentum integri ac sani felicitas corporis. Ut fortiter amissorum desideria pateremur praecepimus nobis: omnis quos amabamus superstites fortuna servavit. [19] Huius unius rei usum qui exigit dies veniet. Non est quod existimes magnis tantum viris hoc robur fuisse quo servitutis humanae claustra perumperent; non est quod iudices hoc fieri nisi a Catone non posse, qui quam ferro non emiserat animam manu extraxit: vilissimae sortis homines ingenti impetu in tutum evaserunt, cumque e commodo mori non licuisset nec ad arbitrium suum instrumenta mortis eligere, obvia quaeque rapuerunt et quae natura non erant noxia vi sua tela fecerunt. [20] Nuper in ludo bestiariorum unus e Germanis, cum ad matutina spectacula pararetur,

secessit ad exonerandum corpus - nullum aliud illi dabatur sine custode secretum; ibi lignum id quod ad emundanda obscena adhaerente spongia positum est totum in gulam farsit et interclusis faucibus spiritum elisit. Hoc fuit morti contumeliam facere. Ita prorsus, parum munde et parum decenter: quid est stultius quam fastidiose mori? [21] O virum fortem, o dignum cui fati daretur electio! Quam fortiter ille gladio usus esset, quam animose in profundam se altitudinem maris aut abscisae rupis immisisset! Undique destitutus invenit quemadmodum et mortem sibi deberet et telum, ut scias ad moriendum nihil aliud in mora esse quam velle. Existimetur de facto hominis acerrimi ut cuique visum erit, dum hoc constet, praeferendam esse spurcissimam mortem servituti mundissimae.

[22] Quoniam coepi sordidis exemplis uti, perseverabo; plus enim a se quisque exigit, si viderit hanc rem etiam a contemptissimis posse contemni. Catones Scipionesque et alios quos audire cum admiratione consuevimus supra imitationem positos putamus: iam ego istam virtutem habere tam multa exempla in ludo bestiario quam in ducibus belli civilis ostendam. [23] Cum adveheretur nuper inter custodias quidam ad matutinum spectaculum missus, tamquam somno premente nutaret, caput usque eo demisit donec radiis insereret, et tamdiu se in sedili suo tenuit donec cervicem circumactu rotae frangeret; eodem vehiculo quo ad poenam ferebatur effugit. [24] Nihil obstat erumpere et exire cupienti: in aperto nos natura custodit. Cui permittit necessitas sua, circumspiciat exitum mollem; cui ad manum plura sunt per quae sese asserat, is dilectum agat et qua potissimum liberetur consideret: cui difficilis occasio est, is proximam quamque pro optima arripiat, sit licet inaudita, sit nova. Non deerit ad mortem ingenium cui non defuerit animus. [25] Vides quemadmodum extrema quoque mancipia, ubi illis stimulos adegit dolor, excitentur et intentissimas custodias fallant? Ille vir magnus est qui mortem sibi non tantum imperavit sed invenit. Ex eodem tibi munere plura exempla promisi. [26] Secundo naumachiae spectaculo unus e barbaris lanceam quam in adversarios acceperat totam iugulo suo mersit. 'Quare, quare' inquit 'non omne tormentum, omne ludibrium iamdudum effugio? quare ego mortem armatus exspecto?' Tanto hoc speciosius spectaculum fuit quanto honestius mori discunt

homines quam occidere. [27] Quid ergo? quod animi perditum quoque noxiosi habent non habebunt illi quos adversus hos casus instruxit longa meditatio et magistra rerum omnium ratio? Illa nos docet fati varios esse accessus, finem eundem, nihil autem interesse unde incipiat quod venit. [28] Eadem illa ratio monet ut si licet moriaris <quemadmodum placet, si minus> quemadmodum potes, et quidquid obvenerit ad vim afferendam tibi invadas. Iniuriosum est rapto vivere, at contra pulcherrimum mori rapto. Vale.

LXXI. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Subinde me de rebus singulis consulis, oblitus vasto nos mari dividi. Cum magna pars consilii sit in tempore, necesse est evenire ut de quibusdam rebus tunc ad te perferatur sententia mea cum iam contraria potior est. Consilia enim rebus aptantur; res nostrae feruntur, immo volvuntur; ergo consilium nasci sub diem debet. Et hoc quoque nimis tardum est: sub manu, quod aiunt, nascatur. Quemadmodum autem inveniatur ostendam. [2] Quotiens quid fugiendum sit aut quid petendum voles scire, ad summum bonum, propositum totius vitae tuae, respice. Illi enim consentire debet quidquid agimus: non disponet singula, nisi cui iam vitae suae summa proposita est. Nemo, quamvis paratos habeat colores, similitudinem reddet, nisi iam constat quid velit pingere. Ideo peccamus quia de partibus vitae omnes deliberamus, de tota nemo deliberat. [3] Scire debet quid petat ille qui sagittam vult mittere, et tunc derigere ac moderari manu telum: errant consilia nostra, quia non habent quo derigantur; ignoranti quem portum petat nullus suus ventus est. Necesse est multum in vita nostra casus possit, quia vivimus casu. [4] Quibusdam autem evenit ut quaedam scire se nesciant; quemadmodum quaerimus saepe eos cum quibus stamus, ita plerumque finem summi boni ignoramus appositum. Nec multis verbis nec circumitu longo quod sit summum bonum colliges: digito, ut ita dicam, demonstrandum est nec in multa spargendum. Quid enim ad rem pertinet in particulas illud diducere? cum possis dicere ‘summum bonum est quod honestum est’ et, quod magis admireris, ‘unum bonum est quod honestum est, cetera falsa et adulterina bona sunt’. [5] Hoc si persuaseris tibi et virtutem adamaveris - amare enim parum est -, quidquid illa contigerit, id tibi, qualecumque aliis videbitur, faustum felixque erit. Et torqueri, si modo iacueris ipso torquente securior, et aegrotare, si non male dixeris fortunae, si non cesseris morbo, omnia denique quae ceteris videntur mala et mansuescent et in bonum abibunt, si super illa eminueris. Hoc liqueat, nihil esse bonum nisi honestum: et omnia incommoda suo iure bona vocabuntur quae modo virtus honestaverit. [6] Multis videmur maiora promittere quam recipit humana condicio, non

immerito; ad corpus enim respiciunt. Revertantur ad animum: iam hominem deo metientur.

Erige te, Lucili virorum optime, et relinque istum ludum litterarium philosophorum qui rem magnificentissimam ad syllabas vocant, qui animum minuta docendo demittunt et conterunt: fies similis illis qui invenerunt ista, non qui docent et id agunt ut philosophia potius difficilis quam magna videatur. [7] Socrates, qui totam philosophiam revocavit ad mores et hanc summam dixit esse sapientiam, bona malaque distinguere, 'sequere' inquit 'illos, si quid apud te habeo auctoritatis, ut sis beatus, et te alicui stultum videri sine. Quisquis volet tibi contumeliam faciat et iniuriam, tu tamen nihil patieris, si modo tecum erit virtus. Si vis inquit 'beatus esse, si fide bona vir bonus, sine contemnat te aliquis.' Hoc nemo praestabit nisi qui omnia prior ipse contempserit, nisi qui omnia bona exaequaverit, quia nec bonum sine honesto est et honestum in omnibus par est.

[8] 'Quid ergo? nihil interest inter praeturam Catonis et repulsam? nihil interest utrum Pharsalica acie Cato vincatur an vincat? hoc eius bonum, quo victis partibus non potest vinci, par erat illi bono quo victor rediret in patriam et componeret pacem?' Quidni par sit? eadem enim virtute et mala fortuna vincitur et ordinatur bona; virtus autem non potest maior aut minor fieri: unius staturae est. [9] 'Sed Cn. Pompeius amittet exercitum, sed illud pulcherrimum rei publicae praetextum, optimates, et prima acies Pompeianarum partium, senatus ferens arma, uno proelio profligabuntur et tam magni ruina imperii in totum dissiliet orbem: aliqua pars eius in Aegypto, aliqua in Africa, aliqua in Hispania cadet. Ne hoc quidem miserae rei publicae continget, semel ruere.' [10] Omnia licet fiant: Iubam in regno suo non locorum notitia adiuvet, non popularium pro rege suo virtus obstinatissima, Uticensium quoque fides malis fracta deficiat et Scipionem in Africa nominis sui fortuna destituat: olim provisum est ne quid Cato detrimenti caperet. [11] 'Victus est tamen.' Et hoc numera inter repulsas Catonis: tam magno animo feret aliquid sibi ad victoriam quam ad praeturam obstitisse. Quo die repulsus est ludit, qua nocte periturus fuit legit; eodem loco habuit praetura et vita excidere; omnia quae acciderent ferenda esse persuaserat sibi.

[12] Quidni ille mutationem rei publicae forti et aequo pateretur

animo? quid enim mutationis periculo exceptum? non terra, non caelum, non totus hic rerum omnium contextus, quamvis deo agente ducatur; non semper tenebit hunc ordinem, sed illum ex hoc cursu aliquis dies deiciet. [13] Certis eunt cuncta temporibus: nasci debent, crescere, exstingui. Quaecumque supra nos vides currere et haec quibus innixi atque impositi sumus veluti solidissimis carpentur ac desinent; nulli non senectus sua est. Inaequalibus ista spatiis eodem natura dimittit: quidquid est non erit, nec peribit sed resolvetur. [14] Nobis solvi perire est; proxima enim intuemur, ad ulteriora non prospicit mens hebes et quae se corpori addixerit; alioqui fortius finem sui suorumque pateretur, si speraret, <ut> omnia illa, sic vitam mortemque per vices ire et composita dissolvi, dissoluta componi, in hoc opere aeternam artem cuncta temperantis dei verti. [15] Itaque ut M. Cato, cum aevum animo percucurrerit, dicet, ‘omne humanum genus, quodque est quodque erit, morte damnatum est; omnes quae usquam rerum potiuntur urbes quaeque alienorum imperiorum magna sunt decora, ubi fuerint aliquando quaeretur et vario exitii genere tollentur: alias destruent bella, alias desidia paxque ad inertiam versa consumet et magnis opibus exitiosa res, luxus. Omnes hos fertiles campos repentini maris inundatio abscondet aut in subitam cavernam considentis soli lapsus abducat. Quid est ergo quare indigner aut doleam, si exiguo momento publica fata praecedo?’ [16] Magnus animus deo pareat et quidquid lex universi iubet sine cunctatione patiat: aut in meliorem emittitur vitam lucidius tranquilliusque inter divina mansurus aut certe sine ullo futurus incommodo, si naturae remiscebatur et revertetur in totum. Non est ergo M. Catonis maius bonum honesta vita quam mors honesta, quoniam non intenditur virtus. Idem esse dicebat Socrates veritatem et virtutem. Quomodo illa non crescit, sic ne virtus quidem: habet numeros suos, plena est.

[17] Non est itaque quod mireris paria esse bona, et quae ex proposito sumenda sunt et quae si ita res tulit. Nam si hanc inaequalitatem receperis ut fortiter torqueri in minoribus bonis numeres, numerabis etiam in malis, et infelicem Socraten dices in carcere, infelicem Catonem vulnera sua animosius quam fecerat retractantem, calamitosissimum omnium Regulum fidei poenas etiam hostibus servatae pendentem. Atqui nemo hoc dicere, ne ex

mollissimis quidem, ausus est; negant enim illum esse beatum, sed tamen negant miserum. [18] Academici veteres beatum quidem esse etiam inter hos cruciatus fatentur, sed non ad perfectum nec ad plenum, quod nullo modo potest recipi: nisi beatus est, in summo bono non est. Quod summum bonum est supra se gradum non habet, si modo illi virtus inest, si illam adversa non minuunt, si manet etiam comminuto corpore incolumis: manet autem. Virtutem enim intellego animosam et excelsam, quam incitat quidquid infestat. [19] Hunc animum, quem saepe induunt generosae indolis iuvenes quos alicuius honestae rei pulchritudo percussit, ut omnia fortuita contemnant, profecto sapientia [non] infundet et tradet; persuadebit unum bonum esse quod honestum, hoc nec remitti nec intendi posse, non magis quam regulam qua rectum probari solet flectes. Quidquid ex illa mutaveris iniuria est recti. [20] Idem ergo de virtute dicemus: et haec recta est, flexuram non recipit; [rigidari quidem amplius intendi potest]. Haec de omnibus rebus iudicat, de hac nulla. Si rector ipsa non potest fieri, ne quae ab illa quidem fiunt alia aliis rectiora sunt; huic enim necesse est respondeant; ita paria sunt.

[21] ‘Quid ergo?’ inquis ‘iacere in convivio et torqueri paria sunt?’ Hoc mirum videtur tibi? illud licet magis admireris: iacere in convivio malum est, iacere in eculeo bonum est, si illud turpiter, hoc honeste fit. Bona ista aut mala non efficit materia sed virtus; haec ubicumque apparuit, omnia eiusdem mensurae ac pretii sunt. [22] In oculos nunc mihi manus intentat ille qui omnium animum aestimat ex suo, quod dicam paria bona esse honeste iudicantis <et honeste periclitantis,> quod dicam paria bona esse eius qui triumphat et eius qui ante currum vehitur invictus animo. Non putant enim fieri quidquid facere non possunt; ex infirmitate sua ferunt de virtute sententiam. [23] Quid miraris si uri, vulnerari, occidi, alligari iuvat, aliquando etiam libet? Luxurioso frugalitas poena est, pigro supplicii loco labor est, delicatus miseretur industrii, desidioso studere torqueri est: eodem modo haec ad quae omnes imbecilli sumus dura atque intoleranda credimus, obliti quam multis tormentum sit vino carere aut prima luce excitari. Non ista difficilia sunt natura, sed nos fluvidi et enerves. [24] Magno animo de rebus magnis iudicandum est; alioqui videbitur illarum vitium esse quod nostrum est. Sic quaedam rectissima, cum in aquam demissa sunt, speciem curvi praefracrique

visentibus reddunt. Non tantum quid videas, sed quemadmodum, refert: animus noster ad vera perspicienda caligat. [25] Da mihi adulescentem incorruptum et ingenio vegetum: dicet fortunatiorem sibi videri qui omnia rerum adversarum onera rigida cervice sustollat, qui supra fortunam exstet. Non est mirum in tranquillitate non concuti: illud mirare, ibi extolli aliquem ubi omnes deprimuntur, ibi stare ubi omnes iacent. [26] Quid est in tormentis, quid est in aliis quae adversa appellamus mali? hoc, ut opinor, succidere mentem et incurvari et succumbere. Quorum nihil sapienti viro potest evenire: stat rectus sub quolibet pondere. Nulla illum res minorem facit; nihil illi eorum quae ferenda sunt displicet. Nam quidquid cadere in hominem potest in se cecidisse non queritur. Vires suas novit; scit se esse oneri ferendo. [27] Non educo sapientem ex hominum numero nec dolores ab illo sicut ab aliqua rupe nullum sensum admittente summoveo. Memini ex duabus illum partibus esse compositum: altera est irrationalis, haec mordetur, uritur, dolet; altera rationalis, haec inconcussas opiniones habet, intrepida est et indomita. In hac positum est summum illud hominis bonum. Antequam impleatur, incerta mentis volutatio est; cum vero perfectum est, immota illi stabilitas est. [28] Itaque inchoatus et ad summa procedens cultorque virtutis, etiam si appropinquit perfecto bono sed ei nondum summam manum imposuit, ibit interim cessim et remittet aliquid ex intentione mentis; nondum enim incerta transgressus est, etiam nunc versatur in lubrico. Beatus vero et virtutis exactae tunc se maxime amat cum fortissime expertus est, et metuenda ceteris, si alicuius honesti officii pretia sunt, non tantum fert sed amplexatur multoque audire mavult ‘tanto melior’ quam ‘tanto felicior’.

[29] Venio nunc illo quo me vocat exspectatio tua. Ne extra rerum naturam vagari virtus nostra videatur, et tremet sapiens et dolebit et expallescet; hi enim omnes corporis sensus sunt. Ubi ergo calamitas, ubi illud malum verum est? illic scilicet, si ista animum detrahunt, si ad confessionem servitutis adducunt, si illi paenitentiam sui faciunt. [30] Sapiens quidem vincit virtute fortunam, at multi professi sapientiam levissimis nonnumquam minis exterriti sunt. Hoc loco nostrum vitium est, qui idem a sapiente exigimus et a proficiente. Suadeo adhuc mihi ista quae laudo, nondum persuadeo; etiam si persuasissem, nondum tam parata haberem aut tam exercitata ut ad

omnes casus procurrerent. [31] Quemadmodum lana quosdam colores semel ducit, quosdam nisi saepius macerata et recocta non perbibit, sic alias disciplinas ingenia, cum acceperere, protinus praestant: haec, nisi alte descendit et diu sedit et animum non coloravit sed infecit, nihil ex iis quae promiserat praestat. [32] Cito hoc potest tradi et paucissimis verbis: unum bonum esse virtutem, nullum certe sine virtute, et ipsam virtutem in parte nostri meliore, id est rationali, positam. Quid erit haec virtus? iudicium verum et immotum; ab hoc enim impetus venient mentis, ab hoc omnis species quae impetum movet redigetur ad liquidum. [33] Huic iudicio consentaneum erit omnia quae virtute contacta sunt et bona iudicare et inter se paria. Corporum autem bona corporibus quidem bona sunt, sed in totum non sunt bona; his pretium quidem erit aliquod, ceterum dignitas non erit; magnis inter se intervallis distabunt: alia minora, alia maiora erunt. [34] Et in ipsis sapientiam sectantibus magna discrimina esse fateamur necesse est: alius iam in tantum profecit ut contra fortunam audeat attollere oculos, sed non pertinaciter - cadunt enim nimio splendore praestrici -, alius in tantum ut possit cum illa conferre vultum, nisi iam pervenit ad summum et fiduciae plenus est. [35] Imperfecta necesse est labent et modo prodeant, modo sublabantur aut succidant. Sublabentur autem, nisi ire et niti perseveraverint; si quicquam ex studio et fideli intentione laxaverint, retro eundum est. Nemo profectum ibi invenit ubi reliquerat.

[36] Instemus itaque et perseveremus; plus quam profligavimus restat, sed magna pars est profectus velle proficere. Huius rei conscius mihi sum: volo et mente tota volo. Te quoque instinctum esse et magno ad pulcherrima properare impetu video. Properemus: ita demum vita beneficium erit; alioquin mora est, et quidem turpis inter foeda versantibus. Id agamus ut nostrum omne tempus sit; non erit autem, nisi prius nos nostri esse coeperimus. [37] Quando continget contemnere utramque fortunam, quando continget omnibus oppressis affectibus et sub arbitrium suum adductis hanc vocem emittere 'vici'? Quem vicerim quaeris? Non Persas nec extrema Medorum nec si quid ultra Dahas bellicosum iacet, sed avaritiam, sed ambitionem, sed metum mortis, qui victores gentium vicit. Vale.

LXXII. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Quod quaeris a me liquebat mihi - sic rem edidiceram - per se; sed diu non retemptavi memoriam meam, itaque non facile me sequitur. Quod evenit libris situ cohaerentibus, hoc evenisse mihi sentio: explicandus est animus et quaecumque apud illum deposita sunt subinde excuti debent, ut parata sint quotiens usus exegerit. Ergo hoc in praesentia differamus; multum enim operae, multum diligentiae poscit. Cum primum longiorem eodem loco speravero moram, tunc istud in manus sumam. [2] Quaedam enim sunt quae possis et in cisio scribere, quaedam lectum et otium et secretum desiderant. Nihilominus his quoque occupatis diebus agatur aliquid et quidem totis. Numquam enim non succedent occupationes novae: serimus illas, itaque ex una exeunt plures. Deinde ipsi nobis dilationem damus: 'cum hoc peregero, toto animo incumbam' et 'si hanc rem molestam composuero, studio me dabo'. [3] Non cum vacaveris philosophandum est, sed ut philosopheris vacandum est; omnia alia negligenda ut huic assideamus, cui nullum tempus satis magnum est, etiam si a pueritia usque ad longissimos humani aevi terminos vita producitur. Non multum refert utrum omittas philosophiam an intermittas; non enim ubi interrupta est manet, sed eorum more quae intenta dissiliunt usque ad initia sua recurrit, quod a continuatione discessit. Resistendum est occupationibus, nec explicandae sed summovendae sunt. Tempus quidem nullum est parum idoneum studio salutari; atqui multi inter illa non student propter quae studendum est. [4] 'Incidet aliquid quod impediat.' Non quidem eum cuius animus in omni negotio laetus atque alacer est: imperfectis adhuc interscinditur laetitia, sapientis vero contextitur gaudium, nulla causa rumpitur, nulla fortuna; semper et ubique tranquillus est. Non enim ex alieno pendet nec favorem fortunae aut hominis exspectat. Domestica illi felicitas est; exiret ex animo si intraret: ibi nascitur. [5] Aliquando extrinsecus quo admoneatur mortalitatis intervenit, sed id leve et quod summam cutem stringat. Aliquo, inquam, incommodo afflatur; maximum autem illud bonum fixum est. Ita dico, extrinsecus aliqua sunt incommoda, velut in corpore interdum robusto solidoque eruptiones quaedam pustularum et ulcuscula, nullum in alto malum

est. [6] Hoc, inquam, interest inter consummatae sapientiae virum et alium procedentis quod inter sanum et ex morbo gravi ac diutino emergentem, cui sanitatis loco est levior accessio: hic nisi attendit, subinde gravatur et in eadem revolvitur, sapiens recidere non potest, ne incidere quidem amplius. Corpori enim ad tempus bona valetudo est, quam medicus, etiam si reddidit, non praestat - saepe ad eundem qui advocaverat excitatur: <animus> semel in totum sanatur. [7] Dicam quomodo intellegas sanum: si se ipse contentus est, si confidit sibi, si scit omnia vota mortalium, omnia beneficia quae dantur petunturque, nullum in beata vita habere momentum. Nam cui aliquid accedere potest, id imperfectum est; cui aliquid abscedere potest, id imperpetuum est: cuius perpetua futura laetitia est, is suo gaudeat. Omnia autem quibus vulgus inhiat ultro citroque fluunt: nihil dat fortuna mancipio. Sed haec quoque fortuita tunc delectant cum illa ratio temperavit ac miscuit haec est quae etiam externa commendet, quorum avidis usus ingratus est. [8] Solebat Attalus hac imagine uti: 'vidisti aliquando canem missa a domino frustra panis aut carnis aperto ore captantem? quidquid excepit protinus integrum devorat et semper ad spem venturi hiat. Idem evenit nobis: quidquid exspectantibus fortuna proiecit, id sine ulla voluptate demittimus statim, ad rapinam alterius erecti et attoniti.' Hoc sapienti non evenit: plenus est; etiam si quid obvenit, secure excipit ac reponit; laetitia fruitur maxima, continua, sua. [9] Habet aliquis bonam voluntatem, habet profectum, sed cui multum desit a summo: hic deprimitur alternis et extollitur ac modo in caelum allevatur, modo defertur ad terram. Imperitis ac rudibus nullus praecipitationis finis est; in Epicureum illud chaos decidunt, inane sine termino. [10] Est adhuc genus tertium eorum qui sapientiae alludunt, quam non quidem contigerunt, in conspectu tamen et, ut ita dicam, sub ictu habent: hi non concutiuntur, ne defluunt quidem; nondum in sicco, iam in portu sunt. [11] Ergo cum tam magna sint inter summos imosque discrimina, cum medios quoque sequatur fluctus suus, sequatur ingens periculum ad deteriora redeundi, non debemus occupationibus indulgere. Excludendae sunt: si semel intraverint, in locum suum alias substituent. Principiis illarum obstemus: melius non incipient quam desinent. Vale.

LXXIII. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Errare mihi videntur qui existimant philosophiae fideliter deditos contumaces esse ac refractarios, contemptores magistratuum aut regum eorumve per quos publica administrantur. Ex contrario enim nulli adversus illos gratiores sunt, nec immerito; nullis enim plus praestant quam quibus frui tranquillo otio licet. [2] Itaque ii quibus multum ad propositum bene vivendi confert securitas publica necesse est auctorem huius boni ut parentem colant, multo quidem magis quam illi inquieti et in medio positi, qui multa principibus debent sed multa et imputant, quibus numquam tam plene occurrere ulla liberalitas potest ut cupiditates illorum, quae crescunt dum implentur, exsatiat. Quisquis autem de accipiendo cogitat oblitus accepti est, nec ullum habet malum cupiditas maius quam quod ingrata est. [3] Adice nunc quod nemo eorum qui in re publica versantur quot vincat, sed a quibus vincatur, aspicit; et illis non tam iucundum est multos post se videre quam grave aliquem ante se. Habet hoc vitium omnis ambitio: non respicit. Nec ambitio tantum instabilis est, verum cupiditas omnis, quia incipit semper a fine. [4] At ille vir sincerus ac purus, qui reliquit et curiam et forum et omnem administrationem rei publicae ut ad ampliora secederet, diligit eos per quos hoc ei facere tuto licet solusque illis gratuitum testimonium reddit et magnam rem nescientibus debet. Quemadmodum praeceptores suos veneratur ac suspicit quorum beneficio illis in viis exit, sic et hos sub quorum tutela positus exercet artes bonas.

[5] ‘Verum alios quoque rex viribus suis protegit.’ Quis negat? Sed quemadmodum Neptuno plus debere se iudicat ex iis qui eadem tranquillitate usi sunt qui plura et pretiosiora illo mari vexit, animosius a mercatore quam a vectore solvitur votum et ex ipsis mercatoribus effusius ratus est qui odores ac purpuras et auro pensanda portabat quam qui vilissima quaeque et saburrae loco futura congesserat, sic huius pacis beneficium ad omnis pertinentis altius ad eos pervenit qui illa bene utuntur. [6] Multi enim sunt ex his togatis quibus pax operosior bello est: an idem existimas pro pace debere eos qui illam ebrietati aut libidini impendunt aut aliis vitiis quae vel bello rumpenda sunt? Nisi forte tam iniquum putas esse

sapientem ut nihil viritim se debere pro communibus bonis iudicet. Soli lunaeque plurimum debeo, et non uni mihi oriuntur; anno temperantique annum deo privatim obligatus sum, quamvis nihil in meum honorem * * * descripta sint. [7] Stulta avaritia mortalium possessionem proprietatemque discernit nec quicquam suum credit esse quod publicum est; at ille sapiens nihil magis suum iudicat quam cuius illi cum humano genere consortium est. Nec enim essent ista communia, nisi pars illorum pertineret ad singulos; socium efficit etiam quod ex minima portione commune est.

[8] Adice nunc quod magna et vera bona non sic dividuntur ut exiguum in singulos cadat: ad unumquemque tota perveniunt. E congiario tantum ferunt homines quantum in capita promissum est; epulum et visceratio et quidquid aliud manu capitur discedit in partes: at haec individua bona, pax et libertas, ea tam omnium tota quam singulorum sunt. [9] Cogitat itaque per quem sibi horum usus fructusque contingat, per quem non ad arma illum nec ad servandas vigilias nec ad tuenda moenia et multiplex belli tributum publica necessitas vocet, agitque gubernatori suo gratias. Hoc docet philosophia praecipue, bene debere beneficia, bene solvere; interdum autem solutio est ipsa confessio. [10] Confitebitur ergo multum se debere ei cuius administratione ac providentia contingit illi pingue otium et arbitrium sui temporis et imperturbata publicis occupationibus quies.

O Meliboe, deus nobis haec otia fecit;
namque erit ille mihi semper deus.

[11] Si illa quoque otia multum auctori suo debent quorum munus hoc maximum est,

ille meas errare boves, ut cernis, et ipsum
ludere quae vellem calamo permisit agresti,

quanti aestimamus hoc otium quod inter deos agitur, quod deos facit?

[12] Ita dico, Lucili, et te in caelum compendiario voco. Solebat Sextius dicere Iovem plus non posse quam bonum virum. Plura

Iuppiter habet quae praestet hominibus, sed inter duos bonos non est melior qui locupletior, non magis quam inter duos quibus par scientia regendi gubernaculum est meliorem dixeris cui maius speciosiusque navigium est. [13] Iuppiter quo antecedit virum bonum? diutius bonus est: sapiens nihilo se minoris aestimat quod virtutes eius spatio brevior cludentur. Quemadmodum ex duobus sapientibus qui senior decessit non est beatior eo cuius intra pauciores annos terminata virtus est, sic deus non vincit sapientem felicitate, etiam si vincit aetate; non est virtus maior quae longior. [14] Iuppiter omnia habet, sed nempe aliis tradidit habenda: ad ipsum hic unus usus pertinet, quod utendi omnibus causa est: sapiens tam aequo animo omnia apud alios videt contemnitque quam Iuppiter et hoc se magis suspicit quod Iuppiter uti illis non potest, sapiens non vult. [15] Credamus itaque Sextio monstranti pulcherrimum iter et clamanti ‘hac

itur ad astra,

hac secundum frugalitatem, hac secundum temperantiam, hac secundum fortitudinem’. Non sunt dii fastidiosi, non invidi: admittunt et ascendentibus manum porrigunt. [16] Miraris hominem ad deos ire? Deus ad homines venit, immo quod est propius, in homines venit: nulla sine deo mens bona est. Semina in corporibus humanis divina dispersa sunt, quae si bonus cultor excipit, similia origini prodeunt et paria iis ex quibus orta sunt surgunt: si malus, non aliter quam humus sterilis ac palustris necat ac deinde creat purgamenta pro frugibus. Vale.

LXXIV. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Epistula tua delectavit me et marcentem excitavit; memoriam quoque meam, quae iam mihi segnis ac lenta est, evocavit. Quidni tu, mi Lucili, maximum putes instrumentum vitae beatae hanc persuasionem unum bonum esse quod honestum est? Nam qui alia bona iudicat in fortunae venit potestatem, alieni arbitrii fit: qui omne bonum honesto circumscripsit intra se felix <est>. [2] Hic amissis liberis maestus, hic sollicitus aegris, hic turpibus et aliqua sparsis infamia tristis; illum videbis alienae uxoris amore cruciari, illum suae; non deerit quem repulsa distorqueat; erunt quos ipse honor vexet. [3] Illa vero maxima ex omni mortalium populo turba miserorum quam expectatio mortis exagitat undique impendens; nihil enim est unde non subeat. Itaque, ut in hostili regione versantibus, huc et illuc circumspiciendum est et ad omnem strepitum circumagenda cervix; nisi hic timor e pectore eiectus est, palpitantibus praecordiis vivitur. [4] Occurrent acti in exilium et evoluti bonis; occurrent, quod genus egestatis gravissimum est, in divitis inopes; occurrent naufragi similiave naufragis passi, quos aut popularis ira aut invidia, perniciosum optimis telum, inopinantis securosque disiecit procellae more quae in ipsa sereni fiducia solet emergere, aut fulminis subiti ad cuius ictum etiam vicina tremuerunt. Nam ut illic quisquis ab igne propior stetit percusso similis obstipuit, sic in his per aliquam vim accidentibus unum calamitas opprimit, ceteros metus, paremque passis tristitiam facit pati posse. [5] Omnium animos mala aliena ac repentina sollicitant. Quemadmodum aves etiam inanis fundae sonus territat, ita nos non ad ictum tantum exagitamur sed ad crepitum. Non potest ergo quisquam beatus esse qui huic se opinioni credidit. Non enim beatum est nisi quod intrepidum; inter suspecta male vivitur. [6] Quisquis se multum fortuitis dedit ingentem sibi materiam perturbationis et inexplicabilem fecit: una haec via est ad tuta vadenti, externa despicere et honesto esse contentum. Nam qui aliquid virtute melius putat aut ullum praeter illam bonum, ad haec quae a fortuna sparguntur sinum expandit et sollicitus missilia eius exspectat. [7] Hanc enim imaginem animo tuo propone, ludos facere fortunam et in

hunc mortalium coetum honores, divitias, gratiam excutere, quorum alia inter diripientium manus scissa sunt, alia infida societate divisa, alia magno detrimento eorum in quos devenerant presa. Ex quibus quaedam aliud agentibus inciderunt, quaedam, quia nimis captabantur, amissa et dum avide rapiuntur expulsa sunt: nulli vero, etiam cui rapina feliciter cessit, gaudium rapti duravit in posterum. Itaque prudentissimus quisque, cum primum induci videt munuscula, a theatro fugit et scit magno parva constare. Nemo manum conserit cum recedente, nemo exeuntem ferit: circa praemium rixa est. [8] Idem in his evenit quae fortuna desuper iactat: aestuamus miseri, distringimur, multas habere cupimus manus, modo in hanc partem, modo in illam respicimus; nimis tarde nobis mitti videntur quae cupiditates nostras irritant, ad paucos perventura, exspectata omnibus; [9] ire obviam cadentibus cupimus; gaudemus si quid invasimus invadendique aliquos spes vana delusit; vilem praedam magno aliquo incommodo luimus aut [de] fallimur. Secedamus itaque ab istis ludis et demus raptoribus locum; illi spectent bona ista pendentia et ipsi magis pendeant.

[10] Quicumque beatus esse constituet, unum esse bonum putet quod honestum est; nam si ullum aliud existimat, primum male de providentia iudicat, quia multa incommoda iustis viris accidunt, et quia quidquid nobis dedit breve est et exiguum si compares mundi totius aevo. [11] Ex hac deploratione nascitur ut ingrati divinorum interpretes simus: querimur quod non semper, quod et pauca nobis et incerta et abitura contingant. Inde est quod nec vivere nec mori volumus: vitae nos odium tenet, timor mortis. Natat omne consilium nec implere nos ulla felicitas potest. Causa autem est quod non pervenimus ad illud bonum immensum et insuperabile ubi necesse est resistat voluntas nostra quia ultra summum non est locus. [12] Quaeris quare virtus nullo egeat? Praesentibus gaudet, non concupiscit absentia; nihil non illi magnum est quod satis. Ab hoc discede iudicio: non pietas constabit, non fides, multa enim utramque praestare cupienti patienda sunt ex iis quae mala vocantur, multa impendenda ex iis quibus indulgemus tamquam bonis. [13] Perit fortitudo, quae periculum facere debet sui; perit magnanimitas, quae non potest eminere nisi omnia velut minuta contempsit quae pro maximis vulgus optat; perit gratia et relatio gratiae si timemus

laborem, si quicquam pretiosius fide novimus, si non optima spectamus.

[14] Sed ut illa praeteream, aut ista bona non sunt quae vocantur aut homo felicior deo est, quoniam quidem quae cara nobis sunt non habet in usu deus; nec enim libido ad illum nec epularum lautitia nec opes nec quicquam ex his hominem inescantibus et vili voluptate ducentibus pertinet. Ergo aut credibile est bona deo deesse aut hoc ipsum argumentum est bona non esse, quod deo desunt. [15] Adice quod multa quae bona videri volunt animalibus quam homini pleniora contingunt. Illa cibo avidius utuntur, venere non aequae fatigantur; virium illis maior est et aequabilior firmitas: sequitur ut multo feliciora sint homine. Nam sine nequitia, sine fraudibus degunt; fruuntur voluptatibus, quas et magis capiunt et ex facili, sine ullo pudoris aut paenitentiae metu. [16] Considera tu itaque an id bonum vocandum sit quo deus ab homine, <homo ab animalibus> vincitur. Summum bonum in animo contineamus: obsolescit si ab optima nostri parte ad pessimam transit et transfertur ad sensus, qui agiliores sunt animalibus mutis. Non est summa felicitatis nostrae in carne ponenda: bona illa sunt vera quae ratio dat, solida ac sempiterna, quae cadere non possunt, ne decrescere quidem ac minui. [17] Cetera opinione bona sunt et nomen quidem habent commune cum veris, proprietates [quidem] in illis boni non est; itaque commoda vocentur et, ut nostra lingua loquar, producta. Ceterum sciamus mancipia nostra esse, non partes, et sint apud nos, sed ita ut meminerimus extra nos esse; etiam si apud nos sint, inter subiecta et humilia numerentur propter quae nemo se attollere debeat. Quid enim stultius quam aliquem eo sibi placere quod ipse non fecit? [18] Omnia ista nobis accedant, non haereant, ut si abducentur, sine ulla nostri laceratione discedant. Utamur illis, non gloriemur, et utamur parce tamquam depositis apud nos et abituris. Quisquis illa sine ratione possedit non diu tenuit; ipsa enim se felicitas, nisi temperatur, premit. Si fugacissimis bonis credidit, cito deseritur, et, ut deseratur, affligitur. Paucis deponere felicitatem molliter licuit: ceteri cum iis inter quae eminere labuntur, et illos degravant ipsa quae extulerant. [19] Ideo adhibebitur prudentia, quae modum illis ac parsimoniam imponat, quoniam quidem licentia opes suas praecipitat atque urget, nec umquam immodica durarunt nisi illa moderatrix ratio

compescuit. Hoc multarum tibi urbium ostendet eventus, quarum in ipso flore luxuriosa imperia ceciderunt, et quidquid virtute partum erat intemperantia corrui. Adversus hos casus muniendi sumus. Nullus autem contra fortunam inexpugnabilis murus est: intus instruamur; si illa pars tuta est, pulsari homo potest, capi non potest. Quod sit hoc instrumentum scire desideras? [20] Nihil indignetur sibi accidere sciatque illa ipsa quibus laedi videtur ad conservationem universi pertinere et ex iis esse quae cursum mundi officiumque consummant; placeat homini quidquid deo placuit; ob hoc ipsum <se> suaque miretur, quod non potest vinci, quod mala ipsa sub se tenet, quod ratione, qua valentius nihil est, casum doloremque et iniuriam subigit. [21] Ama rationem! huius te amor contra durissima armabit. Feras catulorum amor in venabula impingit feritasque et inconsultus impetus praestat indomitas; iuvenilia nonnumquam ingenia cupido gloriae in contemptum tam ferri quam ignium misit; species quosdam atque umbra virtutis in mortem voluntariam trudit: quanto his omnibus fortior ratio est, quanto constantior, tanto vehementius per metus ipsos et pericula exibat.

[22] 'Nihil agitis' inquit 'quod negatis ullum esse aliud honesto bonum. non faciet vos haec munitio tutos a fortuna et immunes. Dicitis enim inter bona esse liberos pios et bene moratam patriam et parentes bonos. Horum pericula non potestis spectare securi: perturbabit vos obsidio patriae, liberorum mors, parentum servitus.'

[23] Quid adversus hos pro nobis responderi soleat ponam; deinde tunc adiciam quid praeterea respondendum putem. Alia condicio est in iis quae ablata in locum suum aliquid incommodi substituunt: tamquam bona valetudo vitiata in malam transfert; acies oculorum extincta caecitate nos afficit; non tantum velocitas perit poplitibus incisis, sed debilitas pro illa subit. Hoc non est periculum in iis quae paulo ante rettulimus. Quare? si amicum bonum amisi, non est mihi pro illo perfidia patienda, nec si bonos liberos extuli, in illorum locum impietas succedit. [24] Deinde non amicorum illic aut liberorum interitus sed corporum est. Bonum autem uno modo perit, si in malum transit; quod natura non patitur, quia omnis virtus et opus omne virtutis incorruptum manet. Deinde etiam si amici perierunt, etiam si probati respondentesque voto patris liberi, est quod illorum expleat locum. Quid sit quaeris? quod illos quoque

bonos fecerat, virtus. [25] Haec nihil vacare patitur loci, totum animum tenet, desiderium omnium tollit, sola satis est; omnium enim bonorum vis et origo in ipsa est. Quid refert an aqua decurrens interceptiatur atque abeat, si fons ex quo fluxerat salvus est? Non dices vitam iustiorum salvis liberis quam amissis nec ordinationem nec prudentiorem nec honestiorem; ergo ne meliorem quidem. Non facit adiectio amicorum sapienterem, non facit stultiorem detractio; ergo nec beatorem aut miseriorem. Quamdiu virtus salva fuerit, non senties quidquid abscesserit.

[26] 'Quid ergo? non est beatorum et amicorum et liberorum turba succinctus?' Quidni non sit? Summum enim bonum nec infringitur nec augetur; in suo modo permanet, utcumque fortuna se gessit. Sive illi senectus longa contigit sive citra senectutem finitus est, eadem mensura summi boni est, quamvis aetatis diversa sit. [27] Utrum maiorem an minorem circulum scribas ad spatium eius pertinet, non ad formam: licet alter diu manserit, alterum statim obduxeris et in eum in quo scriptus est pulverem solveris, in eadem uterque forma fuit. Quod rectum est nec magnitudine aestimatur nec numero nec tempore; non magis produci quam contrahi potest. Honestam vitam ex centum annorum numero in quantum voles corripe et in unum diem coge: aequae honesta est. [28] Modo latius virtus funditur, regna urbes provincias temperat, fert leges, colit amicitias, inter propinquos liberosque dispensat officia, modo arto fine circumdatur paupertatis exsili orbitatis; non tamen minor est si ex altiore fastigio in humile subducitur, in privatum ex regio, ex publico et spatioso iure in angustias domus vel anguli coit. [29] Aequae magna est, etiam si in se recessit undique exclusa; nihilominus enim magni spiritus est et erecti, exactae prudentiae, indeclinabilis iustitiae. Ergo aequae beata est; beatum enim illud uno loco positum est, in ipsa mente, stabile, grande, tranquillum, quod sine scientia divinarum humanorumque non potest effici.

[30] Sequitur illud quod me responsurum esse dicebam. Non affligitur sapiens liberorum amissione, non amicorum; eodem enim animo fert illorum mortem quo suam exspectat; non magis hanc timet quam illam dolet. Virtus enim convenientia constat: omnia opera eius cum ipsa concordant et congruunt. Haec concordia perit si animus, quem excelsum esse oportet, luctu aut desiderio summittitur.

Inhonestas est omnis trepidatio et sollicitudo, in ullo actu pigritia; honestum enim securum et expeditum est, interritum est, in procinctu stat. [31] ‘Quid ergo? non aliquid perturbationi simile patietur? non et color eius mutabitur et vultus agitabitur et artus refrigescunt? et quidquid aliud non ex imperio animi, sed inconsulto quodam naturae impetu geritur?’ Fateor; sed manebit illi persuasio eadem, nihil illorum malum esse nec dignum ad quod mens sana deficiat. [32] Omnia quae facienda erunt audaciter faciet et prompte. Hoc enim stultitiae proprium quis dixerit, ignave et contumaciter facere quae faciat, et alio corpus impellere, alio animum, distrahique inter diversissimos motus. Nam propter illa ipsa quibus extollit se miraturque contempta est, et ne illa quidem quibus gloriatur libenter facit. Si vero aliquid timetur malum, eo proinde, dum exspectat, quasi venisset urgetur, et quidquid ne patiatur timet iam metu patitur. [33] Quemadmodum in corporibus infirmis languorem signa praecurrunt - quaedam enim segnitia enervis est et sine labore ullo lassitudo et oscitatio et horror membra percurrunt - sic infirmus animus multo ante quam opprimatur malis quatitur; praesumit illa et ante tempus cadit. Quid autem dementius quam angere futuris nec se tormento reservare, sed arcessere sibi miseriae et admoveere? quas optimum est differre, si discutere non possis. [34] Vis scire futuro neminem debere torqueri? Quicumque audierit post quinquagesimum annum sibi patienda supplicia, non perturbatur nisi si medium spatium transiluerit et se in illam saeculo post futuram sollicitudinem immiserit: eodem modo fit ut animos libenter aegros et captantes causas doloris vetera atque oblitterata contristant. Et quae praeterierunt et quae futura sunt absunt: neutra sentimus. Non est autem nisi ex eo quod sentias dolor. Vale.

LIBER NONUS

LXXV. SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

[1] Minus tibi accuratas a me epistulas mitti quereris. Quis enim accurate loquitur nisi qui vult putide loqui? Qualis sermo meus esset si una desideremus aut ambularemus, inlaboratus et facilis, tales esse epistulas meas volo, quae nihil habent accersitum nec fictum. [2] Si fieri posset, quid sentiam ostendere quam loqui malletm. Etiam si disputarem, nec supploderem pedem nec manum iactarem nec attollerem vocem, sed ista oratoribus reliquissetm, contentus sensus meos ad te pertulissetm, quos nec exornassem nec abiecissetm. [3] Hoc unum plane tibi adprobare vellem, omnia me illa sentire quae dicerem, nec tantum sentire sed amare. Aliter homines amicam, aliter liberos osculantur; tamen in hoc quoque amplexu tam sancto et moderato satis apparet adfectus. Non mehercules ieiuna esse et arida volo quae de rebus tam magnis dicentur (neque enim philosophia ingenio renuntiat), multum tamen operae inpendi verbis non oportet. [4] Haec sit propositi nostri summa: quod sentimus loquamur, quod loquimur sentiamus; concordet sermo cum vita. Ille promissum suum implevit qui et cum videas illum et cum audias idem est. Videbimus qualis sit, quantus sit: unus est. [5] Non delectent verba nostra sed prosint. Si tamen contingere eloquentia non sollicito potest, si aut parata est aut parvo constat, adsit et res pulcherrimas prosequatur: sit talis ut res potius quam se ostendat. Aliae artes ad ingenium totae pertinent, hic animi negotium agitur. [6] Non quaerit aeger medicum eloquentem, sed si ita competit ut idem ille qui sanare potest compte de iis quae facienda sunt disserat, boni consulat. Non tamen erit quare gratuletur sibi quod inciderit in medicum etiam disertum; hoc enim tale est quale si peritus gubernator etiam formosus est. [7] Quid aures meas scabis? quid oblectas? aliud agitur: urendus, secandus, abstinendus sum. Ad haec adhibitus es; curare debes morbum veterem, gravem, publicum; tantum negotii habes quantum in pestilentia medicus. Circa verba occupatus es? iamdudum gaude si sufficis rebus. Quando tam multa disces? quando quae didiceris adfiges tibi ita ut excidere non possint? quando illa experieris? Non enim, ut cetera, memoriae tradidisse satis est: in opere temptanda sunt; non est beatus qui scit illa, sed <qui> facit.

[8] ‘Quid ergo? infra illum nulli gradus sunt? statim a sapientia praeceps est?’ Non, ut existimo; nam qui proficit in numero quidem stultorum est, magno tamen intervallo ab illis diducitur. Inter ipsos quoque proficientes sunt magna discrimina: in tres classes, ut quibusdam placet, dividuntur.

[9] Primi sunt qui sapientiam nondum habent sed iam in vicinia eius constiterunt; tamen etiam quod prope est extra est. Qui sint hi quaeris? qui omnes iam adfectus ac vitia posuerunt, quae erant conplectenda didicerunt, sed illis adhuc inexperta fiducia est. Bonum suum nondum in usu habent, iam tamen in illa quae fugerunt decidere non possunt; iam ibi sunt unde non est retro lapsus, sed hoc illis de se nondum liquet: quod in quadam epistula scripsisse me memini, ‘scire se nesciunt’. Iam contigit illis bono suo frui, nondum confidere. [10] Quidam hoc proficientium genus de quo locutus sum ita conplectuntur ut illos dicant iam effugisse morbos animi, adfectus nondum, et adhuc in lubrico stare, quia nemo sit extra periculum malitiae nisi qui totam eam excussit; nemo autem illam excussit nisi qui pro illa sapientiam adsumpsit. [11] Quid inter morbos animi intersit et adfectus saepe iam dixi. Nunc quoque te admonebo: morbi sunt inveterata vitia et dura, ut avaritia, ut ambitio; nimio artius haec animum implicuerunt et perpetua eius mala esse coeperunt. Ut breviter finiam, morbus est iudicium in pravo pertinax, tamquam valde expetenda sint quae leviter expetenda sunt; vel, si mavis, ita finiamus: nimis imminere leviter petendis vel ex toto non petendis, aut in magno pretio habere in aliquo habenda vel in nullo. [12] Adfectus sunt motus animi improbables, subiti et concitati, qui frequentes neglectique fecere morbum, sicut destillatio una nec adhuc in morem adducta tussim facit, adsidua et vetus pthisin. Itaque qui plurimum profecere extra morbos sunt, adfectus adhuc sentiunt perfecto proximi.

[13] Secundum genus est eorum qui et maxima animi mala et adfectus deposuerunt, sed ita ut non sit illis securitatis suae certa possessio; possunt enim in eadem relabi.

[14] Tertium illud genus extra multa et magna vitia est, sed non extra omnia. Effugit avaritiam sed iram adhuc sentit; iam non sollicitatur libidine, etiamnunc ambitione; iam non concupiscit, sed adhuc timet, et in ipso metu ad quaedam satis firmus est, quibusdam

cedit: mortem contemnit, dolorem reformidat.

[15] De hoc loco aliquid cogitemus: bene nobiscum agetur, si in hunc admittimur numerum. Magna felicitate naturae magnaque et adsidua intentione studii secundus occupatur gradus; sed ne hic quidem contemnendus est color tertius. Cogita quantum circa te videas malorum; aspice quam nullum sit nefas sine exemplo, quantum cotidie nequitia proficiat, quantum publice privatimque peccetur: intelleges satis nos consequi, si inter pessimos non sumus.

[16] ‘Ego vero’ inquis ‘spero me posse et amplioris ordinis fieri.’ Optaverim hoc nobis magis quam promiserim: praeoccupati sumus, ad virtutem contendimus inter vitia districti. Pudet dicere: honesta colimus quantum vacat. At quam grande praemium expectat, si occupationes nostras et mala tenacissima abrumpimus! [17] Non cupiditas nos, non timor pellet; inagitati terroribus, incorrupti voluptatibus, nec mortem horrebimus nec deos; sciemus mortem malum non esse, deos malo non esse. Tam inbecillum est quod nocet quam cui nocetur: optima vi noxia carent. [18] Expectant nos, <si> ex hac aliquando faece in illud evadimus sublime et excelsum, tranquillitas animi et expulsis erroribus absoluta libertas. Quaeris quae sit ista? Non homines timere, non deos; nec turpia velle nec nimia; in se ipsum habere maximam potestatem: inaestimabile bonum est suum fieri. Vale.

LXXVI. SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

[1] Inimicitias mihi denuntias si quicquam ex iis quae cotidie facio ignoraveris. Vide quam simpliciter tecum vivam: hoc quoque tibi committam. Philosophum audio et quidem quintum iam diem habeo ex quo in scholam eo et ab octava disputantem audio. ‘Bona’ inquis ‘aetate.’ Quidni bona? quid autem stultius est quam quia diu non didiceris non discere? [2] ‘Quid ergo? idem faciam quod trossuli et iuvenes?’ Bene mecum agitur si hoc unum senectutem meam dedecet: omnis aetatis homines haec schola admittit. ‘In hoc senescamus, ut iuvenes sequamur?’ In theatrum senex ibo et in circum deferar et nullum par sine me depugnabit: ad philosophum ire erubescam? [3] Tamdiu discendum est quamdiu nescias; si proverbio credimus, quamdiu vivas. Nec ulli hoc rei magis convenit quam huic: tamdiu discendum est quemadmodum vivas quamdiu vivas. Ego tamen illic aliquid et doceo. Quaeris quid doceam? etiam seni esse discendum. [4] Pudet autem me generis humani quotiens scholam intravi. Praeter ipsum theatrum Neapolitanorum, ut scis, transeundum est Metronactis petenti domum. Illud quidem fartum est, et ingenti studio quis sit pythaeus bonus iudicatur; habet tubicen quoque Graecus et praeco concursus: at in illo loco in quo vir bonus quaeritur, in quo vir bonus discitur, paucissimi sedent, et hi plerisque videntur nihil boni negotii habere quod agant; inepti et inertes vocantur. Mihi contingat iste derisus: aequo animo audienda sunt inperitorum convicia et ad honesta vadenti contemnendus est ipse contemptus.

[5] Perge, Lucili, et propera, ne tibi accidat quod mihi, ut senex discas; immo ideo magis propera quoniam id nunc adgressus es quod perdiscere vix senex possis. ‘Quantum’ inquis ‘proficiam?’ Quantum temptaveris. [6] Quid expectas? nulli sapere casu obtigit. Pecunia veniet ultro, honor offeretur, gratia ac dignitas fortasse ingerentur tibi: virtus in te non incidet. Ne levi quidem opera aut parvo labore cognoscitur; sed est tanti laborare omnia bona semel occupaturo. Unum est enim bonum quod honestum: in illis nihil invenies veri, nihil certi, quaecumque famae placent. [7] Quare autem unum sit bonum quod honestum dicam, quoniam parum me exsecutum priore

epistula iudicas magisque hanc rem tibi laudatam quam probatam putas, et in artum quae dicta sunt contraham.

[8] Omnia suo bono constant. Vitem fertilitas commendat et sapor vini, velocitas cervum; quam fortia dorso iumenta sint quaeris, quorum hic unus est usus, sarcinam ferre; in cane sagacitas prima est, si investigare debet feras, cursus, si consequi, audacia, si mordere et invadere: id in quoque optimum esse debet cui nascitur, quo censetur. [9] In homine quid est optimum? ratio: hac antecedit animalia, deos sequitur. Ratio ergo perfecta proprium bonum est, cetera illi cum animalibus satisque communia sunt. Valet: et leones. Formonsus est: et pavones. Velox est: et equi. Non dico, in his omnibus vincitur; non quaero quid in se maximum habeat, sed quid suum. Corpus habet: et arbores. Habet impetum ac motum voluntarium: et bestiae et vermes. Habet vocem: sed quanto clariorem canes, acutiorem aquilae, graviorem tauri, dulciorem mobilioremque luscinii? [10] Quid est in homine proprium? ratio: haec recta et consummata felicitatem hominis implevit. Ergo si omnis res, cum bonum suum perfecit, laudabilis est et ad finem naturae suae pervenit, homini autem suum bonum ratio est, si hanc perfecit laudabilis est et finem naturae suae tetigit. Haec ratio perfecta virtus vocatur eademque honestum est. [11] Id itaque unum bonum est in homine quod unum hominis est; nunc enim non quaerimus quid sit bonum, sed quid sit hominis bonum. Si nullum aliud est hominis quam ratio, haec erit unum eius bonum, sed pensandum cum omnibus. Si sit aliquis malus, puto inprobabitur; si bonus, puto probabitur. Id ergo in homine primum solumque est quo et probatur et inprobatur.

[12] Non dubitas an hoc sit bonum; dubitas an solum bonum sit. Si quis omnia alia habeat, valetudinem, divitias, imagines multas, frequens atrium, sed malus ex confesso sit, inprobabis illum; item si quis nihil quidem eorum quae rettuli habeat, deficiatur pecunia, clientium turba, nobilitate et avorum proavorumque serie, sed ex confesso bonus sit, probabis illum. Ergo hoc unum est bonum hominis, quod qui habet, etiam si aliis destituitur, laudandus est, quod qui non habet in omnium aliorum copia damnatur ac reicitur. [13] Quae condicio rerum, eadem hominum est: navis bona dicitur non quae pretiosis coloribus picta est nec cui argenteum aut aureum

rostrum est nec cuius tutela ebore caelata est nec quae fiscis atque opibus regiis pressa est, sed stabilis et firma et iuncturis aquam excludentibus spissa, ad ferendum incursum maris solida, gubernaculo parens, velox et non sentiens ventum; [14] gladium bonum dices non cui auratus est balteus nec cuius vagina gemmis distinguitur, sed cui et ad secandum subtilis acies est et mucro munimentum omne rupturus; regula non quam formosa, sed quam recta sit quaeritur: eo quidque laudatur cui comparatur, quod illi proprium est. [15] Ergo in homine quoque nihil ad rem pertinet quantum aret, quantum feneret, a quam multis salutetur, quam pretioso incumbat lecto, quam perlucido poculo bibat, sed quam bonus sit. Bonus autem est si ratio eius explicita et recta est et ad naturae suae voluntatem accommodata. [16] Haec vocatur virtus, hoc est honestum et unicum hominis bonum. Nam cum sola ratio perficiat hominem, sola ratio perfecte beatum facit; hoc autem unum bonum est quo uno beatus efficitur. Dicimus et illa bona esse quae a virtute profecta contractaque sunt, id est opera eius omnia; sed ideo unum ipsa bonum est quia nullum sine illa est. [17] Si omne in animo bonum est, quidquid illum confirmat, extollit, amplificat, bonum est; validiorem autem animum et excelsiorem et ampliorem facit virtus. Nam cetera quae cupiditates nostras iniritant deprimunt quoque animum et labefaciunt et cum videntur attollere inflant ac multa vanitate deludunt. Ergo id unum bonum est quo melior animus efficitur. [18] Omnes actiones totius vitae honesti ac turpis respectu temperantur; ad haec faciendi et non faciendi ratio derigitur. Quid sit hoc dicam: vir bonus quod honeste se facturum putaverit faciet etiam [sine pecunia] si laboriosum erit, faciet etiam si damnosum erit, faciet etiam si periculosum erit; rursus quod turpe erit non faciet, etiam si pecuniam adferet, etiam si voluptatem, etiam si potentiam; ab honesto nulla re deterrebitur, ad turpia nulla invitabitur. [19] Ergo si honestum utique secuturus est, turpe utique vitaturus, et in omni actu vitae spectaturus haec duo, <nec aliud bonum quam honestum> nec aliud malum quam turpe, si una indepravata virtus est et sola permanet tenoris sui, unum est bonum virtus, cui iam accidere ne sit bonum non potest. Mutationis periculum effugit: stultitia ad sapientiam erepit, sapientia in stultitiam non revolvitur.

[20] Dixi, si forte meministi, et concupita vulgo et formidata

inconsulto impetu plerosque calcasse: inventus est qui divitias proiceret, inventus est qui flammis manum inponeret, cuius risum non interromperet tortor, qui in funere liberorum lacrimam non mitteret, qui morti non trepidus occurreret; amor enim, ira, cupiditas pericula depoposcerunt. Quod potest brevis obstinatio animi, aliquo stimulo excitata, quanto magis virtus, quae non ex impetu nec subito sed aequaliter valet, cui perpetuum robur est? [21] Sequitur ut quae ab inconsultis saepe contemnuntur, a sapientibus semper, ea nec bona sint nec mala. Unum ergo bonum ipsa virtus est, quae inter hanc fortunam et illam superba incedit cum magno utriusque contemptu.

[22] Si hanc opinionem receperis, aliquid bonum esse praeter honestum, nulla non virtus laborabit; nulla enim obtineri poterit si quicquam extra se respexerit. Quod si est, rationi repugnat, ex qua virtutes sunt, et veritati, quae sine ratione non est; quaecumque autem opinio veritati repugnat falsa est. [23] Virum bonum concedas necesse est summae pietatis erga deos esse. Itaque quidquid illi accidit aequo animo sustinebit; sciet enim id accidisse lege divina qua universa procedunt. Quod si est, unum illi bonum erit quod honestum; in hoc enim positum <est> et parere diis nec excandescere ad subita nec deplorare sortem suam, sed patienter excipere fatum et facere imperata. [24] Si ullum aliud est bonum quam honestum, sequetur nos aviditas vitae, aviditas rerum vitam instruentium, quod est intolerabile, infinitum, vagum. Solum ergo bonum est honestum, cui modus est.

[25] Diximus futuram hominum feliciorum vitam quam deorum, si ea bona sunt quorum nullus diis usus est, tamquam pecunia, honores. Adice nunc quod, si modo solutae corporibus animae manent, felicior illis status restat quam est dum versantur in corpore. Atqui si ista bona sunt quibus per corpora utimur, emissis erit peius, quod contra fidem est, feliciores esse liberis et in universum datis clusas et obsessas. [26] Illud quoque dixeram, si bona sunt ea quae tam homini contingunt quam mutis animalibus, et muta animalia beatam vitam actura; quod fieri nullo modo potest. Omnia pro honesto patienda sunt; quod non erat faciendum si esset ullum aliud bonum quam honestum.

Haec quamvis latius exsecutus essem priore epistula, constrinxi et breviter percucurri. [27] Numquam autem vera tibi opinio talis

videbitur, nisi animum adleves et te ipse interroges, si res exegerit ut pro patria moriaris et salutem omnium civium tua redimas, an porrecturus sis cervicem non tantum patienter sed etiam libenter. Si hoc facturus es, nullum aliud bonum est; omnia enim relinquis ut hoc habeas. Vide quanta vis honesti sit: pro re publica morieris, etiam si statim facturus hoc eris cum scieris tibi esse faciendum. [28] Interdum ex re pulcherrima magnum gaudium etiam exiguo tempore ac brevi capitur, et quamvis fructus operis peracti nullus ad defunctum exemptumque rebus humanis pertineat, ipsa tamen contemplatio futuri operis iuvat, et vir fortis ac iustus, cum mortis suae pretia ante se posuit, libertatem patriae, salutem omnium pro quibus dependit animam, in summa voluptate est et periculo suo fruitur. [29] Sed ille quoque cui etiam hoc gaudium eripitur quod tractatio operis maximi et ultimi praestat, nihil cunctatus desiliet in mortem, facere recte pieque contentus. Oppone etiamnunc illi multa quae dehortentur, dic, ‘factum tuum matura sequetur oblivio et parum grata existimatio civium’. Respondebit tibi, ‘ista omnia extra opus meum sunt, ego ipsum contemplor; hoc esse honestum scio; itaque quocumque ducit ac vocat venio’.

[30] Hoc ergo unum bonum est, quod non tantum perfectus animus sed generosus quoque et indolis bonae sentit: cetera levia sunt, mutabilia. Itaque sollicite possidentur; etiam si favente fortuna in unum congesta sunt, dominis suis incubant gravia et illos semper premunt, aliquando et inludunt. [31] Nemo ex istis quos purpuratos vides felix est, non magis quam ex illis quibus sceptrum et chlamydem in scaena fabulae adsignant: cum praesente populo lati incesserunt et coturnati, simul exierunt, excalceantur et ad staturam suam redeunt. Nemo istorum quos divitiae honoresque in altiore fastigio ponunt magnus est. Quare ergo magnus videtur? cum basi illum sua metiris. Non est magnus pumilio licet in monte constiterit; colossus magnitudinem suam servabit etiam si steterit in puteo. [32] Hoc laboramus errore, sic nobis inponitur, quod neminem aestimamus eo quod est, sed adicimus illi et ea quibus adornatus est. Atqui cum voles veram hominis aestimationem inire et scire qualis sit, nudum inspicere; ponat patrimonium, ponat honores et alia fortunae mendacia, corpus ipsum exuat: animum intueri, qualis quantusque sit, alieno an suo magnus. [33] Si rectis oculis gladios

micantes videt et si scit sua nihil interesse utrum anima per os an per iugulum exeat, beatum voca; si cum illi denuntiata sunt corporis tormenta et quae casu veniunt et quae potentioris iniuria, si vincula et exilia et vanas humanarum formidines mentium securus audit et dicit:

‘non ulla laborum,
o virgo, nova mi facies inopinave surgit;
omnia praecepi atque animo mecum ipse peregi.

Tu hodie ista denuntias: ego semper denuntiavi mihi et hominem paravi ad humana.’ [34] Praecogitati mali mollis ictus venit. At stultis et fortunae credentibus omnis videtur nova rerum et inopinata facies; magna autem pars est apud inperitos mali novitas. Hoc ut scias, ea quae putaverant aspera fortius, cum adsuevere, patiuntur. [35] Ideo sapiens adsuescit futuris malis, et quae alii diu patiendo levia faciunt hic levia facit diu cogitando. Audimus aliquando voces inperitorum dicentium ‘sciebam hoc mihi restare’: sapiens scit sibi omnia restare; quidquid factum est, dicit ‘sciebam’. Vale.

LXXVII. SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

[1] Subito nobis hodie Alexandrinae naves apparuerunt, quae praemitti solent et nuntiare secuturae classis adventum: tabellarias vocant. Gratus illarum Campaniae aspectus est: omnis in pilis Puteolorum turba consistit et ex ipso genere velorum Alexandrinas quamvis in magna turba navium intellegit; solis enim licet siparum intendere, quod in alto omnes habent naves. [2] Nulla enim res aequè adiuvat cursum quam summa pars veli; illinc maxime navis urgetur. Itaque quotiens ventus increbuit maiorque est quam expedit, antemna summittitur: minus habet virium flatus ex humili. Cum intravere Capreas et promunturium ex quo

alta procelloso speculatur vertice Pallas,
ceterae velo iubentur esse contentae: siparum
Alexandrinarum insigne [indiciu] est.

[3] In hoc omnium discursu properantium ad litus magnam ex pigritia mea sensi voluptatem, quod epistulas meorum accepturus non properavi scire quis illic esset rerum mearum status, quid adferrent: olim iam nec perit quicquam mihi nec acquiritur. Hoc, etiam si senex non essem, fuerat sentiendum, nunc vero multo magis: quantulumcumque haberem, tamen plus iam mihi superesset viatici quam viae, praesertim cum eam viam simus ingressi quam peragere non est necesse. [4] Iter imperfectum erit si in media parte aut citra petitu[m] locu[m] steteris: vita non est imperfecta si honesta est; ubicumque desines, si bene desines, tota est. Saepe autem et fortiter desinendum est et non ex maximis causis; nam nec eae maximae sunt quae nos tenent.

[5] Tullius Marcellinus, quem optime noveras, adulescens quietus et cito senex, morbo et non insanabili correptus sed longo et molesto et multa imperante, coepit deliberare de morte. Convocavit complures amicos. Unusquisque aut, quia timidus erat, id illi suadebat quod sibi suasisset, aut, quia adulator et blandus, id consiliu[m] dabat quod deliberanti gratius fore suspicabatur. [6] Amicus noster Stoicus, homo egregius et, ut verbis illum quibus laudari

dignus est laudem, vir fortis ac strenuus, videtur mihi optime illum cohortatus. Sic enim coepit: 'noli, mi Marcelline, torqueri tamquam de re magna deliberes. Non est res magna vivere: omnes servi tui vivunt, omnia animalia: magnum est honeste mori, prudenter, fortiter. Cogita quamdiu iam idem facias: cibus, somnus, libido — per hunc circulum curritur; mori velle non tantum prudens aut fortis aut miser, etiam fastidiosus potest.' [7] Non opus erat suasore illi sed adiutore: servi parere nolebant. Primum detraxit illis metum et indicavit tunc familiam periculum adire cum incertum esset an mors domini voluntaria fuisset; alioqui tam mali exempli esse occidere dominum quam prohibere. [8] Deinde ipsum Marcellinum admonuit non esse inhumanum, quemadmodum cena peracta reliquiae circumstantibus dividantur, sic peracta vita aliquid porrigi iis qui totius vitae ministri fuissent. Erat Marcellinus facilis animi et liberalis etiam cum de suo fieret; minutas itaque summulas distribuit flentibus servis et illos ultro consolatus est. [9] Non fuit illi opus ferro, non sanguine: triduo abstinuit et in ipso cubiculo poni tabernaculum iussit. Solium deinde inlatum est, in quo diu iacuit et calda subinde suffusa paulatim defecit, ut aiebat, non sine quadam voluptate, quam adferre solet lenis dissolutio non inexpertis nobis, quos aliquando liquit animus.

[10] In fabellam excessi non ingrati tibi; exitum enim amici tui cognosces non difficilem nec miserum. Quamvis enim mortem sibi consciverit, tamen mollissime excessit et vita elapsus est. Sed ne inutilis quidem haec fabella fuerit; saepe enim talia exempla necessitas exigit. Saepe debemus mori nec volumus, morimur nec volumus. [11] Nemo tam inperitus est ut nesciat quandoque moriendum; tamen cum prope accessit, tergiversatur, tremit, plorat. Nonne tibi videtur stultissimus omnium qui flevit quod ante annos mille non vixerat? aequè stultus est qui flet quod post annos mille non vivet. Haec paria sunt: non eris nec fuisti; utrumque tempus alienum est. [12] In hoc punctum coniectus es, quod ut extendas, quousque extendes? Quid fles? quid optas? perdis operam.

Desine fata deum flecti sperare precando.

Rata et fixa sunt et magna atque aeterna necessitate ducuntur: eo ibis quo omnia eunt. Quid tibi novi est? Ad hanc legem natus es; hoc patri tuo accidit, hoc matri, hoc maioribus, hoc omnibus ante te, hoc

omnibus post te. Series invicta et nulla mutabilis ope inligavit ac trahit cuncta. [13] Quantus te populus moriturosum sequetur, quantus comitabitur! Fortior, ut opinor, esses, si multa milia tibi commorerentur; atqui multa milia et hominum et animalium hoc ipso momento quo tu mori dubitas animam variis generibus emittunt. Tu autem non putabas te aliquando ad id perventurum ad quod semper ibas? Nullum sine exitu iter est.

[14] Exempla nunc magnorum virorum me tibi iudicas relaturum? puerorum referam. Lacon ille memoriae traditur, inpubis adhuc, qui captus clamabat 'non serviam' sua illa Dorica lingua, et verbis fidem inposuit: ut primum iussus est fungi servili et contumelioso ministerio (adferre enim vas obscenum iubebatur), inlisum parieti caput rupit. [15] Tam prope libertas est: et servit aliquis? Ita non sic perire filium tuum malles quam per inertiam senem fieri? Quid ergo est cur perturberis, si mori fortiter etiam puerile est? Puta nolle te sequi: duceris. Fac tui iuris quod alieni est. Non sumes pueri spiritum, ut dicas 'non servio'? Infelix, servis hominibus, servis rebus, servis vitae; nam vita, si moriendi virtus abest, servitus est. [16] Ecquid habes propter quod expectes? voluptates ipsas quae te morantur ac retinent consumpsisti: nulla tibi nova est, nulla non iam odiosa ipsa satietate. Quis sit vini, quis mulsi sapor scis: nihil interest centum per vesicam tuam an mille amphorae transeant: saccus es. Quid sapiat ostreum, quid mullus optime nosti: nihil tibi luxuria tua in futuros annos intactum reservavit. Atqui haec sunt a quibus invitus divelleris. [17] Quid est aliud quod tibi eripi doleas? Amicos? Scis enim amicus esse? Patriam? tanti enim illam putas ut tardius cenes? Solem? quem, si posses, extingueres: quid enim umquam fecisti luce dignum? Confitere non curiae te, non fori, non ipsius rerum naturae desiderio tardiozem ad moriendum fieri: invitus relinquis macellum, in quo nihil reliquisti. [18] Mortem times: at quomodo illam media boletatione contemnis! Vivere vis: scis enim? Mori times: quid porro? ista vita non mors est? C. Caesar, cum illum transeuntem per Latinam viam unus ex custodiarum agmine demissa usque in pectus vetere barba rogaret mortem, 'nunc enim' inquit 'vivis?' Hoc istis respondendum est quibus succursura mors est: 'mori times: nunc enim vivis?' [19] 'Sed ego' inquit 'vivere volo, qui multa honeste facio; invitus relinquo officia vitae, quibus fideliter et industrie

fungor.’ Quid? tu nescis unum esse ex vitae officiis et mori? Nullum officium relinquis; non enim certus numerus quem debeas explere finitur. [20] Nulla vita est non brevis; nam si ad naturam rerum respexeris, etiam Nestoris et Sattiae brevis est, quae inscribi monumento suo iussit annis se nonaginta novem vixisse. Vides aliquem gloriari senectute longa: quis illam ferre potuisset si contigisset centesimum implere? Quomodo fabula, sic vita: non quam diu, sed quam bene acta sit, refert. Nihil ad rem pertinet quo loco desinas. Quocumque voles desine: tantum bonam clausulam inpone. Vale.

LXXVIII. SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

[1] Vexari te destillationibus crebris ac febriculis, quae longas destillationes et in consuetudinem adductas sequuntur, eo molestius mihi est quia expertus sum hoc genus valetudinis, quod inter initia contempsi — poterat adhuc adulescentia iniurias ferre et se adversus morbos contumaciter gerere — deinde succubui et eo perductus sum ut ipse destillarem, ad summam maciem deductus. [2] Saepe impetum cepi abrumpendae vitae: patris me indulgentissimi senectus retinuit. Cogitavi enim non quam fortiter ego mori possem, sed quam ille fortiter desiderare non posset. Itaque imperavi mihi ut viverem; aliquando enim et vivere fortiter facere est.

[3] Quae mihi tunc fuerint solacio dicam, si prius hoc dixero, haec ipsa quibus adquiescebam medicinae vim habuisse; in remedium cedunt honesta solacia, et quidquid animum erexit etiam corpori prodest. Studia mihi nostra saluti fuerunt; philosophiae acceptum fero quod surrexi, quod convalui; illi vitam debeo et nihil illi minus debeo. [4] Multum autem mihi contulerunt ad bonam valetudinem <et> amici, quorum adhortationibus, vigiliis, sermonibus adlevabar. Nihil aequae, Lucili, virorum optime, aegrum reficit atque adiuvat quam amicorum adfectus, nihil aequae expectationem mortis ac metum subripit: non iudicabam me, cum illos superstites relinquerem, mori. Putabam, inquam, me victurum non cum illis, sed per illos; non effundere mihi spiritum videbar, sed tradere. Haec mihi dederunt voluntatem adiuvandi me et patiendi omne tormentum; alioqui miserrimum est, cum animum moriendi proieceris, non habere vivendi.

[5] Ad haec ergo remedia te confer. Medicus tibi quantum ambules, quantum exercearis monstrabit; ne indulgeas otio, ad quod vergit iners valetudo; ut legas clarius et spiritum, cuius iter ac receptaculum laborat, exerceas; ut naviges et viscera molli iactatione concutias; quibus cibis utaris, vinum quando virium causa advoces, quando intermittas ne inritet et exasperet tussim. Ego tibi illud praecipio quod non tantum huius morbi sed totius vitae remedium est: contemne mortem. Nihil triste est cum huius metum effugimus.

[6] Tria haec in omni morbo gravia sunt: metus mortis, dolor

corporis, intermissio voluptatum. De morte satis dictum est: hoc unum dicam, non morbi hunc esse sed naturae metum. Multorum mortem distulit morbus et saluti illis fuit videri perire. Morieris, non quia aegrotas, sed quia vivis. Ista te res et sanatum manet; cum convalueris, non mortem sed valetudinem effugeris.

[7] Ad illud nunc proprium incommodum revertamur: magnos cruciatus habet morbus, sed hos tolerabiles intervalla faciunt. Nam summi doloris intentio invenit finem; nemo potest valde dolere et diu; sic nos amantissima nostri natura disposuit ut dolorem aut tolerabilem aut brevem faceret. [8] Maximi dolores consistunt in macerrimis corporis partibus: nervi articuli et quidquid aliud exile est acerrime saevit cum in arto vitia concepit. Sed cito hae partes obstupescunt et ipso dolore sensum doloris amittunt, sive quia spiritus naturali prohibitus cursu et mutatus in peius vim suam qua viget admonetque nos perdit, sive quia corruptus umor, cum desiit habere quo confluat, ipse se elidit et iis quae nimis implevit excutit sensum. [9] Sic podagra et cheragra et omnis vertebrarum dolor nervorumque interquiescit cum illa quae torquebat hebetavit; omnium istorum prima verminatio vexat, impetus mora extinguitur et finis dolendi est optorpuisse. Dentium, oculorum, aurium dolor ob hoc ipsum acutissimus est quod inter angusta corporis nascitur, non minus, mehercule, quam capitis ipsius; sed si incitator est, in alienationem soporemque convertitur. [10] Hoc itaque solacium vasti doloris est, quod necesse est desinas illum sentire si nimis senseris. Illud autem est quod inperitos in vexatione corporis male habet: non adsueverunt animo esse contenti; multum illis cum corpore fuit. Ideo vir magnus ac prudens animum diducit a corpore et multum cum meliore ac divina parte versatur, cum hac querula et fragili quantum necesse est. [11] ‘Sed molestum est’ inquit ‘carere adsuetis voluptatibus, abstinere cibo, sitire, esurire.’ Haec prima abstinentia gravia sunt, deinde cupiditas relanguescit ipsis per [se] quae cupimus fatigatis ac deficientibus; inde morosus est stomachus, inde quibus fuit aviditas cibi odium est. Desideria ipsa moriuntur; non est autem acerbum carere eo quod cupere desieris. [12] Adice quod nullus non intermittitur dolor aut certe remittitur. Adice quod licet cavere venturum et obsistere inminente remediis; nullus enim non signa praemittit, utique qui ex solito revertitur. Tolerabilis est morbi

patientia, si contempseris id quod extremum minatur.

[13] Noli mala tua facere tibi ipse graviora et te querelis onerare: levis est dolor si nihil illi opinio adiecerit. Contra si exhortari te coeperis ac dicere ‘nihil est aut certe exiguum est; duremus; iam desinet’, levem illum, dum putas, facies. Omnia ex opinione suspensa sunt; non ambitio tantum ad illam respicit et luxuria et avaritia: ad opinionem dolemus. [14] Tam miser est quisque quam credidit. Detrahendas praeteritorum dolorum conquestiones puto et illa verba: ‘nulli umquam fuit peius. Quos cruciatus, quanta mala pertuli! Nemo me surrecturum putavit. Quotiens deploratus sum a meis, quotiens a medicis relictus! In eculeum inpositi non sic distrahuntur.’ Etiam si sunt vera ista, transierunt: quid iuvat praeteritos dolores retractare et miserum esse quia fueris? Quid quod nemo non multum malis suis adicit et sibi ipse mentitur? Deinde quod acerbum fuit ferre, tulisse iucundum est: naturale est mali sui fine gaudere. Circumcidenda ergo duo sunt, et futuri timor et veteris incommodi memoria: hoc ad me iam non pertinet, illud nondum. [15] In ipsis positus difficultatibus dicat,

forsan et haec olim meminisse iuvabit.

Toto contra ille pugnet animo; vincetur si cesserit, vincet si se contra dolorem suum intenderit: nunc hoc plerique faciunt, adtrahunt in se ruinam cui obstandum est. Istud quod premit, quod inpendet, quod urguet, si subducere te coeperis, sequetur et gravius incumbet; si contra steteris et obniti volueris, repelletur. [16] Athletae quantum plagarum ore, quantum toto corpore excipiunt! ferunt tamen omne tormentum gloriae cupiditate nec tantum quia pugnant ista patiuntur, sed ut pugnent: exercitatio ipsa tormentum est. Nos quoque evincamus omnia, quorum praemium non corona nec palma est nec tubicen praedicationi nominis nostri silentium faciens, sed virtus et firmitas animi et pax in ceterum parta, si semel in aliquo certamine debellata fortuna est. ‘Dolorem gravem sentio.’ [17] Quid ergo? non sentis si illum muliebriter tuleris? Quemadmodum perniciosior est hostis fugientibus, sic omne fortuitum incommodum magis instat cedenti et averso. ‘Sed grave est.’ Quid? nos ad hoc fortes sumus, ut levia portemus? Utrum vis longum esse morbum an concitatum et brevem? Si longus est, habet intercapedinem, dat refectioni locum, multum temporis donat, necesse est, ut exsurgat, et desinat: brevis

morbus ac praeceps alterutrum faciet, aut extinguetur aut extinguet. Quid autem interest, non sit an non sim? in utroque finis dolendi est.

[18] Illud quoque proderit, ad alias cogitationes avertere animum et a dolore discedere. Cogita quid honeste, quid fortiter feceris; bonas partes tecum ipse tracta; memoriam in ea quae maxime miratus es sparge; tunc tibi fortissimus quisque et victor doloris occurrat: ille qui dum varices exsecandas praeberet legere librum perseveravit, ille qui non desiit ridere cum hoc ipsum irati tortores omnia instrumenta crudelitatis suae experirentur. Non vincetur dolor ratione, qui victus est risu? [19] Quidquid vis nunc licet dicas, destillationes et vim continuae tussis egerentem viscerum partes et febrem praecordia ipsa torrentem et sitim et artus in diversum articulis exeuntibus tortos: plus est flamma et eculeus et lamina et vulneribus ipsis intumescantibus quod illa renovaret et altius urgeret inpressum. Inter haec tamen aliquis non gemit. Parum est: non rogavit. Parum est: non respondit. Parum est: risit et quidem ex animo. Vis tu post hoc dolorem deridere?

[20] ‘Sed nihil’ inquit ‘agere sinit morbus, qui me omnibus abduxit officiis.’ Corpus tuum valetudo tenet, non et animum. Itaque cursoris moratur pedes, sutoris aut fabri manus inpedit: si animus tibi esse in usu solet, suadebis docebis, audies disces, quaeres recordaberis. Quid porro? nihil agere te credis si temperans aeger sis? ostendes morbum posse superari vel certe sustineri. [21] Est, mihi crede, virtuti etiam in lectulo locus. Non tantum arma et acies dant argumenta alacris animi indomitique terroribus: et in vestimentis vir fortis apparet. Habes quod agas: bene luctare cum morbo. Si nihil te coegerit, si nihil exoraverit, insigne prodis exemplum. O quam magna erat gloriae materia, si spectaremur aegri! ipse te specta, ipse te lauda.

[22] Praeterea duo genera sunt voluptatum. Corporales morbus inhibet, non tamen tollit; immo, si verum aestimes, incitat. Magis iuvat bibere sitientem, gratior est esurienti cibus; quidquid ex abstinentia contingit avidius excipitur. Illas vero animi voluptates, quae maiores certioresque sunt, nemo medicus aegro negat. Has quisquis sequitur et bene intellegit omnia sensuum blandimenta contemnit. [23] ‘O infelicem aegrum!’ Quare? quia non vino nivem diluit? quia non rigorem potionis suae, quam capaci scypho miscuit, renovat fracta insuper glacie? quia non ostrea illi Lucrina in ipsa

mensa aperiuntur? quia non circa cenationem eius tumultus cocorum est ipsos cum opsoniis focos transferentium? Hoc enim iam luxuria commenta est: ne quis intepescat cibus, ne quid palato iam calloso parum ferveat, cenam culina prosequitur. [24] 'O infelicem aegrum!' Edet quantum concoquat; non iacebit in conspectu aper ut vilis caro a mensa relegatus, nec in repositorio eius pectora avium (totas enim videre fastidium est) congesta ponentur. Quid tibi mali factum est? cenabis tamquam aeger, immo aliquando tamquam sanus.

[25] Sed omnia ista facile perferemus, sorbitionem, aquam calidam, et quidquid aliud intolerabile videtur delicatis et luxu fluentibus magisque animo quam corpore morbidis: tantum mortem desinamus horrere. Desinemus autem, si fines bonorum ac malorum cognoverimus; ita demum nec vita taedio erit nec mors timori. [26] Vitam enim occupare satietas sui non potest tot res varias, magnas, divinas percensentem: in odium illam sui adducere solet iners otium. Rerum naturam peragranti numquam in fastidium veritas veniet: falsa satiabunt. [27] Rursus si mors accedit et vocat, licet immatura sit, licet mediam praecedat aetatem, perceptus longissimae fructus est. Cognita est illi ex magna parte natura; scit tempore honesta non crescere: iis necesse est videri omnem vitam brevem qui illam voluptatibus vanis et ideo infinitis metiuntur.

[28] His te cogitationibus recrea et interim epistulis nostris vaca. Veniet aliquando tempus quod nos iterum iungat ac misceat; quantulumlibet sit illud, longum faciet scientia utendi. Nam, ut Posidonius ait, 'unus dies hominum eruditorum plus patet quam inperitis longissima aetas'. [29] Interim hoc tene, hoc morde: adversis non succumbere, laetis non credere, omnem fortunae licentiam in oculis habere, tamquam quidquid potest facere factura sit. Quidquid expectatum est diu, levius accedit. Vale.

LXXIX. SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

[1] Expecto epistulas tuas quibus mihi indices circuitus Siciliae totius quid tibi novi ostenderit, et omnia de ipsa Charybdi certiora. Nam Scyllam saxum esse et quidem non terribile navigantibus optime scio: Charybdis an respondeat fabulis perscribi mihi desidero et, si forte observaveris (dignum est autem quod observes), fac nos certiores utrum uno tantum vento agatur in vertices an omnis tempestas aequae mare illud contorqueat, et an verum sit quidquid illo freti turbine abreptum est per multa milia trahi conditum et circa Tauromenitanum litus emergere. [2] Si haec mihi perscripseris, tunc tibi audebo mandare ut in honorem meum Aetnam quoque ascendas, quam consumi et sensim subsidere ex hoc colligunt quidam, quod aliquanto longius navigantibus solebat ostendi. Potest hoc accidere non quia montis altitudo descendit, sed quia ignis evanuit et minus vehemens ac largus effertur, ob eandem causam fumo quoque per diem segniore. Neutrum autem incredibile est, nec montem qui devoretur cotidie minui, nec manere eundem, quia non ipsum <ignis> exest sed in aliqua inferna valle conceptus exaestuat et aliis pascitur, in ipso monte non alimentum habet sed viam. [3] In Lycia regio notissima est (Hephaestion incolae vocant), foratum pluribus locis solum, quod sine ullo nascentium damno ignis innoxius circumit. Laeta itaque regio est et herbida, nihil flammis adurentibus sed tantum vi remissa ac languida refulgentibus.

[4] Sed reservemus ista, tunc quaesituri cum tu mihi scripseris quantum ab ipso ore montis nives absint, quas ne aestas quidem solvit; adeo tutae sunt ab igne vicino. Non est autem quod istam curam inputes mihi; morbo enim tuo daturus eras, etiam si nemo mandaret. [5] Quid tibi do ne Aetnam describas in tuo carmine, ne hunc sollemnem omnibus poetis locum adtingas? Quem quominus Ovidius tractaret, nihil obstitit quod iam Vergilius impleverat; ne Severum quidem Cornelium uterque deterruit. Omnibus praeterea feliciter hic locus se dedit, et qui praecesserant non praeripuisse mihi videntur quae dici poterant, sed aperuisse. [6] [Sed] Multum interest utrum ad consumptam materiam an ad subactam accedas: crescit in dies, et inventuris inventa non obstant. Praeterea condicio optima est

ultimi: parata verba invenit, quae aliter instructa novam faciem habent. Nec illis manus inicit tamquam alienis; sunt enim publica. [Iurisconsulti negant quicquam publicum usu capi.] [7] Aut ego te non novi aut Aetna tibi salivam movet; iam cupis grande aliquid et par prioribus scribere. Plus enim sperare modestia tibi tua non permittit, quae tanta in te est ut videaris mihi retracturus ingenii tui vires, si vincendi periculum sit: tanta tibi priorum reverentia est.

[8] Inter cetera hoc habet boni sapientia: nemo ab altero potest vinci nisi dum ascenditur. Cum ad summum perveneris, paria sunt; non est incremento locus, statur. Numquid sol magnitudini suae adicit? numquid ultra quam solet luna procedit? Maria non crescunt; mundus eundem habitum ac modum servat. [9] Extollere se quae iustam magnitudinem implevere non possunt: quicumque fuerint sapientes, pares erunt et aequales. Habebit unusquisque ex iis proprias dotes: alius erit affabilior, alius expeditior, alius promptior in eloquendo, alius facundior: illud de quo agitur, quod beatum facit, aequalest in omnibus. [10] An Aetna tua possit sublabi et in se ruere, an hoc excelsum cacumen et conspicuum per vasti maris spatia detrahat adsidua vis ignium, nescio: virtutem non flamma, non ruina inferius adducet; haec una maiestas deprimi nescit. Nec proferri ultra nec referri potest; sic huius, ut caelestium, stata magnitudo est. Ad hanc nos conemur educere. [11] Iam multum operis effecti est; immo, si verum fateri volo, non multum. Nec enim bonitas est pessimis esse meliorem: quis oculis gloriatur qui suspicetur diem? Cui sol per caliginem splendet, licet contentus interim sit effugisse tenebras, adhuc non fruitur bono lucis. [12] Tunc animus noster habebit quod gratuletur sibi cum emissus his tenebris in quibus volutatur non tenui visu clara prospexerit, sed totum diem admiserit et redditus caelo suo fuerit, cum receperit locum quem occupavit sorte nascendi. Sursum illum vocant initia sua; erit autem illic etiam antequam hac custodia exsolvatur, cum vitia disiecerit purusque ac levis in cogitationes divinas emicuerit.

[13] Hoc nos agere, Lucili carissime, in hoc ire impetu toto, licet pauci sciant, licet nemo, iuvat. Gloria umbra virtutis est: etiam invitam comitabitur. Sed quemadmodum aliquando umbra antecedit, aliquando sequitur vel a tergo est, ita gloria aliquando ante nos est visendamque se praebet, aliquando in averso est maiorque quo serior,

ubi invidia secessit. [14] Quamdiu videbatur furere Democritus! Vix recepit Socraten fama. Quamdiu Catonem civitas ignoravit! respuit nec intellexit nisi cum perdidit. Rutili innocentia ac virtus lateret, nisi accepisset iniuriam: dum violatur, effulsit. Numquid non sorti suae gratias egit et exilium suum complexus est? De his loquor quos inlustravit fortuna dum vexat: quam multorum profectus in notitiam evasere post ipsos! quam multos fama non excepit sed eruit! [15] Vides Epicurum quantopere non tantum eruditiores sed haec quoque inperitorum turba miretur: hic ignotus ipsis Athenis fuit, circa quas delituerat. Multis itaque iam annis Metrodoro suo superstes in quadam epistula, cum amicitiam suam et Metrodori grata commemoratione cecinisset, hoc novissime adiecit, nihil sibi et Metrodoro inter bona tanta nocuisse quod ipsos illa nobilis Graecia non ignotos solum habuisset sed paene inauditos. [16] Numquid ergo non postea quam esse desierat inventus est? numquid non opinio eius enituit? Hoc Metrodorus quoque in quadam epistula confitetur, se et Epicurum non satis enotuisse; sed post se et Epicurum magnum paratumque nomen habituros qui voluissent per eadem ire vestigia. [17] Nulla virtus latet, et latuisse non ipsius est damnum: veniet qui conditam et saeculi sui malignitate compressam dies publicet. Paucis natus est qui populum aetatis suae cogitat. Multa annorum milia, multa populorum supervenient: ad illa respice. Etiam si omnibus tecum viventibus silentium livor indixerit, venient qui sine offensa, sine gratia iudicent. Si quod est pretium virtutis ex fama, nec hoc interit. Ad nos quidem nihil pertinebit posterorum sermo; tamen etiam non sentientes colet ac frequentabit. [18] Nulli non virtus et vivo et mortuo rettulit gratiam, si modo illam bona secutus est fide, si se non exornavit et pinxit, sed idem fuit sive ex denunciato videbatur sive inparatus ac subito. Nihil simulatio proficit; paucis inponit leviter extrinsecus inducta facies: veritas in omnem partem sui eadem est. Quae decipiunt nihil habent solidi. Tenue est mendacium: perlucet si diligenter inspexeris. Vale.

LXXX. SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

[1] Hodierno die non tantum meo beneficio mihi vaco sed spectaculi, quod omnes molestos ad sphaeromachian avocavit. Nemo inrumpet, nemo cogitationem meam inpediet, quae hac ipsa fiducia procedit audacius. Non crepabit subinde ostium, non adlevabitur velum: licebit tuto vadere, quod magis necessarium est per se eunti et suam sequenti viam. Non ergo sequor priores? facio, sed permitto mihi et invenire aliquid et mutare et relinquere; non servio illis, sed assentior.

[2] Magnum tamen verbum dixi, qui mihi silentium promittebam et sine interpellatore secretum: ecce ingens clamor ex stadio perfertur et me non excutit mihi, sed in huius ipsius rei contemplationem transfert. Cogito mecum quam multi corpora exerceant, ingenia quam pauci; quantus ad spectaculum non fidele et lusorium fiat concursus, quanta sit circa artes bonas solitudo; quam inbecilli animo sint quorum lacertos umerosque miramur. [3] Illud maxime revolve mecum: si corpus perduci exercitatione ad hanc patientiam potest qua et pugnos pariter et calces non unius hominis ferat, qua solem ardentissimum in ferventissimo pulvere sustinens aliquis et sanguine suo madens diem ducat, quanto facilius animus conroboreari possit ut fortunae ictus invictus excipiat, ut proiectus, ut conculcatus exurgat. Corpus enim multis eget rebus ut valeat: animus ex se crescit, se ipse alit, se exercet. Illis multo cibo, multa potione opus est, multo oleo, longa denique opera: tibi continget virtus sine apparatu, sine impensa. Quidquid facere te potest bonum tecum est. [4] Quid tibi opus est ut sis bonus? velle. Quid autem melius potes velle quam eripere te huic servituti quae omnes premit, quam mancipia quoque condicionis extremae et in his sordibus nata omni modo exuere conantur? Peculium suum, quod comparaverunt ventre fraudato, pro capite numerant: tu non concupisces quanticumque ad libertatem pervenire, qui te in illa putas natum? [5] Quid ad arcam tuam respicis? emi non potest. Itaque in tabellas vanum coicitur nomen libertatis, quam nec qui emerunt habent nec qui vendiderunt: tibi des oportet istud bonum, a te petas. Libera te primum metu mortis (illa nobis iugum inponit), deinde metu paupertatis. [6] Si vis scire quam nihil in illa

mali sit, compara inter se pauperum et divitum vultus: saepius pauper et fidelius ridet; nulla sollicitudo in alto est; etiam si qua incidit cura, velut nubes levis transit: horum qui felices vocantur hilaritas ficta est aut gravis et suppurata tristitia, eo quidem gravior quia interdum non licet palam esse miseros, sed inter aerumnas cor ipsum exedentes necesse est agere felicem. [7] Saepius hoc exemplo mihi utendum est, nec enim ullo efficacius exprimitur hic humanae vitae mimus, qui nobis partes quas male agamus adsignat. Ille qui in scaena latus incedit et haec resupinus dicit,

en impero Argis; regna mihi liquit Pelops,
qua ponto ab Helles atque ab Ionio mari
urguetur Isthmos,

servus est, quinque modios accipit et quinque denarios. [8] Ille qui superbus atque inpotens et fiducia virium tumidus ait,
quod nisi quieris, Menelae, hac dextra occides,

diurnum accipit, in centunculo dormit. Idem de istis licet omnibus dicas quos supra capita hominum supraque turbam delicatos lectica suspendit: omnium istorum personata felicitas est. Contemnes illos si despoliaveris. [9] Equum empturus solvi iubes stratum, detrahis vestimenta venalibus ne qua vitia corporis lateant: hominem involutum aestimas? Mangones quidquid est quod displiceat, id aliquo lenocinio abscondunt, itaque ementibus ornamenta ipsa suspecta sunt: sive crus alligatum sive brachium aspiceres, nudari iuberes et ipsum tibi corpus ostendi. [10] Vides illum Scythiae Sarmatiaeve regem insigni capitis decorum? Si vis illum aestimare totumque scire qualis sit, fasciam solve: multum mali sub illa latet. Quid de aliis loquor? si perpendere te voles, sepone pecuniam, domum, dignitatem, intus te ipse considera: nunc qualis sis aliis credis. Vale.

LIBER DECIMUS

LXXXI. SENECA LUCILIO SUO SALUTEM

[1] Quereris incidisse te in hominem ingratum: si hoc nunc primum, age aut fortunae aut diligentiae tuae gratias. Sed nihil facere hoc loco diligentia potest nisi te malignum; nam si hoc periculum vitare volueris, non dabis beneficia; ita ne apud alium pereant, apud te peribunt. Non respondeant potius quam non dentur: et post malam segetem serendum est. Saepe quidquid perierat adsidua infelicis soli sterilitate unius anni restituit ubertas. [2] Est tanti, ut gratum inuenias, experiri et ingratos. Nemo habet tam certam in beneficiis manum ut non saepe fallatur: aberrent, ut aliquando haereant. Post naufragium maria temptantur; feneratorem non fugat a foro coctor. Cito inerti otio vita torpebit, si relinquendum est quidquid offendit. Te vero benigniorem haec ipsa res faciat; nam cuius rei eventus incertus est, id ut aliquando procedat saepe temptandum est.

[3] Sed de isto satis multa in iis libris locuti sumus qui de beneficiis inscribuntur: illud magis quaerendum videtur, quod non satis, ut existimo, explicatum est, an is qui profuit nobis, si postea nocuit, paria fecerit et nos debito solverit. Adice, si vis, et illud: multo plus postea nocuit quam ante profuerat. [4] Si rectam illam rigidi iudicis sententiam quaeris, alterum ab altero absolvet et dicet, ‘quamvis iniuriae praeponderent, tamen beneficiis donetur quod ex iniuria superest’. Plus nocuit, sed prius profuit; itaque habeatur et temporis ratio. [5] Iam illa manifestiora sunt quam ut admoneri debeas quaerendum esse quam libenter profuerit, quam invitus nocuerit, quoniam animo et beneficia et iniuriae constant. ‘Nolui beneficium dare; victus sum aut verecundia aut instantis pertinacia aut spe.’ [6] Eo animo quidque debetur quo datur, nec quantum sit sed a quali profectum voluntate perpenditur. Nunc coniectura tollatur: et illud beneficium fuit et hoc, quod modum beneficii prioris excessit, iniuria est. Vir bonus utrosque calculos sic ponit ut se ipse circumscribat: beneficio adicit, iniuriae demit. Alter ille remissior iudex, quem esse me malo, iniuriae oblivisci iubebit, officii meminisse. [7] ‘Hoc certe’ inquis ‘iustitiae convenit, suum cuique reddere, beneficio gratiam, iniuriae talionem aut certe malam gratiam.’ Verum erit istud cum alius iniuriam fecerit, alius beneficium dederit; nam si idem est,

beneficio vis iniuriae extinguitur. Nam cui, etiam si merita non antecessissent, oportebat ignosci, post beneficia laedenti plus quam venia debetur. [8] Non pono utrique par pretium: pluris aestimo beneficium quam iniuriam. Non omnes esse grati sciunt: debere beneficium potest etiam imprudens et rudis et unus e turba, utique dum prope est ab accepto, ignorat autem quantum pro eo debeat. Uni sapienti notum est quanti res quaeque taxanda sit. Nam ille de quo loquebar modo stultus, etiam si bonae voluntatis est, aut minus quam debet aut <alio quam debet> tempore aut quo non debet loco reddit; id quod referendum est effundit atque abicit.

[9] Mira in quibusdam rebus verborum proprietas est, et consuetudo sermonis antiqui quaedam efficacissimis et officia docentibus notis signat. Sic certe solemus loqui: ‘ille illi gratiam rettulit’. Referre est ultro quod debeas adferre. Non dicimus ‘gratiam reddidit’; reddunt enim et qui reposcuntur et qui inviti et qui ubilibet et qui per alium. Non dicimus ‘reposuit beneficium’ aut ‘solvit’: nullum nobis placuit quod aeri alieno convenit verbum. [10] Referre est ad eum a quo acceperis rem ferre. Haec vox significat voluntariam relationem: qui rettulit, ipse se appellavit. Sapiens omnia examinabit secum, quantum acceperit, a quo, <quare,> quando, ubi, quemadmodum. Itaque negamus quemquam scire gratiam referre nisi sapientem, non magis quam beneficium dare quisquam scit nisi sapiens — hic scilicet qui magis dato gaudet quam alius accepto. [11] Hoc aliquis inter illa numerat quae videmur inopinata omnibus dicere (paradoxa Graeci vocant) et ait, ‘nemo ergo scit praeter sapientem referre gratiam? ergo nec quod debet creditori suo reponere quisquam scit alius nec, cum emit aliquam rem, pretium venditori persolvere?’ <Ne> nobis fiat invidia, scito idem dicere Epicurum. Metrodorus certe ait solum sapientem referre gratiam scire. [12] Deinde idem admiratur cum dicimus, ‘solus sapiens scit amare, solus sapiens amicus est’. Atqui et amoris et amicitiae pars est referre gratiam, immo hoc magis vulgare est et in plures cadit quam vera amicitia. Deinde idem admiratur quod dicimus fidem nisi in sapiente non esse, tamquam non ipse idem dicat. An tibi videtur fidem habere qui referre gratiam nescit? [13] Desinant itaque infamare nos tamquam incredibilia iactantes et sciant apud sapientem esse ipsa honesta, apud vulgum simulacra rerum honestarum et effigies. Nemo referre

gratiam scit nisi sapiens. Stultus quoque, utcumque scit et quemadmodum potest, referat; scientia illi potius quam voluntas desit: velle non discitur. [14] Sapiens omnia inter se comparabit; maius enim aut minus fit, quamvis idem sit, tempore, loco, causa. Saepe enim hoc <non> potuere divitiae in domum infusae quod opportune dati mille denarii. Multum enim interest donaveris an succurreris, servaverit illum tua liberalitas an instruxerit; saepe quod datur exiguum est, quod sequitur ex eo magnum. Quantum autem existimas interesse utrum aliquis quod daret a se [quod praestabat] sumpserit an beneficium acceperit ut daret?

[15] Sed ne in eadem quae satis scrutati sumus revolvamur, in hac comparatione beneficii et iniuriae vir bonus iudicabit quidem quod erit aequissimum, sed beneficio favebit; in hanc erit partem proclivior. [16] Plurimum autem momenti persona solet adferre in rebus eiusmodi: ‘dedisti mihi beneficium in servo, iniuriam fecisti in patre; servasti mihi filium, sed patrem abstulisti’. Alia deinceps per quae procedit omnis conlatio prosequetur, et si pusillum erit quod intersit, dissimulabit; etiam si multum fuerit, sed si id donari salva pietate ac fide poterit, remittet, id est si ad ipsum tota pertinebit iniuria. [17] Summa rei haec est: facilis erit in commutando; patietur plus inputari sibi; invitus beneficium per compensationem iniuriae solvet; in hanc partem inclinabit, huc verget, ut cupiat debere gratiam, cupiat referre. Errat enim si quis beneficium accipit libentius quam reddit: quanto hilarior est qui solvit quam qui mutuatur, tanto debet laetior esse qui se maximo aere alieno accepti benefici exonerat quam qui cum maxime obligatur. [18] Nam in hoc quoque falluntur ingrati, quod creditori quidem praeter sortem extra ordinem numerant, beneficiorum autem usum esse gratuitum putant: et illa crescunt mora tantoque plus solvendum est quanto tardius. Ingratus est qui beneficium reddit sine usura; itaque huius quoque rei habebitur ratio, cum conferentur accepta et expensa.

[19] Omnia facienda sunt ut quam gratissimi simus. Nostrum enim hoc bonum est, quemadmodum iustitia non est (ut vulgo creditur) ad alios pertinens: magna pars eius in se redit. Nemo non, cum alteri prodest, sibi profuit, non eo nomine dico, quod volet adiuvare adiutus, protegere defensus, quod bonum exemplum circuitu ad facientem revertitur (sicut mala exempla recidunt in auctores nec ulla

miseratio contingit iis qui patiuntur iniurias quas posse fieri faciendo docuerunt), sed quod virtutum omnium pretium in ipsis est. Non enim exercentur ad praemium: recte facti fecisse merces est. [20] Gratus sum non ut alius mihi libentius praestet priori inritatus exemplo, sed ut rem iucundissimam ac pulcherrimam faciam; gratus sum non quia expedit, sed quia iuvat. Hoc ut scias ita esse, si gratum esse non licebit nisi ut videar ingratus, si reddere beneficium non aliter quam per speciem iniuriae potero, aequissimo animo ad honestum consilium per mediam infamiam tendam. Nemo mihi videtur pluris aestimare virtutem, nemo illi magis esse devotus quam qui boni viri famam perdidit ne conscientiam perderet. [21] Itaque, ut dixi, maiore tuo quam alterius bono gratus es; illi enim vulgaris et cotidiana res contigit, recipere quod dederat, tibi magna et ex beatissimo animi statu profecta, gratum fuisse. Nam si malitia miseros facit, virtus beatos, gratum autem esse virtus est, rem usitatam reddidisti, inaestimabilem consecutus es, conscientiam grati, quae nisi in animum divinum fortunatumque non pervenit.

[In] Contrarium autem huic adfectum summa infelicitas urget: nemo sibi gratus est qui alteri non fuit. Hoc me putas dicere, qui ingratus est miser erit? non differo illum: statim miser est. [22] Itaque ingrati esse vitemus non aliena causa sed nostra. Minimum ex nequitia levissimumque ad alios redundat: quod pessimum ex illa est et, ut ita dicam, spississimum, domi remanet et premit habentem, quemadmodum Attalus noster dicere solebat, ‘malitia ipsa maximam partem veneni sui bibit’. Illud venenum quod serpentes in alienam perniciem proferunt, sine sua continent, non est huic simile: hoc habentibus pessimum est. [23] Torquet se ingratus et macerat; odit quae accepit, quia redditurus est, et extenuat, iniurias vero dilatat atque auget. Quid autem eo miserius cui beneficia excidunt, haerent iniuriae? At contra sapientia exornat omne beneficium ac sibi ipsa commendat et se adsidua eius commemoratione delectat. [24] Malis una voluptas est et haec brevis, dum accipiunt beneficia, ex quibus sapienti longum gaudium manet ac perenne. Non enim illum accipere sed accepisse delectat, quod immortale est et adsiduum. Illa contemnit quibus laesus est, nec obliviscitur per neglegentiam sed volens. [25] Non vertit omnia in peius nec quaerit cui inputet casum, et peccata hominum ad fortunam potius refert. Non calumniatur verba

nec vultus; quidquid accidit benigne interpretando levat. Non offensae potius quam officii meminit; quantum potest in priore ac meliore se memoria detinet, nec mutat animum adversus bene meritos nisi multum male facta praecedunt et manifestum etiam coniventi discrimen est; tunc quoque in hoc dumtaxat, ut talis sit post maiorem iniuriam qualis ante beneficium. Nam cum beneficio par est iniuria, aliquid in animo benivolentiae remanet. [26] Quemadmodum reus sententiis paribus absolvitur et semper quidquid dubium est humanitas inclinatur in melius, sic animus sapientis, ubi paria maleficiis merita sunt, desinit quidem debere, sed non desinit velle debere, et hoc facit quod qui post tabulas novas solvunt.

[27] Nemo autem esse gratus potest nisi contempsit ista propter quae vulgus insanit: si referre vis gratiam, et in exilium eundem est et effundendus sanguis et suscipienda egestas et ipsa innocentia saepe maculanda indignisque obicienda rumoribus. Non parvo sibi constat homo gratus. [28] Nihil carius aestimamus quam beneficium quamdiu petimus, nihil vilius cum accepimus. Quaeris quid sit quod oblivionem nobis acceptorum faciat? cupiditas accipiendorum; cogitamus non quid inpetratum sed quid petendum sit. Abstrahunt a recto divitiae, honores, potentia et cetera quae opinione nostra cara sunt, pretio suo vilia. [29] Nescimus aestimare res, de quibus non cum fama sed cum rerum natura deliberandum est; nihil habent ista magnificum quo mentes in se nostras trahant praeter hoc, quod mirari illa consuevimus. Non enim quia concupiscenda sunt laudantur, sed concupiscuntur quia laudata sunt, et cum singulorum error publicum fecerit, singulorum errorem facit publicus. [30] Sed quemadmodum illa credidimus, sic et hoc eidem populo credamus, nihil esse grato animo honestius; omnes hoc urbes, omnes etiam ex barbaris regionibus gentes conclamabunt; in hoc bonis malisque conveniet. [31] Erunt qui voluptates laudent, erunt qui labores malint; erunt qui dolorem maximum malum dicant, erunt qui ne malum quidem appellent; divitias aliquis ad summum bonum admittet, alius illas dicet malo vitae humanae repertas, nihil esse eo locupletius cui quod donet fortuna non invenit: in tanta iudiciorum diversitate referendam bene merentibus gratiam omnes tibi uno, quod aiunt, ore adfirmabunt. In hoc tam discors turba consentiet, cum interim iniurias pro beneficiis reddimus, et prima causa est cur quis ingratus

sit si satis gratus esse non potuit. [32] Eo perductus est furor ut periculosissima res sit beneficia in aliquem magna conferre; nam quia putat turpe non reddere, non vult esse cui reddat. Tibi habe quod accepisti; non repeto, non exigo: profuisse tutum sit. Nullum est odium perniciosius quam e beneficii violati pudore. Vale.

LXXXII. SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

[1] Desii iam de te esse sollicitus. ‘Quem’ inquis ‘deorum sponsorem accepisti?’ Eum scilicet qui neminem fallit, animum recti ac boni amatorem. In tuto pars tui melior est. Potest fortuna tibi iniuriam facere: quod ad rem magis pertinet, non timeo ne tu facias tibi. I qua ire coepisti et in isto te vitae habitu compone placide, non molliter. [2] Male mihi esse malo quam molliter — <‘male’> nunc sic excipe quemadmodum a populo solet dici: dure, aspere, laboriose. Audire solemus sic quorundam vitam laudari quibus invidetur: ‘molliter vivit’; hoc dicunt, ‘mollis est’. Paulatim enim effeminatur animus atque in similitudinem otii sui et pigritiae in qua iacet solvitur. Quid ergo? viro non vel obrigescere satius est? * * * deinde idem delicati timent, [morti] cui vitam suam fecere similem. Multum interest inter otium et conditivum. [3] ‘Quid ergo?’ inquis ‘non satius est vel sic iacere quam in istis officiorum verticibus volutari?’ Utraque res detestabilis est, et contractio et torpor. Puto, aequae qui in odoribus iacet mortuus est quam qui rapitur unco; otium sine litteris mors est et hominis vivi sepultura. [4] Quid deinde prodest secessisse? tamquam non trans maria nos sollicitudinum causae persequantur. Quae latebra est in quam non intret metus mortis? quae tam emunita et in altum subducta vitae quies quam non dolor terret? quacumque te abdideris, mala humana circumstrepent. Multa extra sunt quae circumeunt nos quo aut fallant aut urgeant, multa intus quae in media solitudine exaestuant. [5] Philosophia circumdanda est, inexpugnabilis murus, quem fortuna multis machinis lacessitum non transit. In insuperabili loco stat animus qui externa deseruit et arce se sua vindicat; infra illum omne telum cadit. Non habet, ut putamus, fortuna longas manus: neminem occupat nisi haerentem sibi. [6] Itaque quantum possumus ab illa resiliamus; quod sola praestabit sui naturaeque cognitio. Sciat quo iturus sit, unde ortus, quod illi bonum, quod malum sit, quid petat, quid evitet, quae sit illa ratio quae adpetenda ac fugienda discernat, qua cupiditatum mansuescit insania, timorum saexitia conpescitur. [7] Haec quidam putant ipsos etiam sine philosophia repressisse; sed cum securos aliquis casus expertus est, exprimitur sera confessio; magna verba excidunt cum tortor poposcit

manum, cum mors propius accessit. Possis illi dicere, 'facile provocabas mala absentia: ecce dolor, quem tolerabilem esse dicebas, ecce mors, quam contra multa animose locutus es; sonant flagella, gladius micat;

nunc animis opus, Aenea, nunc pectore firmo'.

[8] Faciet autem illud firmum adsidua meditatio, si non verba exercueris sed animum, si contra mortem te praeparaveris, adversus quam non exhortabitur nec attollet qui cavillationibus tibi persuadere temptaverit mortem malum non esse. Libet enim, Lucili, virorum optime, ridere ineptias Graecas, quas nondum, quamvis mirer, excussi. [9] Zenon noster hac conlectione utitur: 'nullum malum gloriosum est; mors autem gloriosa est; mors ergo non est malum'. Profecisti! liberatus sum metu; post hoc non dubitabo porrigere cervicem. Non vis severius loqui nec morituro risum movere? Non mehercules facile tibi dixerim utrum ineptior fuerit qui se hac interrogatione iudicavit mortis metum extinguere, an qui hoc, tamquam ad rem pertineret, conatus est solvere. [10] Nam et ipse interrogationem contrariam opposuit ex eo natam quod mortem inter indifferentia ponimus, quae adiaphora Graeci vocant. 'Nihil' inquit 'indifferens gloriosum est; mors autem gloriosum est; ergo mors non est indifferens.' Haec interrogatio vides ubi obrepit: mors non est gloriosa, sed fortiter mori gloriosum est. Et cum dicis 'indifferens nihil gloriosum est', concedo tibi ita ut dicam nihil gloriosum esse nisi circa indifferentia; tamquam indifferentia esse dico (id est nec bona nec mala) morbum, dolorem, paupertatem, exilium, mortem. [11] Nihil horum per se gloriosum est, nihil tamen sine his. Laudatur enim non paupertas, sed ille quem paupertas non summittit nec incurvat; laudatur non exilium, sed ille [Rutilius] qui fortiore vultu in exilium iit quam misisset; laudatur non dolor, sed ille quem nihil coegit dolor; nemo mortem laudat, sed eum cuius mors ante abstulit animum quam conturbavit. [12] Omnia ista per se non sunt honesta nec gloriosa, sed quidquid ex illis virtus adiit tractavitque honestum et gloriosum facit: illa in medio posita sunt. Interest utrum malitia illis an virtus manum admoverit; mors enim illa quae in Catone gloriosa est in Bruto statim turpis est et erubescenda. Hic est enim Brutus qui, cum periturus mortis moras quaereret, ad exonerandum ventrem secessit et evocatus ad mortem iussusque praebere cervicem,

‘praebebo’, inquit ‘ita vivam’. Quae dementia est fugere cum retro ire non possis! ‘Praebebo’, inquit ‘ita vivam’. Paene adiecit ‘vel sub Antonio’. O hominem dignum qui vitae dederetur!

[13] Sed, ut coeperam dicere, vides ipsam mortem nec malum esse nec bonum: Cato illa honestissime usus est, turpissime Brutus. Omnis res quod non habuit decus virtute addita sumit. Cubiculum lucidum dicimus, hoc idem obscurissimum est nocte; [14] dies illi lucem infundit, nox eripit: sic istis quae a nobis indifferentia ac media dicuntur, divitiis, viribus, formae, honoribus, regno, et contra morti, exilio, malae valetudini, doloribus quaeque alia aut minus aut magis pertinuimus, aut malitia aut virtus dat boni vel mali nomen. Massa per se nec calida nec frigida est: in fornacem coniecta concaluit, in aquam demissa refrixit. Mors honesta est per illud quod honestum est, id <est> virtus et animus externa contemnens.

[15] Est et horum, Lucili, quae appellamus media grande discrimen. Non enim sic mors indifferens est quomodo utrum capillos pares <an inpaes> habeas: mors inter illa est quae mala quidem non sunt, tamen habent mali speciem: sui amor est et permanendi conservandique se insita voluntas atque aspernatio dissolutionis, * * * quia videtur multa nobis bona eripere et nos ex hac cui adsuevimus rerum copia educere. Illa quoque res morti nos alienat, quod haec iam novimus, illa ad quae transituri sumus nescimus qualia sint, et horremus ignota. Naturalis praeterea tenebrarum metus est, in quas adductura mors creditur. [16] Itaque etiam si indifferens mors est, non tamen ea est quae facile negligi possit: magna exercitatione durandus est animus ut conspectum eius accessumque patiat. Mors contemni debet magis quam solet; multa enim de illa credidimus; multorum ingeniis certatum est ad augendam eius infamiam; descriptus est carcer infernus et perpetua nocte oppressa regio, in qua

ingens ianitor Orci

ossa super recubans antro semesa cruento

aeternum latrans exsanguis terreat umbras.

Etiam cum persuaseris istas fabulas esse nec quicquam defunctis superesse quod timeant, subit alius metus: aequae enim timent ne

apud inferos sint quam ne nusquam. [17] His adversantibus quae nobis offundit longa persuasio, fortiter pati mortem quidni gloriosum sit et inter maxima opera mentis humanae? Quae numquam ad virtutem exsurget si mortem malum esse crediderit: exsurget si putabit indifferens esse. Non recipit rerum natura ut aliquis magno animo accedat ad id quod malum iudicat: pigre veniet et cunctanter. Non est autem gloriosum quod ab invito et tergiversante fit; nihil facit virtus quia necesse est. [18] Adice nunc quod nihil honeste fit nisi cui totus animus incubuit atque adfuit, cui nulla parte sui repugnavit. Ubi autem ad malum acceditur aut peiorum metu, aut spe bonorum ad quae pervenire tanti sit devorata unius mali patientia, dissident inter se iudicia facientis: hinc est quod iubeat proposita perficere, illinc quod retrahat et ab re suspecta ac periculosa fugiat; igitur in diversa distrahitur. Si hoc est, perit gloria; virtus enim concordii animo decreta peragit, non timet quod facit.

Tu ne cede malis, sed contra audentior ito
quam tua te fortuna sinet.

[19] Non ibis audentior si mala illa esse credideris. Eximendum hoc e pectore est; alioqui haesitabit impetum moratura suspicio; trudetur in id quod invadendum est.

Nostri quidem videri volunt Zenonis interrogationem
veram esse, fallacem autem alteram et falsam quae illi opponitur. Ego non redigo ista ad legem dialecticam et ad illos artificii veternosissimi nodos: totum genus istuc exturbandum iudico quo circumscribi se qui interrogatur existimat et ad confessionem perductus aliud respondet, aliud putat. Pro veritate simplicius agendum est, contra metum fortius. [20] Haec ipsa quae involvuntur ab illis solvere malim et expandere, ut persuadeam, non ut inponam. In aciem educturus exercitum pro coniugibus ac liberis mortem obiturum quomodo exhortabitur? Do tibi Fabios totum rei publicae bellum in unam transferentes domum. Laconas tibi ostendo in ipsis Thermopylarum angustiis positos: nec victoriam sperant nec reditum; ille locus illis sepulchrum futurus est. [21] Quemadmodum exhortaris ut totius gentis ruinam obiectis corporibus excipiant et vita potius quam loco cedant? Dices 'quod malum est gloriosum non est; mors

gloriosa est; mors ergo non malum'? O efficacem contionem! Quis post hanc dubitet se infestis ingerere mucronibus et stans mori? At ille Leonidas quam fortiter illos adlocutus est! 'Sic', inquit 'conmiliones, prandete tamquam apud inferos cenaturi.' Non in ore crevit cibus, non haesit in faucibus, non elapsus est manibus: alacres et ad prandium illi promiserunt et ad cenam.

[22] Quid? dux ille Romanus, qui ad occupandum locum milites missos, cum per ingentem hostium exercitum ituri essent, sic adlocutus est: 'ire, conmiliones, illo necesse est unde redire non est necesse'. Vides quam simplex et imperiosa virtus sit: quem mortalium circumscriptiones vestrae fortiores facere, quem erectiores possunt? frangunt animum, qui numquam minus contrahendus est et in minuta ac spinosa cogendus quam cum <ad> aliquid grande componitur. [23] Non trecentis, sed omnibus mortalibus mortis timor detrahi debet. Quomodo illos doces malum non esse? quomodo opiniones totius aevi, quibus protinus infantia inbuitur, evincis? quod auxilium invenis [quid dicis] inbecillitati humanae? quid dicis quo inflammati in media pericula inruant? qua oratione hunc timendi consensum, quibus ingenii viribus obnixam contra te persuasionem humani generis avertis? verba mihi captiosa componis et interrogatiunculas nectis? Magnis telis magna portenta feriuntur. [24] Serpentem illam in Africa saevam et Romanis legionibus bello ipso terribiliorem frustra sagittis fundisque petierunt: ne Pythio quidem vulnerabilis erat. Cum ingens magnitudo pro vastitate corporis solida ferrum et quidquid humanae torserant manus reiceret, molaribus demum fracta saxis est. Et adversus mortem tu tam minuta iacularis? subula leonem excipis? Acuta sunt ista quae dicis: nihil est acutius arista; quaedam inutilia et inefficacia ipsa subtilitas reddit. Vale.

LXXXIII. SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

[1] Singulos dies tibi meos et quidem totos indicari iubes: bene de me iudicas si nihil esse in illis putas quod abscondam. Sic certe vivendum est tamquam in conspectu vivamus, sic cogitandum tamquam aliquis in pectus intimum introspicere possit: et potest. Quid enim prodest ab homine aliquid esse secretum? nihil deo clusum est; interest animis nostris et cogitationibus medius intervenit — sic ‘intervenit’ dico tamquam aliquando discedat. [2] Faciam ergo quod iubes, et quid agam et quo ordine libenter tibi scribam. Observabo me protinus et, quod est utilissimum, diem meum recognoscam. Hoc nos pessimos facit, quod nemo vitam suam respicit; quid facturi simus cogitamus, et id raro, quid fecerimus non cogitamus; atqui consilium futuri ex praeterito venit.

[3] Hodiernus dies solidus est, nemo ex illo quicquam mihi eripuit; totus inter stratum lectionemque divisus est; minimum exercitationi corporis datum, et hoc nomine ago gratias senectuti: non magno mihi constat. Cum me movi, lassus sum; hic autem est exercitationis etiam fortissimis finis. [4] Progymnastas meos quaeris? unus mihi sufficit Pharius, puer, ut scis, amabilis, sed mutabitur: iam aliquem teneriorem quaero. Hic quidem ait nos eandem crisin habere, quia utrique dentes cadunt. Sed iam vix illum adsequor currentem et intra paucissimos dies non potero: vide quid exercitatio cotidiana proficiat. Cito magnum intervallum fit inter duos in diversum euntes: eodem tempore ille ascendit, ego descendo, nec ignoras quanto ex his velocius alterum fiat. Mentitus sum; iam enim aetas nostra non descendit sed cadit. [5] Quomodo tamen hodiernum certamen nobis cesserit quaeris? quod raro cursoribus evenit, hieran fecimus. Ab hac fatigatione magis quam exercitatione in frigidam descendi: hoc apud me vocatur parum calda. Ille tantus psychrolutes, qui kalendis Ianuariis euripum salutabam, qui anno novo quemadmodum legere, scribere, dicere aliquid, sic auspicabar in Virginem desilire, primum ad Tiberim transtuli castra, deinde ad hoc solium quod, cum fortissimus sum et omnia bona fide fiunt, sol temperat: non multum mihi ad balneum superest. [6] Panis deinde siccus et sine mensa prandium, post quod non sunt lavandae manus. Dormio minimum.

Consuetudinem meam nosti: brevissimo somno utor et quasi interiungo; satis est mihi vigilare desisse; aliquando dormisse me scio, aliquando suspicor. [7] Ecce circensium obstrepit clamor; subita aliqua et universa voce feriuntur aures meae, nec cogitationem meam excutiant, ne interrumpunt quidem. Fremitum patientissime fero; multae voces et in unum confusae pro fluctu mihi sunt aut vento silvam verberante et ceteris sine intellectu sonantibus.

[8] Quid ergo est nunc cui animum adiecerim? dicam. Superest ex hesterno mihi cogitatio quid sibi voluerint prudentissimi viri qui rerum maximarum probationes levissimas et perplexas fecerint, quae ut sint verae, tamen mendacio similes sunt. [9] Vult nos ab ebrietate detertere Zenon, vir maximus, huius sectae fortissimae ac sanctissimae conditor. Audi ergo quemadmodum colligat virum bonum non futurum ebrium: 'ebrio secretum sermonem nemo committit, viro autem bono committit; ergo vir bonus ebrius non erit'. Quemadmodum opposita interrogatione simili derideatur adtende (satis enim est unam ponere ex multis): 'dormienti nemo secretum sermonem committit, viro autem bono committit; vir bonus ergo non dormit'. [10] Quo uno modo potest Posidonius Zenonis nostri causam agit, sed ne sic quidem, ut existimo, agi potest. Ait enim 'ebrium' duobus modis dici, altero cum aliquis vino gravis est et inpos sui, altero si solet ebrius fieri et huic obnoxius vitio est; hunc a Zenone dici qui soleat fieri ebrius, non qui sit; huic autem neminem commissurum arcana quae per vinum eloqui possit. [11] Quod est falsum; prima enim illa interrogatio complectitur eum qui est ebrius, non eum qui futurus est. Plurimum enim interesse concedes et inter ebrium et ebriosum: potest et qui ebrius est tunc primum esse nec habere hoc vitium, et qui ebriosus est saepe extra ebrietatem esse; itaque id intellego quod significari verbo isto solet, praesertim cum ab homine diligentiam professo ponatur et verba examinante. Adice nunc quod, si hoc intellexit Zenon et nos intellegere noluit, ambiguitate verbi quaesiit locum fraudi, quod faciendum non est ubi veritas quaeritur. [12] Sed sane hoc senserit: quod sequitur falsum est, ei qui soleat ebrius fieri non committi sermonem secretum. Cogita enim quam multis militibus non semper sobriis et imperator et tribunus et centurio tacenda mandaverint. De illa C. Caesaris caede, illius dico qui superato Pompeio rem publicam tenuit, tam creditum

est Tillio Cimbri quam C. Cassio. Cassius tota vita aquam bibit, Tillius Cimber et nimius erat in vino et scordalus. In hanc rem iocatus est ipse: 'ego' inquit 'quemquam feram, qui vinum ferre non possum?'.

[13] Sibi quisque nunc nominet eos quibus scit et vinum male credi et sermonem bene; unum tamen exemplum quod occurrit mihi referam, ne intercidat. Instruenda est enim vita exemplis inlustribus, nec semper confugiamus ad vetera. [14] L. Piso, urbis custos, ebrius ex quo semel factus est fuit. Maiorem noctis partem in convivio exigebat; usque in horam sextam fere dormiebat: hoc eius erat matutinum. Officium tamen suum, quo tutela urbis continebatur, diligentissime administravit. Huic et divus Augustus dedit secreta mandata, cum illum praeponeret Thraciae, quam perdomuit, et Tiberius proficiscens in Campaniam, cum multa in urbe et suspecta relinqueret et invisa. [15] Puto, quia bene illi cesserat Pisonis ebrietas, postea Cossum fecit urbis praefectum, virum gravem, moderatum, sed mersum vino et madentem, adeo ut ex senatu aliquando, in quem e convivio venerat, oppressus inexcitabili somno tolleretur. Huic tamen Tiberius multa sua manu scripsit quae committenda ne ministris quidem suis iudicabat: nullum Cosso aut privatum secretum aut publicum elapsum est.

[16] Itaque declamationes istas de medio removeamus: 'non est animus in sua potestate ebrietate devinctus: quemadmodum musto dolia ipsa rumpuntur et omne quod in imo iacet in summam partem vis caloris eiecat, sic vino exaestuante quidquid in imo iacet abditum effertur et prodit in medium. Onerati mero quemadmodum non continent cibum vino redundante, ita ne secretum quidem; quod suum alienumque est pariter effundunt.' [17] Sed quamvis hoc soleat accidere, ita et illud solet, ut cum iis quos sciamus libentius bibere de rebus necessariis deliberemus; falsum ergo est hoc quod patrocinii loco ponitur, ei qui soleat ebrius fieri non dari tacitum.

Quanto satius est aperte accusare ebrietatem et vitia eius exponere, quae etiam tolerabilis homo vitaverit, nedum perfectus ac sapiens, cui satis est sitim extinguere, qui, etiam si quando hortata est hilaritas aliena causa producta longius, tamen citra ebrietatem resistit. [18] Nam de illo videbimus, an sapientis animus nimio vino turbetur et faciat ebriis solita: interim, si hoc colligere vis, virum

bonum non debere ebrium fieri, cur syllogismis agis? Dic quam turpe sit plus sibi ingerere quam capiat et stomachi sui non nosse mensuram, quam multa ebrii faciant quibus sobrii erubescant, nihil aliud esse ebrietatem quam voluntariam insaniam. Extende in plures dies illum ebrii habitum: numquid de furore dubitabis? nunc quoque non est minor sed brevior. [19] Refer Alexandri Macedonis exemplum, qui Clitum carissimum sibi ac fidelissimum inter epulas transfodit et intellecto facinore mori voluit, certe debuit. Omne vitium ebrietas et incendit et detegit, obstantem malis conatibus verecundiam removet; plures enim pudore peccandi quam bona voluntate prohibitis abstinent. [20] Ubi possedit animum nimia vis vini, quidquid mali latebat emergit. Non facit ebrietas vitia sed protrahit: tunc libidinosus ne cubiculum quidem expectat, sed cupiditatibus suis quantum petierunt sine dilatione permittit; tunc inpudicus morbum profitetur ac publicat; tunc petulans non linguam, non manum continet. Crescit insolenti superbia, crudelitas saevo, malignitas livido; omne vitium laxatur et prodit. [21] Adice illam ignorationem sui, dubia et parum explanata verba, incertos oculos, gradum errantem, vertiginem capitis, tecta ipsa mobilia velut aliquo turbine circumagente totam domum, stomachi tormenta cum effervescit merum ac viscera ipsa distendit. Tunc tamen utcumque tolerabile est, dum illi vis sua est: quid cum somno vitiatur et quae ebrietas fuit cruditas facta est? [22] Cogita quas clades ediderit publica ebrietas: haec acerrimas gentes bellicosasque hostibus tradidit, haec multorum annorum pertinaci bello defensa moenia patefecit, haec contumacissimos et iugum recusantes in alienum egit arbitrium, haec invictos acie mero domuit. [23] Alexandrum, cuius modo feci mentionem, tot itinera, tot proelia, tot hiemes per quas victa temporum locorumque difficultate transierat, tot flumina ex ignoto cadentia, tot maria tutum dimiserunt: intemperantia bibendi et ille Herculaneus ac fatalis scyphus condidit. [24] Quae gloria est capere multum? cum penes te palma fuerit et propinationes tuas strati somno ac vomitantes recusaverint, cum superstes toti convivio fueris, cum omnes viceris virtute magnifica et nemo vini tam capax fuerit, vinceris a dolio. [25] M. Antonium, magnum virum et ingeni nobilis, quae alia res perdidit et in externos mores ac vitia non Romana traiecit quam ebrietas nec minor vino Cleopatrae amor? Haec illum res hostem rei publicae, haec hostibus

suis inparem reddidit; haec crudelem fecit, cum capita principum civitatis cenanti referrentur, cum inter apparatissimas epulas luxusque regales ora ac manus proscriptorum recognosceret, cum vino gravis sitiret tamen sanguinem. Intolerabile erat quod ebrius fiebat cum haec faceret: quanto intolerabilius quod haec in ipsa ebrietate faciebat! [26] Fere vinolentiam crudelitas sequitur; vitiatur enim exasperaturque sanitas mentis. Quemadmodum <morosos> difficilesque faciunt diutini morbi et ad minimam rabidos offensionem, ita ebrietates continuae efferant animos; nam cum saepe apud se non sint, consuetudo insaniae durat et vitia vino concepta etiam sine illo valent.

[27] Dic ergo quare sapiens non debeat ebrius fieri; deformitatem rei et inopportunitatem ostende rebus, non verbis. Quod facillimum est, proba istas quae voluptates vocantur, ubi transcenderunt modum, poenas esse. Nam si illud argumentaberis, sapientem multo vino non inebriari et retinere rectum tenorem etiam si temulentus sit, licet colligas nec veneno poto moriturum nec sopore sumpto dormiturum nec elleboro accepto quidquid in visceribus haerebit eiectionem deiectionemque. Sed si temptantur pedes, lingua non constat, quid est quare illum existimes in parte sobrium esse, in parte ebrium? Vale.

LIBER UNDECIMUS - TERTIUS DECIMUS

LXXXIV. SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

[1] Itinera ista quae segnitiam mihi excutiunt et valetudini meae prodesse iudico et studiis. Quare valetudinem adiuvent vides: cum pigrum me et negligentem corporis litterarum amor faciat, aliena opera exerceor. Studio quare prosint indicabo: a lectionibus <non> recessi. Sunt autem, ut existimo, necessariae, primum ne sim me uno contentus, deinde ut, cum ab aliis quaesita cognovero, tum et de inventis iudicem et cogitem de inveniendis. Alit lectio ingenium et studio fatigatum, non sine studio tamen, reficit. [2] Nec scribere tantum nec tantum legere debemus: altera res contristabit vires et exhaustiet (de stilo dico), altera solvet ac diluet. Invicem hoc et illo commeandum est et alterum altero temperandum, ut quidquid lectione collectum est stilus redigat in corpus. [3] Apes, ut aiunt, debemus imitari, quae vagantur et flores ad mel faciendum idoneos carpunt, deinde quidquid attulere disponunt ac per favos digerunt et, ut Vergilius noster ait,

liquentia mella
stipant et dulci distendunt nectare cellas.

[4] De illis non satis constat utrum sucum ex floribus ducant qui protinus mel sit, an quae collegerunt in hunc saporem mixtura quadam et proprietate spiritus sui mutant. Quibusdam enim placet non faciendi mellis scientiam esse illis sed colligendi. Aiunt inveniri apud Indos mel in arundinum foliis, quod aut ros illius caeli aut ipsius arundinis umor dulcis et pinguior gignat; in nostris quoque herbis vim eandem sed minus manifestam et notabilem poni, quam persequatur et contrahat animal huic rei genitum. Quidam existimant conditura et dispositione in hanc qualitatem verti quae ex tenerrimis virentium florentiumque decerpserint, non sine quodam, ut ita dicam, fermento, quo in unum diversa coalescunt.

[5] Sed ne ad aliud quam de quo agitur abducar, nos quoquehas apes debemus imitari et quaecumque ex diversa lectione congressimus separare (melius enim distincta servantur), deinde adhibita ingenii nostri cura et facultate in unum saporem varia illa

libamenta confundere, ut etiam si apparuerit unde sumptum sit, aliud tamen esse quam unde sumptum est appareat. Quod in corpore nostro videmus sine ulla opera nostra facere naturam [6] (alimenta quae accepimus, quamdiu in sua qualitate perdurant et solida innatant stomacho, onera sunt; at cum ex eo quod erant mutata sunt, tunc demum in vires et in sanguinem transeunt), idem in his quibus aluntur ingenia praestemus, ut quaecumque hausimus non patiamur integra esse, ne aliena sint. [7] Concoquamus illa; alioqui in memoriam ibunt, non in ingenium. Adsentiamur illis fideliter et nostra faciamus, ut unum quiddam fiat ex multis, sicut unus numerus fit ex singulis cum minores summas et dissidentes computatio una comprehendit. Hoc faciat animus noster: omnia quibus est adiutus abscondat, ipsum tantum ostendat quod effecit. [8] Etiam si cuius in te comparebit similitudo quem admiratio tibi altius fixerit, similem esse te volo quomodo filium, non quomodo imaginem: imago res mortua est. ‘Quid ergo? non intellegetur cuius imiteris orationem? cuius argumentationem? cuius sententias?’ Puto aliquando ne intellegi quidem posse, si magni vir ingenii omnibus quae ex quo voluit exemplari traxit formam suam inpressit, ut in unitatem illa conpetant. [9] Non vides quam multorum vocibus chorus constet? unus tamen ex omnibus redditur. Aliqua illic acuta est, aliqua gravis, aliqua media; accedunt viris feminae, interponuntur tibiae: singulorum illic latent voces, omnium apparent. [10] De choro dico quem veteres philosophi noverant: in commissionibus nostris plus cantorum est quam in theatris olim spectatorum fuit. Cum omnes vias ordo canentium implevit et cavea aeneatoribus cincta est et ex pulpito omne tiliarum genus organorumque consonuit, fit concentus ex dissonis. Talem animum esse nostrum volo: multae in illo artes, multa praecepta sint, multarum aetatum exempla, sed in unum conspirata.

[11] ‘Quomodo’ inquis ‘hoc effici poterit?’ Adsidua intentione: si nihil egerimus nisi ratione suadente, nihil vitaverimus nisi ratione suadente. Hanc si audire volueris, dicet tibi: relinque ista iamdudum ad quae discurritur; relinque divitias, aut periculum possidentium aut onus; relinque corporis atque animi voluptates, molliunt et enervant; relinque ambitum, tumida res est, vana, ventosa, nullum habet terminum, tam sollicita est ne quem ante se videat quam ne secum, laborat invidia et quidem duplici. Vides autem quam miser sit si is

cui invidetur et invidet. [12] Intueris illas potentium domos, illa tumultuosa rixa salutantium limina? multum habent contumeliarum ut intres, plus cum intraveris. Praeteri istos gradus divitum et magno adgestu suspensa vestibula: non in praerupto tantum istic stabis sed in lubrico. Huc potius te ad sapientiam derige, tranquillissimasque res eius et simul amplissimas pete. [13] Quaecumque videntur eminere in rebus humanis, quamvis pusilla sint et comparatione humillimorum exstent, per difficiles tamen et arduos tramites adeuntur. Confragosa in fastigium dignitatis via est; at si conscendere hunc verticem libet, cui se fortuna summisit, omnia quidem sub te quae pro excelsissimis habentur aspicias, sed tamen venies ad summa per planum. Vale.

LXXXV. SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

[1] Peperceram tibi et quidquid nodosi adhuc supererat praeterieram, contentus quasi gustum tibi dare eorum quae a nostris dicuntur ut probetur virtus ad explendam beatam vitam sola satis efficax. Iubes me quidquid est interrogationum aut nostrarum aut ad traductionem nostram excogitatarum comprehendere: quod si facere voluero, non erit epistula sed liber. Illud totiens testor, hoc me argumentorum genere non delectari; pudet in aciem descendere pro dis hominibusque susceptam subula armatum.

[2] ‘Qui prudens est et temperans est; qui temperans est, et constans; qui constans est inperturbatus est; qui inperturbatus est sine tristitia est; qui sine tristitia est beatus est; ergo prudens beatus est, et prudentia ad beatam vitam satis est.’

[3] Huic collectioni hoc modo Peripatetici quidam respondent, ut inperturbatum et constantem et sine tristitia sic interpretentur tamquam inperturbatus dicatur qui raro perturbatur et modice, non qui numquam. Item sine tristitia eum dici aiunt qui non est obnoxius tristitiae nec frequens nimiusve in hoc vitio; illud enim humanam naturam negare, alicuius animum immunem esse tristitia; sapientem non vinci maerore, ceterum tangi; et cetera in hunc modum sectae suae respondentia. Non his tollunt adfectus sed temperant. [4] Quantulum autem sapienti damus, si inbecillissimis fortior est et maestissimis laetior et effrenatissimis moderatior et humillimis maior! Quid si miretur velocitatem suam Ladas ad claudos debilesque respiciens?

Illa vel intactae segetis per summa volaret
gramina nec cursu teneras laeisset aristas,
vel mare per medium fluctu suspensa tumentis
ferret iter, celeres nec tingeret aequore plantas.

Haec est pernicitas per se aestimata, non quae tardissimorum conlatione laudatur. Quid si sanum voces leviter febricitantem? non est bona valetudo mediocritas morbi. [5] ‘Sic’ inquit ‘sapiens inperturbatus dicitur quomodo apyrina dicuntur non quibus nulla

inest durtia granorum sed quibus minor.' Falsum est. Non enim deminutionem malorum in bono viro intellego sed vacationem; nulla debent esse, non parva; nam si ulla sunt, crescent et interim impediunt. Quomodo oculos maior et perfecta suffusio excaecat, sic modica turbat. [6] Si das aliquos adfectus sapienti, inpar illis erit ratio et velut torrente quodam auferetur, praesertim cum illi non unum adfectum des cum quo conluctetur sed omnis. Plus potest quamvis mediocrium turba quam posset unius magni violentia. [7] Habet pecuniae cupiditatem, sed modicam; habet ambitionem, sed non concitatum; habet iracundiam, sed placabilem; habet inconstantiam, sed minus vagam ac mobilem; habet libidinem, sed non insanam. Melius cum illo ageretur qui unum vitium integrum haberet quam cum eo qui leviora quidem, sed omnia. [8] Deinde nihil interest quam magnus sit adfectus: quantuscumque est, parere nescit, consilium non accipit. Quemadmodum rationi nullum animal optemperat, non ferum, non domesticum et mite (natura enim illorum est surda suadenti), sic non sequuntur, non audiunt adfectus, quantulicumque sunt. Tigres leonesque numquam feritatem exuunt, aliquando summittunt, et cum minime expectaveris exasperatur torvitas mitigata. Numquam bona fide vitia mansuescunt. [9] Deinde, si ratio proficit, ne incipient quidem adfectus; si invita ratione coeperint, invita perseverabunt. Facilius est enim initia illorum prohibere quam impetum regere.

Falsa est itaque ista mediocritas et inutilis, eodem loco habenda quo si quis diceret modice insaniendum, modiceaegrotandum. [10] Sola virtus habet, non recipiunt animi mala temperamentum; facilius sustuleris illa quam rexeris. Numquid dubium est quin vitia mentis humanae inveterata et dura, quae morbos vocamus, inmoderata sint, ut avaritia, ut crudelitas, ut inpotentia [impietas]? Ergo inmoderati sunt et adfectus; ab his enim ad illa transitur. [11] Deinde, si das aliquid iuris tristitiae, timori, cupiditati, ceteris motibus pravis, non erunt in nostra potestate. Quare? quia extra nos sunt quibus iniritantur; itaque crescent prout magnas habuerint minoresve causas quibus concitentur. Maior erit timor, si plus quo exterreatur aut propius aspexerit, acrior cupiditas quo illam amplioris rei spes evocaverit. [12] Si in nostra potestate non est an sint adfectus, ne illud quidem est, quanti sint: si ipsis permisisti incipere, cum causis suis

crescent tantique erunt quanti fient. Adice nunc quod ista, quamvis exigua sint, in maius excedunt; numquam pernicioosa servant modum; quamvis levia initia morborum serpunt et aegra corpora minima interdum mergit accessio. [13] Illud vero cuius dementiae est, credere quarum rerum extra nostrum arbitrium posita principia sunt, earum nostri esse arbitri terminos! Quomodo ad id finiendum satis valeo ad quod prohibendum parum valui, cum facilius sit excludere quam admissa comprimere?

[14] Quidam ita distinxerunt ut dicerent, 'temperans ac prudens positione quidem mentis et habitu tranquillus est, eventu non est. Nam, quantum ad habitum mentis suae, non perturbatur nec contristatur nec timet, sed multae extrinsecus causae incidunt quae illi perturbationem adferant.' [15] Tale est quod volunt dicere: iracundum quidem illum non esse, irasci tamen aliquando; et timidum quidem non esse, timere tamen aliquando, id est vitio timoris carere, adfectu non carere. Quod si recipitur, usu frequenti timor transibit in vitium, et ira in animum admissa habitum illum ira carentis animi retexet. [16] Praeterea si non contemnit venientes extrinsecus causas et aliquid timet, cum fortiter eundum erit adversus tela, ignes, pro patria, legibus, libertate, cunctanter exhibit et animo recedente. Non cadit autem in sapientem haec diversitas mentis. [17] Illud praeterea iudico observandum, ne duo quae separatim probanda sunt misceamus; per se enim colligitur unum bonum esse quod honestum, per se rursus ad vitam beatam satis esse virtutem. Si unum bonum est quod honestum, omnes concedunt ad beate vivendum sufficere virtutem; e contrario non remittetur, si beatum sola virtus facit, unum bonum esse quod honestum est. [18] Xenocrates et Speusippus putant beatum vel sola virtute fieri posse, non tamen unum bonum esse quod honestum est. Epicurus quoque iudicat, cum virtutem habeat, beatum esse, sed ipsam virtutem non satis esse ad beatam vitam, quia beatum efficiat voluptas quae ex virtute est, non ipsa virtus. Inepta distinctio: idem enim negat umquam virtutem esse sine voluptate. Ita si ei iuncta semper est atque inseparabilis, et sola satis est; habet enim secum voluptatem, sine qua non est etiam cum sola est. [19] Illud autem absurdum est, quod dicitur beatum quidem futurum vel sola virtute, non futurum autem perfecte beatum; quod quemadmodum fieri possit non reperio. Beata enim vita bonum in se

perfectum habet, inexsuperabile; quod si est, perfecte beata est. Si deorum vita nihil habet maius aut melius, beata autem vita divina est, nihil habet in quod amplius possit attolli. [20] Praeterea, si beata vita nullius est indigens, omnis beata vita perfecta est eademque est et beata et beatissima. Numquid dubitas quin beata vita summum bonum sit? ergo si summum bonum habet, summe beata est. Quemadmodum summum bonum adiectionem non recipit (quid enim supra summum erit?), ita ne beata quidem vita, quae sine summo bono non est. Quod si aliquem ‘magis’ beatum induxeris, induces et ‘multo magis’; innumerabilia discrimina summi boni facies, cum summum bonum intellegam quod supra se gradum non habet. [21] Si est aliquis minus beatus quam alius, sequitur ut hic alterius vitam beatoris magis concupiscat quam suam; beatus autem nihil suae praefert. Utrumlibet ex his incredibile est, aut aliquid beato restare quod esse quam quod est malit, aut id illum non malle quod illo melius est. Utique enim quo prudentior est, hoc magis se ad id quod est optimum extendet et id omni modo consequi cupiet. Quomodo autem beatus est qui cupere etiam nunc potest, immo qui debet?

[22] Dicam quid sit ex quo veniat hic error: nesciunt beatam vitam unam esse. In optimo illam statu ponit qualitas sua, non magnitudo; itaque in aequo est longa et brevis, diffusa et angustior, in multa loca multasque partes distributa et in unum coacta. Qui illam numero aestimat et mensura et partibus, id illi quod habet eximium eripit. Quid autem est in beata vita eximium? quod plena est. [23] Finis, ut puto, edendi bibendique satietas est. Hic plus edit, ille minus: quid refert? uterque iam satur est. Hic plus bibit, ille minus: quid refert? uterque non sitit. Hic pluribus annis vixit, hic paucioribus: nihil interest si tam illum multi anni beatum fecerunt quam hunc pauci. Ille quem tu minus beatum vocas non est beatus: non potest hoc nomen inminui.

[24] ‘Qui fortis est sine timore est; qui sine timore est sine tristitia est; qui sine tristitia est beatus est.’

Nostrorum haec interrogatio est. Adversus hanc sic respondere conantur: falsam nos rem et controversiosam pro confessa vindicare, eum qui fortis est sine timore esse. ‘Quid ergo?’ inquit ‘fortis inminuentia mala non timebit? istuc dementis alienatique, non fortis est. Ille vero’ inquit ‘moderatissime timet, sed in totum extra metum

non est.’ [25] Qui hoc dicunt rursus in idem revolvuntur, ut illis virtutum loco sint minora vitia; nam qui timet quidem, sed rarius et minus, non caret malitia, sed levioe vexatur. ‘At enim dementem puto qui mala imminetia non extimescit.’ Verum est quod dicis, si mala sunt; sed si scit mala illa non esse et unam tantum turpitudinem malum iudicat, debet secure pericula aspicere et aliis timenda contemnere. Aut si stulti et amentis est mala non timere, quo quis prudentior est, hoc timebit magis. [26] ‘Ut vobis’ inquit ‘videtur, praebebit se periculis fortis.’ Minime: non timebit illa sed vitabit; cautio illum decet, timor non decet. ‘Quid ergo?’ inquit ‘mortem, vincula, ignes, alia tela fortunae non timebit?’ Non; scit enim illa non esse mala sed videri; omnia ista humanae vitae formidines putat. [27] Describe captivitatem, verbera, catenas, egestatem et membrorum lacerationes vel per morbum vel per iniuriam et quidquid aliud adtuleris: inter lymphatos metus numerat. Ista timidis timenda sunt. An id existimas malum ad quod aliquando nobis nostra sponte veniendum est? [28] Quaeris quid sit malum?cedere iis quae mala vocantur et illis libertatem suam dedere, pro qua cuncta patienda sunt: perit libertas nisi illa contemnimus quae nobis iugum inponunt. Non dubitarent quid conveniret forti viro si scirent quid esset fortitudo. Non est enim inconsulta temeritas nec periculorum amor nec formidabilium adpetitio: scientia est distinguendi quid sit malum et quid non sit. Diligentissima in tutela sui fortitudo est et eadem patientissima eorum quibus falsa species malorum est. [29] ‘Quid ergo? si ferrum intentatur cervicibus viri fortis, si pars subinde alia atque alia suffoditur, si viscera sua in sinu suo vidit, si ex intervallo, quo magis tormenta sentiat, repetitur et per adsiccata vulnera recens demittitur sanguis, non timet? istum tu dices nec dolere?’ Iste vero dolet (sensus enim hominis nulla exuit virtus), sed non timet: invictus ex alto dolores suos spectat. Quaeris quis tunc animus illi sit? qui aegrum amicum adhortantibus.

[30] ‘Quod malum est nocet; quod nocet deterioe facit; dolor et paupertas deterioe non faciunt; ergo mala non sunt.’

‘Falsum est’ inquit ‘quod proponitis; non enim, si quid nocet, etiam deterioe facit. Tempestas et procella nocet gubernatori, non tamen illum deterioe facit.’ [31] Quidam e Stoicis ita adversus hoc respondent: deterioe fieri gubernatorem tempestate ac procella,

quia non possit id quod proposuit efficere nec tenere cursum suum; deteriores illum in arte sua non fieri, in opere fieri. Quibus Peripateticus ‘ergo’ inquit ‘et sapientem deteriores faciet paupertas, dolor, et quidquid aliud tale fuerit; virtutem enim illi non eripiet, sed opera eius inpediet’. [32] Hoc recte diceretur nisi dissimilis esset gubernatoris condicio et sapientis. Huic enim propositum est in vita agenda non utique quod temptat efficere, sed omnia recte facere: gubernatori propositum est utique navem in portum perducere. Artes ministrae sunt, praestare debent quod promittunt, sapientia domina rectrixque est; artes serviunt vitae, sapientia imperat.

[33] Ego aliter respondendum iudico: nec artem gubernatoris deteriores ulla tempestate fieri nec ipsam administrationem artis. Gubernator tibi non felicitatem promisit sed utilem operam et navis regendae scientiam; haec eo magis apparet quo illi magis aliqua fortuita vis obstitit. Qui hoc potuit dicere, ‘Neptune, numquam hanc navem nisi rectam’, arti satis fecit: tempestas non opus gubernatoris inedit sed successum. [34] ‘Quid ergo?’ inquit ‘non nocet gubernatori ea res quae illum tenere portum vetat, quae conatus eius inritos efficit, quae aut refert illum aut detinet et exarmat?’ Non tamquam gubernatori, sed tamquam naviganti nocet: alioqui <gubernator ille non est.> Gubernatoris artem adeo non inedit ut ostendat; tranquillo enim, ut aiunt, quilibet gubernator est. Navigio ista obsunt, non rectori eius, qua rector est. [35] Duas personas habet gubernator, alteram communem cum omnibus qui eandem conscenderunt navem: ipse quoque vector est; alteram propriam: gubernator est. Tempestas tamquam vectori nocet, non tamquam gubernatori. [36] Deinde gubernatoris ars alienum bonum est: ad eos quos vehit pertinet, quomodo medici ad eos quos curat: <sapientis> commune bonum est: <est> et eorum cum quibus vivit et proprium ipsius. Itaque gubernatori fortasse noceatur cuius ministerium aliis promissum tempestate ineditur: [37] sapienti non nocetur a paupertate, non a dolore, non ab aliis tempestatibus vitae. Non enim prohibentur opera eius omnia, sed tantum ad alios pertinentia: ipse semper in actu est, in effectu tunc maximus cum illi fortuna se opposuit; tunc enim ipsius sapientiae negotium agit, quam diximus et alienum bonum esse et suum.

[38] Praeterea ne aliis quidem tunc prodesse prohibetur cum illum

aliquae necessitates premunt. Propter paupertatem prohibetur docere quemadmodum tractanda res publica sit, at illud docet, quemadmodum sit tractanda paupertas. Per totam vitam opus eius extenditur. Ita nulla fortuna, nulla res actus sapientis excludit; id enim ipsum agit quo alia agere prohibetur. Ad utrosque casus aptatus est: bonorum rector est, malorum victor. [39] Sic, inquam, se exercuit ut virtutem tam in secundis quam in adversis exhiberet nec materiam eius sed ipsam intueretur; itaque nec paupertas illum nec dolor nec quidquid aliud inperitos avertit et praecipites agit prohibet. [40] Tu illum premi putas malis? utitur. Non ex ebone tantum Phidias sciebat facere simulacra; faciebat ex aere. Si marmor illi, si adhuc viliorē materiam obtulisses, fecisset quale ex illa fieri optimum posset. Sic sapiens virtutem, si licebit, in divitiis explicabit, si minus, in paupertate; si poterit, in patria, si minus, in exilio; si poterit, imperator, si minus, miles; si poterit, integer, si minus, debilis. Quamcumque fortunam acceperit, aliquid ex illa memorabile efficiet. [41] Certi sunt domitores ferarum qui saevissima animalia et ad occursum expavescenda hominem pati subigunt nec asperitatem excussisse contenti usque in contubernium mitigant: leonis faucibus magister manum insertat, osculatur tigrim suus custos, elephantum minimus Aethiops iubet subsidere in genua et ambulare per funem. Sic sapiens artifex est domandi mala: dolor, egestas, ignominia, carcer, exilium ubique horrenda, cum ad hunc pervenere, mansueta sunt. Vale.

LXXXVI. SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

[1] In ipsa Scipionis Africani villa iacens haec tibi scribo, adoratis manibus eius et ara, quam sepulchrum esse tanti viri suspicor. Animum quidem eius in caelum ex quo erat redisse persuadeo mihi, non quia magnos exercitus duxit (hos enim et Cambyzes furiosus ac furore feliciter usus habuit), sed ob egregiam moderationem pietatemque, quam magis in illo admirabilem iudico cum reliquit patriam quam cum defendit. Aut Scipio Romae esse debebat aut Roma in libertate. [2] ‘Nihil’ inquit ‘volo derogare legibus, nihil institutis; aequum inter omnes cives ius sit. Utere sine me beneficio meo, patria. Causa tibi libertatis fui, ero et argumentum: exeo, si plus quam tibi expedit crevi.’ [3] Quidni ego admirer hanc magnitudinem animi, qua in exilium voluntarium secessit et civitatem exoneravit? Eo perducta res erat ut aut libertas Scipioni aut Scipio libertati faceret iniuriam. Neutrum fas erat; itaque locum dedit legibus et se Liternum recepit tam suum exilium rei publicae inputaturus quam Hannibalis.

[4] Vidi villam exstructam lapide quadrato, murum circumdatum silvae, turrets quoque in propugnaculum villae utrimque subrectas, cisternam aedificiis ac viridibus subditam quae sufficere in usum vel exercitus posset, balneolum angustum, tenebricosum ex consuetudine antiqua: non videbatur maioribus nostris caldum nisi obscurum. [5] Magna ergo me voluptas subiit contemplantem mores Scipionis ac nostros: in hoc angulo ille ‘Carthaginis horror’, cui Roma debet quod tantum semel capta est, abluebat corpus laboribus rusticis fessum. Exercebat enim opere se terramque (ut mos fuit priscis) ipse subigebat. Sub hoc ille tecto tam sordido stetit, hoc illum pavementum tam vile sustinuit: at nunc quis est qui sic lavari sustineat? [6] Pauper sibi videtur ac sordidus nisi parietes magnis et pretiosis orbibus refulserunt, nisi Alexandrina marmora Numidicis crustis distincta sunt, nisi illis undique operosa et in picturae modum variata circumlitio praetextitur, nisi vitro absconditur camera, nisi Thasius lapis, quondam rarum in aliquo spectaculum templo, piscinas nostras circumdedit, in quas multa sudatione corpora exsaniata demittimus, nisi aquam argentea epitonias fuderunt. [7] Et adhuc plebeias fistulas loquor: quid cum ad balnea libertinorum

pervenero? Quantum statuarum, quantum columnarum est nihil sustinentium sed in ornamentum positarum impensae causa! quantum aquarum per gradus cum fragore labentium! Eo deliciarum pervenimus ut nisi gemmas calcare nolumus.

[8] In hoc balneo Scipionis minimae sunt rimae magis quam fenestrae muro lapideo exsectae, ut sine iniuria munimenti lumen admitterent; at nunc blattaria vocant balnea, si qua non ita aptata sunt ut totius diei solem fenestris amplissimis recipiant, nisi et lavantur simul et colorantur, nisi ex solio agros ac maria prospiciunt. Itaque quae concursum et admirationem habuerant cum dedicarentur, ea in antiquorum numerum reiciuntur cum aliquid novi luxuria commenta est quo ipsa se obrueret. [9] At olim et pauca erant balnea nec ullo cultu exornata: cur enim exornaretur res quadrantaria et in usum, non in oblectamentum reperta? Non suffundebatur aqua nec recens semper velut ex calido fonte currebat, nec referre credebant in quam perlucida sordes deponerent. [10] Sed, di boni, quam iuvat illa balinea intrare obscura et gregali tectorio inducta, quae scires Catonem tibi aedilem aut Fabium Maximum aut ex Corneliis aliquem manu sua temperasse! Nam hoc quoque nobilissimi aediles fungebantur officio intrandi ea loca quae populum receptabant exigendique munditias et utilem ac salubrem temperaturam, non hanc quae nuper inventa est similis incendio, adeo quidem ut convictum in aliquo scelere servum vivum lavari oporteat. Nihil mihi videtur iam interesse, ardeat balineum an caleat. [11] Quantae nunc aliqui rusticitatis damnant Scipionem quod non in caldarium suum latis specularibus diem admiserat, quod non in multa luce decoquebatur et expectabat ut in balneo concoqueret! O hominem calamitosum! nesciit vivere. Non saccata aqua lavabatur sed saepe turbida et, cum plueret vehementius, paene lutulenta. Nec multum eius intererat an sic lavaretur; veniebat enim ut sudorem illic ablueret, non ut unguentum. [12] Quas nunc quorundam voces futuras credis? ‘Non invidео Scipioni: vere in exilio vixit qui sic lavabatur.’ Immo, si scias, non cotidie lavabatur; nam, ut aiunt qui priscos mores urbis tradiderunt, brachia et crura cotidie abluebant, quae scilicet sordes opere collegerant, ceterum toti nundinis lavabantur. Hoc loco dicet aliquis: ‘liquet mihi inmundissimos fuisse’. Quid putas illos oluisse? militiam, laborem, virum. Postquam munda balnea inventa sunt,

spurciores sunt. [13] Descripturus infamem et nimiis notabilem deliciis Horatius Flaccus quid ait?

Pastillos Buccillum olet.

Dares nunc Buccillum: proinde esset ac si hircum oleret, Gargonii loco esset, quem idem Horatius Buccillo opposuit. Parum est sumere unguentum nisi bis die terque renovatur, ne evanescat in corpore. Quid quod hoc odore tamquam suo gloriantur?

[14] Haec si tibi nimium tristia videbuntur, villae inputabis, in qua didici ab Aegialo, diligentissimo patre familiae (is enim nunc huius agri possessor est) quamvis vetus arbustum posse transferri. Hoc nobis senibus discere necessarium est, quorum nemo non olivetum alteri ponit, ~quod vidi illud arborum trimum et quadrimum fastidiendi fructus aut deponere.~ [15] Te quoque proteget illa quae

tarda venit seris factura nepotibus umbram,

ut ait Vergilius noster, qui non quid verissime sed quid decentissime diceretur aspexit, nec agricolas docere voluit sed legentes delectare. [16] Nam, ut alia omnia transeam, hoc quod mihi hodie necesse fuit deprehendere, adscribam:

vere fabis satio est; tunc te quoque, Medica, putres accipiunt sulci, et milio venit annua cura.

An uno tempore ista ponenda sint et an utriusque verna sit satio, hinc aestimes licet: Iunius mensis est quo tibi scribo, iam proclivis in Iulium: eodem die vidi fabam metentes, milium serentes.

[17] Ad olivetum revertar, quod vidi duobus modis positum: magnarum arborum truncos circumcisis ramis et ad unum redactis pedem cum rapo suo transtulit, amputatis radicibus, relicto tantum capite ipso ex quo illae pependerant. Hoc fimo tinctum in scrobem demisit, deinde terram non adgressit tantum, sed calcavit et pressit. [18] Negat quicquam esse hac, ut ait, pisatione efficacius. Videlicet frigus excludit et ventum; minus praeterea movetur et ob hoc nascentes radices prodire patitur ac solum adprendere, quas necesse est cereas adhuc et precario haerentes levis quoque revellat agitatio. Rapum autem arboris antequam obruat radit; ex omni enim materia quae nudata est, ut ait, radices exeunt novae. Non plures autem super terram eminere debet truncus quam tres aut quattuor pedes; statim

enim ab imo vestietur nec magna pars eius quemadmodum in olivetis veteribus arida et retorrída erit. [19] Alter ponendi modus hic fuit: ramos fortes nec corticis duri, quales esse novellarum arborum solent, eodem genere deposuit. Hi paulo tardius surgunt, sed cum tamquam a planta processerint, nihil habent in se abhorridum aut triste. [20] Illud etiam nunc vidi, vitem ex arbusto suo annosam transferri; huius capillamenta quoque, si fieri potest, colligenda sunt, deinde liberalius sternenda vitis, ut etiam ex corpore radicescat. Et vidi non tantum mense Februario positas sed etiam Martio exacto; tenent et complexae sunt non suas ulmos. [21] Omnes autem istas arbores quae, ut ita dicam, grandiscapiae sunt, ait aqua adiuvandas cisternina; quae si prodest, habemus pluviam in nostra potestate.

Plura te docere non cogito, ne quemadmodum Aegialus me sibi adversarium paravit, sic ego parem te mihi. Vale.

LXXXVII. SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

[1] Naufragium antequam navem ascenderem feci: quomodo acciderit non adicio, ne et hoc putes inter Stoica paradoxa ponendum, quorum nullum esse falsum nec tam mirabile quam prima facie videtur, cum volueris, adprobabo, immo etiam si nolueris.

Interim hoc me iter docuit quam multa haberemus supervacua et quam facile iudicio possemus deponere quae, si quando necessitas abstulit, non sentimus ablata. [2] Cum paucissimis servis, quos unum capere vehiculum potuit, sine ullis rebus nisi quae corpore nostro continebantur, ego et Maximus meus biduum iam beatissimum agimus. Culcita in terra iacet, ego in culcita; ex duabus paenulis altera stragulum, altera opertorium facta est. [3] De prandio nihil detrahi potuit; paratum fuit ~non magis hora~, nusquam sine caricis, numquam sine pugillaribus; illae, si panem habeo, pro pulmentario sunt, si non habeo, pro pane. Cotidie mihi annum novum faciunt, quem ego faustum et felicem reddo bonis cogitationibus et animi magnitudine, qui numquam maior est quam ubi aliena seposuit et fecit sibi pacem nihil timendo, fecit sibi divitias nihil concupiscendo.

[4] Vehiculum in quod inpositus sum rusticum est; mulae vivere se ambulando testantur; mulio excalceatus, non propter aetatem. Vix a me obtineo ut hoc vehiculum velim videri meum: durat adhuc perversa recti verecundia, et quotiens in aliquem comitatum lautiolem incidimus invitus erubesco, quod argumentum est ista quae probo, quae laudo, nondum habere certam sedem et immobilem. Qui sordido vehiculo erubescit pretioso gloriabitur. [5] Parum adhuc profeci: nondum audeo frugalitatem palam ferre; etiamnunc curo opiniones viatorum.

Contra totius generis humani opiniones mittenda vox erat: ‘insanitis, erratis, stupetis ad supervacua, neminem aestimatis suo. Cum ad patrimonium ventum est, diligentissimi computatores sic rationem ponitis singulorum quibus aut pecuniam credituri estis aut beneficia (nam haec quoque iam expensa fertis): [6] late possidet, sed multum debet; habet domum formosam, sed alienis nummis paratam; familiam nemo cito speciosiore producet, sed nominibus non respondet; si creditoribus solverit, nihil illi supererit. Idem in reliquis

quoque facere debebitis et excutere quantum proprii quisque habeat.’
[7] Divitem illum putas quia aurea supellex etiam in via sequitur, quia in omnibus provinciis arat, quia magnus kalendari liber volvitur, quia tantum suburbani agri possidet quantum invidiose in desertis Apuliae possideret: cum omnia dixeris, pauper est. Quare? quia debet. ‘Quantum?’ inquis. Omnia; nisi forte iudicas interesse utrum aliquis ab homine an a fortuna mutuum sumpserit. [8] Quid ad rem pertinent mulae saginatae unius omnes coloris? quid ista vehicula caelata?

Instratos ostro alipedes pictisque tapetis:
aurea pectoribus demissa monilia pendent,
tecti auro fulvum mandunt sub dentibus aurum.

Ista nec dominum meliorem possunt facere nec mulam. [9] M. Cato Censorius, quem tam e re publica fuit nasci quam Scipionem (alter enim cum hostibus nostris bellum, alter cum moribus gessit), cantherio vehebatur et hippoperis quidem inpositis, ut secum utilia portaret. O quam cuperem illi nunc occurrere aliquem ex his trossulis, in via divitibus, cursores et Numidas et multum ante se pulveris agentem! Hic sine dubio cultior comitatioque quam M. Cato videretur, hic qui inter illos apparatus delicatos cum maxime dubitat utrum se ad gladium locet an ad cultrum. [10] O quantum erat saeculi decus, imperatorem, triumphalem, censorium, quod super omnia haec est, Catonem, uno caballo esse contentum et ne toto quidem; partem enim sarcinae ab utroque latere dependentes occupabant. Ita non omnibus obesis mannis et asturconibus et tolutariis praeferres unicum illum equum ab ipso Catone defricum?

[11] Video non futurum finem in ista materia ullum nisi quem ipse mihi fecero. Hic itaque conticiscam, quantum ad ista quae sine dubio talia divinavit futura qualia nunc sunt qui primus appellavit ‘impedimenta’. Nunc volo paucissimas adhuc interrogationes nostrorum tibi reddere ad virtutem pertinentes, quam satisfacere vitae beatae contendimus.

[12] ‘Quod bonum est bonos facit (nam et in arte musica quod bonum est facit musicum); fortuita bonum non faciunt; ergo non sunt bona.’

Adversus hoc sic respondent Peripatetici ut quod primum

proponimus falsum esse dicant. ‘Ab eo’ inquiunt ‘quod est bonum non utique fiunt boni. In musica est aliquid bonum tamquam tibia aut chorda aut organum aliquod aptatum ad usus canendi; nihil tamen horum facit musicum.’ [13] His respondebimus, ‘non intellegitis quomodo posuerimus quod bonum est in musica. Non enim id dicimus quod instruit musicum, sed quod facit: tu ad supellectilem artis, non ad artem venis. Si quid autem in ipsa arte musica bonum est, id utique musicum faciet.’ [14] Etiamnunc facere istuc planius volo. Bonum in arte musica duobus modis dicitur, alterum quo effectus musici adiuvatur, alterum quo ars: ad effectum pertinent instrumenta, tibiae et organa et chordae, ad artem ipsam non pertinent. Est enim artifex etiam sine istis: uti forsitan non potest arte. Hoc non est aeque duplex in homine; idem enim est bonum et hominis et vitae.

[15] ‘Quod contemptissimo cuique contingere ac turpissimo potest bonum non est; opes autem et lenoni et lanistae contingunt; ergo non sunt bona.’

‘Falsum est’ inquiunt ‘quod proponitis; nam et in grammaticae et in arte medendi aut gubernandi videmus bona humillimis quibusque contingere.’ [16] Sed istae artes non sunt magnitudinem animi professae, non consurgunt in altum nec fortuita fastidiunt: virtus extollit hominem et super cara mortalibus conlocat; nec ea quae bona nec ea quae mala vocantur aut cupit nimis aut expavescit. Chelidon, unus ex Cleopatrae mollibus, atrimonium grande possedit. Nuper Natalis, tam improbae linguae quam impurae, in cuius ore feminae purgabantur, et multorum heres fuit et multos habuit heredes. Quid ergo? utrum illum pecunia impurum effecit an ipse pecuniam inspurgavit? quae sic in quosdam homines quomodo denarius in cloacam cadit. [17] Virtus super ista consistit; suo aere censetur; nihil ex istis quolibet incurrentibus bonum iudicat. Medicina et gubernatio non interdicat sibi ac suis admiratione talium rerum; qui non est vir bonus potest nihilominus medicus esse, potest gubernator, potest grammaticus tam mehercules quam cocus. Cui contingit habere rem non quamlibet, hunc non quemlibet dixeris; qualia quisque habet, talis est. [18] Fiscus tanti est quantum habet; immo in accessionem eius venit quod habet. Quis pleno sacculo ullum pretium ponit nisi quod pecuniae in eo conditae numerus effecit? Idem evenit

magnorum dominis patrimoniorum: accessiones illorum et appendices sunt. Quare ergo sapiens magnus est? quia magnum animum habet. Verum est ergo quod contemptissimo cuique contingit bonum non esse. [19] Itaque indolentiam numquam bonum dicam:habet illam cicada, habet pulex. Ne quietem quidem et molestia vacare bonum dicam: quid est otiosius verme? Quaeris quae res sapientem faciat? quae deum. Des oportet illi divinum aliquid, caeleste, magnificum: non in omnes bonum cadit nec quemlibet possessorem patitur. [20] Vide

et quid quaeque ferat regio et quid quaeque recuset:
hic segetes, illic veniunt felicius uvae,
arborei fetus alibi atque iniussa virescunt
gramina. Nonne vides, croceos ut Tmolus odores,
India mittit ebur, molles sua tura Sabaei,
at Chalybes nudi ferrum?

[21] Ista in regiones discripta sunt, ut necessarium mortalibus esset inter ipsos commercium, si invicem alius aliquid ab alio peteret. Summum illud bonum habet et ipsum suam sedem; non nascitur ubi ebur, nec ubi ferrum. Quis sit summi boni locus quaeris? animus. Hic nisi purus ac sanctus est, deum non capit.

[22] ‘Bonum ex malo non fit; divitiae [autem fiunt] fiunt autem ex avaritia; divitiae ergo non sunt bonum.’ ‘Non est’ inquit ‘verum, bonum ex malo non nasci; ex sacrilegio enim et furto pecunia nascitur. Itaque malum quidem est sacrilegium et furtum, sed ideo quia plura mala facit quam bona; dat enim lucrum, sed cum metu, sollicitudine, tormentis et animi et corporis.’ [23] Quisquis hoc dicit, necesse est recipiat sacrilegium, sicut malum sit quia multa mala facit, ita bonum quoque ex aliqua parte esse, quia aliquid boni facit: quo quid fieri portentuosius potest? Quamquam sacrilegium, furtum, adulterium inter bona haberi prorsus persuasimus. Quam multi furto non erubescunt, quam multi adulterio gloriantur! nam sacrilegia minuta puniuntur, magna in triumphis feruntur. [24] Adice nunc quod sacrilegium, si omnino ex aliqua parte bonum est, etiam honestum erit et recte factum vocabitur, ~nostra enim actio est~ quod nullius mortalium cogitatio recipit. Ergo bona nasci ex malo non possunt.

Nam si, ut dicitis, ob hoc unum sacrilegium malum est, quia multum mali adfert, si remiseris illi supplicia, si securitatem spoonderis, ex toto bonum erit. Atqui maximum scelerum supplicium in ipsis est. [25] Erras, inquam, si illa ad carnificem aut carcerem differs: statim puniuntur cum facta sunt, immo dum fiunt. Non nascitur itaque ex malo bonum, non magis quam ficus ex olea: ad semen nata respondent, bona degenerare non possunt. Quemadmodum ex turpi honestum non nascitur, ita ne ex malo quidem bonum; nam idem est honestum et bonum.

[26] Quidam ex nostris adversus hoc sic respondent: ‘putemus pecuniam bonum esse undecumque sumptam; non tamen ideo ex sacrilegio pecunia est, etiam si ex sacrilegio sumitur. Hoc sic intellege. In eadem urna et aurum est et vipera: si aurum ex urna sustuleris, non ideo sustuleris quia illic et vipera est; non ideo, inquam, mihi urna aurum dat quia viperam habet, sed aurum dat, cum et viperam habeat. Eodem modo ex sacrilegio lucrum fit, non quia turpe et sceleratum est sacrilegium, sed quia et lucrum habet. Quemadmodum in illa urna vipera malum est, non aurum quod cum vipera iacet, sic in sacrilegio malum est scelus, non lucrum.’ [27] A quibus <dissentio>; dissimillima enim utriusque condicio est. Illic aurum possum sine vipera tollere, hic lucrum sine sacrilegio facere non possum; lucrum istud non est adpositum sceleri sed inmixtum.

[28] ‘Quod dum consequi volumus in multa mala incidimus, id bonum non est; dum divitias autem consequi volumus, in multa mala incidimus; ergo divitiae bonum non sunt.’

‘Duas’ inquit ‘significationes habet propositio vestra: unam, dum divitias consequi volumus, in multa nos mala incidere. In multa autem mala incidimus et dum virtutem consequi volumus: aliquis dum navigat studii causa, naufragium fecit, aliquis captus est. [29] Altera significatio talis est: per quod in mala incidimus bonum non est. Huic propositioni non erit consequens per divitias nos aut per voluptates in mala incidere; aut si per divitias in multa mala incidimus, non tantum bonum non sunt divitiae sed malum sunt; vos autem illas dicitis tantum bonum non esse. Praeterea’ inquit ‘conceditis divitias habere aliquid usus: inter commoda illas numeratis. Atqui eadem ratione <ne> commodum quidem erunt; per illas enim multa nobis incommoda eveniunt.’ [30] His quidam hoc

respondent: ‘erratis, qui incommoda divitis inputatis. Illae neminem laedunt: aut sua nocet cuique stultitia aut aliena nequitia, sic quemadmodum gladius neminem occidit: occidentis telum est. Non ideo divitiae tibi nocent si propter divitias tibi nocetur.’ [31] Posidonius, ut ego existimo, melius, qui ait divitias esse causam malorum, non quia ipsae faciunt aliquid, sed quia facturos iniritant. Alia est enim causa efficiens, quae protinus necessest noceat, alia praecedens. Hanc praecedentem causam divitiae habent: inflant animos, superbiam pariunt, invidiam contrahunt, et usque eo mentem alienant ut fama pecuniae nos etiam nocitura delectet. [32] Bona autem omnia carere culpa decet; pura sunt, non corrumpunt animos, non sollicitant; extollunt quidem et dilatant, sed sine tumore. Quae bona sunt fiduciam faciunt, divitiae audaciam; quae bona sunt magnitudinem animi dant, divitiae insolentiam. Nihil autem aliud est insolentia quam species magnitudinis falsa. [33] ‘Isto modo’ inquit ‘etiam malum sunt divitiae, non tantum bonum non sunt.’ Essent malum si ipsae nocerent, si, ut dixi, haberent efficientem causam: nunc praecedentem habent et quidem non iniritantem tantum animos sed adtrahentem; speciem enim boni offundunt veri similem ac plerisque credibilem. [34] Habet virtus quoque praecedentem causam ad invidiam; multis enim propter sapientiam, multis propter iustitiam invidetur. Sed nec ex se hanc causam habet nec veri similem; contra enim veri similior illa species hominum animis obicitur a virtute, quae illos in amorem et admirationem vocet.

[35] Posidonius sic interrogandum ait: ‘quae neque magnitudinem animo dant nec fiduciam nec securitatem non sunt bona; divitiae autem et bona valetudo et similia his nihil horum faciunt; ergo non sunt bona’. Hanc interrogationem magis etiamnunc hoc modo intendit: ‘quae neque magnitudinem animo dant nec fiduciam nec securitatem, contra autem insolentiam, tumorem, arrogantiam creant, mala sunt; a fortuitis autem in haec inpellimur; ergo non sunt bona’.

[36] ‘Hac’ inquit ‘ratione ne commoda quidem ista erunt.’ Alia est commodorum condicio, alia bonorum: commodum est quod plus usus habet quam molestiae; bonum sincerum esse debet et ab omni parte innoxium. Non est id bonum quod plus prodest, sed quod tantum prodest. [37] Praeterea commodum et ad animalia pertinet et ad imperfectos homines et ad stultos. Itaque potest ei esse incommodum

mixtum, sed commodum dicitur a maiore sui parte aestimatum: bonum ad unum sapientem pertinet; inviolatum esse oportet.

[38] Bonum animum habe: unus tibi nodus, sed Herculeus restat: 'ex malis bonum non fit; ex multis paupertatibus divitiae fiunt; ergo divitiae bonum non sunt'.

Hanc interrogationem nostri non agnoscunt, Peripatetici et fingunt illam et solvunt. Ait autem Posidonius hoc sophisma, per omnes dialecticorum scholas iactatum, sic ab Antipatro refelli: [39] 'paupertas non per possessionem dicitur, sed per detractorem' (vel, ut antiqui dixerunt, orbationem; Graeci kata steressin dicunt); 'non quod habeat dicit, sed quod non habeat. Itaque ex multis inanibus nihil impleri potest: divitias multae res faciunt, non multae inopiae. Aliter' inquit 'quam debes paupertatem intellegis. Paupertas enim est non quae pauca possidet, sed quae multa non possidet; ita non ab eo dicitur quod habet, sed ab eo quod ei deest.'

[40] Facilius quod volo exprimerem, si Latinum verbum esset quo anuparxia significaretur. Hanc paupertati Antipater adsignat: ego non video quid aliud sit paupertas quam parvi possessio. De isto videbimus, si quando valde vacabit, quae sit divitiarum, quae paupertatis substantia; sed tunc quoque considerabimus numquid satius sit paupertatem permulcere, divitiis demere supercilium quam litigare de verbis, quasi iam de rebus iudicatum sit. [41] Putemus nos ad contionem vocatos: lex de abolendis divitis fertur. His interrogationibus suasuri aut dissuasuri sumus? his effecturi ut populus Romanus paupertatem, fundamentum et causam imperii sui, requirat ac laudet, divitias autem suas timeat, ut cogitet has se apud victos repperisse, hinc ambitum et largitiones et tumultus in urbem sanctissimam temperatissimam inrupisse, nimis luxuriose ostentari gentium spolia, quod unus populus eripuerit omnibus facilius ab omnibus uni eripi posse? Haec satius est suadere, et expugnare adfectus, non circumscribere. Si possumus, fortius loquamur; si minus, apertius. Vale.

LXXXVIII. SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

[1] De liberalibus studiis quid sentiam scire desideras: nullum suspicio, nullum in bonis numero quod ad aes exit. Meritoria artificia sunt, hactenus utilia si praeparant ingenium, non detinent. Tamdiu enim istis inmorandum est quamdiu nihil animus agere maius potest; rudimenta sunt nostra, non opera. [2] Quare liberalia studia dicta sint vides: quia homine libero digna sunt. Ceterum unum studium vere liberale est quod liberum facit, hoc est sapientiae, sublime, forte, magnanimum: cetera pusilla et puerilia sunt. An tu quicquam in istis esse credis boni quorum professores turpissimos omnium ac flagitiosissimos cernis? Non discere debemus ista, sed didicisse.

Quidam illud de liberalibus studiis quaerendum iudicaverunt, an virum bonum facerent: ne promittunt quidem nec huius rei scientiam adfectant. [3] Grammatice circa curam sermonis versatur et, si latius evagari vult, circa historias, iam ut longissime fines suos proferat, circa carmina. Quid horum ad virtutem viam sternit? Syllabarum enarratio et verborum diligentia et fabularum memoria et versuum lex ac modificatio — quid ex his metum demit, cupiditatem eximit, libidinem frenat? [4] Ad geometriam transeamus et ad musicen: nihil apud illas invenies quod vetet timere, vetet cupere. Quae quisquis ignorat, alia frustra scit.

* * * utrum doceant isti virtutem an non: si non docent, ne tradunt quidem; si docent, philosophi sunt. Vis scire quam non ad docendam virtutem consederint? aspice quam dissimilia inter se omnium studia sint: atqui similitudo esset idem docentium. [5] Nisi forte tibi Homerum philosophum fuisse persuadent, cum his ipsis quibus colligunt negent; nam modo Stoicum illum faciunt, virtutem solam probantem et voluptates refugientem et ab honesto ne immortalitatis quidem pretio recedentem, modo Epicureum, laudantem statum quietae civitatis et inter convivia cantusque vitam exigentis, modo Peripateticum, tria bonorum genera inducentem, modo Academicum, omnia incerta dicentem. Apparet nihil horum esse in illo, quia omnia sunt; ista enim inter se dissident. Demus illis Homerum philosophum fuisse: nempe sapiens factus est antequam carmina ulla cognosceret; ergo illa discamus quae Homerum fecere sapientem. [6] Hoc quidem

me quaerere, uter maioraetate fuerit, Homerus an Hesiodus, non magis ad rem pertinet quam scire, cum minor Hecuba fuerit quam Helena, quare tam male tulerit aetatem. Quid, inquam, annos Patrocli et Achillis inquirere ad rem existimas pertinere? [7] Quaeris Ulixes ubi erraverit potius quam efficias ne nos semper erremus? Non vacat audire utrum inter Italiam et Siciliam iactatus sit an extra notum nobis orbem (neque enim potuit in tam angusto error esse tam longus): tempestates nos animi cotidie iactant et nequitia in omnia Ulixis mala inpellit. Non deest forma quae sollicitet oculos, non hostis; hinc monstra effera et humano cruore gaudentia, hinc insidiosa blandimenta aurium, hinc naufragia et tot varietates malorum. Hoc me doce, quomodo patriam amem, quomodo uxorem, quomodo patrem, quomodo ad haec tam honesta vel naufragus navigem. [8] Quid inquiris an Penelopa inpudica fuerit, an verba saeculo suo dederit? an Ulixem illum esse quem videbat, antequam sciret, suspicata sit? Doce me quid sit pudicitia et quantum in ea bonum, in corpore an in animo posita sit.

[9] Ad musicum transeo. Doces me quomodo inter se acutae ac graves consonent, quomodo nervorum disparem reddentium sonum fiat concordia: fac potius quomodo animus secum meus consonet nec consilia mea discrepent. Monstras mihi qui sint modi flebiles: monstra potius quomodo inter adversa non emittam flebilem vocem.

[10] Metiri me geometres docet latifundia potius quam doceat quomodo metiar quantum homini satis sit; numerare docet me et avaritiae commodat digitos potius quam doceat nihil ad rem pertinere istas computationes, non esse feliciorum cuius patrimonium tabularios lassat, immo quam supervacua possideat qui infelicissimus futurus est si quantum habeat per se computare cogetur. [11] Quid mihi prodest scire agellum in partes dividere, si nescio cum fratre dividere? Quid prodest colligere subtiliter pedes iugeri et comprehendere etiam si quid decempedam effugit, si tristem me facit vicinus inpotens et aliquid ex meo abradens? Docet quomodo nihil perdam ex finibus meis: at ego discere volo quomodo totos hilaris amittam. 'Paterno agro et avito' inquit 'expellor.' [12] Quid? ante avum tuum quis istum agrum tenuit? cuius, non dico hominis, sed populi fuerit potes expedire? Non dominus isto, sed colonus intrasti. Cuius colonus es? si bene tecum agitur, heredis. Negant iurisconsulti quicquam usu capi publicum:

hoc quod tenes, quod tuum dicis, publicum est et quidem generis humani. [13] O egregiam artem! scis rotunda metiri, in quadratum redigis quamcumque acceperis formam, intervalla siderum dicis, nihil est quod in mensuram tuam non cadat: si artifex es, metire hominis animum, dic quam magnus sit, dic quam pusillus sit. Scis quae recta sit linea: quid tibi prodest, si quid in vita rectum sit ignoras?

[14] Venio nunc ad illum qui caelestium notitia gloriatur:

frigida Saturni sese quo stella receptet,
quos ignis caeli Cyllenius erret in orbes.

Hoc scire quid proderit? ut sollicitus sim cum Saturnus et Mars ex contrario stabunt aut cum Mercurius vespertinum faciet occasum vidente Saturno, potius quam hoc discam, ubicumque sunt ista, propitia esse nec posse mutari? [15] Agit illa continuus ordo factorum et inevitabilis cursus; per statas vices remeant et effectus rerum omnium aut movent aut notant. Sed sive quidquid evenit faciunt, quid inmutabilis rei notitia proficiet? sive significant, quid refert providere quod effugere non possis? Scias ista, nescias: fient.

[16] Si vero solem ad rapidum stellasque sequentes ordine respicies, numquam te crastina fallit hora, nec insidiis noctis capiere serенаe.

Satis abundeque provisum est ut ab insidiis tutus essem. [17] ‘Numquid me crastina non fallit hora? fallit enim quod nescienti evenit.’ Ego quid futurum sit nescio: quid fieri possit scio. Ex hoc nihil deprecabor, totum expecto: si quid remittitur, boni consulo. Fallit me hora si parcit, sed ne sic quidem fallit. Nam quemadmodum scio omnia accidere posse, sic scio et non utique casura; itaque secunda expecto, malis paratus sum.

[18] In illo feras me necesse est non per praescriptum euntem; non enim adducor ut in numerum liberalium artium pictores recipiam, non magis quam statuarios aut marmorarios aut ceteros luxuriae ministros. Aequae luctatores et totam oleo ac luto constantem scientiam expello ex his studiis liberalibus; aut et unguentarios

recipiam et cocos et ceteros voluptatibus nostris ingenia accommodantes sua. [19] Quid enim, oro te, liberale habent isti ieiuni vomitores, quorum corpora in sagina, animi in macie et veterno sunt? An liberale studium istuc esse iuventuti nostrae credimus, quam maiores nostri rectam exercuerunt hastilia iacere, sudem torquere, equum agitare, arma tractare? Nihil liberos suos docebant quod discendum esset iacentibus. Sed nec hae nec illae docent aluntve virtutem; quid enim prodest equum regere et cursum eius freno temperare, adfectibus effrenatissimis abstrahi? quid prodest multos vincere luctatione vel caestu, ab iracundia vinci?

[20] ‘Quid ergo? nihil nobis liberalia conferunt studia?’ Ad alia multum, ad virtutem nihil; nam et hae viles ex professo artes quae manu constant ad instrumenta vitae plurimum conferunt, tamen ad virtutem non pertinent. ‘Quare ergo liberalibus studiis filios erudimus?’ Non quia virtutem dare possunt, sed quia animum ad accipiendam virtutem praeparant. Quemadmodum prima illa, ut antiqui vocabant, litteratura, per quam pueris elementa traduntur, non docet liberales artes sed mox percipiendis locum parat, sic liberales artes non perducunt animum ad virtutem sed expediunt.

[21] Quattuor ait esse artium Posidonius genera: sunt vulgares et sordidae, sunt ludicrae, sunt pueriles, sunt liberales. Vulgares opificum, quae manu constant et ad instruendam vitam occupatae sunt, in quibus nulla decoris, nulla honesti simulatio est. [22] Ludicrae sunt quae ad voluptatem oculorum atque aurium tendunt; his adnumeres licet machinatores qui pegmata per se surgentia excogitant et tabulata tacite in sublime crescentia et alias ex inopinato varietates, aut dehiscuntibus quae cohaerebant aut his quae distabant sua sponte coeuntibus aut his quae eminebant paulatim in se residentibus. His inperitorum feriuntur oculi, omnia subita quia causas non novere mirantium. [23] Pueriles sunt et aliquid habentes liberalibus simile hae artes quas egkuklious Graeci, nostri autem liberales vocant. Solae autem liberales sunt, immo, ut dicam verius, liberae, quibus curae virtus est.

[24] ‘Quemadmodum’ inquit ‘est aliqua pars philosophiae naturalis, est aliqua moralis, est aliqua rationalis, sic et haec quoque liberalium artium turba locum sibi in philosophia vindicat. Cum ventum est ad naturales quaestiones, geometriae testimonio statur;

ergo eius quam adiuvat pars est.' [25] Multa adiuvant nos nec ideo partes nostri sunt; immo si partes essent, non adiuvarent. Cibus adiutorium corporis nec tamen pars est. Aliquod nobis praestat geometria ministerium: sic philosophiae necessaria est quomodo ipsi faber, sed nec hic geometriae pars est nec illa philosophiae. [26] Praeterea utraque fines suos habet; sapiens enim causas naturalium et quaerit et novit, quorum numeros mensurasque geometres persequitur et supputat. Qua ratione constant caelestia, quae illis sit vis quaeve natura sapiens scit: cursus et recursus et quasdam obversationes per quas descendunt et adlevantur ac speciem interdum stantium praebent, cum caelestibus stare non liceat, colligit mathematicus. [27] Quae causa in speculo imagines exprimat sciet sapiens: illud tibi geometres potest dicere, quantum abesse debeat corpus ab imagine et qualis forma speculi quales imagines reddat. Magnum esse solem philosophus probabit, quantus sit mathematicus, qui usu quodam et exercitatione procedit. Sed ut procedat, inpetranda illi quaedam principia sunt; non est autem ars sui iuris cui precarium fundamentum est. [28] Philosophia nil ab alio petit, totum opus a solo excitat: mathematice, ut ita dicam, superficialia est, in alieno aedificat; accipit prima, quorum beneficio ad ulteriora perveniat. Si per se iret ad verum, si totius mundi naturam posset comprehendere, dicerem multum conlaturam mentibus nostris, quae tractatu caelestium crescunt trahuntque aliquid ex alto.

Una re consummatur animus, scientia bonorum ac malorum inmutabili; nihil autem ulla ars alia de bonis ac malis quaerit. Singulas lubet circumire virtutes. [29] Fortitudo contemptrix timendorum est; terribilia et sub iugum libertatem nostram mittentia despicit, provocat, frangit: numquid ergo hanc liberalia studia corroborant? Fides sanctissimum humani pectoris bonum est, nulla necessitate ad fallendum cogitur, nullo corrumpitur praemio: 'ure', inquit 'caede, occide: non prodam, sed quo magis secreta quaeret dolor, hoc illa altius condam'. Numquid liberalia studia hos animos facere possunt? Temperantia voluptatibus imperat, alias odit atque abigit, alias dispensat et ad sanum modum redigit nec umquam ad illas propter ipsas venit; scit optimum esse modum cupitorum non quantum velis, sed quantum debeas sumere. [30] Humanitas vetat superbum esse adversus socios, vetat amarum; verbis, rebus,

adfectibus comem se facilemque omnibus praestat; nullum alienum malum putat, bonum autem suum ideo maxime quod alicui bono futurum est amat. Numquid liberalia studia hos mores praecipiant? non magis quam simplicitatem, quam modestiam ac moderationem, non magis quam frugalitatem ac parsimoniam, non magis quam clementiam, quae alieno sanguini tamquam suo parcat et scit homini non esse homine prodige utendum.

[31] ‘Cum dicatis’ inquit ‘sine liberalibus studiis ad virtutem non perveniri, quemadmodum negatis illa nihil conferre virtuti?’ Quia nec sine cibo ad virtutem pervenitur, cibis tamen ad virtutem non pertinet; ligna navi nihil conferunt, quamvis non fiat navis nisi ex lignis: non est, inquam, cur aliquid putes eius adiutorio fieri sine quo non potest fieri. [32] Potest quidem etiam illud dici, sine liberalibus studiis venire ad sapientiam posse; quamvis enim virtus discenda sit, tamen non per haec discitur. Quid est autem quare existimem non futurum sapientem eum qui litteras nescit, cum sapientia non sit in litteris? Res tradit, non verba, et nescio an certior memoria sit quae nullum extra se subsidium habet. [33] Magna et spatiosa res est sapientia; vacuo illi loco opus est; de divinis humanisque discendum est, de praeteritis de futuris, de caducis de aeternis, de tempore. De quo uno vide quam multa quaerantur: primum an per se sit aliquid; deinde an aliquid ante tempus sit sine tempore; cum mundo coeperit an etiam ante mundum quia fuerit aliquid, fuerit et tempus. [34] Innumerabiles quaestiones sunt de animo tantum: unde sit, qualis sit, quando esse incipiat, quamdiu sit, aliunde alio transeat et domicilia mutet in alias animalium formas aliasque coniectus, an non amplius quam semel serviat et emissus vagetur in toto; utrum corpus sit an non sit; quid sit facturus cum per nos aliquid facere desierit, quomodo libertate sua usus cum ex hac effugerit cavea; an obliviscatur priorum et illinc nosse se incipiat unde corpori abductus in sublime secessit. [35] Quaecumque partem rerum humanarum divinarumque conprenderis, ingenti copia quaerendorum ac discendorum fatigaberis. Haec tam multa, tam magna ut habere possint liberum hospitium, supervacua ex animo tollenda sunt. Non dabit se in has angustias virtus; laxum spatium res magna desiderat. Expellantur omnia, totum pectus illi vacet.

[36] ‘At enim delectat artium notitia multarum.’ Tantum itaque ex

illis retineamus quantum necessarium est. An tu existimas reprehendum qui supervacua usibus comparat et pretiosarum rerum pompam in domo explicat, non putas eum qui occupatus est in supervacua litterarum supellectile? Plus scire velle quam sit satis intemperantiae genus est. [37] Quid quod ista liberalium artium consecratio molestos, verbosos, intempestivos, sibi placentes facit et ideo non discentes necessaria quia supervacua didicerunt? Quattuor milia librorum Didymus grammaticus scripsit: misererer si tam multa supervacua legisset. In his libris de patria Homeri quaeritur, in his de Aeneae matre vera, in his libidinosior Anacreon an ebriosior vixerit, in his an Sappho publica fuerit, et alia quae erant dediscenda si scires. I nunc et longam esse vitam nega!

[38] Sed ad nostros quoque cum perveneris, ostendam multa securibus recidenda. Magno impendio temporum, magna alienarum aurium molestia laudatio haec constat: ‘o hominem litteratum!’ Simus hoc titulo rusticiore contenti: ‘o virum bonum!’ [39] Itane est? annales evolvam omnium gentium et quis primus carmina scripserit quaeram? quantum temporis inter Orphea intersit et Homerum, cum fastos non habeam, computabo? et Aristarchi notas quibus aliena carmina conpunctis recognoscant, et aetatem in syllabis conteram? Itane in geometriae pulvere haerebo? adeo mihi praeceptum illud salutare excidit: ‘tempori parce’? Haec sciam? et quid ignorem? [40] Apion grammaticus, qui sub C. Caesare tota circumlocutus est Graecia et in nomen Homeri ab omnibus civitatibus adoptatus, aiebat Homerum utraque materia consummata, et Odyssia et Iliade, principium adiecissem operi suo quo bellum Troianum complexus est. Huius rei argumentum adferebat quod duas litteras in primo versu posuisset ex industria librorum suorum numerum continentes. [41] Talia sciat oportet qui multa vult scire. Non vis cogitare quantum temporis tibi auferat mala valetudo, quantum occupatio publica, quantum occupatio privata, quantum occupatio cotidiana, quantum somnus? Metire aetatem tuam: tam multa non capit. [42] De liberalibus studiis loquor: philosophi quantum habent supervacui, quantum ab usu recedentis! Ipsi quoque ad syllabarum distinctiones et coniunctionum ac praepositionum proprietates descenderunt et invidere grammaticis, invidere geometris; quidquid in illorum artibus supervacuum erat transtulere in suam. Sic effectum est ut diligentius loqui scirent quam

vivere. [43] Audi quantum mali faciat nimia subtilitas et quam infesta veritati sit. Protagoras ait de omni re in utramque partem disputari posse ex aequo et de hac ipsa, an omnis res in utramque partem disputabilis sit. Nausiphanes ait ex his quae videntur esse nihil magis esse quam non esse. [44] Parmenides ait ex his quae videntur nihil esse ~universo~. Zenon Eleates omnia negotia de negotio deiecit: ait nihil esse. Circa eadem fere Pyrrhonei versantur et Megarici et Eretrici et Academici, qui novam induxerunt scientiam, nihil scire. [45] Haec omnia in illum supervacuum studiorum liberalium gregem coice; illi mihi non profuturam scientiam tradunt, hi spem omnis scientiae eripiunt. Satius est supervacua scire quam nihil. Illi non praeferunt lumen per quod acies derigatur ad verum, hi oculos mihi effodiunt. Si Protagorae credo, nihil in rerum natura est nisi dubium; si Nausiphani, hoc unum certum est, nihil esse certi; si Parmenidi, nihil est praeter unum; si Zenoni, ne unum quidem. [46] Quid ergo nos sumus? quid ista quae nos circumstant, alunt, sustinent? Tota rerum natura umbra est aut inanis aut fallax. Non facile dixerim utris magis irascar, illis qui nos nihil scire voluerunt, an illis qui ne hoc quidem nobis reliquerunt, nihil scire. Vale.

Libri XIV-XV

**LIBER QUARTUS DECIMUS ET QUINTUS
DECIMUS**

LXXXIX. SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

[1] Rem utilem desideras et ad sapientiam properanti necessariam, dividi philosophiam et ingens corpus eius in membra disponi; facilius enim per partes in cognitionem totius adducimur. Utinam quidem quemadmodum universa mundi facies in conspectum venit, ita philosophia tota nobis posset occurrere, simillimum mundo spectaculum! Profecto enim omnes mortales in admirationem sui raperet, relictis iis quae nunc magna magnorum ignorantia credimus. Sed quia contingere hoc non potest, est sic nobis aspicienda quemadmodum mundi secreta cernuntur. [2] Sapientis quidem animus totam molem eius amplectitur nec minus illam velociter obit quam caelum acies nostra; nobis autem, quibus perrumpenda caligo est et quorum visus in proximo deficit, singula quaeque ostendi facilius possunt, universi nondum capacibus. Faciam ergo quod exigis et philosophiam in partes, non in frusta dividam. Dividi enim illam, non concidi, utile est; nam comprehendere quemadmodum maxima ita minima difficile est. [3] Describitur in tribus populus, in centurias exercitus; quidquid in maius crevit facilius agnoscitur si discessit in partes, quas, ut dixi, innumerabiles esse et parvulas non oportet. Idem enim vitii habet nimia quod nulla divisio: simile confuso est quidquid usque in pulverem sectum est.

[4] Primum itaque, si [ut] videtur tibi, dicam inter sapientiam et philosophiam quid intersit. Sapientia perfectum bonum est mentis humanae; philosophia sapientiae amor est et adfectatio: haec eo tendit quo illa pervenit. Philosophia unde dicta sit apparet; ipso enim nomine fatetur quid amet. [5] Sapientiam quidam ita finierunt ut dicerent divinorum et humanorum scientiam; quidam ita: sapientia est nosse divina et humana et horum causas. Supervacua mihi haec videtur adiectio, quia causae divinorum humanorumque pars divinorum sunt. Philosophiam quoque fuerunt qui aliter atque aliter finirent: alii studium illam virtutis esse dixerunt, alii studium corrigendae mentis; a quibusdam dicta est adpetitio rectae rationis. [6] Illud quasi constitit, aliquid inter philosophiam et sapientiam interesse; neque enim fieri potest ut idem sit quod adfectatur et quod adfectat. Quomodo multum inter avaritiam et pecuniam interest, cum

illa cupiat, haec concupiscatur, sic inter philosophiam et sapientiam. Haec enim illius effectus ac praemium est; illa venit, ad hanc itur. [7] Sapientia est quam Graeci sophian vocant. Hoc verbo Romani quoque utebantur, sicut philosophia nunc quoque utuntur; quod et togatae tibi antiquae probabunt et inscriptus Dossenni monumento titulus:

hospes resiste et sophian Dossenni lege.

[8] Quidam ex nostris, quamvis philosophia studium virtutis esset et haec peteretur, illa peteret, tamen non putaverunt illas distrahi posse; nam nec philosophia sine virtute est nec sine philosophia virtus. Philosophia studium virtutis est, sed per ipsam virtutem; nec virtus autem esse sine studio sui potest nec virtutis studium sine ipsa. Non enim quemadmodum in iis qui aliquid ex distante loco ferire conantur alibi est qui petit, alibi quod petitur; nec quemadmodum itinera quae ad urbes perducunt <extra urbes sunt, sic viae ad virtutem> extra ipsam: ad virtutem venit per ipsam, cohaerent inter se philosophia virtusque.

[9] Philosophiae tres partes esse dixerunt et maximi et plurimi auctores: moralem, naturalem, rationalem. Prima componit animum; secunda rerum naturam scrutatur; tertia proprietates verborum exigit et structuram et argumentationes, ne pro vero falsa subrepan. Ceterum inventi sunt et qui in pauciora philosophiam et qui in plura diducerent. [10] Quidam ex Peripateticis quartam partem adiecerunt civilem, quia propriam quandam exercitationem desideret et circa aliam materiam occupata sit; quidam adiecerunt his partem quam oikonomiken vocant, administrandae familiaris rei scientiam; quidam et de generibus vitae locum separaverunt. Nihil autem horum non in illa parte morali reperietur. [11] Epicurei duas partes philosophiae putaverunt esse, naturalem atque moralem: rationalem removerunt. Deinde cum ipsis rebus cogerentur ambigua discernere, falsa sub specie veri latentia coarguere, ipsi quoque locum quem ‘de iudicio et regula’ appellant — alio nomine rationalem — induxerunt, sed eum accessionem esse naturalis partis existimant. [12] Cyrenaici naturalia cum rationalibus sustulerunt et contenti fuerunt moralibus, sed hi quoque quae remouent aliter inducunt; in quinque enim partes moralia dividunt, ut una sit de fugiendis et petendis, altera de adfectibus, tertia de actionibus, quarta de causis, quinta de

argumentis. Causae rerum ex naturali parte sunt, argumenta ex rationali. [13] Ariston Chius non tantum supervacuas esse dixit naturalem et rationalem sed etiam contrarias; moralem quoque, quam solam reliquerat, circumcidit. Nam eum locum qui monitiones continet sustulit et paedagogi esse dixit, non philosophi, tamquam quidquam aliud sit sapiens quam generis humani paedagogus.

[14] Ergo cum tripartita sit philosophia, moralem eius partem primum incipiamus disponere. Quam in tria rursus dividi placuit, ut prima esset inspectio suum cuique distribuens et aestimans quanto quidque dignum sit, maxime utilis — quid enim est tam necessarium quam pretia rebus inponere? — secunda de impetu, de actionibus tertia. Primum enim est ut quanti quidque sit iudices, secundum ut impetum ad illa capias ordinatum temperatumque, tertium ut inter impetum tuum actionemque conveniat, ut in omnibus istis tibi ipse consentias. [15] Quidquid ex tribus defuit turbat et cetera. Quid enim prodest inter <se> aestimata habere omnia, si sis in impetu nimius? quid prodest impetus repressisse et habere cupiditates in sua potestate, si in ipsa rerum actione tempora ignores nec scias quando quidque et ubi et quemadmodum agi debeat? Aliud est enim dignitates et pretia rerum nosse, aliud articulos, aliud impetus refrenare et ad agenda ire, non ruere. Tunc ergo vita concors sibi est ubi actio non destituit impetum, impetus ex dignitate rei cuiusque concipitur, proinde remissus <aut> acrior prout illa digna est peti.

[16] Naturalis pars philosophiae in duo scinditur, corporalia et incorporalia; utraque dividuntur in suos, ut ita dicam, gradus. Corporum locus in hos primum, in ea quae faciunt et quae ex his gignuntur — gignuntur autem elementa. Ipse <de> elementis locus, ut quidam putant, simplex est, ut quidam, in materiam et causam omnia moventem et elementa dividitur.

[17] Superest ut rationalem partem philosophiae dividam. Omnis oratio aut continua est aut inter respondentem et interrogantem discissa; hanc dialektiken, illam rhetoriken placuit vocari. Rhetorike verba curat et sensus et ordinem; dialektike in duas partes dividitur, in verba et significationes, id est in res quae dicuntur et vocabula quibus dicuntur. Ingens deinde sequitur utriusque divisio. Itaque hoc loco finem faciam et

summa sequar fastigia rerum;

alioqui, si voluero facere partium partes, quaestionum liber fiet.

[18] Haec, Lucili virorum optime, quominus legas non deterreo, dummodo quidquid legeris ad mores statim referas. Illos conpesce, marcentia in te excita, soluta constringe, contumacia doma, cupiditates tuas publicasque quantum potes vexa; et istis dicentibus ‘quousque eadem?’ responde:

[19] ‘Ego debebam dicere “quousque eadem peccabitis?” Remedia ante vultis quam vitia desinere? Ego vero eo magis dicam, et quia recusatis perseverabo; tunc incipit medicina proficere ubi in corpore alienato dolorem tactus expressit. Dicam etiam invitis profutura. Aliquando aliqua ad vos non blanda vox veniat, et quia verum singuli audire non vultis, publice audite.

[20] ‘Quousque fines possessionum propagabitis? Ager uni domino qui populum cepit angustus est? Quousque arationes vestras porrigetis, ne provinciarum quidem spatio contenti circumscribere praediorum modum? Inlustrum fluminum per privatum decursus est et amnes magni magnarumque gentium termini usque ad ostium a fonte vestri sunt. Hoc quoque parum est nisi latifundiis vestris maria cinxistis, nisi trans Hadriam et Ionium Aegaeumque vester vilicus regnat, nisi insulae, ducum domicilia magnorum, inter vilissima rerum numerantur. Quam vultis late possidete, sit fundus quod aliquando imperium vocabatur, facite vestrum quidquid potestis, dum plus sit alieni.

[21] ‘Nunc vobiscum loquor quorum aequae spatiosae luxuria quam illorum avaritia diffunditur. Vobis dico: quousque nullus erit lacus cui non villarum vestrarum fastigia immineant? nullum flumen cuius non ripas aedificia vestra praetexant? Ubicumque scatebunt aquarum calentium venae, ibi nova deversoria luxuriae excitabuntur. Ubicumque in aliquem sinum litus curvabitur, vos protinus fundamenta iacietis, nec contenti solo nisi quod manu feceritis, mare agetis introrsus. Omnibus licet locis tecta vestra resplendeant, aliubi inposita montibus in vastum terrarum marisque prospectum, aliubi ex plano in altitudinem montium educta, cum multa aedificaveritis, cum ingentia, tamen et singula corpora estis et parvola. Quid prosunt multa cubicula? in uno iacietis. Non est vestrum ubicumque non estis.

[22] ‘Ad vos deinde transeo quorum profunda et insatiabilis gula hinc maria scrutatur, hinc terras, alia hamis, alia laqueis, alia retium

variis generibus cum magno labore persequitur: nullis animalibus nisi ex fastidio pax est. Quantum [est] ex istis epulis [quae] per tot comparatis manus fesso voluptatibus ore libatis? quantum ex ista fera periculose capta dominus crudus ac nauseans gustat? quantum ex tot conchyliis tam longe advectis per istum stomachum inexplebilem labitur? Infelices, ecquid intellegitis maiorem vos famem habere quam ventrem?

[23] Haec aliis dic, ut dum dicis audias ipse, scribe, ut dum scribis legas, omnia ad mores et ad sedandam rabiem adfectuum referens. Stude, non ut plus aliquid scias, sed ut melius. Vale.

XC. SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

[1] Quis dubitare, mi Lucili, potest quin deorum immortalium munus sit quod vivimus, philosophiae quod bene vivimus? Itaque tanto plus huic nos debere quam dis quanto maius beneficium est bona vita quam vita pro certo haberetur, nisi ipsam philosophiam di tribuissent; cuius scientiam nulli dederunt, facultatem omnibus. [2] Nam si hanc quoque bonum vulgare fecissent et prudentes nasceremur, sapientia quod in se optimum habet perdidisset, inter fortuita non esse. Nunc enim hoc in illa pretiosum atque magnificum est, quod non obvenit, quod illam sibi quisque debet, quod non ab alio petitur. Quid haberes quod in philosophia suspiceres si beneficiaria res esset? [3] Huius opus unum est de divinis humanisque verum invenire; ab hac numquam recedit religio, pietas, iustitia et omnis alius comitatus virtutum consertarum et inter se cohaerentium. Haec docuit colere divina, humana diligere, et penes deos imperium esse, inter homines consortium. Quod aliquamdiu inviolatum mansit, antequam societatem avaritia distraxit et paupertatis causa etiam iis quos fecit locupletissimos fuit; desierunt enim omnia possidere, dum volunt propria. [4] Sed primi mortalium quique ex his geniti naturam incorrupti sequebantur eundem habebant et ducem et legem, commissi melioris arbitrio; natura est enim potioribus deteriora summittere. Mutis quidem gregibus aut maxima corpora praesunt aut vehementissima: non praecedunt armenta degener taurus, sed qui magnitudine ac toris ceteros mares vicit; elephantorum gregem excelsissimus ducit: inter homines pro maximo est optimum. Animo itaque rector eligebatur, ideoque summa felicitas erat gentium in quibus non poterat potentior esse nisi melior; tuto enim quantum vult potest qui se nisi quod debet non putat posse.

[5] Illo ergo saeculo quod aureum perhibent penes sapientes fuisse regnum Posidonius iudicat. Hi continebant manus et infirmiore a validioribus tuebantur, suadebant dissuadebantque et utilia atque inutilia monstrabant; horum prudentia ne quid deesset suis providebat, fortitudo pericula arcebat, beneficentia augebat ornabatque subiectos. Officium erat imperare, non regnum. Nemo quantum posset adversus eos experiebatur per quos coeperat posse,

nec erat cuiquam aut animus in iniuriam aut causa, cum bene imperanti bene pareretur, nihilque rex maius minari male parentibus posset quam ut abiret e regno. [6] Sed postquam subrepentibus vitiis in tyrannidem regna conversa sunt, opus esse legibus coepit, quas et ipsas inter initia tulere sapientes. Solon, qui Athenas aequo iure fundavit, inter septem fuit sapientia notos; Lycurgum si eadem aetas tulisset, sacro illi numero accessisset octavus. Zaleuci leges Charondaeque laudantur; hi non in foro nec in consultorum atrio, sed in Pythagorae tacito illo sanctoque secessu didicerunt iura quae florenti tunc Siciliae et per Italiam Graeciae ponerent.

[7] Hactenus Posidonio adsentior: artes quidem a philosophia inventas quibus in cotidiano vita utitur non concesserim, nec illi fabricae adseram gloriam. ‘Illa’ inquit ‘sparsos et aut casis tectos aut aliqua rupe suffossa aut exesae arboris trunco docuit tecta moliri.’ Ego vero philosophiam iudico non magis excogitasse has machinationes tectorum supra tecta surgentium et urbium urbes prementium quam vivaria piscium in hoc clausa ut tempestatum periculum non adiret gula et quamvis acerrime pelago saeviente haberet luxuria portus suos in quibus distinctos piscium greges saginaret. [8] Quid ais? philosophia homines docuit habere clavem et seram? Quid aliud erat avaritiae signum dare? Philosophia haec cum tanto habitantium periculo imminetia tecta suspendit? Parum enim erat fortuitis tegi et sine arte et sine difficultate naturale invenire sibi aliquod receptaculum. [9] Mihi crede, felix illud saeculum ante architectos fuit, ante tectores. Ista nata sunt iam nascente luxuria, in quadratum tigna decidere et serra per designata corrente certa manu trabem scindere;

nam primi cuneis scindebant fissile lignum.

Non enim tecta cenationi epulum recepturae parabantur, nec in hunc usum pinus aut abies deferebatur longo vehiculorum ordine vicis intrementibus, ut ex illa lacunaria auro gravia penderent. [10] Furcae utrimque suspensae fulciebant casam; spissatis ramalibus ac fronde congesta et in proclive disposita decursus imbribus quamvis magnis erat. Sub his tectis habitare [sed] securi: culmus liberos textit, sub marmore atque auro servitus habitat.

[11] In illo quoque dissentio a Posidonio, quod ferramenta fabrilia excogitata a sapientibus viris iudicat; isto enim modo dicat licet

sapientes fuisse per quos

tunc laqueis captare feras et fallere visco
inventum et magnos canibus circumdare saltus.

Omnia enim ista sagacitas hominum, non sapientia invenit. [12] In hoc quoque dissentio, sapientes fuisse qui ferri metalla et aeris invenerint, cum incendio silvarum adusta tellus in summo venas iacentis liquefacta fudisset: ista tales inveniunt quales colunt. [13] Ne illa quidem tam subtilis mihi quaestio videtur quam Posidonio, utrum malleus in usu esse prius an forcipes coeperint. Utraque invenit aliquis excitati ingenii, acuti, non magni nec elati, et quidquid aliud corpore incurvato et animo humum spectante quaerendum est. Sapiens facilis victu fuit. Quidni? cum hoc quoque saeculo esse quam expeditissimus cupiat. [14] Quomodo, oro te, convenit ut et Diogenem mireris et Daedalum? Uter ex his sapiens tibi videtur? qui serram commentus est, an ille qui, cum vidisset puerum cava manu bibentem aquam, fregit protinus exemptum e perula calicem <cum> hac obiurgatione sui: ‘quamdiu homo stultus supervacuas sarcinas habui!’, qui se complicuit in dolio et in eo cubitavit? [15] Hodie utrum tandem sapientiozem putas qui invenit quemadmodum in immensam altitudinem crocum latentibus fistulis exprimat, qui euripos subito aquarum impetu implet aut siccatur et versatilia cenationum laquearia ita coagmentat ut subinde alia facies atque alia succedat et totiens tecta quotiens fericula mutantur, an eum qui et aliis et sibi hoc monstrat, quam nihil nobis natura durum ac difficile imperaverit, posse nos habitare sine marmorario ac fabro, posse nos vestitos esse sine commercio sericorum, posse nos habere usibus nostris necessaria si contenti fuerimus iis quae terra posuit in summo? Quem si audire humanum genus voluerit, tam supervacuum sciet sibi cocum esse quam militem.

[16] Illi sapientes fuerunt aut certe sapientibus similes quibus expedita erat tutela corporis. Simplici cura constant necessaria: in delicias laboratur. Non desiderabis artifices: sequere naturam. Illa noluit esse districtos; ad quaecumque nos cogebat instruxit. ‘Frigus intolerabilest corpori nudo.’ Quid ergo? non pelles ferarum et aliorum animalium a frigore satis abunde defendere queunt? non

corticibus arborum pleraeque gentes tegunt corpora? non avium plumae in usum vestis conseruntur? non hodieque magna Scytharum pars tergis vulpium induitur ac murum, quae tactu mollia et impenetrabilia ventis sunt? Quid ergo? non quilibet virgeam cratem texuerunt manu et vili obliverunt luto, deinde [de] stipula aliisque silvestribus operuere fastigium et pluviis per devexa labentibus hiemem transiere securi? [17] ‘Opus est tamen calorem solis aestivi umbra crassiore propellere.’ Quid ergo? non vetustas multa abdidit loca quae vel iniuria temporis vel alio quolibet casu excavata in specum recesserunt? Quid ergo? non in defosso latent Syrticae gentes quibusque propter nimios solis ardores nullum tegimentum satis repellendis caloribus solidum est nisi ipsa arens humus? [18] Non fuit tam iniqua natura ut, cum omnibus aliis animalibus facilem actum vitae daret, homo solus non posset sine tot artibus vivere; nihil durum ab illa nobis imperatum est, nihil aegre quaerendum, ut possit vita produci. Ad parata nati sumus: nos omnia nobis difficilia facilius fastidio fecimus. Tecta tegimentaue et fomenta corporum et cibi et quae nunc ingens negotium facta sunt obvia erant et gratuita et opera levi parabilia; modus enim omnium prout necessitas erat: nos ista pretiosa, nos mira, nos magnis multisque conquirenda artibus fecimus. [19] Sufficit ad id natura quod poscit. A natura luxuria descivit, quae cotidie se ipsa incitat et tot saeculis crescit et ingenio adiuvat vitia. Primo supervacua coepit concupiscere, inde contraria, novissime animum corpori addixit et illius deservire libidini iussit. Omnes istae artes quibus aut circitatur civitas aut strepit corpori negotium gerunt, cui omnia olim tamquam servo praestabantur, nunc tamquam domino parantur. Itaque hinc textorum, hinc fabrorum officinae sunt, hinc odores coquentium, hinc molles corporis motus docentium mollesque cantus et infractos. Recessit enim ille naturalis modus desideria ope necessaria finiens; iam rusticitatis et miseriae est velle quantum sat est.

[20] Incredibilest, mi Lucili, quam facile etiam magnos viros dulcedo orationis abducat a vero. Ecce Posidonius, ut mea fert opinio, ex iis qui plurimum philosophiae contulerunt, dum vult describere primum quemadmodum alia torqueantur fila, alia ex molli solutoque ducantur, deinde quemadmodum tela suspensis ponderibus rectum stamen extendat, quemadmodum subtemen insertum, quod

duritiam utrimque conprimentis tramae remolliat, spatha coire cogatur et iungi, textrini quoque artem a sapientibus dixit inventam, oblitus postea repertum hoc subtilius genus in quo

tela iugo vincta est, stamen secernit harundo,
inseritur medium radiis subtemen acutis,
quod lato paviunt insecti pectine dentes.

Quid si contigisset illi videre has nostri temporis telas, in quibus vestis nihil celatura conficitur, in qua non dico nullum corpori auxilium, sed nullum pudori est? [21] Transit deinde ad agricolas nec minus facunde describit proscissum aratro solum et iteratum quo solutior terra facilius pateat radicibus, tunc sparsa semina et collectas manu herbas ne quid fortuitum et agreste succrescat quod necet segetem. Hoc quoque opus ait esse sapientium, tamquam non nunc quoque plurima cultores agrorum nova inveniant per quae fertilitas augeatur. [22] Deinde non est contentus his artibus, sed in pistrinum sapientem summittit; narrat enim quemadmodum rerum naturam imitatus panem coeperit facere. ‘Receptas’ inquit ‘in os fruges concurrens inter se duritia dentium frangit, et quidquid excidit ad eosdem dentes lingua refertur; tunc umore miscetur ut facilius per fauces lubricas transeat; cum pervenit in ventrem, aequali eius fervore concoquitur; tunc demum corpori accedit. [23] Hoc aliquis secutus exemplar lapidem asperum aspero inposuit ad similitudinem dentium, quorum pars immobilis motum alterius expectat; deinde utriusque adritu grana franguntur et saepius regeruntur donec ad minutiam frequenter trita redigantur; tum farinam aqua sparsit et adsidua tractatione perdomuit finxitque panem, quem primo cinis calidus et fervens testa percoxit, deinde furni paulatim reperti et alia genera quorum fervor serviret arbitrio.’ Non multum afuit quin sutrinum quoque inventum a sapientibus diceret.

[24] Omnia ista ratio quidem, sed non recta ratio commenta est. Hominis enim, non sapientis inventa sunt, tam mehercules quam navigia quibus amnes quibusque maria transimus, aptatis ad excipiendum ventorum impetum velis et additis a tergo gubernaculis quae huc atque illuc cursum navigii torqueant. Exemplum a piscibus tractum est, qui cauda reguntur et levi eius in utrumque momento

velocitatem suam flectunt. [25] ‘Omnia’ inquit ‘haec sapiens quidem invenit, sed minora quam ut ipse tractaret sordidioribus ministris dedit.’ Immo non aliis excogitata ista sunt quam quibus hodieque curantur. Quaedam nostra demum prodisse memoria scimus, ut speculariorum usum perluciente testa clarum transmittentium lumen, ut suspensuras balneorum et impressos parietibus tubos per quos circumfunderetur calor qui ima simul ac summa foveret aequaliter. Quid loquar marmora quibus templa, quibus domus fulgent? quid lapideas moles in rotundum ac leve formatas quibus porticus et capacia populorum tecta suscipimus? quid verborum notas quibus quamvis citata excipitur oratio et celeritatem linguae manus sequitur? Vilissimorum mancipiorum ista commenta sunt: [26] sapientia altius sedet nec manus edocet: animorum magistra est. Vis scire quid illa eruerit, quid effecerit? Non decoros corporis motus nec varios per tubam ac tibiam cantus, quibus exceptus spiritus aut in exitu aut in transitu formatur in vocem. Non arma nec muros nec bello utilia molitur: paci favet et genus humanum ad concordiam vocat. [27] Non est, inquam, instrumentorum ad usus necessarios opifex. Quid illi tam parvola adsignas? artificem vides vitae. Alias quidem artes sub dominio habet; nam cui vita, illi vitae quoque ornantia serviunt: ceterum ad beatum statum tendit, illo ducit, illo vias aperit. [28] Quae sint mala, quae videantur ostendit; vanitatem exuit mentibus, dat magnitudinem solidam, inflatam vero et ex inani speciosam reprimit, nec ignorari sinit inter magna quid intersit et tumida; totius naturae notitiam ac sui tradit. Quid sint di qualesque declarat, quid inferi, quid lares et genii, quid in secundam numinum formam animae perpetitae, ubi consistent, quid agant, quid possint, quid velint. Haec eius initamenta sunt, per quae non municipale sacrum sed ingens deorum omnium templum, mundus ipse, reseratur, cuius vera simulacra verasque facies cernendas mentibus protulit; nam ad spectacula tam magna hebes visus est. [29] Ad initia deinde rerum redit aeternamque rationem toti inditam et vim omnium seminum singula proprie figurantem. Tum de animo coepit inquirere, unde esset, ubi, quamdiu, in quot membra divisus. Deinde a corporibus se ad incorporalia transtulit veritatemque et argumenta eius excussit; post haec quemadmodum discernerentur vitae aut vocis ambigua; in utraque enim falsa veris inmixta sunt.

[30] Non abduxit, inquam, se (ut Posidonio videtur) ab istis artibus sapiens, sed ad illas omnino non venit. Nihil enim dignum inventu iudicasset quod non erat dignum perpetuo usu iudicaturus; ponenda non sumeret. [31] ‘Anacharsis’ inquit ‘invenit rotam figuli, cuius circuitu vasa formantur.’ Deinde quia apud Homerum invenitur figuli rota, maluit videri versus falsos esse quam fabulam. Ego nec Anacharsim auctorem huius rei fuisse contendo et, si fuit, sapiens quidem hoc invenit, sed non tamquam sapiens, sicut multi sapientes faciunt qua homines sunt, non qua sapientes. Puta velocissimum esse sapientem: cursu omnis anteibit qua velox est, non qua sapiens. Cuperem Posidonio aliquem vitrearium ostendere, qui spiritu vitrum in habitus plurimos format qui vix diligenti manu effingerentur. Haec inventa sunt postquam sapientem invenire desimus. [32] ‘Democritus’ inquit ‘invenisse dicitur fornicem, ut lapidum curvatura paulatim inclinorum medio saxo alligaretur.’ Hoc dicam falsum esse; necesse est enim ante Democritum et pontes et portas fuisse, quarum fere summa curvantur. [33] Excidit porro vobis eundem Democritum invenisse quemadmodum ebur molliretur, quemadmodum decoctus calculus in zmaragdum converteretur, qua hodieque coctura inventi lapides <in> hoc utiles colorantur. Ista sapiens licet invenerit, non qua sapiens erat invenit; multi enim faciunt quae ab imprudentissimis aut aequae fieri videmus aut peritius atque exercitatus.

[34] Quid sapiens investigaverit, quid in lucem protraxerit quaeris? Primum verum naturamque, quam non ut cetera animalia oculis secutus est, tardis ad divina; deinde vitae legem, quam universa derexit, nec nosse tantum sed sequi deos docuit et accidentia non aliter excipere quam imperata. Vetuit parere opinionibus falsis et quanti quidque esset vera aestimatione perpendit; damnavit mixtas paenitentia voluptates et bona semper placitura laudavit et palam fecit felicissimum esse cui felicitate non opus est, potentissimum esse qui se habet in potestate. [35] Non de ea philosophia loquor quae civem extra patriam posuit, extra mundum deos, quae virtutem donavit voluptati, sed <de> illa quae nullum bonum putat nisi quod honestum est, quae nec hominis nec fortunae muneribus deleniri potest, cuius hoc pretium est, non posse pretio capi.

Hanc philosophiam fuisse illo rudi saeculo quo adhuc artificia deerant et ipso usu discebantur utilia non credo. [36] ~Sicut aut~

fortunata tempora, cum in medio iacerent beneficia naturae promiscue utenda, antequam avaritia atque luxuria dissociavere mortales et ad rapinam ex consortio <docuere> discurrere: non erant illi sapientes viri, etiam si faciebant facienda sapientibus. [37] Statum quidem generis humani non alium quisquam suspexerit magis, nec si cui permittat deus terrena formare et dare gentibus mores, aliud probaverit quam quod apud illos fuisse memoratur apud quos

nulli subigebant arva coloni;
ne signare quidem aut partiri limite campum
fas erat: in medium quaerebant, ipsaque tellus
omnia liberius nullo poscente ferebat.

[38] Quid hominum illo genere felicius? In commune rerum natura fruebantur; sufficebat illa ut parens in tutelam omnium; haec erat publicarum opum segura possessio. Quidni ego illud locupletissimum mortalium genus dixerim in quo pauperem invenire non posses? Inrupit in res optime positas avaritia et, dum seducere aliquid cupit atque in suum vertere, omnia fecit aliena et in angustum se ex inmenso redegit. Avaritia paupertatem intulit et multa concupiscendo omnia amisit. [39] Licet itaque nunc conetur reparare quod perdidit, licet agros agris adiciat vicinum vel pretio pellens vel iniuria, licet in provinciarum spatium rura dilatet et possessionem vocet per sua longam peregrinationem: nulla nos finium propagatio eo reducet unde discessimus. Cum omnia fecerimus, multum habebimus: universum habebamus. [40] Terra ipsa fertilior erat inlaborata et in usus populorum non diripientium larga. Quidquid natura protulerat, id non minus invenisse quam inventum monstrare alteri voluptas erat; nec ulli aut superesse poterat aut deesse: inter concordēs dividebatur. Nondum valentior inposuerat infirmiori manum, nondum avarus abscondendo quod sibi iaceret alium necessariis quoque excluserat: par erat alterius ac sui cura. [41] Arma cessabant incruentaeque humano sanguine manus odium omne in feras verterant. Illi quos aliquod nemus densum a sole protexerat, qui adversus saevitiam hiemis aut imbris vili receptaculo tuti sub fronde vivebant, placidas transigebant sine suspirio noctes. Sollicitudo nos in nostra purpura versat et acerrimis excitat stimulis: at quam mollem

somnum illis dura tellus dabat! [42] Non inpendebant caelata laquearia, sed in aperto iacentis sidera superlabebantur et, insigne spectaculum noctium, mundus in praeceps agebatur, silentio tantum opus ducens. Tam interdiu illis quam nocte patebant prospectus huius pulcherrimae domus; libebat intueri signa ex media caeli parte vergentia, rursus ex occulto alia surgentia. [43] Quidni iuvaret vagari inter tam late sparsa miracula? At vos ad omnem tectorum pavetis sonum et inter picturas vestras, si quid increpuit, fugitis attoniti. Non habebant domos instar urbium: spiritus ac liber inter aperta perflatus et levis umbra rupis aut arboris et perlucidi fontes rivique non opere nec fistula nec ullo coacto itinere obsolefacti sed sponte currentes et prata sine arte formosa, inter haec agreste domicilium rustica politum manu — haec erat secundum naturam domus, in qua libebat habitare nec ipsam nec pro ipsa timentem: nunc magna pars nostri metus tecta sunt.

[44] Sed quamvis egregia illis vita fuerit et carens fraude, non fuere sapientes, quando hoc iam in opere maximo nomen est. Non tamen negaverim fuisse alti spiritus viros et, ut ita dicam, a dis recentes; neque enim dubium est quin meliora mundus nondum effectus ediderit. Quemadmodum autem omnibus indoles fortior fuit et ad labores paratior, ita non erant ingenia omnibus consummata. Non enim dat natura virtutem: ars est bonum fieri. [45] Illi quidem non aurum nec argentum nec perlucidos <lapis in> ima terrarum faece quaerebant parcebantque adhuc etiam mutis animalibus: tantum aberat ut homo hominem non iratus, non timens, tantum spectaturus occideret. Nondum vestis illis erat picta, nondum texebatur aurum, adhuc nec eruebatur. [46] Quid ergo <est>? Ignorantia rerum innocentes erant; multum autem interest utrum peccare aliquis nolit an nesciat. Deerat illis iustitia, deerat prudentia, deerat temperantia ac fortitudo. Omnibus his virtutibus habebat similia quaedam rudis vita: virtus non contingit animo nisi instituto et edocto et ad summum adsidua exercitatione perducto. Ad hoc quidem, sed sine hoc nascimur, et in optimis quoque, antequam erudias, virtutis materia, non virtus est. Vale.

XCI. SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

[1] Liberalis noster nunc tristis est nuntiatio incendio quo Lugdunensis colonia exusta est; movere hic casus quemlibet posset, nedum hominem patriae suae amantissimum. Quae res effecit ut firmitatem animi sui quaerat, quam videlicet ad ea quae timeri posse putabat exercuit. Hoc vero tam inopinatum malum et paene inauditum non miror si sine metu fuit, cum esset sine exemplo; multas enim civitates incendium vexavit, nullam abstulit. Nam etiam ubi hostili manu in tecta ignis inmissus est, multis locis deficit, et quamvis subinde excitetur, raro tamen sic cuncta depascitur ut nihil ferro relinquat. Terrarum quoque vix umquam tam gravis et perniciosus fuit motus ut tota oppida everteret. Numquam denique tam infestum ulli exarsit incendium ut nihil alteri superesset incendio. [2] Tot pulcherrima opera, quae singula inlustrare urbes singulas possent, una nox stravit, et in tanta pace quantum ne bello quidem timeri potest accidit. Quis hoc credat? ubique armis quiescentibus, cum toto orbe terrarum diffusa securitas sit, Lugudunum, quod ostendebatur in Gallia, quaeritur. Omnibus fortuna quos publice adflixit quod passuri erant timere permisit; nulla res magna non aliquod habuit ruinae suae spatium: in hac una nox interfuit inter urbem maximam et nullam. Denique diutius illam tibi perisse quam perit narro.

[3] Haec omnia Liberalis nostri adfectum inclinant, adversus sua firmum et erectum. Nec sine causa concussus est: inexpectata plus adgravant; novitas adicit calamitatibus pondus, nec quisquam mortalium non magis quod etiam miratus est doluit. [4] Ideo nihil nobis inprovisum esse debet; in omnia praemittendus animus cogitandumque non quidquid solet sed quidquid potest fieri. Quid enim est quod non fortuna, cum voluit, ex florentissimo detrahat? quod non eo magis adgrediatur et quatiat quo speciosius fulget? Quid illi arduum quidve difficile est? [5] Non una via semper, ne trita quidem incurrit: modo nostras in nos manus advocat, modo suis contenta viribus invenit pericula sine auctore. Nullum tempus exceptum est: in ipsis voluptatibus causae doloris oriuntur. Bellum in media pace consurgit et auxilia securitatis in metum transeunt: ex amico <fit> inimicus, hostis ex socio. In subitas tempestates

hibernisque maiores agitur aestiva tranquillitas. Sine hoste patimur hostilia, et cladis causas, si alia deficiunt, nimia sibi felicitas invenit. Invadit temperantissimos morbus, validissimos pthisis, innocentissimos poena, secretissimos tumultus; eligit aliquid novi casus per quod velut oblitis vires suas ingerat. [6] Quidquid longa series multis laboribus, multa deum indulgentia struxit, id unus dies spargit ac dissipat. Longam moram dedit malis properantibus qui diem dixit: hora momentumque temporis evertendis imperis sufficit. Esset aliquod inbecillitatis nostrae solacium rerumque nostrarum si tam tarde perirent cuncta quam fiunt: nunc incrementa lente exeunt, festinatur in damnum. [7] Nihil privatim, nihil publice stabile est; tam hominum quam urbium fatavolvuntur. Inter placidissima terror existit nihilque extra tumultuantibus causis mala unde minime expectabantur erumpunt. Quae domesticis bellis steterant regna, quae externis, inpellente nullo ruunt: quota quaeque felicitatem civitas pertulit! Cogitanda ergo sunt omnia et animus adversus ea quae possunt evenire firmandus. [8] Exilia, tormenta [morbi], bella, naufragia meditare. Potest te patriae, potest patriam tibi casus eripere, potest te in solitudines abigere, potest hoc ipsum in quo turba suffocatur fieri solitudo. Tota ante oculos sortis humanae condicio ponatur, nec quantum frequenter evenit sed quantum plurimum potest evenire praesumamus animo, si nolumus opprimi nec illis inusitatis velut novis obstupefieri; in plenum cogitanda fortuna est. [9] Quotiens Asiae, quotiens Achaiae urbes uno tremore ceciderunt! Quot oppida in Syria, quot in Macedonia devorata sunt! Cypron quotiens vastavit haec clades! Quotiens in se Paphus corruit! Frequenter nobis nuntiati sunt totarum urbium interitus, et nos inter quos ista frequenter nuntiantur, quota pars omnium sumus! Consurgamus itaque adversus fortuita et quidquid inciderit sciamus non esse tam magnum quam rumore iactetur. [10] Civitas arsit opulenta ornamentumque provinciarum quibus et inserta erat et excepta, uni tamen inposita et huic non latissimo monti: omnium istarum civitatum quas nunc magnificas ac nobiles audis vestigia quoque tempus eradet. Non vides quemadmodum in Achaia clarissimarum urbium iam fundamenta consumpta sint nec quicquam extet ex quo appareat illas saltem fuisse? [11] Non tantum manu facta labuntur, nec tantum humana arte atque industria posita vertit dies:

iuga montium diffluunt, totae desedere regiones, operta sunt fluctibus quae procul a conspectu maris stabant; vasta vis ignium colles per quos relucebat erosit et quondam altissimos vertices, solacia navigantium ac speculas, ad humile deduxit. Ipsius naturae opera vexantur et ideo aequo animo ferre debemus urbium excidia. [12] Casurae stant; omnis hic exitus manet, sive <ventorum> interna vis flatusque per clusa violenti pondus sub quo tenentur excusserint, sive torrentium <impetus> in abdito vastior obstantia effregerit, sive flammaram violentia conpaginem soli ruperit, sive vetustas, a qua nihil tutum est, expugnaverit minutatim, sive gravitas caeli egresserit populos et situs deserta corruperit. Enumerare omnes fatorum vias longum est. Hoc unum scio: omnia mortalium opera mortalitate damnata sunt, inter peritura vivimus.

[13] Haec ergo atque eiusmodi solacia admoveo Liberali nostro incredibili quodam patriae suae amore flagranti, quae fortasse consumpta est ut in melius excitaretur. Saepe maiori fortunae locum fecit iniuria: multa ceciderunt ut altius surgerent. Timagenes, felicitati urbis inimicus, aiebat Romae sibi incendia ob hoc unum dolori esse, quod sciret meliora surrectura quam arsissent. [14] In hac quoque urbe veri simile est certaturos omnes ut maiora celsioraque quam amisere restituant. Sint utinam diuturna et melioribus auspiciis in aevum longius condita! Nam huic coloniae ab origine sua centensimus annus est, aetas ne homini quidem extrema. A Planco deducta in hanc frequentiam loci opportunitate convaluit: quot tamen gravissimos casus intra spatium humanae <pertulit> senectutis! [15] Itaque formetur animus ad intellectum patientiamque sortis suae et sciat nihil inausum esse fortunae, adversus imperia illam idem habere iuris quod adversus imperantis, adversus urbes idem posse quod adversus homines. Nihil horum indignandum est: in eum intravimus mundum in quo his legibus vivitur. Placet: pare. Non placet: quacumque vis exi. Indignare si quid in te iniqui proprie constitutum est; sed si haec summos imosque necessitas alligat, in gratiam cum fato revertere, a quo omnia resolvuntur. [16] Non est quod nos tumulis metiaris et his monumentis quae viam disparia praetexunt: aequat omnis cinis. Inpares nascimur, pares morimur. Idem de urbibus quod de urbium incolis dico: tam Ardea capta quam Roma est. Conditor ille iuris humani non natalibus nos nec nominum claritate distinxit,

nisi dum sumus: ubi vero ad finem mortalium ventum est, ‘discede’ inquit ‘ambitio: omnium quae terram premunt siremps lex esto’. Ad omnia patienda pares sumus; nemo altero fragilior est, nemo in crastinum sui certior.

[17] Alexander Macedonum rex discere geometriam coeperat, infelix, sciturus quam pusilla terra esset, ex qua minimum occupaverat. Ita dico: ‘infelix’ ob hoc quod intellegere debebat falsum se gerere cognomen: quis enim esse magnus in pusillo potest? Erant illa quae tradebantur subtilia et diligenti intentione discenda, non quae perciperet vesanus homo et trans oceanum cogitationes suas mittens. ‘Facilia’ inquit ‘me doce’. Cui praeceptor ‘ista’ inquit ‘omnibus eadem sunt, aequae difficilia’. [18] Hoc puta rerum naturam dicere: ‘ista de quibus quereris omnibus eadem sunt; nulli dare faciliora possum, sed quisquis volet sibi ipse illa reddet faciliora’. Quomodo? aequanimitate. Et doleas oportet et sitias et esurias et senescas (si tibi longior contigerit inter homines mora) et aegrotas et perdas aliquid et pereas. [19] Non est tamen quod istis qui te circumstrepunt credas: nihil horum malum est, nihil intolerabile aut durum. Ex consensu istis metus est. Sic mortem times quomodo famam: quid autem stultius homine verba metuente? Eleganter Demetrius noster solet dicere eodem loco sibi esse voces inperitorum quo ventre redditos crepitus. ‘Quid enim’ inquit ‘mea, susum isti an deosum sonent?’ [20] Quanta dementia est vereri ne infameris ab infamibus! Quemadmodum famam extimuisti sine causa, sic et illa quae numquam timeres nisi fama iussisset. Num quid detrimenti faceret vir bonus iniquis rumoribus sparsus? [21] Ne morti quidem hoc apud nos noceat: et haec malam opinionem habet. Nemo eorum qui illam accusat expertus est: interim temeritas est damnare quod nescias. At illud scis, quam multis utilis sit, quam multos liberet tormentis, egestate, querellis, supplicis, taedio. Non sumus in ullius potestate, cum mors in nostra potestate sit. Vale.

XCII. SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

[1] Puto, inter me teque conveniet externa corpori adquiri, corpus in honorem animi coli, in animo esse partes ministras, per quas movemur alimurque, propter ipsum principale nobis datas. In hoc principali est aliquid inrationale, est et rationale; illud huic servit, hoc unum est quod alio non refertur sed omnia ad se refert. Nam illa quoque divina ratio omnibus praeposita est, ipsa sub nullo est; et haec autem nostra eadem est, quae ex illa est.

[2] Si de hoc inter nos convenit, sequitur ut de illo quoque conveniat, in hoc uno positam esse beatam vitam, ut in nobis ratio perfecta sit. Haec enim sola non summittit animum, stat contra fortunam; in quolibet rerum habitu ~servitus~ servat. Id autem unum bonum est quod numquam defringitur. Is est, inquam, beatus quem nulla res minorem facit; tenet summa, et ne ulli quidem nisi sibi innixus; nam qui aliquo auxilio sustinetur potest cadere. Si aliter est, incipient multum in nobis valere non nostra. Quis autem vult constare fortuna aut quis se prudens ob aliena miratur? [3] Quid est beata vita? securitas et perpetua tranquillitas. Hanc dabit animi magnitudo, dabit constantia bene iudicati tenax. Ad haec quomodo pervenitur? si veritas tota perspecta est; si servatus est in rebus agendis ordo, modus, decor, innoxia voluntas ac benigna, intenta rationi nec umquam ab illa recedens, amabilis simul mirabilisque. Denique ut breviter tibi formulam scribam, talis animus esse sapientis viri debet qualis deum deceat. [4] Quid potest desiderare is cui omnia honesta contingunt? Nam si possunt aliquid non honesta conferre ad optimum statum, in his erit beata vita sine quibus non est. Et quid turpius stultiusve quam bonum rationalis animi ex inrationalibus nectere?

[5] Quidam tamen augeri summum bonum iudicant, quia parum plenum sit fortuitis repugnantibus. Antipater quoque inter magnos sectae huius auctores aliquid se tribuere dicit externis, sed exiguum admodum. Vides autem quale sit die non esse contentum nisi aliquis igniculus adluxerit: quod potest in hac claritate solis habere scintilla momentum? [6] Si non es sola honestate contentus, necesse est aut quietem adici velis, quam Graeci aochlesian vocant, aut voluptatem.

Horum alterum utcumque recipi potest; vacat enim animus molestia liber ad inspectum universi, nihilque illum avocat a contemplatione naturae. Alterum illud, voluptas, bonum pecoris est: adicimus rationali inrationale, honesto inhonestum, magno * * * vitam facit titillatio corporis? [7] Quid ergo dubitatis dicere bene esse homini, si palato bene est? Et hunc tu, non dico inter viros numeras, sed inter homines, cuius summum bonum saporibus et coloribus et sonis constat? Excedat ex hoc animalium numero pulcherrimo ac dis secundo; mutis adgregetur animal pabulo laetum. [8] Inrationalis pars animi duas habet partes, alteram animosam, ambitiosam, inpotentem, positam in adfectionibus, alteram humilem, languidam, voluptatibus deditam: illam effrenatam, meliorem tamen, certe fortiolem ac digniorem viro, reliquerunt, hanc necessariam beatae vitae putaverunt, enervem et abiectam. [9] Huic rationem servire iusserunt, et fecerunt animalis generosissimi summum bonum demissum et ignobile, praeterea mixtum portentosumque et ex diversis ac male congruentibus membris. Nam ut ait Vergilius noster in Scylla,

prima hominis facies et pulchro pectore virgo
pube tenus, postrema inmani corpore pistrix
delphinum caudas utero commissa luporum.

Huic tamen Scyllae fera animalia adiuncta sunt, horrenda, velocia: at isti sapientiam ex quibus composuere portentis? [10] Prima pars hominis est ipsa virtus; huic committitur inutilis caro et fluida, receptandis tantum cibis habilis, ut ait Posidonius. Virtus illa divina in lubricum desinit et superioribus eius partibus venerandis atque caelestibus animal iners ac marcidum adtexitur. Illa utcumque altera quies nihil quidem ipsa praestabat animo, sed inpedimenta removebat: voluptas ultro dissolvit et omne robur emollit. Quae invenietur tam discors inter se iunctura corporum? Fortissimae rei inertissima adstruitur, severissimae parum seria, sanctissimae intemperans usque ad incesta.

[11] 'Quid ergo?' inquit 'si virtutem nihil inpeditura sit bona valetudo et quies et dolorum vacatio, non petes illas?' Quidni petam? non quia bona sunt, sed quia secundum naturam sunt, et quia bono a me iudicio sumuntur. Quid erit tunc in illis bonum? hoc unum, bene

eligi. Nam cum vestem qualem decet sumo, cum ambulo ut oportet, cum ceno quemadmodum debeo, non cena aut ambulatio aut vestis bona sunt, sed meum in iis propositum servantis in quaque re rationi convenientem modum. [12] Etiamnunc adiciam: mundaе vestis electio adpetenda est homini; natura enim homo mundum et elegans animal est. Itaque non est bonum per se munda vestis sed mundaе vestis electio, quia non in re bonum est sed in electione quali; actiones nostrae honestae sunt, non ipsa quae aguntur. [13] Quod de veste dixi, idem me dicere de corpore existima. Nam hoc quoque natura ut quandam vestem animo circumdedit; velamentum eius est. Quis autem umquam vestimenta aestimavit arcula? nec bonum nec malum vagina gladium facit. Ergo de corpore quoque idem tibi respondeo: sumpturum quidem me, si detur electio, et sanitatem et vires, bonum autem futurum iudicium de illis meum, non ipsa.

[14] 'Est quidem' inquit 'sapiens beatus; summum tamen illud bonum non consequitur nisi illi et naturalia instrumenta respondeant. Ita miser quidem esse qui virtutem habet non potest, beatissimus autem non est qui naturalibus bonis destituitur, ut valetudine, ut membrorum integritate.' [15] Quod incredibilis videtur, id concedis, aliquem in maximis et continuis doloribus non esse miserum, esse etiam beatum: quod levius est negas, beatissimum esse. Atqui si potest virtus efficere ne miser aliquis sit, facilius efficiet ut beatissimus sit; minus enim intervalli a beato ad beatissimum restat quam a misero ad beatum. An quae res tantum valet ut ereptum calamitatibus inter beatos locet non potest adicere quod superest, ut beatissimum faciat? in summo deficit clivo? [16] Commoda sunt in vita et incommoda, utraque extra nos. Si non est miser vir bonus quamvis omnibus prematur incommodis, quomodo non est beatissimus si aliquibus commodis deficitur? Nam quemadmodum incommodorum onere usque ad miserum non deprimitur, sic commodorum inopia non deducitur a beatissimo, sed tam sine commodis beatissimus est quam non est sub incommodis miser; aut potest illi eripi bonum suum, si potest minui. [17] Paulo ante dicebam igniculum nihil conferre lumini solis; claritate enim eius quidquid sine illo luceret absconditur. 'Sed quaedam' inquit 'soli quoque opstant.' At sol integer est etiam inter opposita, et quamvis aliquid interiacet quod nos prohibeat eius aspectu, in opere est, cursu suo

fertur; quotiens inter nubila eluxit, non est sereno minor, ne tardior quidem, quoniam multum interest utrum aliquid obstet tantum an inpediat. [18] Eodem modo virtuti opposita nihil detrahunt: non est minor, sed minus fulget. Nobis forsitan non aequae apparet ac nitet, sibi eadem est et more solis obscuri in occulto vim suam exercet. Hoc itaque adversus virtutem possunt calamitates et damna et iniuriae quod adversus solem potest nebula.

[19] Invenitur qui dicat sapientem corpore parum prospero usum nec miserum esse nec beatum. Hic quoque fallitur; exaequat enim fortuita virtutibus et tantundem tribuit honestis quantum honestate carentibus. Quid autem foedius, quid indignius quam comparari veneranda contemptis? Veneranda enim sunt iustitia, pietas, fides, fortitudo, prudentia: e contrario vilia sunt quae saepe contingunt pleniora vilissimis, crus solidum et lacertus et dentes et horum sanitas firmitasque. [20] Deinde si sapiens cui corpus molestum est nec miser habebitur nec beatus, sed <in> medio relinquetur, vita quoque eius nec adpetenda erit nec fugienda. Quid autem tam absurdum quam sapientis vitam adpetendam non esse? aut quid tam extra fidem quam esse aliquam vitam nec adpetendam nec fugiendam? Deinde si damna corporis miserum non faciunt, beatum esse patiuntur; nam quibus potentia non est in peiorem transferendi statum, ne interpellandi quidem optimum.

[21] 'Frigidum' inquit 'aliquid et calidum novimus, inter utrumque tepidum est; sic aliquis beatus est, aliquis miser, aliquis nec beatus nec miser.' Volo hanc contra nos positam imaginem excutere. Si tepido illi plus frigidi ingessero, fiet frigidum; si plus calidi adfudero, fiet novissime calidum. At huic nec misero nec beato quantumcumque ad miserias adiecero, miser non erit, quemadmodum dicitis; ergo imago ista dissimilis est. [22] Deinde trado tibi hominem nec miserum nec beatum. Huic adicio caecitatem: non fit miser; adicio debilitatem: non fit miser; adicio dolores continuos et graves: miser non fit. Quem tam multa mala in miseram vitam non transferunt ne ex beata quidem educunt. [23] Si non potest, ut dicitis, sapiens ex beato in miserum decidere, non potest in non beatum. Quare enim qui labi coepit alicubi subsistat? quae res illum non patitur ad imum devolvi retinet in summo. Quidni non possit beata vita rescindi? ne remitti quidem potest, et ideo virtus ad illam

per se ipsa satis est.

[24] ‘Quid ergo?’ inquit ‘sapiens non est beatior qui diutius vixit, quem nullus avocavit dolor, quam ille qui cum mala fortuna semper luctatus est?’ Responde mihi: numquid et melior est et honestior? Si haec non sunt, ne beatior quidem est. Rectius vivat oportet ut beatius vivat: si rectius non potest, ne beatius quidem. Non intenditur virtus, ergo ne beata quidem vita, quae ex virtute est. Virtus enim tantum bonum est ut istas accessiones minutas non sentiat, brevitatem aevi et dolorem et corporum varias offensiones; nam voluptas non est digna ad quam respiciat. [25] Quid est in virtute praecipuum? futuro non indigere nec dies suos computare. In quantulo libet tempore bona aeterna consummat. Incredibilia nobis haec videntur et supra humanam naturam excurrentia; maiestatem enim eius ex nostra inbecillitate metimur et vitiis nostris nomen virtutis inponimus. Quid porro? non aequè incredibile videtur aliquem in summis cruciatibus positum dicere ‘beatus sum’? Atqui haec vox in ipsa officina voluptatis audita est. ‘Beatissimum’ inquit ‘hunc et ultimum diem ago’ Epicurus, cum illum hinc urinae difficultas torqueret, hinc insanabilis exulcerati dolor ventris. [26] Quare ergo incredibilia ista sint apud eos qui virtutem colunt, cum apud eos quoque reperiantur apud quos voluptas imperavit? Hi quoque degeneres et humillimae mentis aiunt in summis doloribus, in summis calamitatibus sapientem nec miserum futurum nec beatum. Atqui hoc quoque incredibile est, immo incredibilius; non video enim quomodo non inimum agatur e fastigio suo deiecta virtus. Aut beatum praestare debet aut, si ab hoc depulsa est, non prohibebit fieri miserum. Stans non potest mitti: aut vincatur oportet aut vincat.

[27] ‘Dis’ inquit ‘inmortalibus solis et virtus et beata vita contigit, nobis umbra quaedam illorum bonorum et similitudo; accedimus ad illa, non pervenimus.’ Ratio vero dis hominibusque communis est: haec in illis consummata est, in nobis consummabilis. [28] Sed ad desperationem nos vitia nostra perducunt. Nam ille alter secundus est ut aliquis parum constans ad custodienda optima, cuius iudicium labat etiam nunc et incertum est. Desideret oculorum atque aurium sensum, bonam valetudinem et non foedum aspectum corporis et habitu manente suo aetatis praeterea longius spatium. [29] Per haec potest non paenitenda agi vita, at imperfecto viro huic malitiae vis

quaedam inest, quia animum habet mobilem ad prava, illa ~aitarens malitia et ea agitata~ abest [de bono]. Non est adhuc bonus, sed in bonum fingitur; cuicumque autem deest aliquid ad bonum, malus est.

[30] Sed

si cui virtus animusque in corpore praesens,

hic deos aequat, illo tendit originis suae memor. Nemo inprobe eo conatur ascendere unde descenderat. Quid est autem cur non existimes in eo divini aliquid existere qui dei pars est? Totum hoc quo continemur et unum est et deus; et socii sumus eius et membra. Capax est noster animus, perfertur illo si vitia non depriment. Quemadmodum corporum nostrorum habitus erigitur et spectat in caelum, ita animus, cui in quantum vult licet porrigi, in hoc a natura rerum formatus est, ut paria dis vellet; et si utatur suis viribus ac se in spatium suum extendat, non aliena via ad summa nititur. [31] Magnus erat labor ire in caelum: redit. Cum hoc iter nactus est, vadit audaciter contemptor omnium nec ad pecuniam respicit aurumque et argentum, illis in quibus iacuere tenebris dignissima, non ab hoc aestimat splendore quo inperitorum verberant oculos, sed a vetere caeno ex quo illa secrevit cupiditas nostra et effodit. Scit, inquam, aliubi positas esse divitias quam quo congeruntur; animum impleri debere, non arcam. [32] Hunc inponere dominio rerum omnium licet, hunc in possessionem rerum naturae inducere, ut sua orientis occidentisque terminis finiat, deorumque ritu cuncta possideat, cum opibus suis divites superne despiciat, quorum nemo tam suo laetus est quam tristis alieno. [33] Cum se in hanc sublimitatem tulit, corporis quoque ut oneris necessarii non amator sed procurator est, nec se illi cui inpositus est subicit. Nemo liber est qui corpori servit; nam ut alios dominos quos nimia pro illo sollicitudo invenit transeas, ipsius morosum imperium delicatumque est. [34] Ab hoc modo aequo animo exit, modo magno prosilit, nec quis deinde relictus eius futurus sit exitus quaerit; sed ut ex barba capilloque tonsa neglegimus, ita ille divinus animus egressurus hominem, quo receptaculum suum conferatur, ignis illud ~excludat~ an terra contegat an ferae distrahant, non magis ad se iudicat pertinere quam secundas ad editum infantem. Utrum proiectum aves differant an consumatur

canibus data praeda marinis,

quid ad illum qui nullus <est>? [35] Sed tunc quoque cum inter

homines est, <non> timet ullas post mortem minas eorum quibus usque ad mortem timeri parum est. 'Non conterret' inquit 'me nec uncus nec proiecti ad contumeliam cadaveris laceratio foeda visuris. Neminem de supremo officio rogo, nulli reliquias meas commendo. Ne quis insepultus esset rerum natura prospexit: quem saevitia proiecerit dies condet.' Diserte Maecenas ait,
nec tumulum curo: sepelit natura relictos.

Alte cinctum putes dixisse; habuit enim ingenium et grande et virile, nisi illud secunda discinxissent. Vale.

XCIII. SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

[1] In epistula qua de morte Metronactis philosophi querebaris, tamquam et potuisset diutius vivere et debuisset, aequitatem tuam desideravi, quae tibi in omni persona, in omni negotio superest, in una re deest, in qua omnibus: multos inveni aequos adversus homines, adversus deos neminem. Obiurgamus cotidie fatum: ‘quare ille in medio cursu raptus est? quare ille non rapitur? quare senectutem et sibi et aliis gravem extendit?’ [2] Utrum, obsecro te, aequius iudicas, te naturae an tibi parere naturam? quid autem interest quam cito exeas unde utique exeundum est? Non ut diu vivamus curandum est, sed ut satis; nam ut diu vivas fato opus est, ut satis, animo. Longa est vita si plena est; impletur autem cum animus sibi bonum suum reddidit et ad se potestatem sui transtulit. [3] Quid illum octoginta anni iuvant per inertiam exacti? non vixit iste sed in vita moratus est, nec sero mortuus est, sed diu. ‘Octoginta annis vixit.’ Interest mortem eius ex quo die numeres. ‘At ille obiit viridis.’ [4] Sed officia boni civis, boni amici, boni filii executus est; in nulla parte cessavit; licet aetas eius imperfecta sit, vita perfecta est. ‘Octoginta annis vixit.’ Immo octoginta annis fuit, nisi forte sic vixisse eum dicis quomodo dicuntur arbores vivere. Obsecro te, Lucili, hoc agamus ut quemadmodum pretiosa rerum sic vita nostra non multum pateat sed multum pendeat; actu illam metiamur, non tempore. Vis scire quid inter hunc intersit vegetum contemptoremque fortunae functum omnibus vitae humanae stipendiis atque in summum bonum eius evectum et illum cui multi anni transmissi sunt? alter post mortem quoque est, alter ante mortem perit. [5] Laudemus itaque et in numero felicitum reponamus eum cui quantulumcumque temporis contigit bene conlocatum est. Vidit enim veram lucem; non fuit unus e multis; et vixit et vigit. Aliquando sereno usus est, aliquando, ut solet, validi sideris fulgor per nubila emicuit. Quid quaeris quamdiu vixerit? vivit: ad posteros usque transiluit et se in memoriam dedit. [6] Nec ideo mihi plures annos accedere recusaverim; nihil tamen mihi ad beatam vitam defuisse dicam si spatium eius inciditur; non enim ad eum diem me aptavi quem ultimum mihi spes avida promiserat, sed nullum non tamquam

ultimum aspexi. Quid me interrogas quando natus sim, an inter iuniores adhuc censear? habeo meum. [7] Quemadmodum in minore corporis habitu potest homo esse perfectus, sic et in minore temporis modo potest vita esse perfecta. Aetas inter externa est. Quamdiu sim alienum est: quamdiu ero, <vere> ut sim, meum est. Hoc a me exige, ne velut per tenebras aevum ignobile emetiar, ut agam vitam, non ut praetervehar. [8] Quaeris quod sit amplissimum vitae spatium? usque ad sapientiam vivere; qui ad illam pervenit attingit non longissimum finem, sed maximum. Ille vero gloriatur audacter et dis agat gratias interque eos sibi, et rerum naturae inputet quod fuit. Merito enim inputabit: meliorem illi vitam reddidit quam accepit. Exemplar boni viri posuit, qualis quantusque esset ostendit; si quid adiecisset, fuisset simile praeterito. [9] Et tamen quousque vivimus? Omnium rerum cognitione frui sumus: scimus a quibus principiis natura se attollat, quemadmodum ordinet mundum, per quas annum vices revocet, quemadmodum omnia quae usquam erunt cluserit et se ipsam finem sui fecerit; scimus sidera impetu suo vadere, praeter terram nihil stare, cetera continua velocitate decurrere; scimus quemadmodum solem luna praetereat, quare tardior velociorem post se relinquat, quomodo lumen accipiat aut perdat, quae causa inducat noctem, quae reducat diem: illuc eundum est ubi ista propius aspicias. [10] ‘Nec hac spe’ inquit sapiens ille ‘fortius exeo, quod patere mihi ad deos meos iter iudico. Merui quidem admitti et iam inter illos fui animumque illo meum misi et ad me illi suum miserant. Sed tolli me de medio puta et post mortem nihil ex homine restare: aequae magnum animum habeo, etiam si nusquam transiturus excedo.’ Non tam multis vixit annis quam potuit. [11] Et paucorum versuum liber est et quidem laudandus atque utilis: annales Tanusii scis quam ponderosi sint et quid vocentur. Hoc est vita quorundam longa, et quod Tanusii sequitur annales. [12] Numquid feliciorem iudicas eum qui summo die muneris quam eum qui medio occiditur? numquid aliquem tam stulte cupidum esse vitae putas ut iugulari in spoliario quam in harena malit? Non maiore spatio alter alterum praecedimus. Mors per omnis it; qui occidit consequitur occisum. Minimum est de quo sollicitissime agitur. Quid autem ad rem pertinet quam diu vites quod evitare non possis? Vale.

XCIV. SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

[1] Eam partem philosophiae quae dat propria cuique personae praecepta nec in universum componit hominem sed marito suadet quomodo se gerat adversus uxorem, patri quomodo educet liberos, domino quomodo servos regat, quidam solam receperunt, ceteras quasi extra utilitatem nostram vagantis reliquerunt, tamquam quis posset de parte suadere nisi qui summam prius totius vitae complexus esset. [2] Ariston Stoicus e contrario hanc partem levem existimat et quae non descendat in pectus usque, anilia habentem praecepta; plurimum ait proficere ipsa decreta philosophiae constitutionemque summi boni; ‘quam qui bene intellexit ac didicit quid in quaque re faciendum sit sibi ipse praecipit.’ [3] Quemadmodum qui iaculari discit destinatum locum captat et manum format ad derigenda quae mittit, cum hanc vim ex disciplina et exercitatione percepit, quocumque vult illa utitur (didicit enim non hoc aut illud ferire sed quodcumque voluerit), sic qui se ad totam vitam instruxit non desiderat particulatim admoneri, doctus in totum, non enim quomodo cum uxore aut cum filio viveret sed quomodo bene viveret: in hoc est et quomodo cum uxore ac liberis vivat. [4] Cleanthes utilem quidem iudicat et hanc partem, sed inbecillam nisi ab universo fluit, nisi decreta ipsa philosophiae et capita cognovit.

In duas ergo quaestiones locus iste dividitur: utrum utilis an inutilis sit, et an solus virum bonum possit efficere, id est utrum supervacuum sit an omnis faciat supervacuos. [5] Qui hanc partem videri volunt supervacuum hoc aiunt: si quid oculis oppositum moratur aciem, removendum est; illo quidem obiecto operam perdit qui praecipit ‘sic ambulabis, illo manum porriges’. Eodem modo ubi aliqua res occaecat animum et ad officiorum dispiciendum ordinem impedit, nihil agit qui praecipit ‘sic vives cum patre, sic cum uxore’. Nihil enim proficient praecepta quamdiu menti error offusus est: si ille discutitur, apparebit quid cuique debeatur officio. Alioqui doces illum quid sano faciendum sit, non efficis sanum. [6] Pauperi ut agat divitem monstras: hoc quomodo manente paupertate fieri potest? Ostendis esurienti quid tamquam satur faciat: fixam potius medullis famem detrahe. Idem tibi de omnibus vitiis dico: ipsa removenda

sunt, non praeciendum quod fieri illis manentibus non potest. Nisi opiniones falsas quibus laboramus expuleris, nec avarus quomodo pecunia utendum sit exaudiet nec timidus quomodo periculosa contemnat. [7] Efficias oportet ut sciat pecuniam nec bonum nec malum esse; ostendas illi miserrimos divites; efficias ut quidquid publice expavimus sciat non esse tam timendum quam fama circumfert, nec <diu> dolere quemquam nec mori saepe: in morte, quam pati lex est, magnum esse solacium quod ad neminem redit; in dolore pro remedio futuram obstinationem animi, qui levius sibi facit quidquid contumaciter passus est; optimam doloris esse naturam, quod non potest nec qui extenditur magnus esse nec qui est magnus extendi; omnia fortiter excipienda quae nobis mundi necessitas imperat. [8] His decretis cum illum in conspectum suae condicionis adduxeris et cognoverit beatam esse vitam non quae secundum voluptatem est sed secundum naturam, cum virtutem unicum bonum hominis adamaverit, turpitudinem solum malum fugerit, reliqua omnia — divitias, honores, bonam valetudinem, vires, imperia — scierit esse mediam partem nec bonis adnumerandam nec malis, monitorem non desiderabit ad singula qui dicat ‘sic incede, sic cena; hoc viro, hoc feminae, hoc marito, hoc caelibis convenit’. [9] Ista enim qui diligentissime monent ipsi facere non possunt; haec paedagogus puero, haec avia nepoti praecipit, et irascendum non esse magister iracundissimus disputat. Si ludum litterarium intraveris, scies ista quae ingenti supercilio philosophi iactant in puerili esse praescripto.

[10] Utrum deinde manifesta an dubia praecipies? Non desiderant manifesta monitorem, praecipienti dubia non creditur; supervacuum est ergo praecipere. Id adeo sic disce: si id mones quod obscurum est et ambiguum, probationibus adiuvandum erit; si probaturus es, illa per quae probas plus valent satque per se sunt. [11] ‘Sic amico utere, sic cive, sic socio.’ ‘Quare?’ ‘Quia iustum est.’ Omnia ista mihi de iustitia locus tradit: illic invenio aequitatem per se expetendam, nec metu nos ad illam cogi nec mercede conduci, non esse iustum cui quidquam in hac virtute placet praeter ipsam. Hoc cum persuasi mihi et perbibere, quid ista praecepta proficiunt quae eruditum docent? praecepta dare scienti supervacuum est, nescienti parum; audire enim debet non tantum quid sibi praeciatur sed etiam quare. [12] Utrum, inquam, veras opiniones habenti de bonis malisque sunt necessaria

an non habenti? Qui non habet nihil a te adiuvabitur, aures eius contraria monitionibus tuis fama possedit; qui habet exactum iudicium de fugiendis petendisque scit <quid> sibi faciendum sit etiam te tacente. Tota ergo pars ista philosophiae summoventi potest.

[13] Duo sunt propter quae delinquimus: aut inest animo pravis opinionibus malitia contracta aut, etiam si non est falsis occupatus, ad falsa proclivis est et cito specie quo non oportet trahente corrumpitur. Itaque debemus aut percurare mentem aegram et vitiis liberare aut vacantem quidem sed ad peiora pronam praeoccupare. Utrumque decreta philosophiae faciunt; ergo tale praecipendi genus nil agit. [14] Praeterea si praecepta singulis damus, incomprehensibile opus est; alia enim dare debemus feneranti, alia colenti agrum, alia negotianti, alia regum amicitias sequenti, alia pares, alia inferiores amatur. [15] In matrimonio praecipies quomodo vivat cum uxore aliquis quam virginem duxit, quomodo cum ea quae alicuius ante matrimonium experta est, quemadmodum cum locuplete, quemadmodum cum indotata. An non putas aliquid esse discriminis inter sterilem et fecundam, inter provectiorem et puellam, inter matrem et novercam? Omnis species conplecti non possumus: atqui singulae propria exigunt, leges autem philosophiae breves sunt et omnia alligant. [16] Adice nunc quod sapientiae praecepta finita debent esse et certa; si qua finiri non possunt, extra sapientiam sunt; sapientia rerum terminos novit. Ergo ista praeceptiva pars summovenda est, quia quod paucis promittit praestare omnibus non potest; sapientia autem omnis tenet. [17] Inter insaniam publicam et hanc quae medicis traditur nihil interest nisi quod haec morbo laborat, illa opinionibus falsis; altera causas furoris traxit ex valetudine, altera animi mala valetudo est. Si quis furioso praecepta det quomodo loqui debeat, quomodo procedere, quomodo in publico se gerere, quomodo in privato, erit ipso quem monebit insanior: [si] bilis nigra curanda est et ipsa furoris causa removenda. Idem in hoc alio animi furore faciendum est: ipse discuti debet; alioqui abibunt in vanum monentium verba.

[18] Haec ab Aristone dicuntur; cui respondebimus ad singula. Primum adversus illud quod ait, si quid obstat oculo et inpedit visum, debere removeri, fateor huic non opus esse praeceptis ad videndum, sed remedio quo purgetur acies et officientem sibi moram effugiat;

natura enim videmus, cui usum sui reddit qui removet obstantia; quid autem cuique debeat officio natura non docet. [19] Deinde cuius curata suffusio est, is non protinus cum visum recepit aliis quoque potest reddere: malitia liberatus et liberat. Non opus est exhortatione, ne consilio quidem, ut colorum proprietates oculus intellegat; a nigro album etiam nullo monente distinguet. Multis contra praeceptis eget animus ut videat quid agendum sit in vita. Quamquam oculis quoque aegros medicus non tantum curat sed etiam monet. [20] ‘Non est’ inquit ‘quod protinus inbecillam aciem committas inprobo lumini; a tenebris primum ad umbrosa procede, deinde plus aude et paulatim claram lucem pati adsuesce. Non est quod post cibum studeas, non est quod plenis oculis ac tumentibus imperes; adflatum et vim frigoris in os occurrentis evita’ — alia eiusmodi, quae non minus quam medicamenta proficiunt. Adicit remediis medicina consilium.

[21] ‘Error’ inquit ‘est causa peccandi: hunc nobis praecepta non detrahunt nec expugnant opiniones de bonis ac malis falsas.’ Concedo per se efficacia praecepta non esse ad evertendam pravam animi persuasionem; sed non ideo <non> aliis quidem adiecta proficiunt. Primum memoriam renovant; deinde quae in universo confusius videbantur in partes divisa diligentius considerantur. Aut [in] isto modo licet et consolationes dicas supervacuas et exhortationes: atqui non sunt supervacuae; ergo ne monitiones quidem. [22] ‘Stultum est’ inquit ‘praecipere aegro quid facere tamquam sanus debeat, cum restituenda sanitas sit, sine qua inrita sunt praecepta.’ Quid quod habent aegri quaedam sanique communia de quibus admonendi sunt? tamquam ne avide cibos adpetant, ut lassitudinem vitent. Habent quaedam praecepta communia pauper et dives. [23] ‘Sana’ inquit ‘avaritiam, et nihil habebis quod admoneas aut pauperem aut divitem, si cupiditas utriusque consedit.’ Quid quod aliud est non concupiscere pecuniam, aliud uti pecunia scire? cuius avari modum ignorant, etiam non avari usum. ‘Tolle’ inquit ‘errores: supervacua praecepta sunt.’ Falsum est. Puta enim avaritiam relaxatam, puta adstrictam esse luxuriam, temeritati frenos iniectos, ignaviae subditum calcar: etiam remotis vitiis, quid et quemadmodum debeamus facere discendum est. [24] ‘Nihil’ inquit ‘efficient monitiones admotae gravibus vitiis.’ Ne medicina quidem morbos insanabiles vincit, tamen adhibetur aliis in remedium, aliis in

levamentum. Ne ipsa quidem universae philosophiae vis, licet totas in hoc vires suas advocet, duram iam et veterem animis extrahet pestem; sed non ideo nihil sanat quia non omnia.

[25] ‘Quid prodest’ inquit ‘aperta monstrare?’ Plurimum; interdum enim scimus nec adtendimus. Non docet admonitio sed advertit, sed excitat, sed memoriam continet nec patitur elabi. Pleraque ante oculos posita transimus: admonere genus adhortandi est. Saepe animus etiam aperta dissimulat; ingerenda est itaque illi notitia rerum notissimarum. Illa hoc loco in Vatinius Calvi repetenda sententia est: ‘factum esse ambitum scitis, et hoc vos scire omnes sciunt’. [26] Scis amicitias sancte colendas esse, sed non facis. Scis inprobum esse qui ab uxore pudicitiam exigit, ipse alienarum corruptor uxorum; scis ut illi nil cum adultero, sic tibi nil esse debere cum paelice, et non facis. Itaque subinde ad memoriam reducendus es; non enim reposita illa esse oportet sed in promptu. Quaecumque salutaria sunt saepe agitari debent, saepe versari, ut non tantum nota sint nobis sed etiam parata. Adice nunc quod aperta quoque apertiora fieri solent.

[27] ‘Si dubia sunt’ inquit ‘quae praecipis, probationes adicere debebis; ergo illae, non praecepta proficient.’ Quid quod etiam sine probationibus ipsa monentis auctoritas prodest? sic quomodo iurisconsultorum valent responsa, etiam si ratio non redditur. Praeterea ipsa quae praeciipiuntur per se multum habent ponderis, utique si aut carmini intexta sunt aut prosa oratione in sententiam coartata, sicut illa Catoniana: ‘emas non quod opus est, sed quod necesse est; quod non opus est asse carum est’, qualia sunt illa aut reddita oraculo aut similia: [28] ‘tempori parce’, ‘te nosce’. Numquid rationem exiges cum tibi aliquis hos dixerit versus?

Iniuriarum remedium est oblivio.

Audentis fortuna iuvat, piger ipse sibi opstat.

Advocatum ista non quaerunt: adfectus ipsos tangunt et natura vim suam exercente proficiunt. [29] Omnium honestarum rerum semina animi gerunt, quae admonitione excitantur non aliter quam scintilla flatu levi adiuta ignem suum explicat; erigitur virtus cum tacta est et impulsata. Praeterea quaedam sunt quidem in animo, sed

parum prompta, quae incipiunt in expedito esse cum dicta sunt; quaedam diversis locis iacent sparsa, quae contrahere inexercitata mens non potest. Itaque in unum conferenda sunt et iungenda, ut plus valeant animumque magis adlevent. [30] Aut si praecepta nihil adiuvant, omnis institutio tollenda est; ipsa natura contenti esse debemus. Hoc qui dicunt non vident alium esse ingenii mobilis et erecti, alium tardi et hebetis, utique alium alio ingeniosiore. Ingenii vis praeceptis alitur et crescit novasque persuasiones adicit innatis et depravata corrigit.

[31] ‘Si quis’ inquit ‘non habet recta decreta, quid illum admonitiones iuvabunt vitiosis obligatum?’ Hoc scilicet, ut illis liberetur; non enim extincta in illo indoles naturalis est sed obscurata et oppressa. Sic quoque temptat resurgere et contra prava nititur, nacta vero praesidium et adiuta praeceptis evalescit, si tamen illam diutina pestis non infecit nec enecuit; hanc enim ne disciplina quidem philosophiae toto impetu suo conisa restituet. Quid enim interest inter decreta philosophiae et praecepta nisi quod illa generalia praecepta sunt, haec specialia? Utraque res praecipit, sed altera in totum, particulatim altera.

[32] ‘Si quis’ inquit ‘recta habet et honesta decreta, hic ex supervacuo monetur.’ Minime; nam hic quoque doctus quidem est facere quae debet, sed haec non satis perspicit. Non enim tantum adfectibus inpedimur quominus probanda faciamus sed inperitia inveniendi quid quaeque res exigit. Habemus interdum compositum animum, sed residem et inexercitatum ad inveniendam officiorum viam, quam admonitio demonstrat.

[33] ‘Expelle’ inquit ‘falsas opiniones de bonis et malis, in locum autem earum veras repone, et nihil habebit admonitio quod agat.’ Ordinatur sine dubio ista ratione animus, sed non ista tantum; nam quamvis argumentis collectum sit quae bona malaque sint, nihilominus habent praecepta partes suas. Et prudentia et iustitia officiis constat: officia praeceptis disponuntur. [34] Praeterea ipsum de malis bonisque iudicium confirmatur officiorum executione, ad quam praecepta perducunt. Utraque enim inter se consentiunt: nec illa possunt praecedere ut non haec sequantur, et haec ordinem sequuntur suum; unde apparet illa praecedere.

[35] ‘Infinita’ inquit ‘praecepta sunt.’ Falsum est; nam de maximis

ac necessariis rebus non sunt infinita; tenues autem differentias habent quas exigunt tempora, loca, personae, sed his quoque dantur praecepta generalia.

[36] ‘Nemo’, inquit, ‘praeceptis curat insaniam; ergo ne malitiam quidem.’ Dissimile est; nam si insaniam sustuleris, sanitas reddita est; si falsas opiniones exclusimus, non statim sequitur dispectus rerum agendarum; ut sequatur, tamen admonitio conroborabit rectam de bonis malisque sententiam. Illud quoque falsum est, nihil apud insanos proficere praecepta. Nam quemadmodum sola non prosunt, sic curationem adiuvant; et denuntiatio et castigatio insanos coercuit — de illis nunc insanis loquor quibus mens mota est, non erepta.

[37] ‘Leges’ inquit ‘ut faciamus quod oportet non efficiunt, et quid aliud sunt quam minis mixta praecepta?’ Primum omnium ob hoc illae non persuadent quia minantur, at haec non cogunt sed exorant; deinde leges a scelere deterrent, praecepta in officium adhortantur. His adice quod leges quoque proficiunt ad bonos mores, utique si non tantum imperant sed docent. [38] In hac re dissentio a Posidonio, qui <‘improbo’ inquit> ‘quod Platonis legibus adiecta principia sunt. Legem enim brevem esse oportet, quo facilius ab inperitis teneatur. Velut emissa divinitus vox sit: iubeat, non disputet. Nihil videtur mihi frigidius, nihil ineptius quam lex cum prologo. Mone, dic quid me velis fecisse: non disco sed pareo.’ Proficiunt vero; itaque malis moribus uti videbis civitates usas malis legibus. [39] ‘At non apud omnis proficiunt.’ Ne philosophia quidem; nec ideo inutilis et formandis animis inefficax est. Quid autem? philosophia non vitae lex est? Sed putemus non proficere leges: non ideo sequitur ut ne monitiones quidem proficiant. Aut sic et consolationes nega proficere dissuasionisque et adhortationes et obiurgationes et laudationes. Omnia ista monitionum genera sunt; per ista ad perfectum animi statum pervenitur. [40] Nulla res magis animis honesta induit dubiosque et in pravum inclinabiles revocat ad rectum quam bonorum virorum conversatio; paulatim enim descendit in pectora et vim praeceptorum obtinet frequenter aspici, frequenter audiri. Occursus mehercules ipse sapientium iuvat, et est aliquid quod ex magno viro vel tacente proficias. [41] Nec tibi facile dixerim quemadmodum prosit, sicut illud intellegam profuisse. ‘Minuta quaedam’ ut ait Phaeton ‘animalia cum mordent non sentiuntur,

adeo tenuis illis et fallens in periculum vis est; tumor indicat morsum et in ipso tumore nullum vulnus apparet.’ Idem tibi in conversatione virorum sapientium eveniet: non deprehendes quemadmodum aut quando tibi prosit, profuisse deprendes.

[42] ‘Quorsus’ inquis ‘hoc pertinet?’ Aequae praecepta bona, si saepe tecum sint, profutura quam bona exempla. Pythagoras ait alium animum fieri intransantibus templum deorumque simulacra ex vicino cernentibus et alicuius oraculi opperientibus vocem. [43] Quis autem negabit feriri quibusdam praeceptis efficaciter etiam inperitissimos? velut his brevissimis vocibus, sed multum habentibus ponderis:

Nil nimis.

Avarus animus nullo satiatur lucro.

Ab alio expectes alteri quod feceris.

Haec cum ictu quodam audimus, nec ulli licet dubitare aut interrogare ‘quare?’; adeo etiam sine ratione ipsa veritas lucet. [44] Si reverentia frenat animos ac vitia conpescit, cur non et admonitio idem possit? Si inponit pudorem castigatio, cur admonitio non faciat, etiam si nudis praeceptis utitur? Illa vero efficacior est et altius penetrat quae adiuvat ratione quod praecipit, quae adicit quare quidque faciendum sit et quis facientem oboedientemque praeceptis fructus expectet. Si imperio proficitur, et admonitione; atqui proficitur imperio; ergo et admonitione. [45] In duas partes virtus dividitur, in contemplationem veri et actionem: contemplationem institutio tradit, actionem admonitio. Virtutem et exercet et ostendit recta actio. Acturo autem si prodest qui suadet, et qui monet proderit. Ergo si recta actio virtuti necessaria est, rectas autem actiones admonitio demonstrat, et admonitio necessaria est. [46] Duae res plurimum roboris animo dant, fides veri et fiducia: utramque admonitio facit. Nam et creditur illi et, cum creditum est, magnos animus spiritus concipit ac fiducia impletur; ergo admonitio non est supervacua. M. Agrippa, vir ingentis animi, qui solus ex iis quos civilia bella claros potentesque fecerunt felix in publicum fuit, dicere solebat multum se huic debere sententiae: ‘nam concordia parvae res crescunt, discordia maximae dilabuntur’. [47] Hac se aiebat et fratrem

et amicum optimum factum. Si eiusmodi sententiae familiariter in animum receptae formant eum, cur non haec pars philosophiae quae talibus sententiis constat idem possit? Pars virtutis disciplina constat, pars exercitatione; et discas oportet et quod didicisti agendo confirmes. Quod si est, non tantum scita sapientiae prosunt sed etiam praecepta, quae adfectus nostros velut edicto coercent et ablegant.

[48] ‘Philosophia’ inquit ‘dividitur in haec, scientiam et habitum animi; nam qui didicit et facienda ac vitanda percepit nondum sapiens est nisi in ea quae didicit animus eius transfiguratus est. Tertia ista pars praecipendi ex utroque est, et ex decretis et ex habitu; itaque supervacua est ad implendam virtutem, cui duo illa sufficiunt.’ [49] Isto ergo modo et consolatio supervacua est (nam haec quoque ex utroque est) et adhortatio et suasio et ipsa argumentatio; nam et haec ab habitu animi compositi validique proficiscitur. Sed quamvis ista ex optimo habitu animi veniant, optimus animi habitus ex his est; et facit illa et ex illis ipse fit. [50] Deinde istud quod dicis iam perfecti viri est ac summam consecuti felicitatis humanae. Ad haec autem tarde pervenitur; interim etiam imperfecto sed proficienti demonstranda est in rebus agendis via. Hanc forsitan etiam sine admonitione dabit sibi ipsa sapientia, quae iam eo perduxit animum ut moveri nequeat nisi in rectum. Inbecillioribus quidem ingeniis necessarium est aliquem praeire: ‘hoc vitabis, hoc facies’. [51] Praeterea si expectat tempus quo per se sciat quid optimum factu sit, interim errabit et errando inpedietur quominus ad illud perveniat quo possit se esse contentus; regi ergo debet dum incipit posse se regere. Pueri ad praescriptum discunt; digiti illorum tenentur et aliena manu per litterarum simulacra ducuntur, deinde imitari iubentur proposita et ad illa reformare chirographum: sic animus noster, dum eruditur ad praescriptum, iuvatur.

[52] Haec sunt per quae probatur hanc philosophiae partem supervacuam non esse. Quaeritur deinde an ad faciendum sapientem sola sufficiat. Huic quaestioni suum diem dabimus: interim omissis argumentis nonne apparet opus esse nobis aliquo advocato qui contra populi praecepta praecipiat? [53] Nulla ad aures nostras vox inpune perfertur: nocent qui optant, nocent qui execrantur. Nam et horum inprecatio falsos nobis metus inserit et illorum amor male docet bene optando; mittit enim nos ad longinqua bona et incerta et errantia,

cum possimus felicitatem domo promere. [54] Non licet, inquam, ire recta via; trahunt in pravum parentes, trahunt servi. Nemo errat uni sibi, sed dementia spargit in proximos accipitque invicem. Et ideo in singulis vitia populorum sunt quia illa populus dedit. Dum facit quisque peiorem, factus est; didicit deteriora, dein docuit, effectaque est ingens illa nequitia congesto in unum quod cuique pessimum scitur. [55] Sit ergo aliquis custos et aurem subinde pervellat abigatque rumores et reclamet populis laudantibus. Erras enim si existimas nobiscum vitia nasci: supervenerunt, ingesta sunt. Itaque monitionibus crebris opiniones quae nos circumsonant repellantur. [56] Nulli nos vitio natura conciliat: illa integros ac liberos genuit. Nihil quo avaritiam nostram inritaret posuit in aperto: pedibus aurum argentumque subiecit calcandumque ac premendum dedit quidquid est propter quod calcamur ac premimur. Illa vultus nostros erexit ad caelum et quidquid magnificum mirumque fecerat videri a suspicientibus voluit: ortus occasusque et properantis mundi volubilem cursum, interdiu terrena aperientem, nocte caelestia, tardos siderum incessus si compares toti, citatissimos autem si cogites quanta spatia numquam intermissa velocitate circumeant, defectus solis ac lunae invicem obstantium, alia deinceps digna miratu, sive per ordinem subeunt sive subitis causis mota prosiliunt, ut nocturnos ignium tractus et sine ullo ictu sonituque fulgores caeli patescentis columnasque ac trabes et varia simulacra flammaram. [57] Haec supra nos natura disposuit, aurum quidem et argentum et propter ista numquam pacem agens ferrum, quasi male nobis committerentur, abscondit. Nos in lucem propter quae pugnaremus extulimus, nos et causas periculorum nostrorum et instrumenta disiecto terrarum pondere eruimus, nos fortunae mala nostra tradidimus nec erubescimus summa apud nos haberi quae fuerant ima terrarum. [58] Vis scire quam falsus oculos tuos deceperit fulgor? nihil est istis quamdiu mersa et involuta caeno suo iacent foedius, nihil obscurius, quidni? quae per longissimorum cuniculorum tenebras extrahuntur; nihil est illis dum fiunt et a faece sua separantur informius. Denique ipsos opifices intueri per quorum manus sterile terrae genus et infernum perpurgatur: videbis quanta fuligine oblinantur. [59] Atqui ista magis inquinant animos quam corpora, et in possessore eorum quam in artifice plus sordium est. Necessarium

itaque admoneri est, habere aliquem advocatum bonae mentis et in tanto fremitu tumultuque falsorum unam denique audire vocem. Quae erit illa vox? ea scilicet quae tibi tantis clamoribus ambitionis exsurdato salubria insusurret verba, quae dicat: [60] non est quod invid eas istis quos magnos felicesque populus vocat, non est quod tibi compositae mentis habitum et sanitatem plausus excutiat, non est quod tibi tranquillitatis tuae fastidium faciat ille sub illis fascibus purpura cultus, non est quod felicior eum iudices cui summovetur quam te quem lictor semita deicit. Si vis exercere tibi utile, nulli autem grave imperium, summove vitia. [61] Multi inveniuntur qui ignem inferant urbibus, qui inexpugnabilia saeculis et per aliquot aetates tuta prosternant, qui aequum arcibus aggerem attollant et muros in miram altitudinem eductos arietibus ac machinis quassent. Multi sunt qui ante se agant agmina et tergis hostium [et] graves instent et ad mare magnum perfusi caede gentium veniant, sed hi quoque, ut vincerent hostem, cupiditate victi sunt. Nemo illis venientibus restitit, sed nec ipsi ambitioni crudelitatisque restiterant; tunc cum agere alios visi sunt, agebantur. [62] Agebat infelicem Alexandrum furor aliena vastandi et ad ignota mittebat. An tu putas sanum qui a Graeciae primum cladibus, in qua eruditus est, incipit? qui quod cuique optimum est eripit, Lacedaemona servire iubet, Athenas tacere? Non contentus tot civitatum strage, quas aut vicerat Philippus aut emerat, alias alio loco proicit et toto orbe arma circumfert; nec subsistit usquam lassa crudelitas inmanium ferarum modo quae plus quam exigit fames mordent. [63] Iam in unum regnum multa regna coniecit, iam Graeci Persaeque eundem timent, iam etiam a Dareo liberae nationes iugum accipiunt; it tamen ultra oceanum solemque, indignatur ab Herculis Liberique vestigiis victoriam flectere, ipsi naturae vim parat. Non ille ire vult, sed non potest stare, non aliter quam in praeceps deiecta pondera, quibus eundi finis est iacuisse. [64] Ne Gnaeo quidem Pompeio externa bella ac domestica virtus aut ratio suadebat, sed insanus amor magnitudinis falsae. Modo in Hispaniam et Sertoriana arma, modo ad colligandos piratas ac maria pacanda vadebat: hae praetexebantur causae ad continuandam potentiam. [65] Quid illum in Africam, quid in septentrionem, quid in Mithridaten et Armeniam et omnis Asiae angulos traxit? infinita scilicet cupido crescendi, cum sibi uni parum

magnus videretur. Quid C. Caesarem in sua fata pariter ac publica inmisit? gloria et ambitio et nullus supra ceteros eminendi modus. Unum ante se ferre non potuit, cum res publica supra se duos ferret. [66] Quid, tu C. Marium semel consulem (unum enim consulatum accepit, ceteros rapuit), cum Teutonos Cimbrosque concideret, cum Iugurtham per Africae deserta sequeretur, tot pericula putas adpetisse virtutis instinctu? Marius exercitus, Marius ambitio ducebat. [67] Isti cum omnia concuterent, concutiebantur turbinum more, qui rapta convolvunt sed ipsi ante volvuntur et ob hoc maiore impetu incurrunt quia nullum illis sui regimen est, ideoque, cum multis fuerunt malo, pestiferam illam vim qua plerisque nocuerunt ipsi quoque sentiunt. Non est quod credas quemquam fieri aliena infelicitate felicem.

[68] Omnia ista exempla quae oculis atque auribus nostris ingeruntur retexenda sunt, et plenum malis sermonibus pectus exhauriendum; inducenda in occupatum locum virtus, quae mendacia et contra verum placentia exstirpet, quae nos a populo cui nimis credimus separet ac sinceris opinionibus reddat. Hoc est enim sapientia, in naturam converti et eo restitui unde publicus error expulerit. [69] Magna pars sanitatis est hortatores insaniae reliquisse et ex isto coitu invicem noxio procul abisse. Hoc ut esse verum scias, aspice quanto aliter unusquisque populo vivat, aliter sibi. Non est per se magistra innocentiae solitudo nec frugalitatem docent rura, sed ubi testis ac spectator abscessit, vitia subsidunt, quorum monstrari et conspici fructus est. [70] Quis eam quam nulli ostenderet induit purpuram? quis posuit secretam in auro dapem? quis sub alicuius arboris rusticae proiectus umbra luxuriae suae pompam solus explicuit? Nemo oculis suis lautus est, ne paucorum quidem aut familiarium, sed apparatus vitiorum suorum pro modo turbae spectantis expandit. [71] Ita est: inritamentum est omnium in quae insanimus admirator et conscius. Ne concupiscamus efficies si ne ostendamus effeceris. Ambitio et luxuria et inpotentia scaenam desiderant: sanabis ista si absconderis. [72] Itaque si in medio urbium fremitu conlocati sumus, stet ad latus monitor et contra laudatores ingentium patrimoniorum laudet parvo divitem et usu opes metientem. Contra illos qui gratiam ac potentiam attollunt otium ipse suspiciat traditum litteris et animum ab externis ad sua reversum. [73] Ostendat ex constitutione vulgi beatos in illo invidioso fastigio suo

tremens et attonitos longeque aliam de se opinionem habentis quam ab aliis habetur; nam quae aliis excelsa videntur ipsis praerupta sunt. Itaque exanimantur et trepidant quotiens despexerunt in illud magnitudinis suae praeceps; cogitant enim varios casus et in sublimi maxime lubricos. [74] Tunc adpetita formidant et quae illos graves aliis reddit gravior ipsis felicitas incubat. Tunc laudant otium lene et sui iuris, odio est fulgor et fuga a rebus adhuc stantibus quaeritur. Tunc demum videas philosophantis metu et aegrae fortunae sana consilia. Nam quasi ista inter se contraria sint, bona fortuna et mens bona, ita melius in malis sapimus: secunda rectum auferunt. Vale.

XCV. SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

[1] Petis a me ut id quod in diem suum dixeram debere differri repraesentem et scribam tibi an haec pars philosophiae quam Graeci paraeneticon vocant, nos praeceptivam dicimus, satis sit ad consummandam sapientiam. Scio te in bonam partem accepturum si negavero. Eo magis promitto et verbum publicum perire non patior: ‘postea noli rogare quod inpetrare nolueris’. [2] Interdum enim enixe petimus id quod recusaremus si quis offerret. Haec sive levitas est sive vernilitas punienda est promittendi facilitate. Multa videri volumus velle sed nolumus. Recitator historiam ingentem attulit minutissime scriptam, artissime plectam, et magna parte perlecta ‘desinam’ inquit ‘si vultis’: adclamatur ‘recita, recita’ ab iis qui illum ommutescere illic cupiunt. Saepe aliud volumus, aliud optamus, et verum ne dis quidem dicimus, sed dii aut non exaudiunt aut miserentur. [3] Ego me omnia misericordia vindicabo et tibi ingentem epistulam inpingam, quam tu si invitus leges, dicito ‘ego mihi hoc contraxi’, teque inter illos numera quos uxor magno ducta ambitu torquet, inter illos quos divitiae per summum acquisitae sudorem male habent, inter illos quos honores nulla non arte atque opera petiti discruciant, et ceteros malorum suorum compotes.

[4] Sed ut omissio principio rem ipsam adgrediar, ‘beata’ inquit ‘vita constat ex actionibus rectis; ad actiones rectas praecepta perducunt; ergo ad beatam vitam praecepta sufficiunt’. Non semper ad actiones rectas praecepta perducunt, sed cum obsequens ingenium est; aliquando frustra admoventur, si animum opiniones obsident pravae. [5] Deinde etiam si recte faciunt, nesciunt facere se recte. Non potest enim quisquam nisi ab initio formatus et tota ratione compositus omnis exsequi numeros ut sciat quando oporteat et in quantum et cum quo et quemadmodum et quare. Non potest toto animo ad honesta conari, ne constanter quidem aut libenter, sed respiciet, sed haesitabit.

[6] ‘Si honesta’ inquit ‘actio ex praeceptis venit, ad beatam vitam praecepta abunde sunt: atqui est illud, ergo et hoc.’ His respondebimus actiones honestas et praeceptis fieri, non tantum praeceptis.

[7] ‘Si aliae’ inquit ‘artes contentae sunt praeceptis, contenta erit et sapientia; nam et haec ars vitae est. Atqui gubernatorem facit ille qui praecipit “sic move gubernaculum, sic vela summitte, sic secundo vento utere, sic adverso resiste, sic dubium communemque tibi vindica”. Alios quoque artifices praecepta conformant; ergo in hoc idem poterunt artifice vivendi.’ [8] Omnes istae artes circa instrumenta vitae occupatae sunt, non circa totam vitam; itaque multa illas inhihent extrinsecus et inpediunt, spes, cupiditas, timor. At haec quae artem vitae professa est nulla re quominus se exerceat vetari potest; discutit enim inpedimenta et iactat obstantia. Vis scire quam dissimilis sit aliarum artium condicio et huius? in illis excusatius est voluntate peccare quam casu, in hac maxima culpa est sponte delinquere. [9] Quod dico tale est. Grammaticus non erubescet soloecismo si sciens fecit, erubescet si nesciens; medicus si deficere aegrum non intellegit, quantum ad artem magis peccat quam si se intellegere dissimulat: at in hac arte vivendi turpior volentium culpa est. Adice nunc quod artes quoque pleraeque — immo ex omnibus liberalissimae — habent decreta sua, non tantum praecepta, sicut medicina; itaque alia est Hippocratis secta, alia Asclepiadis, alia Themisonis. [10] Praeterea nulla ars contemplativa sine decretis suis est, quae Graeci vocant dogmata, nobis vel decreta licet appellare vel scita vel placita; quae et in geometria et in astronomia invenies. Philosophia autem et contemplativa est et activa: spectat simul agitique. Erras enim si tibi illam putas tantum terrestres operas promittere: altius spirat. ‘Totum’ inquit ‘mundum scrutor nec me intra contubernium mortale contineo, suadere vobis aut dissuadere contenta: magna me vocant supraque vos posita.

[11]

Nam tibi de summa caeli ratione deumque
disserere incipiam et rerum primordia pandam,
unde omnis natura creet res, auctet alatque,
quoque eadem rursus natura preempta resolvat,

ut ait Lucretius.’ Sequitur ergo ut, cum contemplativa sit, habeat decreta sua. [12] Quid quod facienda quoque nemo rite obibit nisi is cui ratio erit tradita qua in quaque re omnis officiorum numeros

exsequi possit? quos non servabit qui in rem praecepta acceperit, non in omne. Inbecilla sunt per se et, ut ita dicam, sine radice quae partibus dantur. Decreta sunt quae muniant, quae securitatem nostram tranquillitatemque tueantur, quae totam vitam totamque rerum naturam simul contineant. Hoc interest inter decreta philosophiae et praecepta quod inter elementa et membra: haec ex illis dependent, illa et horum causae sunt et omnium.

[13] ‘Antiqua’ inquit ‘sapientia nihil aliud quam facienda ac vitanda praecepit, et tunc longe meliores erant viri: postquam docti prodierunt, boni desunt; simplex enim illa et aperta virtus in obscuram et sollertem scientiam versa est docemurque disputare, non vivere.’ [14] Fuit sine dubio, ut dicitis, vetus illa sapientia cum maxime nascens rudis non minus quam ceterae artes quarum in processu subtilitas crevit. Sed ne opus quidem adhuc erat remediis diligentibus. Nondum in tantum nequitia surrexerat nec tam late se sparserat: poterant vitiis simplicibus obstare remedia simplicia. Nunc necesse est tanto operosiora esse munimenta quanto vehementiora sunt quibus petimur.

[15] Medicina quondam paucarum fuit scientia herbarum quibus sisteretur fluens sanguis, vulnera coirent; paulatim deinde in hanc pervenit tam multiplicem varietatem. Nec est mirum tunc illam minus negotii habuisse firmis adhuc solidisque corporibus et facili cibo nec per artem voluptatemque corrupto: qui postquam coepit non ad tollendam sed ad inritandam famem quaeri et inventae sunt mille conditurae quibus aviditas excitaretur, quae desiderantibus alimenta erant onera sunt plenis. [16] Inde pallor et nervorum vino madentium tremor et miserabilior ex cruditatibus quam ex fame macies; inde incerti labantium pedes et semper qualis in ipsa ebrietate titubatio; inde in totam cutem umor admissus distensusque venter dum male adsuescit plus capere quam poterat; inde suffusio luridae bilis et decolor vultus tabesque ~in se~ putrescentium et retorridi digiti articulis obrigescentibus nervorumque sine sensu iacentium torpor aut palpitatio [corporum] sine intermissione vibrantium. [17] Quid capitis vertigines dicam? quid oculorum auriumque tormenta et cerebri exaestuantis verminationes et omnia per quae exoneramur internis ulceribus adfecta? Innumerabilia praeterea febrium genera, aliarum impetu saevientium, aliarum tenui peste repentium, aliarum

cum horrore et multa membrorum quassatione venientium? [18] Quid alios referam innumerabiles morbos, supplicia luxuriae? Immunes erant ab istis malis qui nondum se delicis solverant, qui sibi imperabant, sibi ministrabant. Corpora opere ac vero labore durabant, aut cursu defatigati aut venatu aut tellure versanda; excipiebat illos cibus qui nisi esurientibus placere non posset. Itaque nihil opus erat tam magna medicorum supellectile nec tot ferramentis atque puxidibus. Simplex erat ex causa simplici valetudo: multos morbos multa fericula fecerunt. [19] Vide quantum rerum per unam gulam transiturarum permisceat luxuria, terrarum marisque vastatrix. Necesse est itaque inter se tam diversa dissideant et hausta male digerantur aliis alio nitentibus. Nec mirum quod inconstans variusque ex discordi cibo morbus est et illa ex contrariis naturae partibus in eundem compulsa <ventrem> redundant. Inde tam novo aegrotamus genere quam vivimus.

[20] Maximus ille medicorum et huius scientiae conditor feminis nec capillos defluere dixit nec pedes laborare: atqui et capillis destituuntur et pedibus aegrae sunt. Non mutata feminarum natura sed victa est; nam cum virorum licentiam aequaverint, corporum quoque virilium incommoda aequarunt. [21] Non minus pervigilant, non minus potant, et oleo et mero viros provocant; aequae invitis ingesta visceribus per os reddunt et vinum omne vomitu remetiuntur; aequae nivem rodunt, solacium stomachi aestuantis. Libidine vero ne maribus quidem cedunt: pati natae (di illas deaeque male perdant!) adeo perversum commentae genus inpueritiae viros ineunt. Quid ergo mirandum est maximum medicorum ac naturae peritissimum in mendacio prendi, cum tot feminae podagricae calvaeque sint? Beneficium sexus sui vitiis perdiderunt et, quia feminam exuerant, damnatae sunt morbis virilibus.

[22] Antiqui medici nesciebant dare cibum saepius et vino fulcire venas cadentis, nesciebant sanguinem mittere et diutinam aegrotationem balneo sudoribusque laxare, nesciebant crurum vinculo brachiorumque latentem vim et in medio sedentem ad extrema revocare. Non erat necesse circumspicere multa auxiliorum genera, cum essent periculorum paucissima. [23] Nunc vero quam longe processerunt mala valetudinis! Has usuras voluptatum pendimus ultra modum fasque concupitarum. Innumerabiles esse

morbos non miraberis: cocos numera. Cessat omne studium et liberalia professi sine ulla frequentia desertis angulis praesident; in rhetorum ac philosophorum scholis solitudo est: at quam celebres culinae sunt, quanta circa nepotum focos <se> iuventus premit! [24] Transeo puerorum infelicium greges quos post transacta convivialiae cubiculi contumeliae expectant; transeo agmina exoletorum per nationes coloresque discripta ut eadem omnibus levitas sit, eadem primae mensura lanuginis, eadem species capillorum, ne quis cui rector est coma crispulis misceatur; transeo pistorum turbam, transeo ministratorum per quos signo dato ad inferendam cenam discurritur. Di boni, quantum hominum unus venter exercet! [25] Quid? tu illos boletos, voluptarium venenum, nihil occulti operis iudicas facere, etiam si praesentanei non fuerunt? Quid? tu illam aestivam nivem non putas callum iocineribus obducere? Quid? illa ostrea, inertissimam carnem caeno saginatam, nihil existimas limosae gravitatis inferre? Quid? illud sociorum garum, pretiosam malorum piscium saniem, non credis urere salsa tabe praecordia? Quid? illa purulenta et quae tantum non ex ipso igne in os transferuntur iudicas sine noxa in ipsis visceribus extinguere? Quam foedi itaque pestilentesque ructus sunt, quantum fastidium sui exhalantibus crapulam veterem! scias putrescere sumpta, non concoqui. [26] Memini fuisse quondam in sermone nobilem patinam in quam quidquid apud lautos solet diem ducere properans in damnum suum popina congesserat: veneriae spondylique et ostrea eatenus circumcisa qua eduntur intervenientibus distinguebantur ~echini totam destructique~ sine ullis ossibus nulli constraverant. [27] Piget esse iam singula: coguntur in unum sapes. In cena fit quod fieri debebat in ventre: expecto iam ut manducata ponantur. Quantulo autem hoc minus est, testas excerpere atque ossa et dentium opera cocum fungi? 'Gravest luxuriari per singula: omnia semel et in eundem saponem versa ponantur. Quare ego ad unam rem manum porrigam? plura veniant simul, multorum ferculorum ornamenta coeant et cohaereant. [28] Sciant protinus hi qui iactationem ex istis peti et gloriam aiebant non ostendi ista sed conscientiae dari. Pariter sint quae disponi solent, uno iure perfusa; nihil intersit; ostrea, echini, spondyli, nulli perturbati concoctique ponantur.' Non esset confusior vomentium cibus. [29] Quomodo ista perplexa sunt, sic ex

istis non singulares morbi nascuntur sed inexplicabiles, diversi, multiformes, adversus quos et medicina armare se coepit multis generibus, multis observationibus.

Idem tibi de philosophia dico. Fuit aliquando simplicior inter minora peccantis et levi quoque cura remediabiles: adversus tantam morum eversionem omnia conanda sunt. Et utinam sic denique lues ista vincatur! [30] Non privatim solum sed publice furimus. Homicidia conpescimus et singulas caedes: quid bella et occisarum gentium gloriosum scelus? Non avaritia, non crudelitas modum novit. Et ista quamdiu furtim et a singulis fiunt minus noxia minusque monstrosa sunt: ex senatus consultis plebisque scitis saeva exercentur et publice iubentur vetata privatim. [31] Quae clam commissa capite luerent, tum quia paludati fecere laudamus. Non pudet homines, mitissimum genus, gaudere sanguine alterno et bella gerere gerendaque liberis tradere, cum inter se etiam mutis ac feris pax sit. [32] Adversus tam potentem explicitumque late furem operosior philosophia facta est et tantum sibi virium sumpsit quantum iis adversus quae parabatur accesserat. Expeditum erat obiurgare indulgentis mero et petentis delicatorem cibum, non erat animus ad frugalitatem magna vi reducendus a qua paullum discesserat:

[33]

nunc manibus rapidis opus est, nunc arte magistra.

Voluptas ex omni quaeritur. Nullum intra se manet vitium: in avaritiam luxuria praeceps est. Honesti oblivio invasit; nihil turpest cuius placet pretium. Homo, sacra res homini, iam per lusum ac iocum occiditur et quem erudiri ad inferenda accipiendaque vulnera nefas erat, is iam nudus inermisque producitur satisque spectaculi ex homine mors est. [34] In hac ergo morum perversitate desideratur solito vehementius aliquid quod mala inveterata discutiat: decretis agendum est ut revellatur penitus falsorum recepta persuasio. His si adiunxerimus praecepta, consolationes, adhortationes, poterunt valere: per se inefficaces sunt. [35] Si volumus habere obligatos et malis quibus iam tenentur avellere, discant quid malum, quid bonum sit, sciant omnia praeter virtutem mutare nomen, modo mala fieri, modo bona. Quemadmodum primum militiae vinculum est religio et signorum amor et deserendi nefas, tunc deinde facile cetera exiguntur mandanturque iusiurandum adactis, ita in iis quos velis ad beatam

vitam perducere prima fundamenta iacienda sunt et insinuanda virtus. Huius quadam superstitione teneantur, hanc ament; cum hac vivere velint, sine hac nolint.

[36] 'Quid ergo? non quidam sine institutione subtili evaserunt probi magnosque profectus adsecuti sunt dum nudis tantum praeceptis obsequuntur?' Fateor, sed felix illis ingenium fuit et salutaria in transitu rapuit. Nam ut dii immortales nullam didicere virtutem cum omni editi et pars naturae eorum est bonos esse, ita quidam ex hominibus egregiam sortiti indolem in ea quae tradi solent perveniunt sine longo magisterio et honesta complexi sunt cum primum audire; unde ista tam rapacia virtutis ingenia vel ex se fertilia. At illis aut hebetibus et obtusis aut mala consuetudine obsessis diu robigo animorum effricanda est. [37] Ceterum, ut illos in bonum pronos citius educit ad summa, et hos inbecilliores adiuvabit malisque opinionibus extrahet qui illis philosophiae placita tradiderit; quae quam sint necessaria sic licet videas. Quaedam insident nobis quae nos ad alia pigros, ad alia temerarios faciunt; nec haec audacia reprimi potest nec illa inertia suscitari nisi causae eorum eximuntur, falsa admiratio et falsa formido. Haec nos quamdiu possident, dicas licet 'hoc patri praestare debes, hoc liberis, hoc amicis, hoc hospitibus': temptantem avaritia retinebit. Sciet pro patria pugnandum esse, dissuadebit timor; sciet pro amicis desudandum esse ad extremum usque sudorem, sed deliciae vetabunt; sciet in uxore gravissimum esse genus iniuriae paelicem, sed illum libido in contraria inpinget. [38] Nihil ergo proderit dare praecepta nisi prius amoveris obstatura praeceptis, non magis quam proderit arma in conspectu posuisse propiusque admovisse nisi usurae manus expediuntur. Ut ad praecepta quae damus possit animus ire, solvendus est. [39] Putemus aliquem facere quod oportet: non faciet adsidue, non faciet aequaliter; nesciet enim quare faciat. Aliqua vel casu vel exercitatione exhibunt recta, sed non erit in manu regula ad quam exigantur, cui credat recta esse quae fecit. Non promittet se talem in perpetuum qui bonus casu est.

[40] Deinde praestabunt tibi fortasse praecepta ut quod oportet faciat, non praestabunt ut quemadmodum oportet; si hoc non praestant, ad virtutem non perducunt. Faciet quod oportet monitus, concedo; sed id parum est, quoniam quidem non in facto laus est sed

in eo quemadmodum fiat. [41] Quid est cena sumptuosa flagitiosius et equestrem censum consumente? quid tam dignum censoria nota, si quis, ut isti ganeones loquuntur, sibi hoc et genio suo praestet? et deciens tamen sestertio aditiales cenae frugalissimis viris constiterunt. Eadem res, si gulae datur, turpis est, si honori, reprehensionem effugit; non enim luxuria sed inpensa sollemnis est. [42] Mullum ingentis formae — quare autem non pondus adicio et aliquorum gulam inrito? quattuor pondo et selibram fuisse aiebant — Tiberius Caesar missum sibi cum in macellum deferri et venire iussisset, ‘amici,’ inquit ‘omnia me fallunt nisi istum mullum aut Apicius emerit aut P. Octavius’. Ultra spem illi coniectura processit: liciti sunt, vicit Octavius et ingentem consecutus est inter suos gloriam, cum quinque sestertiis emisset piscem quem Caesar venderat, ne Apicius quidem emerat. Numerare tantum Octavio fuit turpe, non illi qui emerat ut Tiberio mitteret, quamquam illum quoque reprenderim: admiratus est rem qua putavit Caesarem dignum. Amico aliquis aegro adsidet: probamus. [43] At hoc hereditatis causa facit: vultur est, cadaver expectat. Eadem aut turpia sunt aut honesta: refert quare aut quemadmodum fiant. Omnia autem honeste fient si honesto nos addixerimus idque unum in rebus humanis bonum iudicamus quaeque ex eo sunt; cetera in diem bona sunt. [44] Ergo infigi debet persuasio ad totam pertinens vitam: hoc est quod decretum voco. Qualis haec persuasio fuerit, talia erunt quae agentur, quae cogitabuntur; qualia autem haec fuerint, talis vita erit. In particulas suasisse totum ordinanti parum est. [45] M. Brutus in eo libro quem peri kathekontos inscripsit dat multa praecepta et parentibus et liberis et fratribus: haec nemo faciet quemadmodum debet nisi habuerit quo referat. Proponamus oportet finem summi boni ad quem nitamur, ad quem omne factum nostrum dictumque respiciat; veluti navigantibus ad aliquod sidus derigendus est cursus. [46] Vita sine proposito vaga est; quod si utique proponendum est, incipiunt necessaria esse decreta. Illud, ut puto, concedes, nihil esse turpius dubio et incerto ac timide pedem referente. Hoc in omnibus rebus accidet nobis nisi eximuntur quae reprendunt animos et detinent et ire conarique totos vetant.

[47] Quomodo sint dii colendi solet praecipere. Accendere aliquem lucernas sabbatis prohibeamus, quoniam nec lumine dii egent et ne

homines quidem delectantur fuligine. Vetemus salutationibus matutinis fungi et foribus adsidere templorum: humana ambitio istis officiis capitur, deum colit qui novit. Vetemus lintea et strigiles Iovi ferre et speculum tenere Iunoni: non quaerit ministros deus. Quidni? ipse humano generi ministrat, ubique et omnibus praesto est. [48] Audiat licet quem modum servare in sacrificiis debeat, quam procul resilire a molestis superstitionibus, numquam satis profectum erit nisi qualem debet deum mente conceperit, omnia habentem, omnia tribuentem, beneficum gratis. [49] Quae causa est dis bene faciendi? natura. Errat si quis illos putat nocere nolle: non possunt. Nec accipere iniuriam queunt nec facere; laedere etenim laedique coniunctum est. Summa illa ac pulcherrima omnium natura quos periculo exemit ne periculosos quidem fecit. [50] Primus est deorum cultus deos credere; deinde reddere illis maiestatem suam, reddere bonitatem sine qua nulla maiestas est; scire illos esse qui praesident mundo, qui universa vi sua temperant, qui humani generis tutelam gerunt interdum incuriosi singulorum. Hi nec dant malum nec habent; ceterum castigant quosdam et coercent et inrogant poenas et aliquando specie boni puniunt. Vis deos propitiare? bonus esto. Satis illos coluit quisquis imitatus est.

[51] Ecce altera quaestio, quomodo hominibus sit utendum. Quid agimus? quae damus praecepta? Ut parcamus sanguini humano? quantulum est ei non nocere cui debeas prodesse! Magna scilicet laus est si homo mansuetus homini est. Praecipiemus ut naufrago manum porrigat, erranti viam monstret, cum esuriante panem suum dividat? Quare omnia quae praestanda ac vitanda sunt dicam? cum possim breviter hanc illi formulam humani officii tradere: [52] omne hoc quod vides, quo divina atque humana conclusa sunt, unum est; membra sumus corporis magni. Natura nos cognatos edidit, cum ex isdem et in eadem gigneret; haec nobis amorem indidit mutuum et sociabiles fecit. Illa aequum iustumque composuit; ex illius constitutione miserius est nocere quam laedi; ex illius imperio paratae sint iuvandis manus. [53] Ille versus et in pectore et in ore sit:

homo sum, humani nihil a me alienum puto.

Habeamus in commune: <in commune> nati sumus. Societas nostra lapidum fornicationi simillima est, quae, casura nisi in vicem obstarent, hoc ipso sustinetur.

[54] Post deos hominesque dispiciamus quomodo rebus sit utendum. In supervacuum praecepta iactabimus nisi illud praecesserit, qualem de quacumque re habere debeamus opinionem, de paupertate, de divitiis, de gloria, de ignominia, de patria, de exilio. Aestimemus singula fama remota et quaeramus quid sint, non quid vocentur.

[55] Ad virtutes transeamus. Praecipiet aliquis ut prudentiam magni aestimemus, ut fortitudinem complectamur, iustitiam, si fieri potest, propius etiam quam ceteras nobis adplicemus; sed nil aget si ignoramus quid sit virtus, una sit an plures, separatae an innexae, an qui unam habet et ceteras habeat, quo inter se differant. [56] Non est necesse fabro de fabrica quaerere quod eius initium, quis usus sit, non magis quam pantomimo de arte saltandi: omnes istae artes se sciunt, nihil deest; non enim ad totam pertinent vitam. Virtus et aliorum scientia est et sui; discendum de ipsa est ut ipsa discatur. [57] Actio recta non erit nisi recta fuerit voluntas; ab hac enim est actio. Rursus voluntas non erit recta nisi habitus animi rectus fuerit; ab hoc enim est voluntas. Habitus porro animi non erit in optimo nisi totius vitae leges perceperit et quid de quoque iudicandum sit exegerit, nisi res ad verum redegerit. Non contingit tranquillitas nisi inmutabile certumque iudicium adeptis: ceteri decidunt subinde et reponuntur et inter missa adpetitaque alternis fluctuantur. [58] Causa his quae iactationis est? quod nihil liquet incertissimo regimine utentibus, fama. Si vis eadem semper velle, vera oportet velis. Ad verum sine decretis non pervenitur: continent vitam. Bona et mala, honesta et turpia, iusta et iniusta, pia et impia, virtutes ususque virtutum, rerum commodarum possessio, existimatio ac dignitas, valetudo, vires, forma, sagacitas sensuum — haec omnia aestimatorem desiderant. Scire liceat quanti quidque in censum deferendum sit. [59] Falleris enim et pluris quaedam quam sunt putas, adeoque falleris ut quae maxima inter nos habentur — divitiae, gratia, potentia — sestertio nummo aestimanda sint. Hoc nescies nisi constitutionem ipsam qua ista inter se aestimantur inspexeris. Quemadmodum folia per se virere non possunt, ramum desiderant cui inhaereant, ex quo trahant sucum, sic ista praecepta, si sola sunt, marcent; infigi volunt sectae.

[60] Praeterea non intellegunt hi qui decreta tollunt eo ipso confirmari illa quo tolluntur. Quid enim dicunt? praeceptis vitam

satis explicari, supervacua esse decreta sapientiae [id est dogmata]. Atqui hoc ipsum quod dicunt decretum est tam mehercules quam si nunc ego dicerem recedendum a praeceptis velut supervacuis, utendum esse decretis, in haec sola studium conferendum; hoc ipso quo negarem curanda esse praecepta praeceperem. [61] Quaedam admonitionem in philosophia desiderant, quaedam probationem et quidem multam, quia involuta sunt vixque summa diligentia ac summa subtilitate aperiuntur. Si probationes <necessariae sunt>, necessaria sunt et decreta quae veritatem argumentis colligunt. Quaedam aperta sunt, quaedam obscura: aperta quae sensu comprehenduntur, quae memoria; obscura quae extra haec sunt. Ratio autem non impletur manifestis: maior eius pars pulchriorque in occultis est. Occulta probationem exigunt, probatio non sine decretis est; necessaria ergo decreta sunt. [62] Quae res communem sensum facit, eadem perfectum, certa rerum persuasio; sine qua si omnia in animo natant, necessaria sunt decreta quae dant animis inflexibile iudicium. [63] Denique cum monemus aliquem ut amicum eodem habeat loco quo se, ut ex inimico cogitet fieri posse amicum, in illo amorem incitet, in hoc odium moderetur, adicimus ‘iustum est, honestum’. Iustum autem honestumque decretorum nostrorum continet ratio; ergo haec necessaria est, sine qua nec illa sunt. [64] Sed utrumque iungamus; namque et sine radice inutiles rami sunt et ipsae radices iis quae genere adiuvantur. Quantum utilitatis manus habeant nescire nulli licet, aperte iuvant: cor illud, quo manus vivunt, ex quo impetum sumunt, quo moventur, latet. Idem dicere de praeceptis possum: aperta sunt, decreta vero sapientiae in abdito. Sicut sanctiora sacrorum tantum initiati sciunt, ita in philosophia arcana illa admissis receptisque in sacra ostenduntur; at praecepta et alia eiusmodi profanis quoque nota sunt.

[65] Posidonius non tantum praeceptionem (nihil enim nos hoc verbo uti prohibet) sed etiam suasionem et consolationem et exhortationem necessariam iudicat; his adicit causarum inquisitionem, aetiologian quam quare nos dicere non audeamus, cum grammatici, custodes Latini sermonis, suo iure ita appellent, non video. Ait utilem futuram et descriptionem cuiusque virtutis; hanc Posidonius ‘ethologian’ vocat, quidam ‘characterismon’ appellant, signa cuiusque virtutis ac vitii et notas reddentem, quibus inter se

similia discriminentur. [66] Haec res eandem vim habet quam praecipere; nam qui praecipit dicit ‘illa facies si voles temperans esse’, qui describit ait ‘temperans est qui illa facit, qui illis abstinet’. Quaeris quid intersit? alter praecepta virtutis dat, alter exemplar. Descriptiones has et, ut publicanorum utar verbo, iconismos ex usu esse confiteor: proponamus laudanda, invenietur imitator. [67] Putas utile dari tibi argumenta per quae intellegas nobilem equum, ne fallaris empturus, ne operam perdas in ignavo? Quanto hoc utilius est excellentis animi notas nosse, quas ex alio in se transferre permittitur.

[68]

Continuo pecoris generosi pullus in arvis
altius ingreditur et mollia crura reponit;
primus et ire viam et fluvios temptare minantis
audet et ignoto sese committere ponti,
nec vanos horret strepitus. Illi ardua cervix
argutumque caput, brevis alvus obesaque terga,
luxuriatque toris animosum pectus . . .
. . . Tum, si qua sonum procul arma dederunt,
stare loco nescit, micat auribus et tremit artus,
conlectumque premens volvitur sub naribus ignem.

[69] Dum aliud agit, Vergilius noster descripsit virum fortem: ego certe non aliam imaginem magno viro dederim. Si mihi M. Cato exprimendus <sit> inter fragores bellorum civilium inpavidus et primus incessens admotus iam exercitus Alpibus civilique se bello ferens obvium, non alium illi adsignaverim vultum, non alium habitum. [70] Altius certe nemo ingredi potuit quam qui simul contra Caesarem Pompeiumque se sustulit et aliis Caesareanas opes, aliis Pompeianas [tibi] foveantibus utrumque provocavit ostenditque aliquas esse et rei publicae partes. Nam parum est in Catone dicere ‘nec vanos horret strepitus’. Quidni? cum veros vicinosque non horreat, cum contra decem legiones et Gallica auxilia et mixta barbarica arma civilibus vocem liberam mittat et rem publicam hortetur ne pro libertate decidat, sed omnia experiatur, honestius in servitutem casura quam itura. [71] Quantum in illo vigoris ac spiritus,

quantum in publica trepidatione fiduciaest! Scit se unum esse de cuius statu non agatur; non enim quaeri an liber Cato, sed an inter liberos sit: inde periculorum gladiatorumque contemptus. Libet admirantem invictam constantiam viri inter publicas ruinas non labantis dicere ‘luxuriatque toris animosum pectus’.

[72] Proderit non tantum quales esse soleant boni viri dicere formamque eorum et liniamenta deducere sed quales fuerint narrare et exponere, Catonis illud ultimum ac fortissimum vulnus per quod libertas emisit animam, Laeli sapientiam et cum suo Scipione concordiam, alterius Catonis domi forisque egregia facta, Tiberonis ligneos lectos, cum in publicum sterneret, haedinasque pro stragulis pelles et ante ipsius Iovis cellam adposita convivii vasa fictilia. Quid aliud paupertatem in Capitolio consecrare? Ut nullum aliud factum eius habeam quo illum Catonibus inseram, hoc parum credimus? censura fuit illa, non cena. [73] O quam ignorant homines cupidi gloriae quid illa sit aut quemadmodum petenda! Illo die populus Romanus multorum suppellectilem spectavit, unius miratus est. Omnium illorum aurum argentumque fractum est et [in] milliens conflatum, at omnibus saeculis Tiberonis fictilia durabunt. Vale.

LIBER SEXTUS DECIMUS

XCVI. SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

[1] Tamen tu indignaris aliquid aut quereris et non intellegis nihil esse in istis mali nisi hoc unum quod indignaris et quereris? Si me interrogas, nihil puto viro miserum nisi aliquid esse in rerum natura quod putet miserum. Non feram me quo die aliquid ferre non potero. Male valeo: pars fati est. Familia decubuit, fenus offendit, domus crepuit, damna, vulnera, labores, metus incucurrerunt: solet fieri. Hoc parum est: debuit fieri. [2] Decernuntur ista, non accidunt. Si quid credis mihi, intimos adfectus meos tibi cum maxime detego: in omnibus quae adversa videntur et dura sic formatus sum: non pareo deo sed adsentior; ex animo illum, non quia necesse est, sequor. Nihil umquam mihi incidet quod tristis excipiam, quod malo vultu; nullum tributum invitus conferam. Omnia autem ad quae gemimus, quae expavescimus, tributa vitae sunt: horum, mi Lucili, nec speraveris immunitatem nec petieris. [3] Vesicae te dolor inquietavit, epistulae venerunt parum dulces, detrimenta continua — propius accedam, de capite timuisti. Quid, tu nesciebas haec te optare cum optares senectutem? Omnia ista in longa vita sunt, quomodo in longa via et pulvis et lutum et pluvia. [4] ‘Sed volebam vivere, carere tamen incommodis omnibus.’ Tam effeminata vox virum dedecet. Videris quemadmodum hoc votum meum excipias; ego illud magno animo, non tantum bono facio: neque di neque deae faciant ut te fortuna in delicis habeat. [5] Ipse te interroga, si quis potestatem tibi deus faciat, utrum velis vivere in macello an in castris. Atqui vivere, Lucili, militare est. Itaque hi qui iactantur et per operosa atque ardua sursum ac deorsum eunt et expeditiones periculosissimas obeunt fortes viri sunt primoresque castrorum; isti quos putida quies aliis laborantibus molliter habet turturillae sunt, tuti contumeliae causa. Vale.

XCVII. SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

[1] Erras, mi Lucili, si existimas nostri saeculi esse vitium luxuriam et negligentiam boni moris et alia quae obiecit suis quisque temporibus: hominum sunt ista, non temporum. Nulla aetas vacavit a culpa; et si aestimare licentiam cuiusque saeculi incipias, pudet dicere, numquam apertius quam coram Catone peccatum est. [2] Credat aliquis pecuniam esse versatam in eo iudicio in quo reus erat P. Clodius ob id adulterium quod cum Caesaris uxore in operto commiserat, violatis religionibus eius sacrificii quod ‘pro populo’ fieri dicitur, sic summotis extra consaepum omnibus viris ut picturae quoque masculorum animalium contegantur? Atqui dati iudicibus nummi sunt et, quod hac etiamnunc pactione turpius est, stupra insuper matronarum et adolescentulorum nobilium stilari loco exacta sunt. [3] Minus crimine quam absolutione peccatum est: adulterii reus adulteria divisit nec ante fuit de salute securus quam similes sui iudices suos reddidit. Haec in eo iudicio facta sunt in quo, si nihil aliud, Cato testimonium dixerat. Ipsa ponam verba Ciceronis, quia res fidem excedit. [Ciceronis epistularum ad Atticum liber primus] [4] ‘Accersivit ad se, promisit, intercessit, dedit. Iam vero (o di boni, rem perditam!) etiam noctes certarum mulierum atque adolescentulorum nobilium introductiones nonnullis iudicibus pro mercedis cumulo fuerunt.’ [5] Non vacat de pretio queri, plus in accessionibus fuit. ‘Vis severi illius uxorem? dabo illam. Vis divitis huius? tibi praestabo concubitum. Adulterium nisi feceris, damna. Illa formonsa quam desideras veniet. Illius tibi noctem promitto nec differo; intra comperendinationem fides promissi mei extabit.’ Plus est distribuere adulteria quam facere; hoc vero matribus familiae denuntiare est. [6] Hi iudices Clodiani a senatu petierant praesidium, quod non erat nisi damnaturis necessarium, et inpetraverant; itaque eleganter illis Catulus absoluto reo ‘quid vos’ inquit ‘praesidium a nobis petebatis? an ne nummi vobis eriperentur?’ Inter hos tamen iocos inpune tulit ante iudicium adulter, in iudicio leno, qui damnationem peius effugit quam meruit. [7] Quicquam fuisse corruptius illis moribus credis quibus libido non sacris inhiberi, non iudicis poterat, quibus in ea ipsa quaestione quae extra ordinem

senatusconsulto exercebatur plus quam quaerebatur admissum est? Quaerebatur an post adulterium aliquis posset tutus esse: apparuit sine adulterio tutum esse non posse.

[8] Hoc inter Pompeium et Caesarem, inter Ciceronem Catonemque commissum est, Catonem inquam illum quo sedente populus negatur permisisse sibi postulare Florales iocos nudandarum meretricum, si credis spectasse tunc severius homines quam iudicasse. Et fient et facta sunt ista, et licentia urbium aliquando disciplina metuque, numquam sponte considet. [9] Non est itaque quod credas nos plurimum libidini permisisse, legibus minimum; longe enim frugalior haec iuventus est quam illa, cum reus adulterium apud iudices negaret, iudices apud reum confiterentur, cum stuprum committeretur rei iudicandae causa, cum Clodius, isdem vitiis graciosus quibus nocens, conciliaturas exerceret in ipsa causae dictione. Credat hoc quisquam? qui damnabatur uno adulterio absolutus est multis.

[10] Omne tempus Clodios, non omne Catones feret. Ad deteriora faciles sumus, quia nec dux potest nec comes deesse, et res ipsa etiam sine duce, sine comite procedit. Non primum est tantum ad vitia sed praeceps, et, quod plerosque inemendabiles facit, omnium aliarum artium peccata artificibus pudori sunt offenduntque deerrantem, vitae peccata delectant. [11] Non gaudet navigio gubernator everso, non gaudet aegro medicus elato, non gaudet orator si patroni culpa reus cecidit, at contra omnibus crimen suum voluptati est: laetatur ille adulterio in quod inritatus est ipsa difficultate; laetatur ille circumscriptione furtoque, nec ante illi culpa quam culpa fortuna displicuit. Id prava consuetudine evenit. [12] Alioquin, ut scias subesse animis etiam in pessima abductis boni sensum nec ignorari turpe sed neglegi, omnes peccata dissimulant et, quamvis feliciter cesserint, fructu illorum utuntur, ipsa subducunt. At bona conscientia prodire vult et conspici: ipsas nequitia tenebras timet. [13] Eleganter itaque ab Epicuro dictum puto: ‘potest nocenti contingere ut lateat, latendi fides non potest’, aut si hoc modo melius hunc explicari posse iudicas sensum: ‘ideo non prodest latere peccantibus quia latendi etiam si felicitatem habent, fiduciam non habent’. Ita est, tuta scelera esse possunt, <secura esse non possunt>.

[14] Hoc ego repugnare sectae nostrae si sic expediatur non iudico.

Quare? quia prima illa et maxima peccantium est poena peccasse, nec ullum scelus, licet illud fortuna exornet muneribus suis, licet tueatur ac vindicet, inpunitum est, quoniam sceleris in scelere supplicium est. Sed nihilominus et hae illam secundae poenae premunt ac sequuntur, timere semper et expavescere et securitati diffidere. Quare ego hoc supplicio nequitiam liberem? quare non semper illam in suspensio relinquam? [15] Illic dissentiamus cum Epicuro ubi dicit nihil iustum esse natura et crimina vitanda esse quia vitari metus non posse: hic consentiamus, mala facinora conscientia flagellari et plurimum illi tormentorum esse eo quod perpetua illam sollicitudo urget ac verberat, quod sponsoribus securitatis suae non potest credere. Hoc enim ipsum argumentum est, Epicure, natura nos a scelere abhorrere, quod nulli non etiam inter tuta timor est. [16] Multos fortuna liberat poena, metu neminem. Quare nisi quia infixi nobis eius rei aversatio est quam natura damnavit? Ideo numquam fides latendi fit etiam latentibus quia coarguit illos conscientia et ipsos sibi ostendit. Proprium autem est nocentium trepidare. Male de nobis actum erat, quod multa scelera legem et vindicem effugiunt et scripta supplicia, nisi illa naturalia et gravia de praesentibus solverent et in locum patientiae timor cederet. Vale.

XCVIII. SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

[1] Numquam credideris felicem quemquam ex felicitate suspensum. Fragilibus innititur qui adventicio laetus est: exhibit gaudium quod intravit. At illud ex se ortum fidele firmumque est et crescit et ad extremum usque prosequitur: cetera quorum admiratio est vulgo in diem bona sunt. 'Quid ergo? non usui ac voluptati esse possunt?' Quis negat? sed ita si illa ex nobis pendent, non ex illis nos. [2] Omnia quae fortuna intuetur ita fructifera ac iucunda fiunt si qui habet illa se quoque habet nec in rerum suarum potestate est. Errant enim, Lucili, qui aut boni aliquid nobis aut mali iudicant tribuere fortunam: materiam dat bonorum ac malorum et initia rerum apud nos in malum bonumve exiturarum. Valentior enim omni fortuna animus est et in utramque partem ipse res suas ducit beataeque ac miserae vitae sibi causa est. [3] Malus omnia in malum vertit, etiam quae cum specie optimi venerant: rectus atque integer corrigit prava fortunae et dura atque aspera ferendi scientia mollit, idemque et secunda grate excipit modesteque et adversa constanter ac fortiter. Qui licet prudens sit, licet exacto faciat cuncta iudicio, licet nihil supra vires suas temptet, non continget illi bonum illud integrum et extra minas positum nisi certus adversus incerta est. [4] Sive alios observare volueris (liberius enim inter aliena iudicium est) sive te ipsum favore seposito, et senties hoc et confiteberis, nihil ex his optabilibus et caris utile esse nisi te contra levitatem casus rerumque casum sequentium instruxeris, nisi illud frequenter et sine querella inter singula damna dixeris:

dis aliter visum est.

[5] Immo mehercules, ut carmen fortius ac iustius petam quo animum tuum magis fulcias, hoc dicito quotiens aliquid aliter quam cogitabas evenerit: 'di melius'. Sic composito nihil accidet. Sic autem componetur si quid humanarum rerum varietas possit cogitaverit antequam senserit, si et liberos et coniugem et patrimonium sic habuerit tamquam non utique semper habiturus et tamquam non futurus ob hoc miserior si habere desierit. [6] Calamitosus est animus futuri anxius et ante miserias miser, qui sollicitus est ut ea quibus delectatur ad extremum usque permaneant;

nullo enim tempore conquiescet et expectatione venturi praesentia, quibus frui poterat, amittet. In aequo est autem amissae rei <dolor> et timor amittendae. [7] Nec ideo praecipio tibi negligentiam. Tu vero metuenda declina; quidquid consilio prospici potest prospice; quodcumque laesurum est multo ante quam accidat speculari et averte. In hoc ipsum tibi plurimum conferet fiducia et ad tolerandum omne obfirmata mens. Potest fortunam cavere qui potest ferre; certe in tranquillo non tumultuatur. Nihil est nec miserius nec stultius quam praetimere: quae ista dementia est malum suum antecedere? [8] Denique, ut breviter includam quod sentio et istos satagios ac sibi molestos describam tibi, tam intemperantes in ipsis miseriis sunt quam ante illas. Plus dolet quam necesse est qui ante dolet quam necesse est; eadem enim infirmitate dolorem non aestimat qua non expectat; eadem intemperantia fingit sibi perpetuam felicitatem suam, fingit crescere debere quaecumque contigerunt, non tantum durare, et oblitus huius petauri quo humana iactantur sibi uni fortuitorum constantiam spondet. [9] Egregie itaque videtur mihi Metrodorus dixisse in ea epistula qua sororem amisso optimae indolis filio adloquitur: ‘mortale est omne mortalium bonum’. De his loquitur bonis ad quae concurritur; nam illud verum bonum non moritur, certum est sempiternumque, sapientia et virtus; hoc unum contingit inmortale mortalibus. [10] Ceterum tam improbi sunt tamque oblitus quo eant, quo illos singuli dies trudent, ut mirentur aliquid ipsos amittere, amissuri uno die omnia. Quidquid est cui dominus inscriberis apud te est, tuum non est; nihil firmum infirmo, nihil fragile aeternum et invictum est. Tam necesse est perire quam perdere et hoc ipsum, si intellegimus, solacium est. Aequo animo perde: pereundum est.

[11] Quid ergo adversus has amissiones auxilii invenimus? hoc, ut memoria teneamus amissa nec cum ipsis fructum excidere patiamur quem ex illis percepimus. Habere eripitur, habuisse numquam. Peringratus est qui, cum amisit, pro accepto nihil debet. Rem nobis eripit casus, usum fructumque apud nos relinquit, quem nos iniquitate desiderii perdidimus. [12] Dic tibi ex istis quae terribilia videntur nihil est invictum’. Singula vicere iam multi, ignem Mucius, crucem Regulus, venenum Socrates, exilium Rutilius, mortem ferro adactam Cato: et nos vincamus aliquid. [13] Rursus ista quae ut

speciosa et felicia trahunt vulgum a multis et saepe contempta sunt. Fabricius divitias imperator reiecit, censor notavit; Tubero paupertatem et se dignam et Capitolio iudicavit, cum fictilibus in publica cena usus ostendit debere iis hominem esse contentum quibus di etiamnunc uterentur. Honores reppulit pater Sextius, qui ita natus ut rem publicam deberet capessere, latum clavum divo Iulio dante non recepit; intellegebat enim quod dari posset et eripi posse. Nos quoque aliquid et ipsi faciamus animose; simus inter exempla. [14] Quare defecimus? quare desperamus? Quidquid fieri potuit potest, nos modo purgemus animum sequamurque naturam, a qua aberranti cupiendum timendumque est et fortuitis serviendum. Licet reverti in viam, licet in integrum restitui: restituamur, ut possimus dolores quocumque modo corpus invaserint perferre et fortunae dicere 'cum viro tibi negotium est: quaere quem vincas'.

[15] * * * His sermonibus et his similibus lenitur illa vis ulceris, quam opto mehercules mitigari et aut sanari aut stare et cum ipso senescere. Sed securus de illo sum: de nostro damno agitur, quibus senex egregius eripitur. Nam ipse vitae plenus est, cui adici nihil desiderat sua causa sed eorum quibus utilis est. [16] Liberaliter facit quod vivit. Alius iam hos cruciatus finisset: hic tam turpe putat mortem fugere quam ad mortem confugere. 'Quid ergo? non si suadebit res exibat?' Quidni exeat, si nemo iam uti eo poterit, si nihil aliud quam dolori operam dabit? [17] Hoc est, mi Lucili, philosophiam in opere discere et ad verum exerceri, videre quid homo prudens animi habeat contra mortem, contra dolorem, cum illa accedat, hic premat; quid faciendum sit a faciente discendum est. [18] Adhuc argumentis actum est an posset aliqui dolori resistere, an mors magnos quoque animos admota summittere. Quid opus est verbis? in rem praesentem eamus: nec mors illum contra dolorem facit fortiolem nec dolor contra mortem. Contra utrumque sibi fidit nec spe mortis patienter dolet nec taedio doloris libenter moritur: hunc fert, illam expectat. Vale.

XCIX. SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

[1] Epistolam quam scripsi Marullo cum filium parvulum amisisset et diceretur molliter ferre misi tibi, in qua non sum solitum morem secutus nec putavi leniter illum debere tractari, cum obiurgatione esset quam solacio dignior. Adflicto enim et magnum vulnus male ferenti paulisper cedendum est; exsatiat se aut certe primum impetum effundat: [2] hi qui sibi lugere sumpserunt protinus castigentur et discant quasdam etiam lacrimarum ineptias esse.

‘Solacia expectas? convicia accipe. Tam molliter tu fers mortem filii? quid faceres si amicum perdidisses? Decessit filius incertae spei, parvulus; pusillum temporis perit. [3] Causas doloris conquirimus et de fortuna etiam inique queri volumus, quasi non sit iustas querendi causas praebitura: at mehercules satis mihi iam videbaris animi habere etiam adversus solida mala, nedum ad istas umbras malorum quibus ingemescunt homines moris causa. Quod damnorum omnium maximum est, si amicum perdidisses, danda opera erat ut magis gauderes quod habueras quam maereres quod amiseras. [4] Sed plerique non computant quanta perceperint, quantum gavisi sint. Hoc habet inter reliqua mali dolor iste: non supervacuum tantum sed ingratus est. Ergo quod habuisti talem amicum, perit opera? Tot annis, tanta coniunctione vitae, tam familiari studiorum societate nil actum est? Cum amico effers amicitiam? Et quid doles amisisse, si habuisse non prodest? Mihi crede, magna pars ex iis quos amavimus, licet ipsos casus abstulerit, apud nos manet; nostrum est quod praeterit tempus nec quicquam est loco tutiore quam quod fuit. [5] Ingrati adversus percepta spe futuri sumus, quasi non quod futurum est, si modo successerit nobis, cito in praeterita transiturum sit. Anguste fructus rerum determinat qui tantum praesentibus laetus est: et futura et praeterita delectant, haec expectatione, illa memoria, sed alterum pendet et non fieri potest, alterum non potest non fuisse. Quis ergo furor est certissimo excidere? Adquiescamus iis quae iam hausimus, si modo non perforato animo hauriebamus et transmittente quidquid acceperat.

[6] ‘Innumerabilia sunt exempla eorum qui liberos iuvenes sine lacrimis extulerint, qui in senatum aut in aliquod publicum officium a

rogo redierint et statim aliud egerint. Nec inmerito; nam primum supervacuum est dolere si nihil dolendo proficias; deinde iniquum est queri de eo quod uni accidit, omnibus restat; deinde desiderii stulta conquestio est, ubi minimum interest inter amissum et desiderantem. Eo itaque aequiore animo esse debemus quod quos amisimus sequimur. [7] Respice celeritatem rapidissimi temporis, cogita brevitatem huius spatii per quod citatissimi currimus, observa hunc comitatum generis humani eodem tendentis, minimis intervallis distinctum etiam ubi maxima videntur: quem putas perisse praemissus est. Quid autem dementius quam, cum idem tibi iter emetiendum sit, flere eum qui antecessit? [8] Flet aliquis factum quod non ignoravit futurum? Aut si mortem in homine non cogitavit, sibi inposuit. Flet aliquis factum quod aiebat non posse non fieri? quisquis aliquem queritur mortuum esse, queritur hominem fuisse. Omnis eadem condicio devinxit: cui nasci contigit mori restat. [9] Intervallis distinguimur, exitu aequamur. Hoc quod inter primum diem et ultimum iacet varium incertumque est: si molestias aestimes, etiam puero longum, si velocitatem, etiam seni angustum. Nihil non lubricum et fallax et omni tempestate mobilius; iactantur cuncta et in contrarium transeunt iubente fortuna, et in tanta volutatione rerum humanarum nihil cuiquam nisi mors certum est; tamen de eo queruntur omnes in quo uno nemo decipitur.

[10] “Sed puer decessit.” Nondum dico melius agi cum eo qui <cito> vita defungitur: ad eum transeamus qui consenuit: quantulo vincit infantem! Propone temporis profundi vastitatem et universum conplectere, deinde hoc quod aetatem vocamus humanam compara immenso: videbis quam exiguum sit quod optamus, quod extendimus. [11] Ex hoc quantum lacrimae, quantum sollicitudines occupant? quantum mors antequam veniat optata, quantum valetudo, quantum timor? quantum tenent aut rudes aut inutiles anni? dimidium ex hoc edormitur. Adice labores, luctus, pericula, et intelleges etiam in longissima vita minimum esse quod vivitur. [12] Sed quis tibi concedit non melius se habere eum cui cito reverti licet, cui ante lassitudinem peractum est iter? Vita nec bonum nec malum est: boni ac mali locus est. Ita nihil ille perdidit nisi aleam in damnum certiore. Potuit evadere modestus et prudens, potuit sub cura tua in meliora formari, sed, quod iustius timetur, potuit fieri

pluribus similis. [13] Aspice illos iuvenes quos ex nobilissimis domibus in harenam luxuria proiecit; aspice illos qui suam alienamque libidinem exercent mutuo inpudici, quorum nullus sine ebrietate, nullus sine aliquo insigni flagitio dies exit: plus timeri quam sperari potuisse manifestum erit. Non debes itaque causas doloris accersere nec levia incommoda indignando cumulare. [14] Non hortor ut nitaris et surgas; non tam male de te iudico ut tibi adversus hoc totam putem virtutem advocandam. Non est dolor iste sed morsus: tu illum dolorem facis. Sine dubio multum philosophia profecit, si puerum nutrici adhuc quam patri notiozem animo forti desideras.

[15] 'Quid? nunc ego duritiam suadeo et in funere ipso rigere vultum volo et animum ne contrahi quidem patior? Minime. Inhumanitas est ista, non virtus, funera suorum isdem oculis quibus ipsos videre nec commoveri ad primam familiarium divulsionem. Puta autem me vetare: quaedam sunt sui iuris; excidunt etiam retinentibus lacrimae et animum profusae levant. [16] Quid ergo est? permittamus illis cadere, non imperemus; fluat quantum adfectus eiecerit, non quantum poscet imitatio. Nihil vero maerori adiciamus nec illum ad alienum augeamus exemplum. Plus ostentatio doloris exigit quam dolor: quotus quisque sibi tristis est? Clarius cum audiuntur gemunt, et taciti quietique dum secretum est, cum aliquos videre, in fletus novos excitantur; tunc capiti suo manus ingerunt (quod potuerant facere nullo prohibente liberius), tunc mortem comprecantur sibi, tunc lectulo devolvuntur: sine spectatore cessat dolor. [17] Sequitur nos, ut in aliis rebus, ita in hac quoque hoc vitium, ad plurium exempla componi nec quid oporteat sed quid soleat aspicere. A natura discedimus, populo nos damus nullius rei bono auctori et in hac re sicut in his omnibus inconstantissimo. Videt aliquem fortem in luctu suo, impium vocat et efferatum; videt aliquem conlabentem et corpori adfusum, effeminatum ait et enervem. [18] Omnia itaque ad rationem revocanda sunt. Stultius vero nihil est quam famam captare tristitiae et lacrimas adprobare, quas iudico sapienti viro alias permissas cadere, alias vi sua latas. Dicam quid intersit. Cum primus nos nuntius acerbi funeris perculit, cum tenemus corpus e complexu nostro in ignem transiturum, lacrimas naturalis necessitas exprimit et spiritus ictu doloris impulsus

quemadmodum totum corpus quatit, ita oculos, quibus adiacentem umorem perpremit et expellit. [19] Hae lacrimae per elisionem cadunt nolentibus nobis: aliae sunt quibus exitum damus cum memoria eorum quos amissimus retractatur, et inest quiddam dulce tristitiae cum occurrunt sermones eorum iucundi, conversatio hilaris, officiosa pietas; tunc oculi velut in gaudio relaxantur. His indulgemus, illis vincimur. [20] Non est itaque quod lacrimas propter circumstantem adsidentemque aut contineas aut exprimas: nec cessant nec fluunt umquam tam turpiter quam finguntur: eant sua sponte. Ire autem possunt placidis atque compositis; saepe salva sapientis auctoritate fluxerunt tanto temperamento ut illis nec humanitas nec dignitas deesset. [21] Licet, inquam, naturae obsequi gravitate servata. Vidi ego in funere suorum verendos, in quorum ore amor eminebat remota omni lugentium scaena; nihil erat nisi quod veris dabatur adfectibus. Est aliquis et dolendi decor; hic sapienti servandus est et quemadmodum in ceteris rebus, ita etiam in lacrimis aliquid sat est: imprudentium ut gaudia sic dolores exundavere.

[22] 'Aequo animo excipe necessaria. Quid incredibile, quid novum evenit? quam multis cum maxime funus locatur, quam multis vitalia emuntur, quam multi post luctum tuum lugent! Quotiens cogitaveris puerum fuisse, cogita et hominem, cui nihil certi promittitur, quem fortuna non utique perducit ad senectutem: unde visum est dimittit. [23] Ceterum frequenter de illo loquere et memoriam eius quantum potes celebra; quae ad te saepius revertetur si erit sine acerbitate ventura; nemo enim libenter tristi conversatur, nedum tristitiae. Si quos sermones eius, si quos quamvis parvoli iocos cum voluptate audieras, saepius repete; potuisse illum implere spes tuas, quas paterna mente conceperas, audacter adfirma. [24] Oblivisci quidem suorum ac memoriam cum corporibus efferre et effusissime flere, meminisse parcissime, inhumani animi est. Sic aves, sic ferae suos diligunt, quarum [contra] concitatus [actus] est amor et paene rabidus, sed cum amissis totus extinguitur. Hoc prudentem virum non decet: meminisse perseveret, lugere desinat.

[25] 'Illud nullo modo probo quod ait Metrodorus, esse aliquam cognatam tristitiae voluptatem, hanc esse captandam in eiusmodi tempore. Ipsa Metrodori verba subscripsi. Metrodoron epistolon pros ten adelphen. estin gar tis hedone lupe suggenes, hen chre thereuein

kata touton ton kairon. [26] De quibus non dubito quid sis sensurus; quid enim est turpius quam captare in ipso luctu voluptatem, immo per luctum, et inter lacrimas quoque quod iuvet quaerere? Hi sunt qui nobis obiciunt nimium rigorem et infamant praecepta nostra duritiae, quod dicamus dolorem aut admittendum in animum non esse aut cito expellendum. Utrum tandem est aut incredibilius aut inhumanius, non sentire amisso amico dolorem an voluptatem in ipso dolore aucupari? [27] Nos quod praecipimus honestum est: cum aliquid lacrimarum adfectus effuderit et, ut ita dicam, despumaverit, non esse tradendum animum dolori. Quid, tu dicis miscendam ipsi dolori voluptatem? sic consolamur crustulo pueros, sic infantium fletum infuso lacte conpescimus. Ne illo quidem tempore quo filius ardet aut amicus expirat cessare pateris voluptatem, sed ipsum vis titillare maerorem? Utrum honestius dolor ab animo summovetur an voluptas ad dolorem quoque admittitur? “Admittitur” dico? Captatur, et quidem ex ipso. [28] “Est aliqua” inquit “voluptas cognata tristitiae.” Istuc nobis licet dicere, vobis quidem non licet. Unum bonum nostis, voluptatem, unum malum, dolorem: quae potest inter bonum et malum esse cognatio? Sed puta esse: nunc potissimum eruitur? Et ipsum dolore scrutamur, an aliquid habeat iucundum circa se et voluptarium? [29] Quaedam remedia aliis partibus corporis salutaria velut foeda et indecora adhiberi aliis nequeunt, et quod aliubi prodesset sine damno verecundiae, id fit inhonestum loco vulneris: non te pudet luctum voluptate sanare? Severius ista plaga curanda est. Illud potius admone, nullum mali sensum ad eum qui perit pervenire; nam si pervenit, non perit. [30] Nulla, inquam, res eum laedit qui nullus est: vivit si laeditur. Utrum putas illi male esse quod nullus est an quod est adhuc aliquis? Atqui nec ex eo potest ei tormentum esse quod non est (quis enim nullius sensus est?) nec ex eo quod est; effugit enim maximum mortis incommodum, non esse. [31] Illud quoque dicamus ei qui deflet ac desiderat in aetate prima raptum: omnes, quantum ad brevitatem aevi, si universo compares, et iuvenes et senes, in aequo sumus. Minus enim ad nos ex aetate omni venit quam quod minimum esse quis dixerit, quoniam quidem minimum aliqua pars est: hoc quod vivimus proximum nihilo est; et tamen, o dementia nostram, late disponitur.

[32] ‘Haec tibi scripsi, non tamquam expectaturus esses remedium

a me tam serum (liquet enim mihi te locutum tecum quidquid lecturus es) sed ut castigarem exiguam illam moram qua a te recessisti, et in reliquum adhortarer contra fortunam tolleres animos et omnia eius tela non tamquam possent venire sed tamquam utique essent ventura prospiceres. Vale.'

C. SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

[1] Fabiani Papiri libros qui inscribuntur civilium legisse te cupidissime scribis, et non respondisse expectationi tuae; deinde oblitus de philosopho agi compositionem eius accusas. Puta esse quod dicis et effundi verba, non figi. Primum habet ista res suam gratiam et est decor proprius orationis leniter lapsae; multum enim interesse existimo utrum exciderit an fluxerit. <Adice> nunc quod in hoc quoque quod dicturus sum ingens differentia est: [2] Fabianus mihi non effundere videtur orationem sed fundere; adeo larga est et sine perturbatione, non sine cursu tamen veniens. Illud plane fatetur et praefert, non esse tractatam nec diu tortam. Sed ita, ut vis, esse credamus: mores ille, non verba composuit et animis scripsit ista, non auribus. [3] Praeterea ipso dicente non vacasset tibi partes intueri, adeo te summa rapuisset; et fere quae impetu placent minus praestant ad manum relata; sed illud quoque multum est, primo aspectu oculos occupasse, etiam si contemplatio diligens inventura est quod arguat. [4] Si me interrogas, maior ille est qui iudicium abstulit quam qui meruit; et scio hunc tutiorem esse, scio audacius sibi de futuro promittere. Oratio sollicita philosophum non decet: ubi tandem erit fortis et constans, ubi periculum sui faciet qui timet verbis? [5] Fabianus non erat neglegens in oratione sed securus. Itaque nihil invenies sordidum: electa verba sunt, non captata, nec huius saeculi more contra naturam suam posita et inversa, splendida tamen quamvis sumantur e medio. Sensus honestos et magnificos habes, non coactos in sententiam sed latius dictos. Videbimus quid parum recisum sit, quid parum structum, quid non huius recentis politurae: cum circumspexeris omnia, nullas videbis angustias inanis. [6] Desit sane varietas marmorum et concisura aquarum cubiculis interfluentium et pauperis cella et quidquid aliud luxuria non contenta decore simplici miscet: quod dici solet, domus recta est.

Adice nunc quod de compositione non constat: quidam illam volunt esse ex horrido comptam, quidam usque eo aspera gaudent ut etiam quae mollius casus explicuit ex industria dissipent et clausulas abrumpant ne ad expectatum respondeant. [7] Lege Ciceronem: compositio eius una est, pedem curvat lenta et sine infamia mollis.

At contra Pollionis Asinii salebrosa et exiliens et ubi minime expectes relictura. Denique omnia apud Ciceronem desinunt, apud Pollionem cadunt, exceptis paucissimis quae ad certum modum et ad unum exemplar adstricta sunt.

[8] Humilia praeterea tibi videri dicis omnia et parum erecta: quo vitio carere eum iudico. Non sunt enim illa humilia sed placida et ad animi tenorem quietum compositumque formata, nec depressa sed plana. Deest illis oratorius vigor stimuli que quos quaeris et subiti ictus sententiarum; sed totum corpus, videris quam sit comptum, honestum est. Non habet oratio eius sed dabit dignitatem. [9] Adfer quem Fabiano possis praepone. Dic Ciceronem, cuius libri ad philosophiam pertinentes paene totidem sunt quot Fabiani: cedam, sed non statim pusillum est si quid maximo minus est. Dic Asinium Pollionem: cedam, et respondeamus: in re tanta eminere est post duos esse. Nomina adhuc T. Livium; scripsit enim et dialogos, quos non magis philosophiae adnumerare possis quam historiae, et ex professo philosophiam continentis libros: huic quoque dabo locum. Vide tamen quam multos antecedit qui a tribus vincitur et tribus eloquentissimis.

[10] Sed non praestat omnia: non est fortis oratio eius, quamvis elata sit; non est violenta nec torrens, quamvis effusa sit; non est perspicua sed pura. ‘Desideres’ inquis ‘contra vitia aliquid aspere dici, contra pericula animose, contra fortunam superbe, contra ambitionem contumeliose. Volo luxuriam obiurgari, libidinem traduci, inpotentiam frangi. Sit aliquid oratorie acre, tragice grande, comice exile.’ Vis illum adsidere pusillae rei, verbis: ille rerum se magnitudini addixit, eloquentiam velut umbram non hoc agens trahit.

[11] Non erunt sine dubio singula circumspecta nec in se collecta nec omne verbum excitabit ac punget, fateor; exhibunt multa nec ferient et interdum otiosa praeterlabetur oratio, sed multum erit in omnibus lucis, sed ingens sine taedio spatium. Denique illud praestabit, ut liqueat tibi illum sensisse quae scripsit. Intelleges hoc actum ut tu scires quid illi placeret, non ut ille placeret tibi. Ad profectum omnia tendunt, ad bonam mentem: non quaeritur plausus.

[12] Talia esse scripta eius non dubito, etiam si magis reminiscor quam teneo haeretque mihi color eorum non ex recenti conversatione familiariter sed summatim, ut solet ex vetere notitia; cum audirem

certe illum, talia mihi videbantur, non solida sed plena, quae adolescentem indolis bonae attollerent et ad imitationem sui evocarent sine desperatione vincendi, quae mihi adhortatio videtur efficacissima. Deterret enim qui imitandi cupiditatem fecit, spem abstulit. Ceterum verbis abundabat, sine commendatione partium singularum in universum magnificus. Vale.

**LIBER SEPTIMVS DECIMVS ET OCTAVVS
DECIMVS**

CI. SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

[1] Omnis dies, omnis hora quam nihil simus ostendit et aliquo argumento recenti admonet fragilitatis oblitus; tum aeterna meditados respicere cogit ad mortem. Quid sibi istud principium velit quaeris? Senecionem Cornelium, equitem Romanum splendidum et officiosum, noveras: ex tenui principio seipse promoverat et iam illi declivis erat cursus ad cetera; facilius enim crescit dignitas quam incipit. [2] Pecunia quoque circa paupertatem plurimum morae habet; dum ex illa erepat haeret. Iam Senecio divitis imminebat, ad quas illum duae res ducebant efficacissimae, et quaerendi et custodiendi scientia, quarum vel altera locupletem facere potuisset. [3] Hic homo summae frugalitatis, non minus patrimonii quam corporis diligens, cum me ex consuetudine mane vidisset, cum per totum diem amico graviter adfecto et sine spe iacentiusque in noctem adsedisset, cum hilaris cenasset, genere valetudinis praecipiti arreptus, angina, vix compressum artatis faucibus spiritum traxit in lucem. Intra paucissimas ergo horas quam omnibus erat sani ac valentis officiis functus decessit. [4] Ille qui et mari et terra pecuniam agitabat, qui ad publica quoque nullum relinquens inexpertum genus quaestus accesserat, in ipso actu bene cedentium rerum, in ipso procurrentis pecuniae impeturaptus est.

Insere nunc, Meliboe, piros, pone [in] ordine vites.

Quam stultum est aetatem disponere ne crastini quidem dominum! o quanta dementia est spes longas inchoantium: emam, aedificabo, credam, exigam, honores geram, tum deinde lassam et plenam senectutem in otium referam. [5] Omnia, mihi crede, etiam felicibus dubia sunt; nihil sibi quisquam de futuro debet promittere; id quoque quod tenetur per manus exit et ipsam quam premimus horam casus incidit. Volvitur tempus rata quidem lege, sed per obscurum: quid autem ad me an naturae certum sit quod mihi incertum est? [6] Navigationes longas et pererratis litoribus alienis seros in patriam reditus proponimus, militiam et castrensiu laboru tarda manipretia, procuraciones officiorumque per officia processus, cum interim ad latus mors est, quae quoniam numquam cogitatur nisi aliena, subinde nobis ingeruntur mortalitatis exempla non diutius

quam dum miramur haesura. [7] Quid autem stultius quam mirari id ullo die factum quod omni potest fieri? Stat quidem terminus nobis ubi illum inexorabilis fatorum necessitas fixit, sed nemo scit nostrumquam prope versetur a termino; sic itaque formemus animum tamquam ad extremaventum sit. Nihil differamus; cotidie cum vita paria faciamus. [8] Maximum vitae vitium est quod imperfecta semper est, quod [in] aliquid ex illa differtur. Qui cotidie vitae suae summam manum inposuit non indiget tempore; ex hac autem indigentia timor nascitur et cupiditas futuri exedens animum. Nihil est miserius dubitatione venientium quorsus evadant; quantum sit illud quod restat aut quale sollicita mens inexplicabili formidine agitur. [9] Quo modo effugiemus hanc volutationem? Uno: si vita nostra non prominebit, si in se colligitur; ille enim ex futuro suspenditur cui inritum est praesens. Ubi vero quidquid mihi debui redditum est, ubi stabilita mens scit nihil interesse inter diem et saeculum, quidquid deinceps dierum rerumque venturum est ex alto prospicit et cum multo risu seriem temporum cogitat. Quid enim varietas mobilitasque casuum perturbabit, si certus sis adversus incerta? [10] Ideo propera, Lucili mi, vivere, et singulos dies singulas vitas puta. Qui hoc modo se aptavit, cui vita sua cotidie fuit tota, securus est: in spem viventibus proximum quodque tempus elabatur, subitque aviditas et miserrimus ac miserrima omnia efficiens metus mortis. Inde illud Maecenatis turpissimum votum quo et debilitatem non recusat et deformitatem et novissime acutam crucem, dummodo inter haec mala spiritus prorogetur:

[11] debilem facito manu,
debilem pede coxo,
tuber adstrue gibberum,
lubricos quate dentes:
vita dum superest, benest;
hanc mihi, vel acuta
si sedeam cruce, sustine.

[12] Quod miserrimum erat si incidisset optatur, et tamquam vita petitur supplici mora. Contemptissimum putarem si vivere vellet usque ad crucem: 'tu vero' inquit 'me debiles licet, dum spiritus in

corpore fracto et inutili maneat; depraves licet, dum monstroso et distorto temporis aliquid accedat; suffigas licet et acutam sessuro crucem subdas': est tanti vulnus suum premere et patibulo pendere districtum, dum differat id quod est in malis optimum, supplicii finem? est tanti habere animam ut agam? [13] Quid huic optes nisi deos faciles? quid sibi vult ista carminis effeminati turpitude? quid timoris dementissimi pactio? quid tam foeda vitae mendicatio? Huic putes umquam recitasse Vergilium:

usque adeone mori miserum est?

Optat ultima malorum et quae pati gravissimum est extendi ac sustineri cupit: qua mercede? scilicet vitae longioris. Quod autem vivere est diu mori? [14] Invenitur aliquis qui velit inter supplicia tabescere et perire membratim et totiens per stilicidia emittere animam quam semel exhalare? Invenitur qui velit adactus ad illud infelix lignum, iam debilis, iam pravuset in foedum scapularum ac pectoris tuber elisus, cui multae moriendi causae etiam citra crucem fuerant, trahere animam tot tormenta tracturam? Nega nunc magnum beneficium esse naturae quod necesse est mori. [15] Multi peiora adhuc pacisci parati sunt: etiam amicum prodere, ut diutius vivant, et liberos ad stuprum manu sua tradere, ut contingat lucem videre tot consciam scelerum. Excutienda vitae cupido est discendumque nihil interesse quando patiaris quod quandoque patiendum est; quam bene vivas referre, non quamdiu; saepe autem in hoc esse bene, ne diu. Vale.

CII. SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

[1] Quomodo molestus est iucundum somnium videnti qui excitat (aufertenim voluptatem etiam si falsam, effectum tamen verae habentem) sic epistulatua mihi fecit iniuriam; revocavit enim me cogitationi aptae traditum etiturum, si licuisset, ulterius. [2] Iuvabat de aeternitate animarum quaerere, immo mehercules credere; praebebam enim me facilem opinionibus magnorum virorum rem gratissimam promittentium magis quam probantium. Dabam me spei tantae, iam eram fastidio mihi, iam reliquias aetatis infractae contemnebam in immensum illud tempus et in possessionem omnis aevi transiturus, cum subito experrectus sum epistula tua accepta et tam bellum somnium perdi. Quod repetam, si te dimiser, et redimam.

[3] Negas me epistula prima totam quaestionem explicuisse in qua probare conabar id quod nostris placet, claritatem quae post mortem contingit bonum esse. Id enim me non solvisse quod opponitur nobis: ‘nullum’ inquit ‘bonum ex distantibus; hoc autem ex distantibus constat’. [4] Quod interrogas, mi Lucili, eiusdem quaestionis est loci alterius, et ideo non id tantum sed alia quoque eodem pertinentia distuleram; quaedam enim, ut scis, moralibus rationalia inmixta sunt. Itaque illam partem rectam et ad mores pertinentem tractavi, numquid stultum sit ac supervacuum ultra extremum diem curastrans mittere, an cadant bona nostra nobiscum nihilque sit eius qui nullusest, an ex eo quod, cum erit, sensuri non sumus, antequam sit aliquis fructus percipi aut peti possit. [5] Haec omnia ad mores spectant; itaque suo locoposita sunt. At quae a dialecticis contra hanc opinionem dicuntur segreganda fuerunt et ideo seposita sunt. Nunc, quia omnia exis, omnia quae dicunt persequar, deinde singulis occurram.

[6] Nisi aliquid praedixero, intellegi non poterunt quae refellentur. Quid est quod praedicere velim? quaedam continua corpora esse, ut hominem; quaedam esse composita, ut navem, domum, omnia denique quorum diversae partes iunctura in unum coactae sunt; quaedam ex distantibus, quorum adhuc membra separata sunt, tamquam exercitus, populus, senatus. Illi enim perquos ista corpora

efficiuntur iure aut officio cohaerent, natura diductiet singuli sunt. Quid est quod etiam nunc praedicere velim? [7] nullum bonum putamus esse quod ex distantibus constat; uno enim spiritu unum bonum contineri ac regi debet, unum esse unius boni principale. Hoc si quando desideraverisper se probatur: interim ponendum fuit, quia in <nos> nostra tela mittuntur.

[8] ‘Dicitis’ inquit ‘nullum bonum ex distantibus esse; claritas aut emista bonorum virorum secunda opinio est. Nam quomodo fama non est unius sermo nec infamia unius mala existimatio, sic nec claritas uni bono placuisse;consentire in hoc plures insignes et spectabiles viri debent, ut claritassit. Haec autem ex iudiciis plurium efficitur, id est distantium; ergonon est bonum.

[9] ‘Claritas’ inquit ‘laus est a bonis bono reddita; laus oratio, vox est aliquid significans; vox est autem, licet virorum sit <bonorum, non> bonum. Nec enim quidquid vir bonus facit bonum est; nam et plauditet sibilat, sed nec plausum quisquam nec sibilum, licet omnia eius admiretur et laudet, bonum dicit, non magis quam sternumentum aut tussim. Ergo claritas bonum non est.

[10] ‘Ad summam dicite nobis utrum laudantis an laudati bonum sit: si laudati bonum esse dicitis, tam ridiculam rem facitis quam si adfirmetis meum esse quod alius bene valeat. Sed laudare dignos honesta actio est; ita laudantis bonum est cuius actio est, non nostrum qui laudamur: atqui hoc quaerebatur. ‘

[11] Respondebo nunc singulis cursim. Primum an sit aliquod ex distantibus bonum etiamnunc quaeritur et pars utraque sententias habet. Deinde claritas desiderat multa suffragia? potest et unius boni viri iudicio esse contenta: nos bonus bonos iudicat. [12] ‘Quid ergo?’ inquit ‘et fama erit unius hominis existimatio et infamia unius malignus sermo? Gloriam quoque’ inquit ‘latius fusam intellego; consensum enim multorum exigit. ‘ Diversa horum condicio est et illius. Quare? quia si de me bene vir bonus sentit, eodem loco sum quo si omnes boni idem sentirent; omnes enim, si me cognoverint, idem sentient. Par illis idemque iudicium est, aequo vero inficiscitur. Dissidere nonpossunt; ita pro eo est ac si omnes idem sentiant, quia aliud sentire non possunt. [13] Ad gloriam aut famam non est satis unius opinio. Illic idem potest una sententia quod omnium, quia

omnium, si perrogetur, una erit: hic diversa dissimilium iudicia sunt. Difficiles adsensus, dubia omnia invenies, levia, suspecta. Putas tu posse unam omnium esse sententiam? non est unius una sententia. Illic placet verum, veritatis una vis, una facies est: apud hos falsa sunt quibus adsentiuntur. Numquam autem falsis constantia est; variantur et dissident.

[14] ‘Sed laus’ inquit ‘nihil aliud quam vox est, vox autem bonum non est. ‘ Cum dicunt claritatem esse laudem bonorum a bonis redditam, non advocem referunt sed ad sententiam. Licet enim vir bonus taceat sed aliquem iudicet dignum laude esse, laudatus est. [15] Praeterea aliud est laus, aliud laudatio, haec et vocem exigit; itaque nemo dicit laudem funebrem sed laudationem, cuius officium oratione constat. Cum dicimus aliquem laude dignum, non verba illi benigna hominum sed iudicia promittimus. Ergo laus etiam taciti est bene sentientis ac bonum virum apud se laudantis. [16] Deinde, ut dixi, ad animum refertur laus, non ad verba, quae conceptam laudem egerunt et in notitiam plurium emittunt. Laudat qui laudandum esse iudicat. Cum tragicus ille apud nos ait magnificum esse ‘laudari a laudato viro’, laude digno ait. Et cum aequae antiquus poeta ait ‘laus alit artis’, non laudationem dicit, quae corrumpit artes; nihil enim aequae et eloquentiam et omne aliud studium auribus deditum vitiavit quam popularis adsensio. [17] Fama vocem utique desiderat, claritas potest etiam citra vocem contingere contenta iudicio; plena est non tantum inter tacentis sed etiam inter reclamantis. Quid intersit inter claritatem et gloriam dicam: gloria multorum iudicis constat, claritas bonorum.

[18] ‘Cuius’ inquit ‘bonum est claritas, id est laus bono a bonis reddita? utrum laudati an laudantis?’ ‘ Utriusque. Meum, qui laudor; quia natura mea mantem omnium genuit, et bene fecisse gaudeo et gratos me invenisse virtutum interpretes laetor. Hoc plurimum bonum est quod grati sunt, sed et meum; ita enim animo compositus sum ut aliorum bonum meum iudicem, utique eorum quibus ipse sum boni causa. [19] Est istud laudantium bonum; virtute enim geritur; omnis autem virtutis actio bonum est. Hoc contingere illis non potuisset nisi ego talis essem. Itaque utriusque bonum est merito laudari, tam mehercules quam bene iudicasse iudicantis bonum est et eius

secundum quem iudicatum est. Numquid dubitas quin iustitia et habentis bonum sitet autem sit eius cui debitum solvit? Merentem laudare iustitia est; ergo utriusque bonum est.

[20] Cavillatoribus istis abunde responderimus. Sed non debet hoc nobis esse propositum, arguta disserere et philosophiam in has angustias ex sua maiestate detrahere: quanto satius est ire aperta via et recta quam sibi ipsum flexus disponere quos cum magna molestia debeas relegere? Neque enim quicquam aliud istae disputationes sunt quam inter se perite captantium lusus. [21] Dic potius quam naturale sit in immensum mentem suam extendere. Magna et generosa res est humanus animus; nullos sibi poni nisi communeset cum deo terminos patitur. Primum humilem non accipit patriam, Ephesum aut Alexandriam aut si quod est etiamnunc frequentius accolis laetius vetectis solum: patria est illi quodcumque suprema et universa circuitu suo cingit, hoc omne convexum intra quod iacent maria cum terris, intra quod aer humanis divina secernens etiam coniungit, in quo disposita tot numina in actus suos excubant. [22] Deinde artam aetatem sibi dari non sinit: ‘omnes’ inquit ‘anni mei sunt; nullum saeculum magnis ingeniis clusum est, nullum non cogitationi pervium tempus. Cum venerit dies ille qui mixtum hoc divini humanique secernat, corpus hic ubi inveni relinquam, ipse mediis reddam. Nec nunc sine illis sum, sed gravi terrenoque detineor.’ [23] Per has mortalis aevi moras illi meliori vitae longiorique proluditur. Quemadmodum decem mensibus tenet nos maternus uterus et praeparat non sibi sed illi loco in quem videmur emitti iam idonei spiritum trahere et inaperto durare, sic per hoc spatium quod ab infantia patet in senectutem in alium mature scimus partum. Alia origo nos expectat, alius rerum status. [24] Nondum caelum nisi ex intervallo pati possumus. Proinde intrepidus horam illam decretoriam prospice: non est animo suprema, sed corpori. Quidquid circa te iacet rerum tamquam hospitalis loci sarcinas specta: transeundum est. Excudit redeuntem natura sicut intrantem. [25] Non licet plus efferrequam intuleris, immo etiam ex eo quod ad vitam adtulisti pars magna ponenda est: detrahatur tibi haec circumiecta, novissimum velamentum tui, cutis; detrahatur caro et suffusus sanguis discurrensque per totum; detrahentur ossa nervique, firmamenta

fluidorum ac labentium. [26] Dies iste quem tamquam extremum reformidas aeterni natalis est. Depone onus: quid cunctaris, tamquam non prius quoque relicto in quo latebas corpore exieris? Haeres, reluctaris: tum quoque magno nisu matris expulsus es. Gemis, ploras: et hoc ipsum flerenascentis est, sed tunc debebat ignosci: rudis et inperitus omnium veneras. Ex maternorum viscerum calido mollique fomento emissum adflavit aura liberior, deinde offendit durae manus tactus, tenerque adhuc et nullius rei gnarus obstipuisti inter ignota:

[27] nunc tibi non est novum separari ab eo cuius ante pars fueris; aequo animo membra iam supervacua dimitte et istuc corpus inhabitatum diu pone. Scindetur, obruetur, abolebitur: quid contristaris? ita solet fieri: pereunt semper velamenta nascentium. Quid ista sic diligis quasi tua? Istis opertus es: veniet qui te reveilat dies et ex contubernio foedi atque olidi ventris educat. [28] Huic nunc quoque tu quantum potessub<duc te> voluptatique nisi quae * * * necessariisque cohaerebit alienus iam hinc altius aliquid sublimiusque meditare: aliquando naturae tibi arcana reteguntur, discutietur ista caligo et lux undique clara percutiet. Imaginare tecum quantus ille sit fulgor tot sideribus inter se lumen miscentibus. Nulla serenum umbra turbabit; aequaliter splendeat omne caeli latus: dies et nox aeris infimi vices sunt. Tunc in tenebris vixisse te dices cum totam lucem et totus aspexeris, quam nunc per angustissimas oculorum vias obscure intueris, et tamen admiraris illam iam procul: quid tibi videbitur divina lux cum illam suo loco videris? [29] Haec cogitatio nihil sordidum animo subsidere sinit, nihil humile, nihil crudele. Deos rerum omnium esse testes ait; illis nos adprobari, illis in futurum parari iubet et aeternitatem proponere. Quam qui mente concepit nullos horret exercitus, non terretur tuba, nullis ad timorem minis agitur. [30] Quidni non timeat qui mori sperat? is quoque qui animum tamdiu iudicat manere quamdiu retinetur corporis vinculo, solutum statim spargi, id agit ut etiam post mortem utilis esse possit. Quamvis enim ipse ereptus sit oculis, tamen

multa viri virtus animo multusque recursat
gentis honos.

Cogita quantum nobis exempla bona prosint: scies magnorum

virorum non minus praesentiam esse utilem quam memoriam. Vale.

CIII. SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

[1] Quid ista circumspicis quae tibi possunt fortasse evenire sed possunt et non evenire? Incendium dico, ruinam, alia quae nobis incidunt, non insidiantur: illa potius vide, illa [vide] vita [illa] quae nos observant, quae captant. Rari sunt casus, etiamsi graves, naufragium facere, vehiculo everti: ab homine homini cotidianum periculum. Adversus hoc te expedi, hoc intentis oculis intueri; nullum est malum frequentius, nullum pertinacius, nullum blandius.

[2] Tempestas minatur antequam surgat, crepant aedificia antequam corruant, praenuntiat fumus incendium: subita est ex homine perniciēs [est], et eo diligentius tegitur quo propius accedit. Erras si istorum tibi qui occurrunt vultibus credis: hominum effigies habent, animos ferarum, nisi quod illarum perniciosus est primus incursus: quos transiere non quaerunt. Numquam enim illas ad nocendum nisi necessitas incitat; [hae] aut fame aut timore coguntur ad pugnam: homini perdere hominem libet. [3] Tu tamen ita cogita quod ex homine periculum sit ut cogites quod sit hominis officium; alterum intueri ne laedaris, alterum ne laedas. Commodis omnium laeteris, movearis incommodis, et memineris quae praestare debeas, quae cavere. [4] Sic vivendo quid consequaris? non te ne noceant, sed ne fallant. Quantum potes autem in philosophiam recede: illa te sinu suo proteget, in huius sacrario eris aut tutus aut tutior. Non arietant inter se nisi in eadem ambulantes via. [5] Ipsam autem philosophiam non debebis iactare; multis fuit periculi causa insolenter tractata et contumaciter: tibi vitia detrahat, non aliis exprobet. Non abhorreat a publicis moribus nec hoc agat ut quidquid non facit damnare videatur. Licet sapere sine pompa, sine invidia. Vale.

CIV. SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

[1] In Nomentanum meum fugi — quid putas? urbem? immo febrem et quidam subrepentem; iam manum mihi iniecerat. Medicus initia esse dicebat motis venis et incertis et naturalem turbantibus modum. Protinus itaque parare vehiculum iussi; Paulina mea retinente exire perseveravi. Illud mihi in ore erat domini mei Gallionis, qui cum in Achaia febrem habere coepisset, protinus navem escendit clamitans non corporis esse sed loci morbum. [2] Hoc ego Paulinae meae dixi, quae mihi valetudinem meam commendat. Nam cum sciam spiritum illius in meo verti, incipio, ut illi consulam, mihi consulere. Et cum me fortiorem senectus ad multa reddiderit, hoc beneficium aetatis amitto; venit enim mihi in mentem in hoc senectute et adulescentem esse cui parciitur. Itaque quoniam ego ab illa non inpetro ut me fortius amet, <ame> inpetrat illa ut me diligentius amem. [3] Indulgendum est enim honestis affectibus; et interdum, etiam si premunt causae, spiritus in honorem suorum vel cum tormento revocandus et in ipso ore retinendus est, cum bono viro vivendum sit non quamdiu iuvat sed quamdiu oportet: ille qui non uxorem, non amicum tanti putat ut diutius in vita commoretur, qui perseverabit mori, delicatus est. Hoc quoque imperet sibi animus, ubi utilitas suorum exigit, nec tantum si vult mori, sed si coepit, intermittat et <se> suis commodet. [4] Ingentis animi est aliena causa ad vitam reverti, quod magni viri saepe fecerunt; sed hoc quoque summae humanitatis existimo, senectutem suam, cuius maximus fructus est securior sui tutela et vitae usus animosior, attentius <curare>, si scias alicui id tuorum esse dulce, utile, optabile. [5] Habet praeterea in se non mediocre ista res gaudium et mercedem; quid enim iucundius quam uxori tam carum esse ut propter hoc tibi carior fias? Potest itaque Paulina mea non tantum suum mihi timorem inputare sed etiam meum.

[6] Quaeris ergo quomodo mihi consilium profectionis cesserit? Ut primum gravitatem urbis excessi et illum odorem culinarum fumantium quae mota quidquid pestiferi vaporis sorbuerunt cum pulvere effundunt, protinus mutatam valetudinem sensi. Quantum deinde adiectum putas viribus postquam vineas attigi? in pascuum

emissus cibum meum invasi. Repetivi ergo iam me; non permansit marcor ille corporis dubii et male cogitantis. Incipio toto animo studere. [7] Non multum ad hoc locus confert nisi se sibi praestat animus, qui secretum in occupationibus mediis si volet habebit: at ille qui regiones eligit et otium captat ubique quo distringatur inveniet. Nam Socraten quere quendam quod nihil sibi peregrinationes profuissent respondisse ferunt, 'non inmerito hoc tibi evenit; tecum enim peregrinaberis'. [8] O quam bene cum quibusdam ageretur, si a se aberrarent! Nunc premunt se ipsi, sollicitant, corrumpunt, territant. Quid prodest mare traicere et urbes mutare? si visista quibus urgueris effugere, non aliubi sis oportet sed alius. Puta venissete Athenas, puta Rhodon; elige arbitrio tuo civitatem: quid ad rem pertinet quos illa mores habeat? tuos adferes. [9] Divitias iudicabis bonum: torquebit te paupertas, quod est miserrimum, falsa. Quamvis enim multum possideas, tamen, quia aliquis plus habet, tanto tibi videris deficere quanto vinceris. Honores iudicabis bonum: male te habebit ille consul factus, ille etiam refectus; inviderebis quotiens aliquem in fastis saepius legeris. Tantum erit ambitionis furor ut nemo tibi post te videatur si aliquis ante te fuerit. [10] Maximum malum iudicabis mortem, cum <in> illa nihil sit mali nisi quod ante ipsam est, timeri. Exterrebunt te non tantum pericula sed suspensiones; vanis semper agitareris. Quid enim proderit

evasisse tot urbes

Argolicas mediosque fugam tenuisse per hostis?

Ipsa pax timores sumministrabit; ne tutis quidem habebitur fides consternata semel mente, quae ubi consuetudinem pavoris inprovidi fecit, etiam ad tutelam salutis suae inhabilis est. Non enim vitat sed fugit; magis autem periculis patemur aversi. [11] Gravissimum iudicabis malum aliquem ex his quos amabis amittere, cum interim hoc tam ineptum erit quam flere quod arboribus amoenis et domum tuam ornantibus decidant folia. Quidquid te delectat aequè vide+ut videres+: dum virent, utere. Alium alio die casus excutiet, sed quemadmodum frondium iactura facilis est quia renascuntur, sic istorum quos amas quosque oblectamenta vitae putas esse damnum, quia reparantur etiam si non renascuntur. [12] 'Sed non erunt idem. '

Ne tu quidem idem eris. Omnis dies, omnis horate mutat; sed in aliis rapina facilius apparet, hic latet, quia non exaperto fit. Alii auferuntur, at ipsi nobis furto subducimur. Horum nihilcogitabis nec remedia vulneribus oppones, sed ipse tibi seres sollicitudinumcausas alia sperando, alia desperando? Si sapis, alterum alteri misce:nec speraveris sine desperatione nec desperaveris sine spe.

[13] Quid per se peregrinatio prodesse cuiquam potuit? Non voluptatesilla temperavit, non cupiditates refrenavit, non iras repressit, non indomitosamoris impetus fregit, nulla denique animo mala eduxit. Non iudicium dedit, non discussit errorem, sed ut puerum ignota mirantem ad breve tempus rerumaliqua novitate detinuit. [14] Ceterum inconstantiam mentis, quae maximeaegra est, lacessit, mobiliorem leviolemque reddit ipsa iactatio. Itaquequae petierant cupidissime loca cupidius deserunt et avium modo transvolantcitiusque quam venerant abeunt. [15] Peregrinatio notitiam dabit gentium, novas tibi montium formas ostendet, invisitata spatia camporum et inriguasperennibus aquis valles; alicuius fluminis <singularem ponet> sub observationenaturam, sive ut Nilus aestivo incremento tumet, sive ut Tigris eripiturex oculis et acto per occulta cursu integrae magnitudinis redditur, siveut Maeander, poetarum omnium exercitatio et ludus, implicatur crebris anfractibuset saepe in vicinum alveo suo admotus, antequam sibi influat, flectitur:ceterum neque meliorem faciet neque saniolem. [16] Inter studia versandumest et inter auctores sapientiae ut quaesita discamus, nondum inventa quaeramus;sic eximendus animus ex miserrima servitute in libertatem adseritur. Quamdiuquidem nescieris quid fugiendum, quid petendum, quid necessarium, quidsupervacuum, quid iustum, quid iniustum, quid honestum, quid inhonestumsit, non erit hoc peregrinari sed errare. [17] Nullam tibi opem feret istediscursus; peregrinaris enim cum adfectibus tuis et mala te tua sequuntur. Utinam quidem sequerentur! Longius abessent: nunc fers illa, non ducis. Itaque ubique te premunt et paribus incommodis urunt. Medicina aegro, nonregio quaerenda est. [18] Fregit aliquis crus aut extorsit articulum: nonvehiculum navemque conscendit, sed advocat medicum ut fracta pars iungatur, ut luxata in locum reponatur. Quid ergo? animum tot locis fractum et extortumcredis locorum mutatione posse sanari? Maius est istud malum quam ut gestationecuretur. [19]

Peregrinatio non facit medicum, non oratorem; nulla ars locodiscitur: quid ergo? sapientia, ars omnium maxima, in itinere colligitur? Nullum est, mihi crede, iter quod te extra cupiditates, extra iras, extrametus sistat; aut si quod esset, agmine facto gens illuc humana pergeret. Tamdiu ista urguebunt mala macerabuntque per terras ac maria vagum quamdiu malorum gestaveris causas. [20] Fugam tibi non prodesse miraris? tecumsunt quae fugis. Te igitur emenda, onera tibi detrahe et [emenda] desideria intra salutarem modum contine; omnem ex animo erade nequitiam. Si vis peregrinationes habere iucundas, comitem tuum sana. Haerebit tibi avaritia quamdiu avaros sordidoque convixeris; haerebit tumor quamdiu superbo conversaberis; numquamsaevitiam in tortoris contubernio pones; incendent libidines tuas adulterorum sodalicia. [21] Si velis vitiis exui, longe a vitiorum exemplis recedendum est. Avarus, corruptor, saevus, fraudulentus, multum nocituri si propea te fuissent, intra te sunt. Ad meliores transi: cum Catonibus vive, cum Laelio, cum Tuberone. Quod si convivere etiam Graecis iuvat, cum Socrate, cum Zenone versare: alter te docebit mori si necesse erit, alter antequam necesse erit. [22] Vive cum Chrysippo, cum Posidonio: hi tibi tradent humanorum divinorumque notitiam, hi iubebunt in opere esse nec tantum scite loquit in oblectationem audientium verba iactare, sed animum indurare et adversus minas erigere. Unus est enim huius vitae fluctuantis et turbidae portus eventura contemnere, stare fidenter ac paratum tela fortunae adverso pectore excipere, non latitantem nec tergiversantem. [23] Magnanimos nos natura produxit, et ut quibusdam animalibus ferum dedit, quibusdam subdolum, quibusdampavidum, ita nobis gloriosum et excelsum spiritum quaerentem ubi honestissime, non ubi tutissime vivat, simillimum mundo, quem quantum mortalium passibus licet sequitur aemulaturque; profert se, laudari et aspici credit. [24] <Dominus> omnium est, supra omnia est; itaque nulli se rei summittat, nihil illi videatur grave, nihil quod virum incurvet.

Terribiles visu formae, Letumque Labosque:

minime quidem, si quis rectis oculis intueri illa possit et tenebras perumpere; multa per noctem habita terrori dies vertit ad risum.

Terribiles visu formae, Letumque Labosque:

egregie Vergilius noster non re dixit terribiles esse sed visu, id

est videri, non esse. [25] Quid, inquam, in istis est tam formidabile quam fama vulgavit? quid est, obsecro te, Lucili, cur timeat laborem vir, mortem homo? Totiens mihi occurrunt isti qui non putant fieri posse quidquid facere non possunt, et aiunt nos loqui maiora quam quae humana natura sustineat. [26] At quanto ego de illis melius existimo! ipsi quoque haec possunt facere, sed nolunt. Denique quem umquam ista destituere temptantem? cui non faciliora apparere in actu? Non quia difficilia sunt non audemus, sed quia non audemus difficilia sunt.

[27] Si tamen exemplum desideratis, accipite Socraten, per se ipsum senem, per omnia aspera iactatum, invictum tamen et paupertate, quam graviore milli domestica onera faciebant, et laboribus, quos militares quoque pertulit. Quibus ille domi exercitus, sive uxorem eius moribus feram, lingua petulantem, sive liberos indociles et matri quam patri similiores +sivere+ aut in bello fuit aut in tyrannide aut in libertate bellis ac tyrannis saeviore. [28] Viginti et septem annis pugnatum est; post finita arma triginta tyrannis noxae dedita est civitas, ex quibus plerique inimici erant. Novissime damnatio est sub gravissimis nominibus impleta: obiecta est et religionum violatio et iuventutis corruptela, quam inmittere in deos, in patres, in rem publicam dictus est. Post haec carcer et venenum. Haec usque eo animum Socratis non moverant ut ne vultum quidem moverint. <O> illam mirabilem laudem et singularem! usque ad extremum nec hilariorem quisquam nec tristiorem Socraten vidit; aequalis fuit in tanta inaequalitate fortunae.

[29] Vis alterum exemplum? accipe hunc M. Catonem recentiorem, cum quo et infestius fortuna egit et pertinacius. Cui cum omnibus locis obstitisset, novissime et in morte, ostendit tamen virum fortem posse invita fortunam vivere, invita mori. Tota illi aetas aut in armis est exacta civilibus aut +intacta+ concipiente iam civile bellum; et hunc licet dicas non minusquam Socraten +inseruisse dixisse+ nisi forte Cn. Pompeium et Caesarem et Crassum putas libertatis socios fuisse.

[30] Nemo mutatum Catonem totiens mutata re publica vidit; eundem se in omni statu praestitit, in praetura, in repulsa, in accusatione, in provincia, in contione, in exercitu, in morte. Denique in illa rei publicae trepitatione, cum illinc Caesar esset decem legionibus pugnacissimis subnixus, totis exterarum gentium praesidiis, hinc Cn.

Pompeius, satis unus adversus omnia, cum alii ad Caesarem inclinarent, alii ad Pompeium, solus Cato fecit aliquas et rei publicae partes. [31] Si animo conplexi volueris illius imaginem temporis, videbis illinc plebemet omnem erectum ad res novas vulgum, hinc optumates et equestrem ordinem, quidquid erat in civitate sancti et electi, duos in medio relictos, rempublicam et Catonem. Miraberis, inquam, cum animadverteris

Atriden Priamumque et saevom ambobus Achillen;

utrumque enim inprobat, utrumque exarmat. [32] Hanc fert de utroque sententiam: ait se, si Caesar vicerit, moriturum, si Pompeius, exulaturum. Quid habebat quod timeret qui ipse sibi et victo et victori constituerat quae constituta esse ab hostibus iratissimis poterant? Perit itaque ex decreto suo. [33] Vides posse homines laborem pati: per medias Africae solitudines pedesduxit exercitum. Vides posse tolerari sitim: in collibus arentibus sine ullis impedimentis victi exercitus reliquias trahens inopiam umoris loricatus tulit et, quotiens aquae fuerat occasio, novissimus bibit. Vides honorem et notam posse contemni: eodem quo repulsus est die in comitio pila lusit. Vides posse non timeri potentiam superiorum: et Pompeium et Caesarem, quorum nemo alterum offendere audebat nisi ut alterum demereretur, simul provocavit. Vides tam mortem posse contemni quam exilium: et exilium sibi indixit et mortem et interim bellum. [34] Possumus itaque adversus ista tantum habere animi, libeat modo subducere iugo collum. In primis autem respuendae voluptates: enervant et effeminant et multum petunt, multum autem a fortuna petendum est. Deinde spernendae opes: auctoramenta sunt servitutum. Aurum et argentum et quidquid aliud felices domos onerat relinquatur: non potest gratis constare libertas. Hanc si magno aestimas, omnia parvo aestimanda sunt. Vale.

CV. SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

[1] Quae observanda tibi sint ut tutior vivas dicam. Tu tamen sic audiascenseo ista praecepta quomodo si tibi praeciperem qua ratione bonam valetudinemin Ardeatino tuereris. Considera quae sint quae hominem in perniciem hominisinstigent: invenies spem, invidiam, odium, metum, contemptum. [2] Ex omnibusistis adeo levissimum est contemptus ut multi in illo remedii causa delituerint. Quem quis contemnit, calcatur sine dubio sed transit; nemo homini contemptopertinaciter, nemo diligenter nocet; etiam in acie iacens praeteritur, cum stante pugnatur.

[3] Spem improborum vitabis si nihil habueris quod cupiditatem alienamet inprobam iritet, si nihil insigne possederis; concupiscuntur enim etiam+pars innotarum sunt sic raro+. Invidiam effugies si te non ingesserisoculis, si bona tua non iactaveris, si scieris in sinu gaudere. Odium autest ex offensa (hoc vitabis neminem lacescendo) aut gratuitum, a quo tesensus communis tuebitur. Fuit hoc multis periculosum: quidam odium habueruntnec inimicum. [4] Illud, ne timearis, praestabit tibi et fortunae mediocritaset ingeni lenitas: eum esse te homines sciant quem offendere sine periculopossint; reconciliatio tua et facilis sit et certa. Timeri autem tam domimolestum est quam foris, tam a servis quam a liberis: nulli non ad nocendum satis virium est. Adice nunc quod qui timetur timet: nemo potuit terribilisse secure. [5] Contemptus superest, cuius modum in sua potestate habetqui illum sibi adiunxit, qui contemnitur quia voluit, non quia debuit. Huius incommodum et artes bonae discutiunt et amicitiae eorum qui apudaliquem potentem potentes sunt, quibus adplicari expediet, non inplicari, ne pluris remedium quam periculum constet.

[6] Nihil tamen aequae proderit quam quiescere et minimum cum aliisloqui, plurimum secum. Est quaedam dulcedo sermonis quae inrepat et eblandituret non aliter quam ebrietas aut amor secreta producit. Nemo quod audierittacebit, nemo quantum audierit loquetur; qui rem non tacuerit non tacebitauctorem. Habet unusquisque aliquem cui tantum credat quantum ipsi creditumest; ut garrulitatem suam custodiat et contentus sit unius auribus,

populumfaciet; sic quod modo secretum erat rumor est.

[7] Securitatis magna portio est nihil inique facere: confusam vitamet perturbatam inpotentes agunt; tantum metuunt quantum nocent, nec ullotempore vacant. Trepidant enim cum fecerunt, haerent; conscientia aliudagere non patitur ac subinde respondere ad se cogit. Dat poenas quisquisexpectat; quisquis autem meruit expectat. [8] Tutum aliqua res in malaconscientia praestat, nulla securum; putat enim se, etiam si non deprenditur, posse deprenderi, et inter somnos movetur et, quotiens alicuius scelus loquitur, de suo cogitat; non satis illi oblitteratum videtur, non satis tectum. Nocens habuit aliquando latendi fortunam, numquam fiduciam. Vale.

CVI. SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

[1] Tardius rescribo ad epistulas tuas, non quia districtus occupationibussum. Hanc excusationem cave audias: vaco, et omnes vacant qui volunt. Neminemres sequuntur: ipsi illas amplexantur et argumentum esse felicitatis occupationemputant. Quid ergo fuit quare non protinus rescriberem? id de quo quaerebasveniebat in contextum operis mei; [2] scis enim me moralem philosophiamvelle conplecti et omnes ad eam pertinentis quaestiones explicare. Itaque dubitavi utrum differrem te donec suus isti rei veniret locus, an ius tibiextra ordinem dicerem: humanius visum est tam longe venientem non detinere. [3] Itaque et hoc ex illa serie rerum cohaerentium excerptam et, si quaerunt eiusmodi, non quaerenti tibi ultro mittam.

Quae sint haec interrogas? Quae scire magis iuvat quam prodest, sicuthoc de quo quaeris: bonum an corpus sit? [4] Bonum facit; prodest enim;quod facit corpus est. Bonum agitat animum et quodam modo format et continet, quae [ergo] propria sunt corporis. Quae corporis bona sunt corpora sunt;ergo et quae animi sunt; nam et hoc corpus est. [5] Bonum hominis necesseest corpus sit, cum ipse sit corporalis. Mentior, nisi et quae alunt illumet quae valetudinem eius vel custodiunt vel restituunt corpora sunt; ergoet bonum eius corpus est. Non puto te dubitaturum an adfectus corpora sint(ut aliud quoque de quo non quaeris infulciam), tamquam ira, amor, tristitia, nisi dubitas an vultum nobis mutant, an frontem adstringant, an faciemdiffundant, an ruborem evocent, an fugent sanguinem. Quid ergo? tam manifestasnotas corporis credis inprimi nisi a corpore? [6] Si adfectus corpora sunt, et morbi animorum, ut avaritia, crudelitas, indurata vitia et in statuminemendabilem adducta; ergo et malitia et species eius omnes, malignitas, invidia, superbia; [7] ergo et bona, primum quia contraria istis sunt, deinde quia eadem tibi indicia praestabunt. An non vides quantum oculisdet vigorem fortitudo? quantam intentionem prudentia? quantam modestiamet quietem reverentia? quantam serenitatem laetitia? quantum rigorem severitas? quantam remissionem lenitas? Corpora ergo sunt quae colorem habitumque corporum mutant, quae in illis regnum suum exercent.

Omnes autem quas rettuli virtutes bona sunt, et quidquid ex illis est.
[8] Numquid est dubium an id quo quid tangi potest corpus sit?
Tangere enim et tangi nisi corpus nulla potest res, ut ait Lucretius.
Omnia autem ista quae dixi non mutarent corpus nisi tangerent; ergo
corpora sunt. [9] Etiam nunc cui tanta vis est ut inpellat et cogat et
retineat inhibeat corpus est. Quid ergo? non timor retinet? non
audacia inpellit? non fortitudo inmittit et impetum dat? non
moderatio refrenat ac revocat? non gaudium extollit? non tristitia
deducit? [10] Denique quidquid facimus aut malitiae aut virtutis
gerimus imperio: quod imperat corpori corpus est, quod vim corpori
adfert, corpus. Bonum corporis corporale est, bonum hominis et
corporis bonum est; itaque corporale est.

[11] Quoniam, ut voluisti, morem gessi tibi, nunc ipse dicam mihi
quod dicturum esse te video: latrunculis ludimus. In supervacuis
subtilitasteritur: non faciunt bonos ista sed doctos. [12] Apertior res est
sapere, immo simplicior: paucis <satis> est ad mentem bonam uti
litteris, sed nos ut cetera in supervacuum diffundimus, ita
philosophiam ipsam. Quemadmodum omnium rerum, sic litterarum
quoque intemperantia laboramus: non vitae sed scholae discimus.
Vale.

CVII. SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

[1] Ubi illa prudentia tua? ubi in dispiciendis rebus subtilitas? ubimagnitudo? Tam pusilla <te res> tangit? Servi occupationes tuas occasionemfugae putaverunt. Si amici deciperent (habeant enim sane nomen quod illisnoster error inposuit, et vocentur quo turpius non sint) * * * omnibusrebus tuis desunt illi qui et operam tuam conterebant et te aliis molestumesse credebant. [2] Nihil horum insolitum, nihil inexpectatum est; offendi rebus istis tam ridiculum est quam queri quod spargaris <in balneo autvexeris> in publico aut inquineris in luto. Eadem vitae condicio est quae balnei, turbae, itineris: quaedam in te mittentur, quaedam incident. Non est delicata res vivere. Longam viam ingressus es: et labaris oportet et arietes et cadas et lasseris et exclames ‘o mors!’, id est mentiaris. Alio loco comitem relinques, alio efferes, alio timebis: per eiusmodi offensasemetiendum est confragosum hoc iter. [3] Mori vult? praeparetur animus contra omnia; sciat se venisse ubi tonat fulmen; sciat se venisse ubi

Luctus et ultrices posuere cubilia Curae

pallentesque habitant Morbi tristisque Senectus.

In hoc contubernio vita degenda est. Effugere ista non potes, contemnere potes; contemnes autem si saepe cogitaveris et futura praesumpseris. [4] Nemo non fortius ad id cui se diu composuerat accessit et duris quoque, si praemeditata erant, obstitit: at contra inparatus etiam levissima expavit. Id agendum est ne quid nobis inopinatum sit; et quia omnia novitate graviora sunt, hoc cogitatio adsidua praestabit, ut nulli sis malo tiro.

[5] ‘Servi me reliquerunt. ‘ Alium compilaverunt, alium accusaverunt, alium occiderunt, alium prodiderunt, alium mulcaverunt, alium veneno, alium criminatione petierunt: quidquid dixeris multis accidit * * * deinceps quae multa et varia sunt in nos deriguntur. Quedam in nos fixa sunt, quaedam vibrant et cum maxime veniunt, quaedam in alios perventura nos stringunt. [6] Nihil miremur eorum ad quae nati sumus, quae ideo nulli querenda quia paria sunt omnibus. Ita dico,

paria sunt; nam etiam quod effugit aliquispati potuit. Aequum autem ius est non quo omnes usi sunt sed quod omnibuslatum est. Imperetur aequitas animo et sine querella mortalitatis tributapendamus. [7]

Hiems frigora adducit: alendum est. Aestas calores refert:aestuandum est. Intemperies caeli valetudinem temptat: aegrotandum est. Et fera nobis aliquo loco occurret et homo perniciosior feris omnibus. Aliud aqua, aliud ignis eripiet. Hanc rerum condicionem mutare non possumus:illud possumus, magnum sumere animum et viro bono dignum, quo fortiterfortuita patiamur et naturae consentiamus. [8] Natura autem hoc quod videsregnum mutationibus temperat: nubilo serena succedunt; turbantur mariacum quieverunt; flant in vicem venti; noctem dies sequitur; pars caeliconsurgit, pars mergitur: contrariis rerum aeternitas constat. [9]

Ad hanclegem animus noster aptandus est; hanc sequatur, huic pareat; et quaecumquefiunt debuisse fieri putet nec velit obiurgare naturam. Optimum est pati quod emendare non possis, et deum quo auctore cuncta proveniunt sine murmurationecomitari: malus miles est qui imperatorem gemens sequitur. [10] Quare in pigriatque alacres excipiamus imperia nec deseramus hunc operis pulcherrimicursum, cui quidquid patiemur intextum est; et sic adloquamur Iovem, cuiusgubernaculo moles ista derigitur, quemadmodum Cleanthes noster versibusdisertissimis adloquitur, quos mihi in nostrum sermonem mutare permittiturCiceronis, disertissimi viri, exemplo. Si placuerint, boni consules; si displicuerint, scies me in hoc secutum Ciceronis exemplum.

[11]

Duc, o parens celsique dominator poli,
quocumque placuit: nulla parendi mora est;
adsum inpiger. Fac nolle, comitabor gemens
malusque patiar facere quod licuit bono.
Ducunt volentem fata, nolentem trahunt.

[12] Sic vivamus, sic loquamur; paratos nos inveniatur atque in pigros fatum. Hic est magnus animus qui se ei tradidit: at contra ille pusillus et degenerqui obluctatur et de ordine mundi male existimat et

emendare mavult deosquam se. Vale.

CVIII. SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

[1] Id de quo quaeris ex iis est quae scire tantum eo, ut scias, pertinet. Sed nihilominus, quia pertinet, properas nec vis expectare libros quoscum maxime ordino continentis totam moralem philosophiae partem. Statim expediam; illud tamen prius scribam, quemadmodum tibi ista cupiditas discendi, qua flagrare te video, digerenda sit, ne ipsa se inpediat. [2] Nec passim carpenda sunt nec avide invadenda universa: per partes pervenietur ad totum. Aptari onus viribus debet nec plus occupari quam cui sufficere possimus. Non quantum vis sed quantum capis hauriendum est. Bonum tantum habe animum: capies quantum voles. Quo plus recipit animus, hoc se magis laxat.

[3] Haec nobis praecipere Attalum memini, cum scholam eius obsideremus et primi veniremus et novissimi exiremus, ambulantiem quoque illum ad aliquas disputationes evocarem, non tantum paratum discentibus sed obvium. ‘Idem’ inquit ‘et docenti et discenti debet esse propositum, ut ille prodesse velit, hic proficere.’ [4] Qui ad philosophum venit cotidie aliquid secum boni ferat: aut sanior domum redeat aut sanabilior. Redibit autem: ea philosophiae vis est ut non studentis sed etiam conversantis iuvet. Qui in solem venit, licet non in hoc venerit, colorabitur; qui in unguentaria taberna resederunt paullo diutius commorati sunt odorem secum loci ferunt; et qui ad philosophum fuerunt traxerint aliquid necesse est quod prodesset etiam negligentibus. Attende quid dicam: negligentibus, non repugnantibus.

[5] ‘Quid ergo? non novimus quosdam qui multis apud philosophum annis persederint et ne colorem quidem duxerint? ‘Quidni noverim? pertinacissimos quidem et adsiduos, quos ego non discipulos philosophorum sed inquilinos voco. [6] Quidam veniunt ut audiant, non ut discant, sicut in theatrum voluptatis causa ad delectandas aures oratione vel voce vel fabulis ducimur. Magnam hanc auditorum partem videbis cui philosophi schola deversorium otii sit. Non id agunt ut aliqua illo vitia deponant, ut aliquam legem vitae accipiant qua mores suos exigant, sed ut oblectamento aurium perfruantur. Aliqui tamen et cum pugillaribus veniunt, non ut res excipiant, sed ut verba, quae tam sine profectu alieno dicant quam

sine suo audiunt. [7] Quidam ad magnificas voces excitantur et transeunt in adfectum dicentium alacres vultu et animo, nec aliter concitantur quam solent Phrygii tibicinis sono semiviri et ex imperio furentes. Rapti illos instigatque rerum pulchritudo, non verborum inanum sonitus. Si quid acriter contra mortem dictum est, si quid contra fortunam contumaciter, iuvat protinus quae audias facere. Adficiuntur illis et sunt quales iubentur, si illa animo forma permaneat, si non impetum insignem protinus populus, honesti dissuasor, excipiat: pauci illam quam conceperant mentem domum perferre potuerunt. [8] Facile est auditorem concitare ad cupidinem recti; omnibus enim natura fundamenta dedit semenque virtutum. Omnes ad omnia ista nati sumus: cum inritator accessit, tunc illa animi bona veluti sopita excitantur. Non vides quemadmodum theatra consonent quotiens aliqua dicta sunt quae publice adgnoscamus et consensu vera esse testamur?

[9]

Desunt inopiae multa, avaritiae omnia.

In nullum avarus bonus est, in se pessimus.

Ad hos versus ille sordidissimus plaudit et vitiis suis fieri convicium gaudet: quanto magis hoc iudicas evenire cum a philosopho ista dicuntur, cum salutaribus praeceptis versus inseruntur, efficacius eadem illa demissuri in animum inperitorum? [10] Nam ut dicebat Cleanthes, ‘quemadmodum spiritus noster clariorem sonum reddit cum illum tuba per longi canalis angustias tractum patientiore novissime exitu effudit, sic sensus nostros clariores carminis arta necessitas efficit.’ Eadem negligentius audiuntur minusque percutiunt quamdiu soluta oratione dicuntur: ubi accessere numeri et egregium sensum adstrinxere certi pedes, eadem illa sententia velut lacerto excussione torquetur. [11] De contemptu pecuniae multa dicuntur et longissimis orationibus hoc praecipitur, ut homines in animo, non in patrimonio putent esse divitias, eum esse locupletem qui paupertati suae aptatus est et parvo se divitem fecit; magis tamen feriuntur animi cum carmina eiusmodi dicta sunt:

Is minimo eget mortalis qui minimum cupit.

Quod vult habet qui velle quod satis est potest.

[12] Cum haec atque eiusmodi audimus, ad confessionem veritatis adducimur; illi enim quibus nihil satis est admirantur, exclamant, odium pecuniae indicunt. Hunc illorum adfectum cum videris, urge, hoc preme, hoc onera, relictis ambiguitatibus et syllogismis et cavillationibus et ceteris acuminis inriti ludicris. Dic in avaritiam, dic in luxuriam; cum profecisse te videriset animos audientium adfeceris, insta vehementius: veri simile non est quantum proficiat talis oratio remedio intenta et tota in bonum audientium versa. Facillime enim tenera conciliantur ingenia ad honesti rectique amorem, et adhuc docilibus leviterque corruptis inicit manum veritas si advocatum idoneum nacta est. [13] Ego certe cum Attalum audirem in vitia, in errores, in mala vitae perorantem, saepe miseritus sum generis humani et illum sublimem altioreque humano fastigio credidi. Ipse regem se esse dicebat, sed plusquam regnare mihi videbatur cui liceret censuram agere regnantium. [14] Cum vero commendare paupertatem coeperat et ostendere quam quidquid usus excederet pondus esset supervacuum et grave ferenti, saepe exire e schola pauperi libuit. Cum coeperat voluptates nostras traducere, laudare castum corpus, sobriam mensam, puram mentem non tantum ab illicitis voluptatibus sed etiam supervacuis, libebat circumscribere gulam ac ventrem. [15] Inde mihi quaedam permansere, Lucili; magno enim in omnia impetu veneram, deinde ad civitatis vitam reductus ex bene coeptis pauca servavi. Inde ostreis boletisque in omnem vitam renuntiatum est; nec enim cibi sed oblectamenta sunt ad edendum saturos cogentia (quod gratissimum est edacibus et se ultraquam capiunt farcientibus), facile descensura, facile reditura. [16] Inde in omnem vitam unguento abstinemus, quoniam optimus odor in corpore est nullus. Inde vino carens stomachus. Inde in omnem vitam balneum fugimus; decoquere corpus atque exinanire sudoribus inutile simul delicatumque credidimus. Cetera proiecta redierunt, ita tamen ut quorum abstinentiam interrupti modum servem et quidem abstinentiae proximior, nescio an difficiliorem, quoniam quaedam absciduntur facilius animo quam temperantur.

[17] Quoniam coepi tibi exponere quanto maiore impetu ad philosophiam iuvenis accesserim quam senex pergam, non pudebit

fateri quem mihi amorem Pythagoras iniecerit. Sotion dicebat quare ille animalibus abstinuisset, quare postea Sextius. Dissimilis utrique causa erat, sed utrique magnifica.

[18] Hic homini satis alimentorum citra sanguinem esse credebat et crudelitatis consuetudinem fieri ubi in voluptatem esset adducta laceratio. Adiciebat contrahendam materiam esse luxuriae; colligebat bonae valetudini contraria esse alimenta varia et nostris aliena corporibus. [19] At Pythagoras omnium inter omnia cognationem esse dicebat et animorum commercium in alias atque alias formas transeuntium. Nulla, si illi credas, anima interit, ne cessat quidem nisi tempore exiguo, dum in aliud corpus transfunditur. Videbimus per quas temporum vices et quando pererratis pluribus domiciliis in hominem revertatur: interim sceleris hominibus ac parricidii metum fecit, cum possent in parentis animam inscii incurrere et ferro morsu violare, si in quo corpore cognatus aliqui spiritus hospitaretur. [20] Haec cum exposuisset Sotion et implesset argumentis suis, 'non credis' inquit 'animas in alia corpora atque alia describi et migrationem esse quod dicimus mortem? Non credis in his pecudibus ferisve aut aqua mersis illum quondam hominis animum morari? Non credis nihil perire in hoc mundo, sed mutare regionem? nectantur caelestia per certos circuitus verti, sed animalia quoque per vices ire et animos per orbem agi? Magni ista crediderunt viri. [21] Itaque iudicium quidem tuum sustine, ceterum omnia tibi in integro serva. Si vera sunt ista, abstinuisse animalibus innocentia est; si falsa, frugalitas est. Quod istic credulitatis tuae damnum est? alimenta tibi leonum et vulturum eripio. [22] His ego instinctus abstinere animalibus coepi, et anno peractum non tantum facilis erat mihi consuetudo sed dulcis. Agitatio enim mihi animi esse credebam nec tibi hodie adfirmaverim an fuerit. Quaeris quomodo desierim? In primum Tiberii Caesaris principatum iuventutis tempus inciderat: alienigenatum sacra movebantur et inter argumenta superstitionis ponebatur quorundam animalium abstinencia. Patre itaque meo rogante, qui non calumniam timebat sed philosophiam oderat, ad pristinam consuetudinem redii; nec difficile mihi ut inciperem melius cenare persuasit. [23] Laudare solebat Attalus culcitam quae resisteret corpori: tali utor etiam senex, in qua vestigium apparere non

possit.

Haec rettuli ut probarem tibi quam vehementes haberent tirunculi impetus primos ad optima quaeque, si quis exhortaretur illos, si quis inpelleret. Sed aliquid praecipientium vitio peccatur, qui nos docent disputare, non vivere, aliquid discentium, qui propositum adferunt ad praeceptores suos non animum excolendi sed ingenium. Itaque quae philosophia fuit facta philologia est. [24] Multum autem ad rem pertinet quo proposito ad quamquam rem accedas. Qui grammaticus futurus Vergilium scrutatur non hoc animo legit illud egregium

fugit inreparabile tempus:

‘vigilandum est; nisi properamus relinquemur; agit nos agiturque velocius dies; inscii rapimur; omnia in futurum disponimus et inter praecipitianti sumus’: sed ut observet, quotiens Vergilius de celeritate temporum dicit, hoc uti verbo illum ‘fugit’.

Optima quaeque dies miseris mortalibus aevi
prima fugit; subeunt morbi tristisque senectus
et labor, et durae rapit inclementia mortis.

[25] Ille qui ad philosophiam spectat haec eadem quo debet adducit. ‘Numquam Vergilius’ inquit ‘dies dicit ire, sed fugere, quod currendi genus concitatissimum est, et optimos quosque primos rapi: quid ergo cessamus nos ipsi concitare, ut velocitatem rapidissimae rei possimus aequare? Meliora praetervolant, deteriora succedunt.’

[26] Quemadmodum ex amphora primum quod est sincerissimum effluit, gravissimum quodque turbidumque subsidit, sic in aetate nostra quod est optimum in primo est. Id exauriri [in] aliis potius patimur, ut nobis faciem reservemus? Inhaereat istud animo et tamquam missum oraculo placeat:

optima quaeque dies miseris mortalibus aevi
prima fugit.

[27] Quare optima? quia quod restat incertum est. Quare optima? quia iuvenes possumus discere, possumus facilem animum et adhuc tractabilem ad meliora convertere; quia hoc tempus idoneum est

laboribus, idoneum agitandis perstudia ingeniis [est] et exercendis per opera corporibus: quod superest segnius et languidius est et propius a fine. Itaque toto hoc agamus animo et omissis ad quae devertimur in rem unam laboremus, ne hanc temporis perniciosissimae celeritatem, quam retinere non possumus, relictis demum intellegamus. Primus quisque tamquam optimus dies placeat et redigatur in nostrum. [28] Quod fugit occupandum est. Haec non cogitat ille qui grammatici oculis carmen istud legit, ideo optimum quemque primum esse diem quia subeunt morbi, quia senectus premit et adhuc adulescentiam cogitantibus supra caput est, sed ait Vergilium semper una ponere morbos et senectutem — non me hercules in merito; senectus enim insanabilis morbus est. [29] ‘Praeterea’ inquit ‘hoc senectuti cognomen inposuit, “tristem” illam vocat:

subeunt morbi tristisque senectus.

Alio loco dicit

pallentesque habitant Morbi tristisque Senectus.’

Non est quod mireris ex eadem materia suis quemque studiis apta colligere: in eodem prato bos herbam quaerit, canis leporem, ciconia lacertam.

[30] Cum Ciceronis librum de re publica prendit hinc philologus aliquis, hinc grammaticus, hinc philosophiae deditus, alius alio curam suam mittit. Philosophus admiratur contra iustitiam dici tam multa potuisse. Cum ad hanc eandem lectionem philologus accessit, hoc subnotat: duos Romanos reges esse quorum alter patrem non habet, alter matrem. Nam de Servi matre dubitatur; Anci pater nullus, Numae nepos dicitur. [31] Praeterea notat eum quem nos dictatorem dicimus et in historiis ita nominari legimus apud antiquos magistrum populi’ vocatum. Hodieque id extat in auguralibus libris, et testimonium est quod qui ab illo nominatur ‘magister equitum’ est. Aequae notat Romulum perisse solis defectione; provocationem ad populum etiam a regibus fuisse; id ita in pontificalibus libris +et aliqui qui+ putant et Fenestella. [32] Eosdem libros cum grammaticus explicuit, primum [verba expresse] ‘reapse’ dici a Cicerone, id est ‘re ipsa’, in commentarium refert, nec minus ‘seipse’, id est ‘se ipse’.

Deinde transit ad ea quae consuetudo saeculi mutavit, tamquam ait Cicero ‘quoniam sumus ab ipsa calce eius interpellatione revocati. ‘Hanc quam nunc in circo ‘cretam’ vocamus ‘calcem’ antiqui dicebant. [33]Deinde Ennianos colligit versus et in primis illos de Africano scriptos:

cui nemo civis neque hostis
quibit pro factis reddere opis pretium.

Ex eo se ait intellegere <opem> apud antiquos non tantum auxilium significasses operam. Ait [opera] enim Ennius neminem potuisse Scipioni neque civemneque hostem reddere operae pretium. [34] Felicem deinde se putat quodinvenerit unde visum sit Vergilio dicere

quem super ingens
porta tonat caeli.

Ennium hoc ait Homero [se] subripuisse, Ennio Vergilium; esse enim apudCiceronem in his ipsis de re publica hoc epigramma Enni:

si fas endo plagas caelestum ascendere cuiquam est,
mi soli caeli maxima porta patet.

[35] Sed ne et ipse, dum aliud ago, in philologum aut grammaticum delabar, illud admoneo, auditionem philosophorum lectionemque ad propositum beataevitae trahendam, non ut verba prisca aut ficta captemus et translationesinprobis figurasque dicendi, sed ut profutura praecepta et magnificas voceset animosas quae mox in rem transferantur. Sic ista ediscamus ut quae fuerintverba sint opera. [36] Nullos autem peius mereri de omnibus mortalibus iudico quam qui philosophiam velut aliquod artificium venale didicerunt, qui aliter vivunt quam vivendum esse praecipunt. Exempla enim se ipsosinutilis disciplinae circumferunt, nulli non vitio quod insequuntur obnoxii.

[37] Non magis mihi potest quisquam talis prodesse praeceptor quam gubernatorin tempestate nauseabundus. Tenendum rapiente fluctu gubernaculum, luctandumcum ipso mari, eripienda sunt vento

vela: quid me potest adiuvare rectornavigii attonitus et vomitans? Quanto maiore putas vitam tempestate iactariquam ullam ratem? Non est loquendum sed gubernandum. [38] Omnia quae dicunt, quae turba audiente iactant, aliena sunt: dixit illa Platon, dixit Zenon, dixit Chrysippus et Posidonius et ingens agmen nominum tot ac talium. Quomodoprobare possint sua esse monstrabo: faciant quae dixerint.

[39] Quoniam quae volueram ad te perferre iam dixi, nunc desideriotuo satis faciam et in alteram epistulam integrum quod exegeras transferam, ne ad rem spinosam et auribus erectis curiosisque audiendam lassus accedas. Vale.

CIX. SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

[1] An sapiens sapienti prosit scire desideras. Dicimus plenum omnibono esse sapientem et summa adeptum: quomodo prodesse aliqui possit summumhabenti bonum quaeritur. Prosunt inter se boni. Exercent enim virtuteset sapientiam in suo statu continent; desiderat uterque aliquem cum quoconferat, cum quo quaerat. [2] Peritos luctandi usus exercet; musicum quiparia didicit movet. Opus est et sapienti agitatione virtutum; ita quemadmodumipse se movet, sic movetur ab alio sapiente. [3] Quid sapiens sapienti proderit? Impetum illi dabit, occasiones actionum honestarum commonstrabit. Praeter haec aliquas cogitationes suas exprimet; docebit quae invenerit. Semper enim etiam sapienti restabit quod inveniat et quo animus eius excurrat. [4] Malus malo nocet facitque peiorem, iram eius incitando, tristitiae adsentiendo, voluptates laudando; et tunc maxime laborant mali ubi plurimumvitia miscuere et in unum conlata nequitia est. Ergo ex contrario bonusbono proderit. ‘Quomodo?’ ‘ inquis. [5] Gaudium illi adferet, fiduciam confirmabit;ex conspectu mutuae tranquillitatis crescet utriusque laetitia. Praeterea quarumdam illi rerum scientiam tradet; non enim omnia sapiens scit; etiamsi sciret, breviores vias rerum aliqui excogitare posset et has indicareper quas facilius totum opus circumfertur. [6] Proderit sapienti sapiens, non scilicet tantum suis viribus sed ipsius quem adiuvabit. Potest quidemille etiam relictus sibi explicare partes suas: utetur propria velocitate, sed nihilominus adiuvat etiam currentem hortator. ‘Non prodest sapienti sapiens sed sibi ipse. Hoc <ut> scias, detrahe illi vim propriam et ille nihil aget.’ [7] Isto modo dicas licet non essein melle dulcedinem; nam ipse ille qui esse debeat <nisi> ita aptatuslingua palatoque est ad eiusmodi gustum ut illum talis sapor capiat, offendetur;sunt enim quidam quibus morbi vitio mel amarum videatur. Oportet utrumque valere ut et ille prodesse possit et hic profuturo idonea materia sit.

[8] ‘<Ut> in summum’ inquit ‘perducto calorem calefieri supervacuumest, et in summum perducto bonum supervacuum est <si> qui prosit. Numquidinstructus omnibus rebus agricola ab alio instrui quaerit? numquid armatusmiles quantum in aciem exituro

satis est ulla amplius arma desiderat? Ergone sapiens; satis enim vitae instructus, satis armatus est. ‘[9] Ad haec respondeo: et qui in summum <perductus est calorem> opus est calore adiecto ut summum teneat. ‘Sed ipse se’ inquit ‘calor continet. ‘Primum multum interest inter ista quae comparas. Calor enim unus est, prodesse varium est. Deinde calor non adiuvatur adiectione caloris ut caleat: sapiens non potest in habitu mentis suae stare nisi amicos aliquos similes sui admisit cum quibus virtutes suas communicet. [10] Adice nunc quod omnibus inter se virtutibus amicitia est; itaque prodest qui virtutes alicuius pariter sui amat amandasque invicem praestat. Similia delectant, utique ubi honesta sunt et probare ac probari sciunt. [11] Etiam nunc sapientis animum perite movere nemo alius potest quam sapiens, sicut hominem movere rationaliter non potest nisi homo. Quomodo ergo ad rationem movendam ratione opus est, sic ut moveatur ratio perfecta opus est ratione perfecta. [12] Prodesse dicuntur et qui media nobis largiuntur, pecuniam, gratiam, incolumitatem, alia in usus vitae cara aut necessaria; in his dicetur etiam stultus prodesse sapienti. Prodesse autem est animum secundum naturam movere virtute sua. Ut eius qui movebitur, hoc non sine ipsius quoque qui proderit bono fiet; necesse est enim alienam virtutem exercendo exerceat et suam. [13] Sed ut removeas ista quae aut summa bona sunt aut summorum efficientia, nihilominus prodesse inter se sapientes possunt. Invenire enim sapientem sapienti per se res expetenda est, quia natura bonum omne carum est bono et sic quisque conciliatur bono quemadmodum sibi.

[14] Necesse est ex hac quaestione argumenti causa in alteram transeam. Quaeritur enim an deliberaturus sit sapiens, an in consilium aliquem advocaturus. Quod facere illi necessarium est cum ad haec civilia et domestica veniatur, ut ita dicam, mortalia; in his sic illi opus est alieno consilio quomodo medico, quomodo gubernatori, quomodo advocato et litis ordinatori. Proderit ergo sapiens aliquando sapienti; suadebit enim. Sed in illis quoque magnis ac divinis, ut diximus, communiter honesta tractando et animos cogitationesque miscendo utilis erit. [15] Praeterea secundum naturam est et amicos complecti et amicorum auctu ut suo proprioque laetari; nam nisi hoc fecerimus, ne virtus quidem nobis permanebit, quae exercendo sensu valet. Virtus autem suadet praesentia bene

conlocare, in futurum consulere, deliberare et intendere animum: facilius intendet explicabitque qui aliquem sibi adsumpserit. Quaerit itaque aut perfectum virum aut proficientem vicinumque perfecto. Proderit autem ille perfectus, si consilium communi prudentia iuverit. [16] Aiunt homines plus in alieno negotio videre +initio+. Hoc illis evenit quos amor sui excaecat quibusque dispectum utilitatis timor in periculis excutit: incipiet sapere securior et extra metum positus. Sed nihilominus quaedam sunt quae etiam sapientes in alio quam in se diligentius vident. Praeterea illud dulcissimum et honestissimum 'idem velle atque idem nolle' sapiens sapienti praestabit; egregium opus pari iugo ducet.

[17] Persolvi quod exegeras, quamquam in ordine rerum erat quas moralis philosophiae voluminibus conplectimur. Cogita quod soleo frequenter tibi dicere, in istis nos nihil aliud quam acumen exercere. Totiens enim illo revertor: quid ista me res iuvat? fortio rem fac me, iustio rem, temperantio rem. Nondum exerceri vacat: adhuc medico mihi opus est. [18] Quid me poscis scientiam inutilem? Magna promisisti: exhibe fidem. Dicebas intrepidum fore etiam si circa me gladii micarent, etiam si mucro tangeret iugulum; dicebas securum fore etiam si circa me flagrarent incendia, etiam si subitus turbo toto navem meam mari raperet: hanc mihi praesta curam, ut voluptatem, ut gloriam contemnam. Postea docebis in plicta solvere, ambigua distinguere, obscura perspicere: nunc doce quod necesse est. Vale.

LIBER NONVS DECIMVS

CX. SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

[1] Ex Nomentano meo te saluto et iubeo habere mentem bonam, hoc est propitios deos omnis, quos habet placatos et faventes quisquis sibi se propitiavit. Sepone in praesentia quae quibusdam placent, unicuique nostrum paedagogum dari deum, non quidem ordinarium, sed hunc inferioris notae ex eorum numero quos Ovidius ait ‘de plebe deos’. Ita tamen hoc seponas volo ut memineris maiores nostros qui crediderunt Stoicos fuisse; singulis enim et Genium et Iunonem dederunt. [2] Postea videbimus an tantum dis vacet ut privatorum negotia procurent: interim illud scito, sive adsignati sumus sive neglecti et fortunae dati, nulli te posse inprecari quicquam gravius quam si inprecatus fueris ut se habeat iratum. Sed non est quare cuiquam quem poena putaveris dignum optes ut infestos deos habeat: habet, inquam, etiam si videtur eorum favore produci. [3] Adhibe diligentiam tuam et intueri quid sint res nostrae, non quid vocentur, et scies plura mala contingere nobis quam accidere. Quotiens enim felicitatis et causa et initium fuit quod calamitas vocabatur! quotiens magna gratulatione excepta res gradum sibi struxit in praeceps et aliquem iam eminentem adlevavit etiamnunc, tamquam adhuc ibi staret unde tuto cadunt! [4] Sed ipsum illud cadere non habet in se mali quicquam si exitum spectes, ultra quem natura neminem deiecit. Prope est rerum omnium terminus, prope est, inquam, et illud unde felix eicitur et illud unde infelix emittitur: nos utraque extendimus et longa spe ac metu facimus. Sed, si sapis, omnia humana condicione metire; simul et quod gaudes et quod times contrahe. Est autem tanti nihil diu gaudere ne quid diu timeas.

[5] Sed quare istuc malum adstringo? Non est quod quicquam timendum putes: vana sunt ista quae nos movent, quae attonitos habent. Nemo nostrum quid veri esset excussit, sed metum alter alteri tradidit; nemo ausus est ad id quo perturbabatur accedere et naturam ac bonum timoris sui nosse. Itaque res falsa et inanis habet adhuc fidem quia non coarguitur. [6] Tanti putemus oculos intendere: iam apparebit quam brevia, quam incerta, quam tuta timeantur. Talis est animorum nostrorum confusio qualis Lucretio visa est:

nam veluti pueri trepidant atque omnia caecis
in tenebris metuunt, ita nos in luce timemus.

Quid ergo? non omni puero stultiores sumus qui in luce timemus?
[7] Sed falsum est, Lucreti, non timemus in luce: omnia nobis fecimus
tenebras. Nihil videmus, nec quid noceat nec quid expediat; tota vita
incursitamus nec ob hoc resistimus aut circumspectius pedem
ponimus. Vides autem quam sit furiosa res in tenebris impetus. At
mehercules id agimus ut longius revocandi simus, et cum ignoremus
quo feramur, velociter tamen illo quo intendimus perseveramus. [8]
Sed lucescere, si velimus, potest. Uno autem modo potest, si quis
hanc humanorum divinorumque notitiam [scientia] acceperit, si illa
se non perfuderit sed infecerit, si eadem, quamvis sciat, retractaverit
et ad se saepe rettulerit, si quaesierit quae sint bona, quae mala,
quibus hoc falso sit nomen adscriptum, si quaesierit de honestis et
turpibus, de providentia. [9] Nec intra haec humani ingenii sagacitas
sistitur: prospicere et ultra mundum libet, quo feratur, unde
surrexerit, in quem exitum tanta rerum velocitas properet. Ab hac
divina contemplatione abductum animum in sordida et humilia
pertraximus, ut avaritiae serviret, ut relicto mundo terminisque eius
et dominis cuncta versantibus terram rimaretur et quaereret quid ex
illa mali effoderet, non contentus oblatis. [10] Quidquid nobis bono
futurum erat deus et parens noster in proximo posuit; non expectavit
inquisitionem nostram et ultro dedit: nocitura altissime pressit. Nihil
nisi de nobis queri possumus: ea quibus periremus nolente rerum
natura et abscondente protulimus. Addiximus animum voluptati, cui
indulgere initium omnium malorum est, tradidimus ambitioni et
famae, ceteris aequae vanis et inanibus.

[11] Quid ergo nunc te hortor ut facias? nihil novi — nec enim
novis malis remedia quaeruntur - sed hoc primum, ut tecum ipse
dispicias quid sit necessarium, quid supervacuum. Necessaria tibi
ubique occurrent: supervacua et semper et toto animo quaerenda
sunt. [12] Non est autem quod te nimis laudes si contempseris aureos
lectos et gemmeam supellectilem; quae est enim virtus supervacua
contemnere? Tunc te admirare cum contempseris necessaria. Non
magnam rem facis quod vivere sine regio apparatu potes, quod non
desideras milliarios apros nec linguas phoenicopterorum et alia

portenta luxuriae iam tota animalia fastidientis et certa membra ex singulis eligentis: tunc te admirabor si contempseris etiam sordidum panem, si tibi persuaseris herbam, ubi necesse est, non pecori tantum sed homini nasci, si scieris cacumina arborum explementum esse ventris in quem sic pretiosa congerimus tamquam recepta servantem. Sine fastidio implendus est; quid enim ad rem pertinet quid accipiat, perditurus quidquid acceperit? ^[13] Delectant te disposita quae terra marique capiuntur, alia eo gratiora si recentia perferuntur ad mensam, alia si diu pasta et coacta pinguescere fluunt ac vix saginam continent suam; delectat te nitor horum arte quaesitus. At mehercules ista sollicite scrutata varieque condita, cum subierint ventrem, una atque eadem foeditas occupabit. Vis ciborum voluptatem contemnere? exitum specta.

^[14] Attalum memini cum magna admiratione omnium haec dicere: ‘diu’ inquit ‘mihi inposuere divitiae. Stupebam ubi aliquid ex illis alio atque alio loco fulserat; existimabam similia esse quae laterent his quae ostenderentur. Sed in quodam apparatu vidi totas opes urbis, caelata et auro et argento et iis quae pretium auri argentique vicerunt, exquisitos colores et vestes ultra non tantum nostrum sed ultra finem hostium advectas; hinc puerorum perspicuos cultu atque forma greges, hinc feminarum, et alia quae res suas recognoscens summi imperii fortuna protulerat. ^[15] “Quid hoc est” inquam “aliud inritare cupiditates hominum per se incitatas? quid sibi vult ista pecuniae pompa? ad discendam avaritiam convenimus?” At mehercules minus cupiditatis istinc effero quam adtuleram. Contempsisti divitias, non quia supervacuae sed quia pusillae sunt. ^[16] Vidistine quam intra paucas horas ille ordo quamvis lentus dispositusque transierit? Hoc totam vitam nostram occupabit quod totum diem occupare non potuit? Accessit illud quoque: tam supervacuae mihi visae sunt habentibus quam fuerunt spectantibus. ^[17] Hoc itaque ipse mihi dico quotiens tale aliquid praestrinxerit oculos meos, quotiens occurrit domus splendida, cohors culta servorum, lectica formonsis inposita calonibus: “quid miraris? quid stupeas? pompa est. Ostendunt istae res, non possidentur, et dum placent transeunt”. ^[18] Ad veras potius te converte divitias; disce parvo esse contentus et illam vocem magnus atque animosus exclama: habemus aquam, habemus polentam; Iovi ipsi controversiam de felicitate faciamus. Faciamus, oro te, etiam si

ista defuerint; turpe est beatam vitam in auro et argento reponere, aequè turpe in aqua et polenta. “Quid ergo faciam si ista non fuerint?” [19] Quaeris quod sit remedium inopiae? Famem fames finit: alioquin quid interest magna sint an exigua quae servire te cogant? quid refert quantulum sit quod tibi possit negare fortuna? [20] Haec ipsa aqua et polenta in alienum arbitrium cadit; liber est autem non in quem parum licet fortunae, sed in quem nihil. Ita est: nihil desideres oportet si vis Iovem provocare nihil desiderantem.’

Haec nobis Attalus dixit, natura omnibus dixit; quae si voles frequenter cogitare, id ages ut sis felix, non ut videaris, et ut tibi videaris, non aliis. Vale.

CXI. SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

[1] Quid vocentur Latine sophismata quaesisti a me. Multi temptaverunt illis nomen inponere, nullum haesit; videlicet, quia res ipsa non recipiebatur a nobis nec in usu erat, nomini quoque repugnatum est. Aptissimum tamen videtur mihi quo Cicero usus est: ‘cavillationes’ vocat. [2] Quibus quisquis se tradidit quaestiunculas quidem vafras nectit, ceterum ad vitam nihil proficit: neque fortior fit neque temperantior neque elatior. At ille qui philosophiam in remedium suum exercuit ingens fit animo, plenus fiducia, inexsuperabilis et maior adeunti. [3] Quod in magnis evenit montibus, quorum proceritas minus apparet longe intuentibus: cum accesseris, tunc manifestum fit quam in arduo summa sint. Talis est, mi Lucili, verus et rebus, non artificiis philosophus. In edito stat, admirabilis, celsus, magnitudinis verae; non exsurgit in plantas nec summis ambulat digitis eorum more qui mendacio staturam adiuvant longioresque quam sunt videri volunt; contentus est magnitudine sua. [4] Quidni contentus sit eo usque crevisse quo manus fortuna non porrigit? Ergo et supra humana est et par sibi in omni statu rerum, sive secundo cursu vita procedit, sive fluctuatur et <it> per adversa ac difficilia: hanc constantiam cavillationes istae de quibus paulo ante loquebar praestare non possunt. Ludit istis animus, non proficit, et philosophiam a fastigio suo deducit in planum. [5] Nec te prohibuerim aliquando ista agere, sed tunc cum voles nihil agere. Hoc tamen habent in se pessimum: dulcedinem quandam sui faciunt et animum specie subtilitatis inductum tenent ac morantur, cum tanta rerum moles vocet, cum vix tota vita sufficiat ut hoc unum discas, vitam contemnere. ‘Quid regere?’ inquis. Secundum opus est; nam nemo illam bene rexit nisi qui contempserat. Vale.

CXII. SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

[1] Cupio mehercules amicum tuum formari ut desideras et institui, sed valde durus capitur; immo, quod est molestius, valde mollis capitur et consuetudine mala ac diutina fractus. Volo tibi ex nostro artificio exemplum referre. [2] Non quaelibet insitionem vitis patitur: si vetus et exesa est, si infirma gracilisque, aut non recipiet surculum aut non alet nec adplicabit sibi nec in qualitatem eius naturamque transibit. Itaque solemus supra terram praecidere ut, si non respondit, temptari possit secunda fortuna et iterum repetita infra terram inseratur. [3] Hic de quo scribis et mandas non habet vires: indulsit vitiis. Simul et emarcuit et induruit; non potest recipere rationem, non potest nutrire. 'At cupit ipse.' Noli credere. Non dico illum mentiri tibi: putat se cupere. Stomachum illi fecit luxuria: cito cum illa redibit in gratiam. [4] 'Sed dicit se offendi vita sua.' Non negaverim; quis enim non offenditur? Homines vitia sua et amant simul et oderunt. Tunc itaque de illo feremus sententiam cum fidem nobis fecerit invisam iam sibi esse luxuriam: nunc illis male convenit. Vale.

CXIII. SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

[1] Desideras tibi scribi a me quid sentiam de hac quaestione iactata apud nostros, an iustitia, fortitudo, prudentia ceteraeque virtutes animalia sint. Hac subtilitate effecimus, Lucili carissime, ut exercere ingenium inter inrita videremur et disputationibus nihil profuturis otium terere. Faciam quod desideras et quid nostris videatur exponam; sed me in alia esse sententia profiteor: puto quaedam esse quae deceant phaecasiatum palliatumque. Quae sint ergo quae antiquos moverint vel quae sint quae antiqui moverint dicam.

[2] Animum constat animal esse, cum ipse efficiat ut simus animalia, cum ab illo animalia nomen hoc traxerint; virtus autem nihil aliud est quam animus quodam modo se habens; ergo animal est. Deinde virtus agit aliquid; agi autem nihil sine impetu potest; si impetum habet, qui nulli est nisi animali, animal est. [3] ‘Si animal est’ inquit ‘virtus, habet ipsa virtutem.’ Quidni habeat se ipsam? quomodo sapiens omnia per virtutem gerit, sic virtus per se. ‘Ergo’ inquit ‘et omnes artes animalia sunt et omnia quae cogitamus quaeque mente complectimur. Sequitur ut multa millia animalium habitent in his angustiis pectoris, et singuli multa simus animalia aut multa habeamus animalia.’ Quaeris quid adversus istud respondeatur? Unaquaeque ex istis res animal erit: multa animalia non erunt. Quare? dicam, si mihi accommodaveris subtilitatem et intentionem tuam. [4] Singula animalia singulas habere debent substantias; ista omnia unum animum habent; itaque singula esse possunt, multa esse non possunt. Ego et animal sum et homo, non tamen duos esse nos dices. Quare? quia separati debent esse. Ita dico: alter ab altero debet esse diductus ut duo sint. Quidquid in uno multiplex est sub unam naturam cadit; itaque unum est. [5] Et animus meus animal est et ego animal sum, duo tamen non sumus. Quare? quia animus mei pars est. Tunc aliquid per se numerabitur cum per se stabit; ubi vero alterius membrum erit, non poterit videri aliud. Quare? dicam: quia quod aliud est suum oportet esse et proprium et totum et intra se absolutum.

[6] Ego in alia esse me sententia professus sum; non enim tantum virtutes animalia erunt, si hoc recipitur, sed opposita quoque illis

vitia et adfectus, tamquam ira, timor, luctus, suspicio. Ultra res ista procedet: omnes sententiae, omnes cogitationes animalia erunt. Quod nullo modo recipiendum est; non enim quidquid ab homine fit homo est. [7] ‘Iustitia quid est?’ inquit. Animus quodam modo se habens. ‘Itaque si animus animal est, et iustitia.’ Minime; haec enim habitus animi est et quaedam vis. Idem animus in varias figuras convertitur et non totiens animal aliud est quotiens aliud facit; nec illud quod fit ab animo animal est. [8] <Si> iustitia animal est, <si> fortitudo, si ceterae virtutes, utrum desinunt esse animalia subinde aut rursus incipiunt, an semper sunt? desinere virtutes non possunt. Ergo multa animalia, immo innumerabilia, in hoc animo versantur. [9] ‘Non sunt’ inquit ‘multa, quia ex uno religata sunt et partes unius ac membra sunt.’ Talem ergo faciem animi nobis proponimus qualis est hydrae multa habentis capita, quorum unumquodque per se pugnat, per se nocet. Atqui nullum ex illis capitibus animal est, sed animalis caput: ceterum ipsa unum animal est. Nemo in Chimaera leonem animal esse dixit aut draconem: hae partes erant eius; partes autem non sunt animalia. [10] Quid est quo colligas iustitiam animal esse? ‘Agit’ inquit ‘aliquid et prodest; quod autem agit et prodest impetum habet; <quod autem impetum habet> animal est.’ Verum est si suum impetum habet; <suum autem non habet> sed animi. [11] Omne animal donec moriatur id est quod coepit: homo donec moriatur homo est, equus equus, canis canis; transire in aliud non potest. Iustitia, id est animus quodam modo se habens, animal est. Credamus: deinde animal est fortitudo, id est animus quodam modo se habens. Quis animus? ille qui modo iustitia erat? Tenetur in priore animali, in aliud animal transire ei non licet; in eo illi in quo primum esse coepit perseverandum est. [12] Praeterea unus animus duorum esse animalium non potest, multo minus plurium. Si iustitia, fortitudo, temperantia ceteraeque virtutes animalia sunt, quomodo unum animum habebunt? singulos habeant oportet, aut non sunt animalia. [13] Non potest unum corpus plurium animalium esse. Hoc et ipsi fatentur. Iustitiae quod est corpus? ‘Animus’. Quid? fortitudinis quod est corpus? ‘Idem animus’. Atqui unum corpus esse duorum animalium non potest. [14] ‘Sed idem animus’ inquit ‘iustitiae habitum induit et fortitudinis et temperantiae.’ Hoc fieri posset si quo tempore iustitia esset fortitudo non esset, quo tempore fortitudo esset

temperantia non esset; nunc vero omnes virtutes simul sunt. Ita quomodo singulae erunt animalia, cum unus animus sit, qui plus quam unum animal non potest facere? [15] Denique nullum animal pars est alterius animalis; iustitia autem pars est animi; non est ergo animal.

Videor mihi in re confessa perdere operam; magis enim indignandum de isto quam disputandum est. Nullum animal alteri par est. Circumspice omnium corpora: nulli non et color proprius est et figura sua et magnitudo. [16] Inter cetera propter quae mirabile divini artificis ingenium est hoc quoque existimo esse, quod in tanta copia rerum numquam in idem incidit; etiam quae similia videntur, cum contuleris, diversa sunt. Tot fecit genera foliorum: nullum non sua proprietate signatum; tot animalia: nullius magnitudo cum altero convenit, utique aliquid interest. Exegit a se ut quae alia erant et dissimilia essent et inparia. Virtutes omnes, ut dicitis, pares sunt; ergo non sunt animalia. [17] Nullum non animal per se agit; virtus autem per se nihil agit, sed cum homine. Omnia animalia aut rationalia sunt, ut homines, ut dii, <aut irrationalia, ut ferae, ut pecora>; virtutes utique rationales sunt; atqui nec homines sunt nec dii; ergo non sunt animalia. [18] Omne rationale animal nihil agit nisi primum specie alicuius rei irritatum est, deinde impetum cepit, deinde adsensio confirmavit hunc impetum. Quid sit adsensio dicam. Oportet me ambulare: tunc demum ambulo cum hoc mihi dixi et adprobavi hanc opinionem meam; oportet me sedere: tunc demum sedeo. Haec adsensio in virtute non est. [19] Puta enim prudentiam esse: quomodo adsentietur 'oportet me ambulare'? Hoc natura non recipit. Prudentia enim ei cuius est prospicit, non sibi; nam nec ambulare potest nec sedere. Ergo adsensionem non habet; quod adsensionem non habet rationale animal non est. Virtus si animal est, rationale est; rationale autem non est; ergo nec animal. [20] Si virtus animal est, virtus autem bonum omnest, omne bonum animal est. Hoc nostri fatentur. Patrem servare bonum est, et sententiam prudenter in senatu dicere bonum est, et iuste decernere bonum est; ergo et patrem servare animal est et prudenter sententiam dicere animal est. Eo usque res ~exegit~ ut risum tenere non possis: prudenter tacere bonum est, <* * * cenare bonum est>; ita et tacere et cenare animal est.

[21] Ego mehercules titillare non desinam et ludos mihi ex istis subtilibus ineptiis facere. Iustitia et fortitudo, si animalia sunt, certe terrestria sunt; omne animal terrestre alget, esurit, sitit; ergo iustitia alget, fortitudo esurit, clementia sitit. [22] Quid porro? non interrogabo illos quam figuram habeant ista animalia? hominis an equi an ferae? Si rotundam illis qualem deo dederint, quaeram an et avaritia et luxuria et dementia aequae rotundae sint; sunt enim et ipsae animalia. Si has quoque conrotundaverint, etiamnunc interrogabo an prudens ambulatio animal sit. Necesse est confiteantur, deinde dicant ambulationem animal esse et quidem rotundum.

[23] Ne putes autem primum <me> ex nostris non ex praescripto loqui sed meae sententiae esse, inter Cleanthen et discipulum eius Chrysippum non convenit quid sit ambulatio. Cleanthes ait spiritum esse a principali usque in pedes permissum, Chrysippus ipsum principale. Quid est ergo cur non ipsius Chrysippi exemplo sibi quisque se vindicet et ista tot animalia quot mundus ipse non potest capere derideat?

[24] 'Non sunt' inquit 'virtutes multa animalia, et tamen animalia sunt. Nam quemadmodum aliquis et poeta est et orator, et tamen unus, sic virtutes istae animalia sunt sed multa non sunt. Idem est animus et animus et iustus et prudens et fortis, ad singulas virtutes quodam modo se habens.' [25] Sublata * * * convenit nobis. Nam et ego interim fateor animum animal esse, postea visurus quam de ista re sententiam feram: actiones eius animalia esse nego. Alioqui et omnia verba erunt animalia et omnes versus. Nam si prudens sermo bonum est, bonum autem omne animal est, <sermo animal est>. Prudens versus bonum est, bonum autem omne animal est; versus ergo animal est. Ita

arma virumque cano

animal est, quod non possunt rotundum dicere cum sex pedes habeat. [26] 'Textorium' inquis 'totum mehercules istud quod cum maxime agitur.' Dissilio risu cum mihi propono soloecismum animal esse et barbarismum et syllogismum et aptas illis facies tamquam pictor adsigno. Haec disputamus attractis superciliis, fronte rugosa? Non possum hoc loco dicere illud Caelianum: 'o tristes ineptias!' Ridiculae sunt.

Quin itaque potius aliquid utile nobis ac salutare tractamus et

quaerimus quomodo ad virtutes pervenire possimus, quae nos ad illas via adducat? [27] Doce me non an fortitudo animal sit, sed nullum animal felix esse sine fortitudine, nisi contra fortuita convaluit et omnis casus antequam exciperet meditando praedomuit. Quid est fortitudo? Munimentum humanae imbecillitatis inexpugnabile, quod qui circumdedit sibi securus in hac vitae obsidione perdurat; utitur enim suis viribus, suis telis. [28] Hoc loco tibi Posidonii nostri referre sententiam volo: ‘non est quod umquam fortunae armis putes esse te tutum: tuis pugna. Contra ipsam fortuna non armat; itaque contra hostes instructi, contra ipsam inermes sunt.’ [29] Alexander Persas quidem et Hyrcanos et Indos et quidquid gentium usque in oceanum extendit oriens vastabat fugabatque, sed ipse modo occiso amico, modo amisso, iacebat in tenebris, alias scelus, alias desiderium suum maerens, victor tot regum atque populorum irae tristitiaeque succumbens; id enim egerat ut omnia potius haberet in potestate quam adfectus. [30] O quam magnis homines tenentur erroribus qui ius dominandi trans maria cupiunt permittere felicissimosque se iudicant si multas [pro] milite provincias obtinent et novas veteribus adiungunt, ignari quod sit illud ingens parque dis regnum: imperare sibi maximum imperium est. [31] Doceat me quam sacra res sit iustitia alienum bonum spectans, nihil ex se petens nisi usum sui. Nihil sit illi cum ambitione famaue: sibi placeat. Hoc ante omnia sibi quisque persuadeat: me iustum esse gratis oportet. Parum est. Adhuc illud persuadeat sibi: me in hanc pulcherrimam virtutem ultro etiam inpendere iuvet; tota cogitatio a privatis commodis quam longissime aversa sit. Non est quod spectes quod sit iustae rei praemium: maius in iusto est. [32] Illud adhuc tibi adfige quod paulo ante dicebam, nihil ad rem pertinere quam multi aequitatem tuam noverint. Qui virtutem suam publicari vult non virtuti laborat sed gloriae. Non vis esse iustus sine gloria? at mehercules saepe iustus esse debebis cum infamia, et tunc, si sapis, mala opinio bene parta delectet. Vale.

CXIV. SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

[1] Quare quibusdam temporibus provenerit corrupti generis oratio quaeris et quomodo in quaedam vitia inclinatio ingeniorum facta sit, ut aliquando inflata explicatio vigeret, aliquando infracta et in morem cantici ducta; quare alias sensus audaces et fidem egressi placuerint, alias abruptae sententiae et suspiciosae, in quibus plus intellegendum esset quam audiendum; quare aliqua aetas fuerit quae translationis iure uteretur inverecunde. Hoc quod audire vulgo soles, quod apud Graecos in proverbium cessit: talis hominibus fuit oratio qualis vita.

[2] Quemadmodum autem uniuscuiusque actio ~dicendi~ similis est, sic genus dicendi aliquando imitatur publicos mores, si disciplina civitatis laboravit et se in delicias dedit. Argumentum est luxuriae publicae orationis lascivia, si modo non in uno aut in altero fuit, sed adprobata est et recepta. [3] Non potest alius esse ingenio, alius animo color. Si ille sanus est, si compositus, gravis, temperans, ingenium quoque siccum ac sobrium est: illo vitiato hoc quoque adflatum. Non vides, si animus elanguit, trahi membra et pigre moveri pedes? si ille effeminatus est, in ipso incessu apparere mollitiam? si ille acer est et ferox, concitari gradum? si furit aut, quod furori simile est, irascitur, turbatum esse corporis motum nec ire sed ferri? Quanto hoc magis accidere ingenio putas, quod totum animo permixtum est, ab illo fingitur, illi paret, inde legem petit?

[4] Quomodo Maecenas vixerit notius est quam ut narrari nunc debeat quomodo ambulaverit, quam delicatus fuerit, quam cupierit videri, quam vitia sua latere noluerit. Quid ergo? non oratio eius aequae soluta est quam ipse discinctus? non tam insignita illius verba sunt quam cultus, quam comitatus, quam domus, quam uxor? Magni vir ingenii fuerat si illud egisset via rectiore, si non vitasset intellegi, si non etiam in oratione diffunderet. Videbis itaque eloquentiam ebrii hominis involutam et errantem et licentiae plenam. [Maecenas de cultu suo.] [5] Quid turpius ‘amne silvisque ripa comantibus’? Vide ut ‘alveum lyntribus arent versoque vado remittant hortos’. Quid? si quis ‘feminae cinno crispas et labris columbatur incipitque suspirans, ut cervice lassa fanantur nemoris tyranni’. ‘Inremediabilis factio rimantur epulis lagonaque temptant domos et spe mortem exigunt.’

‘Genium festo vix suo testem.’ ‘Tenuisve cerei fila et crepacem molam.’ ‘Focum mater aut uxor investiunt.’ [6] Non statim cum haec legeris hoc tibi occurret, hunc esse qui solutis tunicis in urbe semper incesserit (nam etiam cum absentis Caesaris partibus fungeretur, signum a discincto petebatur); hunc esse qui <in> tribunali, in rostris, in omni publico coetu sic apparuerit ut pallio velaretur caput exclusis utrimque auribus, non aliter quam in mimo fugitivi divitis solent; hunc esse cui tunc maxime civilibus bellis strepentibus et sollicita urbe et armata comitatus hic fuerit in publico, spadones duo, magis tamen viri quam ipse; hunc esse qui uxorem milliens duxit, cum unam habuerit? [7] Haec verba tam inprobe structa, tam neglegenter abiecta, tam contra consuetudinem omnium posita ostendunt mores quoque non minus novos et pravos et singulares fuisse. Maxima laus illi tribuitur mansuetudinis: pepercit gladio, sanguine abstinuit, nec ulla alia re quid posset quam licentia ostendit. Hanc ipsam laudem suam corripit istis orationis portentosissimae delicis; apparet enim mollem fuisse, non mitem. [8] Hoc istae ambages compositionis, hoc verba transversa, hoc sensus miri, magni quidem saepe sed enervati dum exeunt, cuivis manifestum facient: motum illi felicitate nimia caput. Quod vitium hominis esse interdum, interdum temporis solet. [9] Ubi luxuriam late felicitas fudit, cultus primum corporum esse diligentior incipit; deinde supellectili laboratur; deinde in ipsas domos inpenditur cura ut in laxitatem ruris excurrant, ut parietes advectis trans maria marmoribus fulgeant, ut tecta varientur auro, ut lacunaribus pavementorum respondeat nitor; deinde ad cenas lautitia transfertur et illic commendatio ex novitate et soliti ordinis commutatione captatur, ut ea quae includere solent cenam prima ponantur, ut quae advenientibus dabantur exeuntibus dentur. [10] Cum adsuevit animus fastidire quae ex more sunt et illi pro sordidis solita sunt, etiam in oratione quod novum est quaerit et modo antiqua verba atque exoleta revocat ac profert, modo fingit ~et ignota ac~ deflectit, modo, id quod nuper increbruit, pro cultu habetur audax translatio ac frequens. [11] Sunt qui sensus praecidant et hoc gratiam sperent, si sententia pependerit et audienti suspicionem sui fecerit; sunt qui illos detineant et porrigant; sunt qui non usque ad vitium accedant (necesse est enim hoc facere aliquid grande temptanti) sed qui ipsum vitium ament.

Itaque ubicumque videris orationem corruptam placere, ibi mores quoque a recto descivisse non erit dubium. Quomodo conviviorum luxuria, quomodo vestium aegrae civitatis indicia sunt, sic orationis licentia, si modo frequens est, ostendit animos quoque a quibus verba exeunt procidisse. [12] Mirari quidem non debes corrupta excipi non tantum a corona sordidiore sed ab hac quoque turba cultiore; togis enim inter se isti, non iudicis distant. Hoc magis mirari potes, quod non tantum vitiosa sed vitia laudentur. Nam illud semper factum est: nullum sine venia placuit ingenium. Da mihi quemcumque vis magni nominis virum: dicam quid illi aetas sua ignoverit, quid in illo sciens dissimulaverit. Multos tibi dabo quibus vitia non nocuerint, quosdam quibus profuerint. Dabo, inquam, maximae famae et inter admiranda propositos, quos si quis corrigit, delet; sic enim vitia virtutibus inmixta sunt ut illas secum tractura sint.

[13] Adice nunc quod oratio certam regulam non habet: consuetudo illam civitatis, quae numquam in eodem diu stetit, versat. Multi ex alieno saeculo petunt verba, duodecim tabulas loquuntur; Gracchus illis et Crassus et Curio nimis culti et recentes sunt, ad Appium usque et Coruncanium redeunt. Quidam contra, dum nihil nisi tritum et usitatum volunt, in sordes incidunt. [14] Utrumque diverso genere corruptum est, tam mehercules quam nolle nisi splendidis uti ac sonantibus et poeticis, necessaria atque in usu posita vitare. Tam hunc dicam peccare quam illum: alter se plus iusto colit, alter plus iusto negligit; ille et crura, hic ne alas quidem vellit.

[15] Ad compositionem transeamus. Quot genera tibi in hac dabo quibus peccetur? Quidam prae fractam et asperam probant; disturbant de industria si quid placidius effluxit; nolunt sine salebra esse iuncturam; virilem putant et fortem quae aurem inaequalitate percutiat. Quorundam non est compositio, modulatio est; adeo blanditur et molliter labitur. [16] Quid de illa loquar in qua verba differuntur et diu expectata vix ad clausulas redeunt? Quid illa in exitu lenta, qualis Ciceronis est, devexa et molliter detinens nec aliter quam solet ad morem suum pedemque respondens?

Non tantum * * * in genere sententiarum vitium est, si aut pusillae sunt et pueriles aut improbae et plus ausae quam pudore salvo licet, si floridae sunt et nimis dulces, si in vanum exeunt et sine effectum nihil amplius quam sonant.

[17] Haec vitia unus aliquis inducit, sub quo tunc eloquentia est, ceteri imitantur et alter alteri tradunt. Sic Sallustio vigente anputatae sententiae et verba ante expectatum cadentia et obscura brevitatis fuere pro cultu. L. Arruntius, vir rarae frugalitatis, qui historias belli Punici scripsit, fuit Sallustianus et in illud genus nitens. Est apud Sallustium ‘exercitum argento fecit’, id est, pecunia paravit. Hoc Arruntius amare coepit; posuit illud omnibus paginis. Dicit quodam loco ‘fugam nostris fecere’, alio loco ‘Hiero rex Syracusanorum bellum fecit’, et alio loco ‘quae audita Panhormitanos dedere Romanis fecere’. [18] Gustum tibi dare volui: totus his contextitur liber. Quae apud Sallustium rara fuerunt apud hunc crebra sunt et paene continua, nec sine causa; ille enim in haec incidebat, at hic illa quaerebat. Vides autem quid sequatur ubi alicui vitium pro exemplo est. [19] Dixit Sallustius ‘aquis hiemantibus’. Arruntius in primo libro belli Punici ait ‘repente hiemavit tempestas’, et alio loco cum dicere vellet frigidum annum fuisse ait ‘totus hiemavit annus’, et alio loco ‘inde sexaginta onerarias leves praeter militem et necesarios nautarum hiemante aquilone misit’. Non desinit omnibus locis hoc verbum infulcire. Quodam loco dicit Sallustius ‘dum inter arma civilia aequi bonique famas petit’. Arruntius non temperavit quominus primo statim libro poneret ingentes esse ‘famas’ de Regulo. [20] Haec ergo et eiusmodi vitia, quae alicui inpressit imitatio, non sunt indicia luxuriae nec animi corrupti; propria enim esse debent et ex ipso nata ex quibus tu aestimes alicuius adfectus: iracundi hominis iracunda oratio est, commoti nimis incitata, delicati tenera et fluxa. [21] Quod vides istos sequi qui aut vellunt barbam aut intervellunt, qui labra pressius tondent et adradunt servata et summissa cetera parte, qui lacernas coloris improbi sumunt, qui perlucens togam, qui nolunt facere quicquam quod hominum oculis transire liceat: iniritant illos et in se avertunt, volunt vel reprehendi dum conspici. Talis est oratio Maecenatis omniumque aliorum qui non casu errant sed scientes volentesque. [22] Hoc a magno animi malo oritur: quomodo in vino non ante lingua titubat quam mens cessit oneri et inclinata vel prodita est, ita ista orationis quid aliud quam ebrietas nulli molesta est nisi animus labat. Ideo ille curetur: ab illo sensus, ab illo verba exeunt, ab illo nobis est habitus, vultus, incessus. Illo sano ac valente oratio quoque robusta, fortis,

virilis est: si ille procubuit, et cetera ruinam sequuntur.

[23]

Rege incolumi mens omnibus una est:

amisso rupere fidem.

Rex noster est animus; hoc incolumi cetera manent in officio, parent, obtemperant: cum ille paulum vacillavit, simul dubitant. Cum vero cessit voluptati, artes quoque eius actusque marcent et omnis ex languido fluidoque conatus est.

[24] Quoniam hac similitudine usus sum, perseverabo. Animus noster modo rex est, modo tyrannus: rex cum honesta intuetur, salutem commissi sibi corporis curat et illi nihil imperat turpe, nihil sordidum; ubi vero inpotens, cupidus, delicatus est, transit in nomen detestabile ac dirum et fit tyrannus. Tunc illum excipiunt adfectus inpotentes et instant; qui initio quidem gaudet, ut solet populus largitione nocitura frustra plenus et quae non potest haurire contrectans; [25] cum vero magis ac magis vires morbus exedit et in medullas nervosque descendere deliciae, conspectu eorum quibus se nimia aviditate inutilem reddidit laetus, pro suis voluptatibus habet alienarum spectaculum, sumministrator libidinum testisque, quarum usum sibi ingerendo abstulit. Nec illi tam gratum est abundare iucundis quam acerbum quod non omnem illum apparatus per gulam ventremque transmittit, quod non cum omni exoletorum feminarumque turba convolutatur, maeretque quod magna pars suae felicitatis exclusa corporis angustiis cessat. [26] Numquid enim, mi Lucili, <non> in hoc furor est, quod nemo nostrum mortalem se cogitat, quod nemo inbecillum? immo quod nemo nostrum unum esse se cogitat? Aspice culinas nostras et concursantis inter tot ignes cocos: unum videri putas ventrem cui tanto tumultu comparatur cibus? Aspice veteraria nostra et plena multorum saeculorum vindemiis horrea: unum putas videri ventrem cui tot consulum regionumque vina cluduntur? Aspice quot locis terra vertatur, quot millia colonorum arent, fodiant: unum videri putas ventrem cui et in Sicilia et in Africa seritur? [27] Sani erimus et modica concupiscemus si unusquisque se numeret, metiatur simul corpus, sciat quam nec multum capere nec diu possit. Nihil tamen aequae tibi profuerit ad

temperantiam omnium rerum quam frequens cogitatio brevis aevi et huius incerti: quidquid facies, respice ad mortem. Vale.

CXV. SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

[1] Nimis anxium esse te circa verba et compositionem, mi Lucili, nolo: habeo maiora quae cures. Quaere quid scribas, non quemadmodum; et hoc ipsum non ut scribas sed ut sentias, ut illa quae senseris magis adplices tibi et velut signes. [2] Cuiuscumque orationem videris sollicitam et politam, scito animum quoque non minus esse pusillis occupatum. Magnus ille remissius loquitur et securius; quaecumque dicit plus habent fiduciae quam curae. Nosti comptulos iuvenes, barba et coma nitidos, de capsula totos: nihil ab illis speraveris forte, nihil solidum. Oratio cultus animi est: si circumtonsa est et fucata et manu facta, ostendit illum quoque non esse sincerum et habere aliquid fracti. Non est ornamentum virile concinnitas. [3] Si nobis animum boni viri liceret inspicere, o quam pulchram faciem, quam sanctam, quam ex magnifico placidoque fulgentem videremus, hinc iustitia, illinc fortitudine, hinc temperantia prudentiaque lucentibus! Praeter has frugalitas et continentia et tolerantia et liberalitas comitasque et (quis credat?) in homine rarum humanitas bonum splendorem illi suum adfunderent. Tunc providentia cum elegantia et ex istis magnanimitas eminentissima quantum, di boni, decoris illi, quantum ponderis gravitatisque adderent! quanta esset cum gratia auctoritas! Nemo illam amabilem qui non simul venerabilem diceret. [4] Si quis viderit hanc faciem altiore fulgentioreque quam cerni inter humana consuevit, nonne velut numinis occurso obstupefactus resistat et ut fas sit vidisse tacitus precetur, tum evocante ipsa vultus benignitate productus adoret ac supplicet, et diu contemplatus multum extantem superque mensuram solitorum inter nos aspici elatam, oculis mite quiddam sed nihilominus vivo igne flagrantibus, tunc deinde illam Vergili nostri vocem verens atque attonitus emittat?

[5]

O quam te memorem, virgo? namque haut tibi vultus
mortalis nec vox hominem sonat . .
sis felix nostrumque leves quaecumque laborem.

Aderit levabitque, si colere eam voluerimus. Colitur autem non taurorum opimis corporibus contrucidatis nec auro argentoque suspenso nec in thesauros stipe infusa, sed pia et recta voluntate. [6] Nemo, inquam, non amore eius arderet si nobis illam videre contingeret; nunc enim multa obstrigillant et aciem nostram aut splendore nimio reperiunt aut obscuritate retinent. Sed si, quemadmodum visus oculorum quibusdam medicamentis acui solet et repurgari, sic nos aciem animi liberare impedimentis voluerimus, poterimus perspicere virtutem etiam obrutam corpore, etiam paupertate opposita, etiam humilitate et infamia obiacentibus; cernemus, inquam, pulchritudinem illam quamvis sordido obtectam. [7] Rursus aequae malitiam et aerumnosi animi veterum perspicimus, quamvis multus circa divitiarum radiantium splendor inpediat et intuentem hinc honorum, illinc magnarum potestatum falsa lux verberet. [8] Tunc intellegere nobis licebit quam contemnenda miremur, simillimi pueris, quibus omne ludicrum in pretio est; parentibus quippe nec minus fratribus praeferunt parvo aere empta monilia. Quid ergo inter nos et illos interest, ut Ariston ait, nisi quod nos circa tabulas et statuas insanimus, carius inepti? Illos reperti in litore calculi leves et aliquid habentes varietatis delectant, nos ingentium maculae columnarum, sive ex Aegyptiis harenis sive ex Africae solitudinibus advectae porticum aliquam vel capacem populi cenationem ferunt. [9] Miramur parietes tenui marmore inductos, cum sciamus quale sit quod absconditur. Oculis nostris inponimus, et cum auro tecta perfudimus, quid aliud quam mendacio gaudemus? Scimus enim sub illo auro foeda ligna latitare. Nec tantum parietibus aut lacunaribus ornamentum tenue praetenditur: omnium istorum quos incedere altos vides bratteata felicitas est. Inspice, et scies sub ista tenui membrana dignitatis quantum mali iaceat. [10] Haec ipsa res quae tot magistratus, tot iudices detinet, quae et magistratus et iudices facit, pecunia, ex quo in honore esse coepit, verus rerum honor cecidit, mercatoresque et venales in vicem facti quaerimus non quale sit quidque sed quanti; ad mercedem pii sumus, ad mercedem impii, et honesta quamdiu aliqua illis spes inest sequimur, in contrarium transituri si plus scelera promittent. [11] Admirationem nobis parentes auri argenteque fecerunt, et teneris infusa cupiditas altius sedit crevitque nobiscum. Deinde

totus populus in alia discors in hoc convenit: hoc suspiciunt, hoc suis optant, hoc dis velut rerum humanarum maximum, cum grati videri volunt, consecrant. Denique eo mores redacti sunt ut paupertas maledicto probroque sit, contempta divitibus, invisa pauperibus. [12] Accedunt deinde carmina poetarum, quae adfectibus nostris facem subdant, quibus divitiae velut unicum vitae decus ornamentumque laudantur. Nihil illis melius nec dare videntur di immortales posse nec habere.

[13]

Regia Solis erat sublimibus alta columnis,
clara micante auro.

Eiusdem currum aspice:

Aureus axis erat, temo aureus, aurea summae
curvatura rotae, radiorum argenteus ordo.

Denique quod optimum videri volunt saeculum aureum appellant.
[14] Nec apud Graecos tragicos desunt qui lucro innocentiam, salutem, opinionem bonam mutant.

Sine me vocari pessimum, [simul] ut dives vocer.
An dives omnes quaerimus, nemo an bonus.
Non quare et unde, quid habeas tantum rogant.
Ubique tanti quisque, quantum habuit, fuit.
Quid habere nobis turpe sit quaeris? nihil.
Aut dives opto vivere aut pauper mori.
Bene moritur quisquis moritur dum lucrum facit.
Pecunia, ingens generis humani bonum,
cui non voluptas matris aut blandae potest
par esse prolis, non sacer meritis parens;
tam dulce si quid Veneris in vultu micat,
merito illa amores caelitum atque hominum movet.

[15] Cum hi novissimi versus in tragoedia Euripidis pronuntiati essent, totus populus ad eiciendum et actorem et carmen consurrexit uno impetu, donec Euripides in medium ipse prosilivit petens ut

expectarent viderentque quem admirator auri exitum faceret. Dabat in illa fabula poenas Bellerophontes quas in sua quisque dat. [16] Nulla enim avaritia sine poena est, quamvis satis sit ipsa poenarum. O quantum lacrimarum, quantum laborum exigit! quam misera desideratis, quam misera partis est! Adice cotidianas sollicitudines quae pro modo habendi quemque discruciant. Maiore tormento pecunia possidetur quam quaeritur. Quantum damnis ingemescunt, quae et magna incidunt et videntur maiora. Denique ut illis fortuna nihil detrahat, quidquid non acquiritur damnum est. [17] 'At felicem illum homines et divitem vocant et consequi optant quantum ille possidet.' Fateor. Quid ergo? tu ullos esse condicionis peioris existimas quam qui habent et miseriam et invidiam? Utinam qui divitias optaturi essent cum divitibus deliberarent; utinam honores petaturi cum ambitiosis et summum adeptis dignitatis statum! Profecto vota mutassent, cum interim illi nova suscipiunt cum priora damnaverint. Nemo enim est cui felicitas sua, etiam si cursu venit, satis faciat; queruntur et de consiliis et de processibus suis maluntque semper quae reliquerunt. [18] Itaque hoc tibi philosophia praestabit, quo equidem nihil maius existimo: numquam te paenitebit tui. Ad hanc tam solidam felicitatem, quam tempestas nulla concutiat, non perducent te apte verba contexta et oratio fluens leniter: eant ut volent, dum animo compositio sua constet, dum sit magnus et opinionum securus et ob ipsa quae aliis displicent sibi placens, qui profectum suum vita aestimet et tantum scire se iudicet quantum non cupit, quantum non timet. Vale.

CXVI. SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

[1] Utrum satius sit modicos habere adfectus an nullos saepe quaesitum est. Nostri illos expellunt, Peripatetici temperant. Ego non video quomodo salubris esse aut utilis possit ulla mediocritas morbi. Noli timere: nihil eorum quae tibi non vis negari eripio. Facilem me indulgentemque praebebo rebus ad quas tendis et quas aut necessarias vitae aut utiles aut iucundas putas: detraham vitium. Nam cum tibi cupere interdixero, velle permittam, ut eadem illa intrepidus facias, ut certiore consilio, ut voluptates ipsas magis sentias: quidni ad te magis perventurae sint si illis imperabis quam si servies? [2] ‘Sed naturale est’ inquis ‘ut desiderio amici torquear: da ius lacrimis tam iuste cadentibus. Naturale est opinionibus hominum tangi et adversis contristari: quare mihi non permittas hunc tam honestum malae opinionis metum?’ Nullum est vitium sine patrocinio; nulli non initium verecundum est et exorabile, sed ab hoc latius funditur. Non obtinebis ut desinat si incipere permiseris. [3] Inbecillus est primo omnis adfectus; deinde ipse se concitat et vires dum procedit parat: excluditur facilius quam expellitur. Quis negat omnis adfectus a quodam quasi naturali fluere principio? Curam nobis nostri natura mandavit, sed huic ubi nimium indulseris, vitium est. Voluptatem natura necessariis rebus admiscuit, non ut illam peteremus, sed ut ea sine quibus non possumus vivere gratiora nobis illius faceret accessio: suo veniat iure, luxuria est. Ergo intransibilibus resistamus, quia facilius, ut dixi, non recipiuntur quam exeunt. [4] ‘Aliquatenus’ inquis ‘dolere, aliquatenus timere permitte.’ Sed illud ‘aliquatenus’ longe producit nec ubi vis accipit finem. Sapienti non sollicitate custodire se tutum est, et lacrimas suas et voluptates ubi volet sistet: nobis, quia non est regredi facile, optimum est omnino non progredi. [5] Eleganter mihi videtur Panaetius respondisse adulescentulo cuidam quaerenti an sapiens amaturus esset. ‘De sapiente’ inquit ‘videbimus: mihi et tibi, qui adhuc a sapiente longe absumus, non est committendum ut incidamus in rem commotam, inpotentem, alteri emancipatam, vilem sibi. Sive enim nos respicit, humanitate eius irritamur, sive contempsit, superbia accendimur. Aequae facilitas amoris quam difficultas nocet: facilitate capimur, cum difficultate

certamus. Itaque conscii nobis inbecillitatis nostrae quiescamus; nec vino infirmum animum committamus nec formae nec adulationi nec ullis rebus blande trahentibus.’ [6] Quod Panaetius de amore quaerenti respondit, hoc ego de omnibus adfectibus dico: quantum possumus nos a lubrico recedamus; in sicco quoque parum fortiter stamus.

[7] Occurres hoc loco mihi illa publica contra Stoicos voce: ‘nimis magna promittitis, nimis dura praecipitis. Nos homunciones sumus; omnia nobis negare non possumus. Dolebimus, sed parum; concupiscemus, sed temperate; irascemur, sed placabimur.’ [8] Scis quare non possumus ista? quia nos posse non credimus. Immo mehercules aliud est in re: vitia nostra quia amamus defendimus et malumus excusare illa quam excutere. Satis natura homini dedit roboris si illo utamur, si vires nostras colligamus ac totas pro nobis, certe non contra nos concitemus. Nolle in causa est, non posse praetenditur. Vale.

CXVII. SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

[1] Multum mihi negotii concinnabis et, dum nescis, in magnam me litem ac molestiam inpinges, qui mihi tales quaestiunculas ponis, in quibus ego nec dissentire a nostris salva gratia nec consentire salva conscientia possum. Quaeris an verum sit quod Stoicis placet, sapientiam bonum esse, sapere bonum non esse. Primum exponam quid Stoicis videatur; deinde tunc dicere sententiam audebo.

[2] Placet nostris quod bonum est corpus esse, quia quod bonum est facit, quidquid facit corpus est. Quod bonum est prodest; faciat autem aliquid oportet ut prosit; si facit, corpus est. Sapientiam bonum esse dicunt; sequitur ut necesse sit illam corporalem quoque dicere. [3] At sapere non putant eiusdem condicionis esse. Incorporale est et accidens alteri, id est sapientiae; itaque nec facit quicquam nec prodest. ‘Quid ergo?’ inquit ‘non dicimus: bonum est sapere?’ Dicimus referentes ad id ex quo pendet, id est ad ipsam sapientiam.

[4] Adversus hos quid ab aliis respondeatur audi, antequam ego incipio secedere et in alia parte considerare. ‘Isto modo’ inquiunt ‘nec beate vivere bonum est. Velint nolint, respondendum est beatam vitam bonum esse, beate vivere bonum non esse.’ [5] Etiamnunc nostris illud quoque opponitur: ‘vultis sapere; ergo expetenda res est sapere; si expetenda res est, bona est’. Coguntur nostri verba torquere et unam syllabam expetendo interponere quam sermo noster inseri non sinit. Ego illam, si pateris, adiungam. ‘Expetendum est’ inquiunt ‘quod bonum est, expetibile quod nobis contingit cum bonum consecuti sumus. Non petitur tamquam bonum, sed petito bono accedit.’

[6] Ego non idem sentio et nostros iudico in hoc descendere quia iam primo vinculo tenentur et mutare illis formulam non licet. Multum dare solemus praesumptioni omnium hominum et apud nos veritatis argumentum est aliquid omnibus videri; tamquam deos esse inter alia hoc colligimus, quod omnibus insita de dis opinio est nec ulla gens usquam est adeo extra leges moresque proiecta ut non aliquos deos credat. Cum de animarum aeternitate disserimus, non leve momentum apud nos habet consensus hominum aut timentium inferos aut colentium. Utor hac publica persuasione: neminem

invenies qui non putet et sapientiam bonum et sapere.

[7] Non faciam quod victi solent, ut provocem ad populum: nostris incipiamus armis conflare. Quod accidit alicui, utrum extra id cui accidit est an in eo cui accidit? Si in eo est cui accidit, tam corpus est quam illud cui accidit. Nihil enim accidere sine tactu potest; quod tangit corpus est: nihil accidere sine actu potest; quod agit corpus est. Si extra est, postea quam acciderat recessit; quod recessit motum habet; quod motum habet corpus est. [8] Speras me dicturum non esse aliud cursum, aliud currere, nec aliud calorem, aliud calere, nec aliud lucem, aliud lucere: concedo ista alia esse, sed non sortis alterius. Si valetudo indifferens est, <et> bene valere indifferens est; si forma indifferens est, et formosum esse. Si iustitia bonum est, et iustum esse; si turpitudine malum est, et turpem esse malum est, tam mehercules quam si lippitudine malum est, lippire quoque malum est. Hoc ut scias, neutrum esse sine altero potest: qui sapit sapiens est; qui sapiens est sapit. Adeo non potest dubitari an quale illud sit, tale hoc sit, ut quibusdam utrumque unum videatur atque idem. [9] Sed illud libenter quaesierim, cum omnia aut mala sint aut bona aut indifferentia, sapere in quo numero sit? Bonum negant esse; malum utique non est; sequitur ut medium sit. Id autem medium atque indifferens vocamus quod tam malo contingere quam bono possit, tamquam pecunia, forma, nobilitas. Hoc, ut sapiat, contingere nisi bono non potest; ergo indifferens non est. Atqui ne malum quidem est, quod contingere malo non potest; ergo bonum est. Quod nisi bonus non habet bonum est; sapere non nisi bonus habet; ergo bonum est. [10] Accidens est' inquit 'sapientiae.' Hoc ergo quod vocas sapere, utrum facit sapientiam an patitur? Sive facit illud sive patitur, utroque modo corpus est; nam et quod fit et quod facit corpus est. Si corpus est, bonum est; unum enim illi deerat quominus bonum esset, quod incorporale erat.

[11] Peripateticis placet nihil interesse inter sapientiam et sapere, cum in utrolibet eorum et alterum sit. Numquid enim quemquam existimas sapere nisi qui sapientiam habet? numquid quemquam qui sapit non putas habere sapientiam? [12] Dialectici veteres ista distinguunt; ab illis divisio usque ad Stoicos venit. Qualis sit haec dicam. Aliud est ager, aliud agrum habere, quidni? cum habere agrum ad habentem, non ad agrum pertineat. Sic aliud est sapientia,

aliud sapere. Puto, concedes duo esse haec, id quod habetur et eum qui habet: habetur sapientia, habet qui sapit. Sapientia est mens perfecta vel ad summum optimumque perducta; ars enim vitae est. Sapere quid est? non possum dicere ‘mens perfecta’, sed id quod contingit perfectam mentem habenti; ita alterum est mens bona, alterum quasi habere mentem bonam.

[13] ‘Sunt’ inquit ‘naturae corporum, tamquam hic homo est, hic equus; has deinde sequuntur motus animorum enuntiativi corporum. Hi habent proprium quiddam et a corporibus seductum, tamquam video Catonem ambulantiem: hoc sensus ostendit, animus credidit. Corpus est quod video, cui et oculos intendi et animum. Dico deinde: Cato ambulat. Non corpus’ inquit ‘est quod nunc loquor, sed enuntiativum quiddam de corpore, quod alii effatum vocant, alii enuntiatum, alii dictum. Sic cum dicimus “sapientiam”, corporale quiddam intellegimus; cum dicimus “sapit”, de corpore loquimur. Plurimum autem interest utrum illud dicas an de illo.’

[14] Putemus in praesentia ista duo esse (nondum enim quid mihi videatur pronuntio): quid prohibet quominus aliud quidem <sit> sed nihilominus bonum? Dicebam paulo ante aliud esse agrum, aliud habere agrum. Quidni? in alia enim natura est qui habet, in alia quod habetur: illa terra est, hic homo est. At in hoc de quo agitur eiusdem naturae sunt utraque, et qui habet sapientiam et ipsa. [15] Praeterea illic aliud est quod habetur, alius qui habet: hic in eodem est et quod habetur et qui habet. Ager iure possidetur, sapientia natura; ille abalienari potest et alteri tradi, haec non discedit a domino. Non est itaque quod compares inter se dissimilia.

Coeperam dicere posse ista duo esse et tamen utraque bona esse, tamquam sapientia et sapiens duo sunt et utrumque bonum esse concedis. Quomodo nihil obstat quominus et sapientia bonum sit et habens sapientiam, sic nihil obstat quominus et sapientia bonum sit et habere sapientiam, id est sapere. [16] Ego in hoc volo sapiens esse, ut sapiam. Quid ergo? non est id bonum sine quo nec illud bonum est? Vos certe dicitis sapientiam, si sine usu detur, accipiendam non esse. Quid est usus sapientiae? sapere: hoc est in illa pretiosissimum, quo detracto supervacua fit. Si tormenta mala sunt, torqueri malum est, adeo quidem ut illa non sint mala si quod sequitur detraxeris. Sapientia habitus perfectae mentis est, sapere usus perfectae mentis:

quomodo potest usus eius bonum non esse quae sine usu bonum non est? [17] Interrogo te an sapientia expetenda sit: fateris. Interrogo an usus sapientiae expetendus sit: fateris. Negas enim te illam recepturum si uti ea prohibearis. Quod expetendum est bonum est. Sapere sapientiae usus est, quomodo eloquentiae eloqui, quomodo oculorum videre. Ergo sapere sapientiae usus est, usus autem sapientiae expetendus est; sapere ergo expetendum est; si expetendum est, bonum est.

[18] Olim ipse me damno qui illos imitor dum accuso et verba apertae rei inpendo. Cui enim dubium potest esse quin, si aestus malum est, et aestuare malum sit? si algor malum est, malum sit algere? si vita bonum est, et vivere bonum sit? Omnia ista circa sapientiam, non in ipsa sunt; at nobis in ipsa commorandum est. [19] Etiam si quid evagari libet, amplos habet illa spatiososque secessus: de deorum natura quaeramus, de siderum alimento, de his tam variis stellarum discursibus, an ad illarum motus nostra moveantur, an corporibus omnium animisque illinc impetus veniat, an et haec quae fortuita dicuntur certa lege constricta sint nihilque in hoc mundo repentinum aut expers ordinis volutetur. Ista iam a formatione morum recesserunt, sed levant animum et ad ipsarum quas tractat rerum magnitudinem attollunt; haec vero de quibus paulo ante dicebam minuunt et deprimunt nec, ut putatis, exacuunt, sed extenuant. [20] Obsecro vos, tam necessariam curam maioribus melioribusque debitam in re nescio an falsa, certe inutili terimus? Quid mihi profuturum est scire an aliud sit sapientia, aliud sapere? Quid mihi profuturum est scire illud bonum esse, <hoc non esse>? Temere me geram, subibo huius voti aleam: tibi sapientia, mihi sapere contingat. Pares erimus. [21] Potius id age ut mihi viam monstres qua ad ista perveniam. Dic quid vitare debeam, quid adpetere, quibus animum labantem studiis firmem, quemadmodum quae me ex transverso feriunt aguntque procul a me repellam, quomodo par esse tot malis possim, quomodo istas calamitates removeam quae ad me inruperunt, quomodo illas ad quas ego inrupi. Doce quomodo feram aerumnas sine gemitu meo, felicitatem sine alieno, quomodo ultimum ac necessarium non expectem sed ipsemet, cum visum erit, profugiam. [22] Nihil mihi videtur turpius quam optare mortem. Nam si vis vivere, quid optas mori? sive non vis,

quid deos rogas quod tibi nascenti dederunt? Nam ut quandoque moriaris etiam invito positum est, ut cum voles in tua manu est; alterum tibi necesse est, alterum licet. [23] Turpissimum his diebus principium diserti mehercules viri legi: 'ita[que]' inquit 'quam primum moriar'. Homo demens, optas rem tuam. 'Ita quam primum moriar.' Fortasse inter has voces senex factus es; alioqui quid in mora est? Nemo te tenet: evade qua visum est; elige quamlibet rerum naturae partem, quam tibi praebere exitum iubeas. Haec nempe sunt et elementa quibus hic mundus administratur; aqua, terra, spiritus, omnia ista tam causae vivendi sunt quam viae mortis. [24] 'Ita quam primum moriar': 'quam primum' istud quid esse vis? quem illi diem ponis? citius fieri quam optas potest. Inbecillae mentis ista sunt verba et hac detestatione misericordiam captantis: non vult mori qui optat. Deos vitam et salutem roga: si mori placuit, hic mortis est fructus, optare desinere.

[25] Haec, mi Lucili, tractemus, his formemus animum. Hoc est sapientia, hoc est sapere, non disputatiunculis inanibus subtilitatem vanissimam agitare. Tot quaestiones fortuna tibi posuit, nondum illas solvisti: iam cavillaris? Quam stultum est, cum signum pugnae acceperis, ventilare. Remove ista lusoria arma: decretoriis opus est. Dic qua ratione nulla animum tristitia, nulla formido perturbet, qua ratione hoc secretarum cupiditatum pondus effundam. Agatur aliquid. [26] 'Sapientia bonum est, sapere non est bonum': sic fit <ut> negemur sapere, ut hoc totum studium derideatur tamquam operatum supervacuis.

Quid si scires etiam illud quaeri, an bonum sit futura sapientia? Quid enim dubi est, oro te, an nec messem futuram iam sentiant horrea nec futuram adulescentiam pueritia viribus aut ullo robore intellegat? Aegro interim nil ventura sanitas prodest, non magis quam currentem luctantemque post multos secuturum menses otium reficit. [27] Quis nescit hoc ipso non esse bonum id quod futurum est, quia futurum est? Nam quod bonum est utique prodest; nisi praesentia prodesse non possunt. Si non prodest, bonum non est; si prodest, iam est. Futurus sum sapiens; hoc bonum erit cum fuero: interim non est. Prius aliquid esse debet, deinde quale esse. [28] Quomodo, oro te, quod adhuc nihil est iam bonum est? Quomodo autem tibi magis vis probari non esse aliquid quam si dixero

‘futurum est’? nondum enim venisse apparet quod veniet. Ver secuturum est: scio nunc hiemem esse. Aestas secutura est: scio aestatem non esse. Maximum argumentum habeo nondum praesentis futurum esse. [29] Sapiam, spero, sed interim non sapio; si illud bonum haberem, iam hoc carerem malo. Futurum est ut sapiam: ex hoc licet nondum sapere me intellegas. Non possum simul et in illo bono et in hoc malo esse; duo ista non coeunt nec apud eundem sunt una malum et bonum.

[30] Transcurramus sollertissimas nugae et ad illa quae nobis aliquam opem sunt latura properemus. Nemo qui obstetricem parturienti filiae sollicitus accersit edictum et ludorum ordinem perlegit; nemo qui ad incendium domus suae currit tabulam latrunculariam prospicit ut sciat quomodo alligatus exeat calculus. [31] At mehercule omnia tibi undique nuntiantur, et incendium domus et periculum liberorum et obsidio patriae et bonorum direptio; adice isto naufragia motusque terrarum et quidquid aliud timeri potest: inter ista districtus rebus nihil aliud quam animum oblectantibus vacas? Quid inter sapientiam et sapere intersit inquiris? nodos nectis ac solvis tanta mole inpendente capiti tuo? [32] Non tam benignum ac liberale tempus natura nobis dedit ut aliquid ex illo vacet perdere. Et vide quam multa etiam diligentissimis pereant: aliud valetudo sua cuique abstulit, aliud suorum; aliud necessaria negotia, aliud publica occupaverunt; vitam nobiscum dividit somnus. Ex hoc tempore tam angusto et rapido et nos auferente quid iuvat maiorem partem mittere in vanum? [33] Adice nunc quod adsuescit animus delectare se potius quam sanare et philosophiam oblectamentum facere cum remedium sit. Inter sapientiam et sapere quid intersit nescio: scio mea non interesse sciam ista an nesciam. Dic mihi: cum quid inter sapientiam et sapere intersit didicero, sapiam? Cur ergo potius inter vocabula me sapientiae detines quam inter opera? Fac me fortiorem, fac securiorem, fac fortunae parem, fac superiorem. Possum autem superior esse si derexero <eo> omne quod disco. Vale.

LIBER VICENSIMUS

CXVIII. SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM.

(1) Exigis a me frequentiores epistulas. Rationes conferamus: soluendonon eris. Conuenerat quidem ut tua priora essent: tu scriberes, ego rescriberem. Sed non ero difficilis: bene credi tibi scio. Itaque in antecessum dabonec faciam quod Cicero, uir disertissimus, facere Atticum iubet, ut etiam'si rem nullam habebit, quod in buccam uenerit scribat'. (2) Numquam potestdeesse quod scribam, ut omnia illa quae Ciceronis implent epistulas transeam:quis candidatus laboret; quis alienis, quis suis uiribus pugnet; quis consulatumfiducia Caesaris, quis Pompei, quis arcae petat; quam durus sit feneratorCaecilius, a quo minoris centesimis propinqui nummum mouere non possint. Sua satius est mala quam aliena tractare, se excutere et uidere quam multarumrerum candidatus sit, et non suffragari. (3) Hoc est, mi Lucili, egregium,hoc securum ac liberum, nihil petere et tota fortunae comitia transire. Quam putas esse iucundum tribubus uocatis, cum candidati in templis suispendeant et alius nummos pronuntiet, alius per sequestrem agat, alius eorummanus osculis conterat quibus designatus contingendam manum negaturus est,omnes attoniti uocem praeconis expectent, stare otiosum et spectare illasnudinas nec ementem quicquam nec uendentem? (4) Quanto hic maiore gaudiofruitur qui non praetoria aut consularia comitia securus intuetur, sedmagna illa in quibus alii honores anniuersarios petunt, alii perpetuaspotestates, alii bellorum euentus prosperos triumphosque, alii diuitias,alii matrimonia ac liberos, alii salutem suam suorumque! Quanti animi reseat solum nihil petere, nulli supplicare, et dicere, 'nihil mihi tecum,fortuna; non facio mei tibi copiam. Scio apud te Catones repelli, Vatiniosfieri. Nihil rogo. ' Hoc est priuatam facere fortunam. (5) Licet ergo haec in uicem scribere et hanc semper integram egereremateriam circumspicientibus tot milia hominum inquieta, qui ut aliquidpestiferi consequantur per mala nituntur in malum petuntque mox fugiendaaaut etiam fastidienda. (6) Cui enim adsecuto satis fuit quod optanti nimiumuidebatur? Non est, ut existimant homines, auida felicitas sed pusilla;itaque neminem satiat. Tu ista credis excelsa quia longe ab illis iaces;ei uero qui ad illa peruenit humilia sunt. Mentior nisi adhuc

quaerit escendere: istud quod tu summum putas gradus est. (7) Omnes autem male habet ignorantia ueri. Tamquam ad bona feruntur decepti rumoribus, deinde mala esse aut inania aut minora quam sperauerint adepti ac multa passi uident; maiorque pars miratur ex interuallo fallentia, et uulgo bona pro magnis sunt.

(8) Hoc ne nobis quoque eueniat, quaeramus quid sit bonum. Varia eius interpretatio fuit, alius illud aliter expressit. Quidam ita finiunt: 'bonum est quod inuitat animos, quod ad se uocat'. Huic statim opponitur: quid si inuitat quidem sed in perniciem? scis quam multa mala blanda sint. Verum et ueri simile inter se differunt. Ita quod bonum est uero iungitur; non est enim bonum nisi uerum est. At quod inuitat ad se et ad licefacit uerisimile est: subrepat, sollicitat, adtrahit. (9) Quidam ita finierunt: 'bonum est quod ad petitionem sui mouet, uel quod impetum animi tendentis ad semouet'. 'Et huic idem opponitur; multa enim impetum animi mouent quae petantur petentium malo. Melius illi qui ita finierunt: 'bonum est quod ad se impetum animi secundum naturam mouet et ita demum petendum est cum coepit esse expetendum'. Iam et honestum est; hoc enim est perfecte petendum. (10) Locus ipse me admonet ut quid intersit inter bonum honestumque dicam. Aliquid inter se mixtum habent et inseparabile: nec potest bonum esse nisi cuius aliquid honesti inest, et honestum utique bonum est. Quid ergo inter duos interest? Honestum est perfectum bonum, quo beata uita completur, cuius contactu alia quoque bona fiunt. (11) Quod dico tale est: sunt quaedam neque bona neque mala, tamquam militia, legatio, iurisdictio. Haec cum honeste administrata sunt, bona esse incipiunt et ex dubio in bonum transeunt. Bonum societate honesti fit, honestum per se bonum est; bonum ex honesto fluit, honestum ex se est. Quod bonum est malum esse potuit; quod honestum est nisi bonum esse non potuit.

(12) Hanc quidam finitionem reddiderunt: 'bonum est quod secundum naturam est'. Adtende quid dicam: quod bonum, est secundum naturam: non protinus quod secundum naturam est etiam bonum est. Multa naturae quidem consentiunt, sed tam pusilla sunt ut non conueniat illis boni nomen; leuia enim sunt, contemnenda. Nullum est minimum contemnendum bonum; nam quamdiu exiguum est bonum non est: cum bonum esse coepit, non est

exiguum. Unde ad cognoscitur bonum? si perfecte secundum naturam est. (13) 'Fateris' inquis 'quod bonum est secundum naturam esse; haec eius proprietas est. Fateris et alia secundum naturam quidem esse sed bona non esse. Quomodo ergo illud bonum est cum haec non sint? quomodo ad aliam proprietatem peruenit cum utrique praecipuum illud commune sit, secundum naturam esse?'

(14) Ipsa scilicet magnitudine. Nec hoc nouum est, quaedam crescendo mutari. Infans fuit; factus est pubes: alia eius proprietas fit; ille enim irrationalis est, hic rationalis. Quaedam incremento non tantum in maius exeunt sed in aliud. (15) 'Non fit' inquit 'aliud quod maius fit. Utrum lagonam an dolium impleas uino, nihil refert: in utroque proprietas uini est. Et exiguum mellis pondus et magnum saporem non differt. ' Diuersa ponis exempla; in istis enim eadem qualitas est; quamuis augeantur, manet. (16) Quaedam amplificata in suo genere et in sua proprietate perdurant; quaedam post multa incrementa ultima demum uertit adiectio et nouam illis aliamque quam in qua fuerunt condicionem imprimit. Unus lapis facit fornicem, ille qui latera inclinata cuneauit et interuentus uinxit. Summa adiectio quare plurimum facit uel exigua? quia non auget sed implet. (17) Quaedam processu priorem exuunt formam et in nouam transeunt. Ubi aliquid animus diu protulit et magnitudinem eius sequendo lassatus est, infinitum coepit uocari; quod longe aliud factum est quam fuit cum magnum uideretur sed finitum. Eodem modo aliquid difficulter secari cogitauimus: nouissime crescente hac difficultate insecabile inuentum est. Sic ab eo quod uix et aegre mouebatur processimus ad immobile. Eadem ratione aliquid secundum naturam fuit: hoc in aliam proprietatem magnitudo sua transtulit bonum fecit. Vale.

CXIX. SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM.

(1) Quotiens aliquid inueni, non expecto donec dicas ‘in commune’: ipse mihi dico. Quid sit quod inuenerim quaeris? Sinum laxa, merum lucrum est. Docebo quomodo fieri diues celerrime possis. Quam ualde cupis audire! nec inmerito: ad maximas te diuitias compendiaria ducam. Opus erit tamen tibi creditore: ut negotiari possis, aes alienum facias oportet, sed nolo per intercessorem mutueris, nolo proxenetae nomen tuum iactent. (2) Paratum tibi creditorem dabo Catonianum illum, a te mutuum sumes. Quantulumcumque est, satis erit si, quidquid deerit, id a nobis petierimus. Nihil enim, mi Lucili, interest utrum non desideres an habeas. Summa rei in utroque eadem est: non torqueberis. Nec illud praecipio, ut aliquid naturae neges — contumax est, non potest uinci, suum poscit — sed ut quidquid naturam excedit scias precarium esse, non necessarium.

(3) Esurio: edendum est. Utrum hic panis sit plebeius an siligineus ad naturam nihil pertinet: illa uentrem non delectari uult sed impleri. Sitio: utrum haec aqua sit quam ex lacu proximo excepero an ea quam multa niue clusero, ut rigore refrigeretur alieno, ad naturam nihil pertinet. Illa hoc unum iubet, sitim extinguere; utrum sit aureum poculum an crustallinum an murreum an Tiburtinus calix an manus concaua, nihil refert. (4) Finem omnium rerum specta, et superuacua dimittes. Fames me appellat: ad proxima quaeque porrigatur manus; ipsa mihi commendabit quodcumque conprendero. Nihil contemnit esuriens. (5) Quid sit ergo quod me delectauerit quaeris? Videtur mihi egregie dictum, ‘sapiens diuitiarum naturalium est quaesitor acerrimus’. ‘Inanime’ inquis ‘lance muneras. Quid est istud? Ego iam paraueram fiscos; circumspiciebam in quod me mare negotiaturus inmitterem, quod publicum agitare, quas arcesserem merces.

Decipere est istud, docere paupertatem cum diuitias promiseris. ‘Ita tu pauperem iudicas cui nihil deest? ‘Suo’ inquis ‘et patientiae suae beneficio, non fortunae. ‘ Ideo ergo illum non iudicas diuitem quia diuitiae eius desinere non possunt? (6) Utrum mauis habere multum an satis? Qui multum habet plus cupit, quod est argumentum nondum illum satis habere; qui satis habet consecutus est quod

numquam diuiti contigit, finem. An has ideo non putas esse diuitias quia propter illas nemo proscriptus est? quia propter illas nulli uenenum filius, nulli uxor inpegit? quia in bello tutae sunt? quia in pace otiosae? quia nec habere illas periculosum est nec operosum disponere?

(7) 'At parum habet qui tantum non alget, non esurit, non sitit. ' Plus Iuppiter non habet. Numquam parum est quod satis est, et numquam multum est quod satis non est. Post Dareum et Indos pauper est Alexander. Mentior? Quaerit quod suum faciat, scrutatur maria ignota, in oceanum classes nouas mittit et ipsa, ut ita dicam, mundi claustra perrumpit. Quod naturae satis est homini non est. (8) Inuentus est qui concupisceret aliquid post omnia: tanta est caecitas mentium et tanta initiorum suorum unicuique, cum processit, obliuio. Ille modo ignobilis anguli non sine controuersia dominus tacto fine terrarum per suum rediturus orbem tristis est. (9) Neminem pecunia diuitem fecit, immo contra nulli non maiorem sui cupidinem incussit. Quaeris quae sit huius rei causa? plus incipit habere posse qui plus habet. Ad summam quem uoles mihi ex his quorum nomina cum Crasso Licinoque numerantur in medium licet protrahas; adferat census et quidquid habet et quidquid sperat simul computet: iste, si mihi credis, pauper est, si tibi, potest esse. (10) At hic qui se ad quod exigit natura composuit non tantum extra sensum est paupertatis sed extra metum. Sed ut scias quam difficile sit res suas ad naturalem modum coartare, hic ipse quem circumcidimus, quem tu uocas pauperem, habet aliquid et superuacui. (11) At excaecant populum et in se conuertunt opes, si numerati multum ex aliqua domo effertur, si multum auri tecto quoque eius inlinitur, si familia aut corporibus electa aut spectabilis cultu est. Omnium istorum felicitas in publicum spectat: ille quem nos et populo et fortunae subduximus beatus introsum est. (12) Nam quod ad illos pertinet apud quos falso diuitiarum nomen inuasit occupata paupertas, sic diuitias habent quomodo habere dicimur febrem, cum illa nos habeat. E contrario dicere solemus 'febris illum tenet': eodem modo dicendum est 'diuitiae illum tenent'. Nihil ergo monuisse te malim quam hoc, quod nemo monetur satis, ut omnia naturalibus desideriis metiaris, quibus aut gratis satis fiat aut paruo: tantum miscere uitia desideriis noli. (13) Quaeris quali mensa, quali argento, quam paribus ministeriis et

leuibus adferatur cibus? Nihil praeter cibum natura desiderat.

Num, tibi cum fauces urit sitis, aurea quaeris
pocula? num esuriens fastidis omnia praeter
pauonem rhombumque?

(14) Ambitiosa non est fames, contenta desinere est; quo desinat non nimis curat. Infelicis luxuriae ista tormenta sunt: quaerit quemadmodum post saturitatem quoque esuriat, quemadmodum non impleat uentrem sed farciat, quemadmodum sitim prima potione sedatam reuocet. Egregie itaque Horatius negat ad sitim pertinere quo poculo (aquae) aut quam eleganti manu ministretur. Nam si pertinere ad te iudicas quam crinitus puer et quam perlucidum tibi poculum porrigat, non sitis.

(15) Inter reliqua hoc nobis praestitit natura praecipuum, quod necessitati fastidium excussit. Recipiunt superuacua dilectum: 'hoc parum decens, illud parum lautum, oculos hoc meos laedit'. Id actum est ab illo mundi conditore, qui nobis uiuendi iura discripsit, ut salui essemus, non ut delicati: ad salutem omnia parata sunt et in promptu, delicis omnia misere ac sollicite comparantur. (16) Utamur ergo hoc naturae beneficio inter magna numerando et cogitemus nullo nomine melius illam meruisse de nobis quam quia quidquid ex necessitate desideratur sine fastidio sumitur. Vale.

CXX. SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM.

(1) Epistula tua per plures quaestiunculas uagata est sed in una constitit hanc expediri desiderat, quomodo ad nos boni honestique notitia peruenerit. Haec duo apud alios diuersa sunt, apud nos tantum diuisa. (2) Quid sithoc dicam. Bonum putant esse aliqui id quod utile est. Itaque hoc et diuitiiset equo et uino et calceo nomen inponunt; tanta fit apud illos boni uilitaset adeo in sordida usque descendit. Honestum putant cui ratio recti officiconstat, tamquam pie curatam patris senectutem, adiutam amici paupertatem, fortem expeditionem, prudentem moderatamque sententiam. (3) <nos> istaduo quidem facimus, sed ex uno.

Nihil est bonum nisi quod honestum est; quod honestum, est utique bonum. Superuacuum iudico adicere quid interista discriminis sit, cum saepe dixerim. Hoc unum dicam, nihil nobis uideri <bonum> quo quis et male uti potest; uides autem diuitiis, nobilitate, uiribus quam multi male utantur. Nunc ergo ad id reuertor de quo desideras dici, quomodo ad nos primaboni honestique notitia peruenerit. (4) Hoc nos natura docere non potuit: semina nobis scientiae dedit, scientiam non dedit. Quidam aiunt nos innotitiam incidisse, quod est incredibile, uirtutis alicui speciem casu occurrisse. Nobis uidetur obseruatio collegisse et rerum saepe factarum inter se conlatio; per analogian nostri intellectum et honestum et bonum iudicant. Hoc uerbum cum Latini grammatici ciuitate donauerint, ego damnandum non puto, <immo> in ciuitatem suam redigendum. Utar ergo illo non tantum tamquam recepto sed tamquam usitato. Quae sit haec analogia dicam. (5) Noueramus corporis sanitatem: ex hac cogitauimus esse aliquam et animi. Noueramus uires corporis: ex his collegimus esse et animi robur. Aliqua benigna facta, aliqua humana, aliqua fortia nos obstupescerant: haec coepimus tamquam perfecta mirari. Suberant illis multa uitia quae species conspicua licuius facti fulgorque celabat: haec dissimulauimus. Natura iubet augere laudanda, nemo non gloriam ultra uerum tulit: ex his ergo speciem ingentis boni traximus. (6) Fabricius Pyrrhi regis aurum reppulit maiusque regno iudicauit regias opes posse contemnere. Idem medico Pyrrhi promittente uenenum se regi daturum monuit Pyrrhum

caueret insidias.

Eiusdem animi fuit auro non uinci, ueneno non uincere. Admirati sumus ingentem uirum quem non regis, non contra regem promissa flexissent, boni exempli tenacem, quod difficillimum est, in bello innocentem, qui aliquod esse crederet etiam in hostes nefas, qui in summa paupertate quam sibi decus fecerat non aliter refugit diuitias quam uenenum. 'Viue' inquit 'beneficio meo, Pyrrhe, et gaude quod adhuc dolebas, Fabricium non posse corrumpi. ' (7) Horatius Cocles solus impleuit pontis angustias adimique a tergo sibi reditum, dummodo iter hosti auferretur, iussit et tam diu prementibus restitit donec reuulsa ingenti ruina tigna sonuerunt. Postquam respexit et extra periculum esse patriam periculo suo sensit, 'ueniat, si quis uult' inquit 'sic euntem sequi' iecitque se in praeceps et non minus sollicitus in illo rapido alueo fluminis ut armatus quam ut saluus exiret, retento armorum uictricium decorem tam tutus redit quam si ponte uenisset. (8) Haec et eiusmodi facta imaginem nobis ostendere uirtutis.

Adiciam quod mirum fortasse uideatur: mala interdum speciem honesti obtulere et optimum ex contrario enituit. Sunt enim, ut scis, uirtutibus uitia confinia, et perditis quoque ac turpibus recti similitudo est: sic mentitur prodigus liberalem, cum plurimum intersit utrum quis dare sciat an seruare nesciat. Multi, inquam, sunt, Lucili, qui non donant sed prociunt: non uoco ego liberalem pecuniae suae iratum. Imitatur negligentia facilitatem, temeritas fortitudinem. (9) Haec nos similitudo coegit adtendere et distinguere specie quidem uicina, re autem plurimum inter se dissidentia. Dum obseruamus eos quos insignes egregium opus fecerat, coepimus adnotare quis rem aliquam generoso animo fecisset et magno impetu, sed semel. Hunc uidimus in bello fortem, in foro timidum, animose paupertatem ferentem, humiliter infamiam: factum laudauimus, contempsimus uirum.

(10) Alium uidimus aduersus amicos benignum, aduersus inimicos temperatum, et publica et priuata sancte ac religiose administrantem; non deesse ei in iis quae toleranda erant patientiam, in iis quae agenda prudentiam. Vidimus ubitribuendum esset plena manudentem, ubi laborandum, pertinacem et obnixum et lassitudinem corporis animo subleuantem. Praeterea idem erat semper et in omni actu par sibi, iam non consilio bonus, sed more eo perductus ut non tantum recte

facereposset, sed nisi recte facere non posset. (11) Intelleximus in illo perfectam esse uirtutem. Hanc in partes diuisimus: oportebat cupiditates refrenari, metus conprimi, facienda prouideri, reddenda distribui: comprehendimus temperantiam, fortitudinem, prudentiam, iustitiam et suum cuique dedimus officium. Ex quo ergo uirtutem intelleximus? ostendit illam nobis ordo eius et decor et constantia et omnium inter se actionum concordia et magnitudo super omnia efferens sese. Hinc intellecta est illa beata uita secundo defluens cursu, arbitrii sui tota. (12) Quomodo ergo hoc ipsum nobis apparuit? dicam. Numquam uir ille perfectus adeptusque uirtutem fortunae maledixit, numquam accidentia tristis excepit, ciuem esse se uniuersi et militem credens labores uelut imperatos subit. Quidquid inciderat non tamquam malum aspernatusest et in se casu delatum, sed quasi delegatum sibi. 'Hoc qualecumque est' inquit 'meum est; asperum est, durum est, in hoc ipso nauemus operam. (13) Necessario itaque magnus apparuit qui numquam malis ingemuit, numquam de fato suo questus est; fecit multis intellectum sui et non aliter quam in tenebris lumen effulsit aduertitque in se omnium animos, cum esset placidus et lenis, humanis diuinisque rebus pariter aequus. (14) Habebat perfectum animum et ad summam sui adductum, supra quam nihil est nisi mens dei, ex quo pars et in hoc pectus mortale defluxit; quod numquam magis diuinum est quam ubi mortalitatem suam cogitat et scit in hoc natum hominem, ut uita defungeretur, nec domum esse hoc corpus sed hospitium, et quidem breue hospitium, quod relinquendum est ubi te grauem esse hospiti uideas.

(15) Maximum, inquam, mi Lucili, argumentum est animi ab altiore sede uenientis, si haec in quibus uersatur humilia iudicat et angusta, si exire non metuit; scit enim quo exiturus sit qui unde uenerit meminit. Non uidemus quam multa nos incommoda exagitant, quam male nobis conueniat hoc corpus? (16) Nunc de capite, nunc de uentre, nunc de pectore ac faucibus querimur; alias nerui nos, alias pedes uexant, nunc deiectio, nunc destillatio; aliquando superest sanguis, aliquando deest: hinc atque illinc temptamur et expellimur. Hoc euenire solet in alieno habitantibus. (17) At nos corpus tam putresortiti nihilominus aeterna proponimus et in quantum potest aetas humanam protendi, tantum spe occupamus, nulla contenti pecunia, nulla potentia. Quid hac re fieri impudentius, quid stultius

potest? Nihil satis est morituris, immo morientibus; cotidie enim propius ab ultimo stamus, et illo unde nobiscadendum est hora nos omnis inpellit. (18) Vide in quanta caecitate mens nostra sit: hoc quod futurum dico cum maxime fit, et pars eius magna iam facta est; nam quod uiximus tempus eo loco est quo erat antequam uiximus. Erramus autem qui ultimum timemus diem, cum tantumdem in mortem singuli conferant. Non ille gradus lassitudinem facit in quo deficimus, sed ille profitetur; ad mortem dies extremus peruenit, accedit omnis; carpit nos illa, non corripit. Ideo magnus animus conscius sibi melioris naturae dat quidem operam ut in hac statione qua positus est honeste se atque industrie gerat, ceterum nihil horum quae circa sunt suum iudicat, sed ut commodatus utitur, peregrinus et properans.

(19) Cum aliquem huius uideremus constantiae, quidni subiret nos species non usitatae indolis? utique si hanc, ut dixi, magnitudinem ueram esse ostendebat aequalitas. Vero tenor permanet, falsa non durant. Quidam alternis Vatinii, alternis Catones sunt; et modo parum illis seuerus est Curius, parum pauper Fabricius, parum frugi et contentus uilibus Tubero, modo Licinum diuitis, Apicium cenis, Maecenatem delicis prouocant. (20) Maximum indicium est malae mentis fluctuatio et inter simulationem uirtutum amoremque uitiorum adsidua iactatio. (is)

Habebat saepe ducentos,
saepe decem seruos; modo reges atque tetrarchas,
omnia magna loquens, modo 'sit mihi mensa tripes et
concha salis puri, toga quae defendere frigus
quamuis crassa queat'. Decies centena dedisses
huic parco, paucis contento: quinque diebus
nil erat.

(21) Homines multi tales sunt qualem hunc describit Horatius Flaccus, numquam eundem, ne similem quidem sibi; adeo in diuersum aberrat. Multos dixi? prope est ut omnes sint. Nemo non cotidie et consilium mutat et uotum: modo uxorem uult habere, modo amicam, modo regnare uult, modo id agit ne quis sit officiosior seruus, modo dilatat se usque ad inuidiam, modo subsidit

contrahitur infra humilitatem uere iacentium, nunc pecuniam spargit, nunc rapit. (22) Sic maxime coarguitur animus imprudens: alius prodit atque alius et, quo turpius nihil iudico, inpar sibi est. Magnam rem puta unum hominem agere. Praeter sapientem autem nemo unum agit, ceteri multiformes sumus. Modo frugi tibi uidebimur et graues, modo prodigi et uani; mutamus subinde personam et contrariam ei sumimus quam exuimus. Hoc ergo a te exige, ut qualem institueris praestare te, talem usque ad exitum serues; effice ut possis laudari, si minus, ut agnosci. De aliquo quem here uidisti meriti dici potest 'hic qui est?': tanta mutatio est. Vale.

CXXI. SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM.

(1) Litigabis, ego uideo, cum tibi hodiernam quaestiunculam, in quasatis diu haesimus, exposuero; iterum enim exclamabis ‘hoc quid ad mores? ‘Sed exclama, dum tibi primum alios opponam cum quibus litiges, Posidoniumet Archidemum (hi iudicium accipient) , deinde dicam: non quidquid moraleest mores bonos facit.

(2) Aliud ad hominem alendum pertinet, aliud adexercendum, aliud ad uestiendum, aliud ad docendum, aliud ad delectandum;omnia tamen ad hominem pertinent, etiam si non omnia meliorem eum faciunt. Mores alia aliter attingunt: quaedam illos corrigunt et ordinant, quaedamnaturam eorum et originem scrutantur.

(3) Cum <quaero> quare hominemnatura produxerit, quare praetulerit animalibus ceteris, longe me iudicasmores reliquisse? falsum est. Quomodo enim scies qui habendi sint nisi quid homini sit optimum inueneris, nisi naturam eius inspexeris? Tunc demumintelleges quid faciendum tibi, quid uitandum sit, cum didiceris quid naturaetae debeas. (4) ‘Ego’ inquis ‘uolo discere quomodo minus cupiam, minustimeam. Superstitionem mihi excute; doce leue esse uanumque hoc quod felicitasdicitur, unam illi syllabam facillime accedere. ‘ Desiderio tuo satis faciam:et uirtutes exhortabor et uitia conuerberabo. Licet aliquis nimium inmoderatumquein hac parte me iudicet, non desistam persequi nequitiam et adfectus efferatissimosinhibere et uoluptates ituras in dolorem conpescere et uotis obstrepere. Quidni? cum maxima malorum optauerimus, et ex gratulatione natum sit quidquidadloquimur.

(5) Interim permitte mihi ea quae paulo remotiora uidentur excutere. Quaerebamus an esset omnibus animalibus constitutionis suae sensus. Esseautem ex eo maxime apparet quod membra apte et expedite mouent non aliterquam in hoc erudita; nulli non partium suarum agilitas est. Artifex instrumentasua tractat ex facili, rector nauis scite gubernaculum flectit, pictorcolores quos ad reddendam similitudinem multos uariosque ante se posuitcelerrime denotat et inter ceram opusque facili uultu ac manu commeat:sic animal in omnem usum sui mobilest.

(6) Mirari solemus saltandi peritos quod in omnem significationem rerum et adfectuum parata illorum est manus et uerborum uelocitatem gestus adsequitur: quod illis ars praestat, his natura. Nemo aegre molitur artus suos, nemo in usu sui haesitat. Hoc edita protinus faciunt; cum hac scientia prodeunt; instituta nascuntur.

(7) 'Ideo' inquit 'partes suas animalia apte mouent quia, si aliter mouerint, dolorem sensura sunt. Ita, ut uos dicitis, coguntur, metusque illa in rectum, non uoluntas mouet. ' Quod est falsum; tarda enim sunt quae necessitate inpelluntur, agilitas sponte motis est. Adeo autem non adigit illa ad hoc doloris timor ut in naturalem motum etiam dolore prohibente nitantur. (8) Sic infans qui stare meditatur et ferre se adsuescit, simul temptare uires suas coepit, cadit et cum fletu totiens resurgit donec seper dolorem ad id quod natura poscit exercuit. Animalia quaedam tergi durioris in uersa tam diu se torquent ac pedes exerunt et obliquant donec ad locum reponantur. Nullum tormentum sentit supina testudo, inquieta est tamend desiderio naturalis status nec ante desinit niti, quater se, quam in pedes constitit. (9) Ergo omnibus constitutionis suae sensus est et inde membrorum tam expedita tractatio, nec ullum maius indicium habemus cum hac illa aduiendum uenire notitia quam quod nullum animal ad usum sui rude est.

(10) 'Constitutio' inquit 'est, ut uos dicitis, principale animi quodammodo se habens erga corpus. Hoc tam perplexum et subtile et uobis quoque uix enarrabile quomodo infans intellegit? Omnia animalia dialectica nasci oportet ut istam finitionem magnae parti hominum togatorum obscuram intellegant. '(11) Verum erat quod opponis si ego ab animalibus constitutionis finitionem intellegi dicerem, non ipsam constitutionem. Facilius natura intellegitur quam enarratur. Itaque infans ille quid sit constitutio non nouit, constitutionem suam nouit; et quid sit animal nescit, animal esse se sentit. (12) Praeterea ipsam constitutionem suam crasse intellegit et summatim et obscure. Nos quoque animum habere nos scimus: quid sit animus, ubi sit, qualis sit aut unde nescimus. Qualis ad nos (peruenerit) animi nostri sensus, quamuis naturam eius ignoremus ac sedem, talis ad omnia animalia constitutionis suae sensus est. Necesse est enim id sentiant per quod alia quoque sentiunt; necesse est eius sensum habeant cui parent, a quo reguntur. (13) Nemo non ex nobis

intellegit esse aliquid quod impetus suos moueat: quid sit illudignorat. Et conatum sibi esse scit: quis sit aut unde sit nescit. Sic infantibusquoque animalibusque principalis partis suae sensus est non satis dilucidusnec expressus.

(14) ‘Dicitis’ inquit ‘omne animal primum constitutioni suae conciliari,hominis autem constitutionem rationalem esse et ideo conciliari hominemsibi non tamquam animali sed tamquam rationali; ea enim parte sibi carusest homo qua homo est. Quomodo ergo infans conciliari constitutioni rationalipotest, cum rationalis nondum sit?’ (15) Unicuique aetati sua constitutioest, alia infanti, alia puero, <alia adulescenti>, alia seni: omnesei constitutioni conciliantur in qua sunt. Infans sine dentibus est: huicconstitutioni suae conciliatur. Enati sunt dentes: huic constitutioni conciliatur. Nam et illa herba quae in segetem frugemque uentura est aliam constitutionemhabet tenera et uix eminens sulco, aliam cum conualuit et molli quidemculmo, sed quo ferat onus suum, constitit, aliam cum flauescit et ad areamspectat et spica eius induruit: in quamcumque constitutionem uenit, eamtuetur, in eam componitur. (16) Alia est aetas infantis, pueri, adulescentis,senis; ego tamen idem sum qui et infans fui et puer et adulescens. Sic,quamuis alia atque alia cuique constitutio sit, conciliatio constitutionissuae eadem est. Non enim puerum mihi aut iuuenem aut senem, sed me naturacommendat. Ergo infans ei constitutioni suae conciliatur quae tunc infantiest, non quae futura iuueni est; neque enim si aliquid illi maius in quodtranseat restat, non hoc quoque in quo nascitur secundum naturam est. (17) Primum sibi ipsum conciliatur animal; debet enim aliquid esse ad quod aliareferantur. Voluptatem peto. Cui? mihi; ergo mei curam ago. Dolorem refugio. Pro quo? pro me; ergo mei curam ago. Si omnia propter curam mei facio,ante omnia est mei cura. Haec animalibus inest cunctis, nec inseritur sedinnascitur. (18) Producit fetus suos natura, non abicit; et quia tutelacertissima ex proximo est, sibi quisque commissus est. Itaque, ut in prioribusepistulis dixi, tenera quoque animalia et materno utero uel ouo modo effusaquid sit infestum ipsa protinus norunt et mortifera deuitant; umbram quoquetransuolantium reformidant obnoxia auibis raptu uiuentibus. Nullum animalad uitam prodit sine metu mortis.

(19) ‘Quemadmodum’ inquit ‘editum animal intellectum habere

aut salutaris aut mortiferae rei potest? ‘ Primum quaeritur an intellegat, non quemadmodum intellegat. Esse autem illis intellectum ex eo apparet quod nihil amplius, si intellexerint, facient. Quid est quare pavonem, quare anserem gallinam non fugiat, at tanto minorem et ne notum quidem sibi accipitrem? quare pulli faem timeant, canem non timeant? Apparet illis inesse nocituris scientiam non experimento collectam; nam antequam possint experisci, cauent. (20) Deinde ne hoc casu existimes fieri, nec metuunt alia quam debent nec umquam obliuiscuntur huius tutelae et diligentiae: aequalis est illis apertissimo fuga. Praeterea non fiunt timidiora uiuendo; ex quo quidem apparet non usu illa in hoc peruenire sed naturali amore salutis suae. Et tardum est et uarium quod usus docet: quidquid natura tradit et aequale omnibus est et statim. (21) Si tamen exigis, dicam quomodo omne animal perniciosum intellegere cogatur. Sentit se carne constare; itaque sentit quid sit quod secari caro, quo uri, quo obteri possit, quae sint animalia armata ad nocendum: horum speciem trahit inimicam et hostilem. Inter se ista coniuncta sunt; simul enim conciliatur saluti suae quidque et iuuatura petit, laesura formidat. Naturales ad utilia impetus, naturales a contrariis aspernationes sunt; sine ulla cogitatione quae hoc dictet, sine consilio fit quidquid natura praecepit. (22) Non uides quanta sit subtilitas apibus ad fingenda domicilia, quanta diuidui laboris obeundi undique concordia? Non uides quam nulli mortalium imitabilis illa aranei textura, quanti operis sit fila disponere, alia in rectum inmissa firmamenti loco, alia in orbem currentia ex densiora, qua minora animalia, in quorum perniciem illa tenduntur, uelut retibus implicata teneantur? (23) Nascitur ars ista, non discitur. Itaque nullum est animal altero doctius: uidebis araneorum pares telas, par in fauisculorum omnium foramen. Incertum est et inaequabile quidquid ars tradit: ex aequo uenit quod natura distribuit. Haec nihil magis quam tutelam sui et eius peritiam tradidit, ideoque etiam simul incipiunt et discere et uiuere. (24) Nec est mirum cum eo nasci illa sine quo frustra nascerentur. Primum hoc instrumentum <in> illa natura contulit ad permanendum, (in) conciliationem et caritatem sui. Non poterant salua esse nisi uellent; nec (non) hoc per se profuturum erat, sed sine hoc nulla res profuisset. Sed in nullo dependes utilitatem sui, <ne> neglegentiam quidem; tacitis quoque et brutis, quamquam in cetera

torpeant, ad uiuendum sollertia est. Videbis quae aliis inutilia sunt
sibi ipsa non deesse. Vale.

CXXII. SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM.

(1) Detrimentum iam dies sensit; resiliuit aliquantum, ita tamen ut liberale adhuc spatium sit si quis cum ipso, ut ita dicam, die surgat. Officiosiormeliorque si quis illum expectat et lucem primam excipit: turpis qui altosole semisomnus iacet, cuius uigilia medio die incipit; et adhuc multishoc antelucanum est. (2) Sunt qui officia lucis noctisque peruerterintnec ante diducant oculos hesterna graues crapula quam adpetere nox coepit. Qualis illorum condicio dicitur quos natura, ut ait Vergilius, pedibusnostris subditos e contrario posuit,

nosque ubi primus equis Oriens adflauit anhelis,
illis sera rubens accendit lumina Vesper,

talis horum contraria omnibus non regio sed uita est. (3) Sunt quidam ineadem urbe antipodes qui, ut M. Cato ait, nec orientem umquam solem uideruntnec occidentem. Hos tu existimas scire quemadmodum uiuendum sit, qui nesciuntquando?

Et hi mortem timent, in quam se uiui condiderunt? tam infausti ominisquam nocturnae aues sunt. Licet in uino unguentoque tenebras suas exigant,licet epulis et quidem in multa fericula discoctis totum peruersae uigiliaetempus educant, non conuiuantur sed iusta sibi faciunt. Mortuis certe interdiuparentatur. At mehercules nullus agenti dies longus est. Extendamus uitam:huius et officium et argumentum actus est. Circumscribatur nox et aliquidex illa in diem transferatur. (4) Aues quae conuiuiis comparantur, ut in motaefacile pinguescant, in obscuro continentur; ita sine ulla exercitationeiacentibus tumor pigrum corpus inuadit et ~superba umbra~ iners saginasubcrescit. At istorum corpora qui se tenebris dicauerunt foeda uisuntur,quippe suspectior illis quam morbo pallentibus color est: languidi et euanidialbent, et in uiuis caro morticina est. Hoc tamen minimum in illis malorumdixerim: quanto plus tenebrarum in animo est! ille in se stupet, ille caligat,inuidet caecis. Quis umquam oculos tenebrarum causa habuit?

(5) Interrogas quomodo haec animo prauitas fiat auersandi diem et

totam uitam in noctem transferendi? Omnia uitia contra naturam pugnant, omniadebitum ordinem deserunt; hoc est luxuriae propositum, gaudere peruersis nec tantum discedere a recto sed quam longissime abire, deinde etiam e contrario stare. (6) Non uidentur tibi contra naturam uiuere <qui> ieiunibunt, qui uinum recipiunt inanibus uenis et ad cibum ebrii transeunt? Atqui frequens hoc adulescentium uitium est, qui uires excolunt <ut> in ipso paene balinei limine inter nudos bibant, immo potent et sudorem quem mouerunt potionibus crebris ac feruentibus subinde destringant. Postprandium aut cenam bibere uulgare est; hoc patres familiae rustici faciunt et uerae uoluptatis ignari: merum illud delectat quod non innatat cibo, quod libere penetrat ad neruos; illa ebrietas iuuat quae in uacuum uenit. (7) Non uidentur tibi contra naturam uiuere qui commutant cum feminis uestem? Non uiuunt contra naturam qui spectant ut pueritia splendeat tempore alieno? Quid fieri crudelius uel miserius potest? numquam uir erit, ut diu uirumpati possit? et cum illum contumeliae sexus eripuisse debuerat, non ne aetas quidem eripiet? (8) Non uiuunt contra naturam qui hieme concupiscunt rosam fomentoque aquarum calentium et locorum apta mutatione bruma lilium (florem uernum) exprimunt? Non uiuunt contra naturam qui pomaria in summis turribus serunt? quorum siluae in tectis domuum ac fastigiis nutant, inde ortis radicibus quo in probe cacumina egissent? Non uiuunt contra naturam qui fundamenta thermarum in mari iaciunt et delicate natare ipsi sibi non uidentur nisi calentia stagna fluctu ac tempestate feriantur? (9) Cum instituerunt omnia contra naturae consuetudinem uelle, nouissime in totum ab illa desciscunt. ‘Lucet: somni tempus est. Quies est: nunc exerceamur, nunc gestemur, nunc prandeamus. Iam lux propius accedit: tempus est cenae. Non oportet id facere quod populus; res sordida est trita ac uulgari uia uiuere. Dies publicus relinquatur: proprium nobis ac peculiare mane fiat.’ (10) Isti uero mihi defunctorum loco sunt; quantulum enim a funere absunt et quidem acerbo qui ad faces et cereos uiuunt? Hanc uitam agere eodem tempore multos meminimus, inter quos et Acilium Butam praetorium, cui post patrimonium ingens consumptum Tiberius paupertatem confitenti ‘sero’ inquit ‘exspectatus es’. (11) Recitabat Montanus Iulius carmen, tolerabilis poeta et amicitia Tiberi notus et frigore. Ortus et occasus libentissime

inserebat; itaque cum indignaretur quidam illum totodie recitasse et negaret accedendum ad recitationes eius, Natta Pinarius ait: 'numquid possum liberalius agere? paratus sum illum audire ab ortu ad occasum'.

(12) Cum hos uersus recitasset
incipit ardentes Phoebus producere flammās,
spargere <se> rubicunda dies; iam tristis hirundo
argutis reditura cibos inmittere nidis
incipit et molli partitos ore ministrat,

Varus eques Romanus, M. Vinicii comes, cenarum bonarum adsectator, quasinprobitate linguae merebatur, exclamauit 'incipit Buta dormire'. (13) Deinde cum subinde recitasset

iam sua pastores stabulis armenta locarunt,
iam dare sopitis nox pigra silentia terris
incipit,

idem Varus inquit 'quid dicis? iam nox est? ibo et Butam salutabo'. Nihil erat notius hac eius uita in contrarium circumacta; quam, ut dixi, multi eodem tempore egerunt. (14) Causa autem est ita uiuendi quibusdam, non quia aliquid existiment noctem ipsam habere iucundius, sed quia nihil uiuat solitum, et grauis malae conscientiae lux est, et omnia concupiscentia ut contemnenti prout magno aut paruo empta sunt fastidio est lumen gratuitum. Praeterea luxuriosi uitam suam esse in sermonibus dum uiuunt uolunt; nam si tacetur, perdere se putant operam. Itaque aliquotiens faciunt quod excitet famam. Multi bona comedunt, multi amicas habent: ut inter istos nomen inuenias, opus est non tantum luxuriosam rem sed notabilem facere; in tam occupata ciuitate fabulas uulgaris nequitia non inuenit. (15) Pedonem Albinouanum narrantem audieramus (erat autem fabulator elegantissimus) habitasse sesupra domum Sex. Papini. Is erat ex hac turba lucifugarum. 'Audio' inquit 'circa horam tertiam noctis flagellorum sonum. Quaero quid faciat: dicitur rationes accipere. Audio circa horam sextam noctis clamorem concitatum. Quaero quid sit: dicitur uocem exercere.

Quaero circa horam octauam noctisquid sibi ille sonus rotarum uelit: gestari dicitur. (16) Circa lucem discurritur,pueri uocantur, cellarii, coqui tumultuantur. Quaero quid sit: dicitur mulsum et halicam poposcisse, a balneo exisse. “Excedebat” inquit “huiusdiem cena. “ Minime; ualde enim frugaliter uiuebat; nihil consumebat nisi noctem. ‘ Itaque Peto dicentibus illum quibusdam auarum et sordidum ‘uos’inquit ‘illum et lychnobium dicetis’. (17) Non debes admirari si tantas inuenis uitiorum proprietates: uariasunt, innumerabiles habent facies, conprendi eorum genera non possunt. Simplex recti cura est, multiplex prauis, et quantumuis nouas declinationes capit. Idem moribus euenit: naturam sequentium faciles sunt, soluti sunt,exiguas differentias habent; (his) distorti plurimum et omnibus et inter se dissident. (18) Causa tamen praecipua mihi uidetur huius morbi uitae communis fastidium. Quomodo cultu se a ceteris distinguunt, quomodo elegantiae cenarum, munditiis uehiculorum, sic uolunt separari etiam temporum dispositione. Nolunt solita peccare quibus peccandi praemium infamia est. Hanc petunt omnes isti qui, ut ita dicam, retro uiuunt. (19) Ideo, Lucili, tenenda nobis uia est quam natura praescripsit, nec ab illa declinandum: illamsequentibus omnia facilia, expedita sunt, contra illam nitentibus non alia uita est quam contra aquam remigantibus. Vale.

CXXIII. SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

(1) Itinere confectus incommodo magis quam longo in Albanum meum multanocte perueni: nihil habeo parati nisi me. Itaque in lectulo lassitudinempono, hanc coci ac pistoris moram boni consulo. Mecum enim de hoc ipsoloquor, quam nihil sit graue quod leuiter excipias, quam indignandum nihil<dum nihil> ipse indignando adstruas. (2) Non habet panem meus pistor;sed habet uilicus, sed habet atriensis, sed habet colonus. ‘Malum panem’inquis. Expecta: bonus fiet; etiam illum tibi tenerum et siligineum famesreddet. Ideo non est ante edendum quam illa imperat. Expectabo ergo necante edam quam aut bonum panem habere coepero aut malum fastidire desiero. (3) Necessarium est paruo adsuescere: multae difficultates locorum, multaetemporum etiam locupletibus et instructis ~aduobus optantem prohibent et~occurrent. Quidquid uult habere nemo potest, illud potest, nolle quod nonhabet, rebus oblatis hilaris uti. Magna pars libertatis est bene moratusuenter et contumeliae patiens. (4) Aestimari non potest quantam uoluptatemcapiam ex eo quod lassitudo mea sibi ipsa adquiescit: non unctores, nonbalineum, non ullum aliud remedium quam temporis quaero. Nam quod laborcontraxit quies tollit. Haec qualiscumque cena aditali iucundior erit. (5) ~Aliquod enim~ experimentum animi sumpsi subito; hoc enim est simpliciuset uerius. Nam ubi se praeparauit et indixit sibi patientiam, non aequaeapparet quantum habeat uerae firmitatis: illa sunt certissima argumentaquae ex tempore dedit, si non tantum aequus molestias sed placidus aspexit;si non excanduit, non litigauit; si quod dari deberet ipse sibi non desiderandosuppleuit et cogitauit aliquid consuetudini suae, sibi nihil deesse.

(6) Multa quam superuacua essent non intelleximus nisi deesse coeperunt; utebatur enim illis non quia debebamus sed quia habebamus. Quam multa autem paramus quia alii parauerunt, quia apud plerosque sunt! Inter causas malorum nostrorum est quod uiuimus ad exempla, nec ratione componimur sed consuetudine abducimur. Quod si pauci facerent nollemus imitari, cum plures facere coeperunt quasi honestius sit quia frequentius, sequimur; et recti apud nos locum tenet error ubi publicus factus est. (7) Omnes

iam sic peregrinantur ut illos Numidarum praecurrat equitatus, ut agmen cursorum antecedit: turpe est nullos esse qui occurrentis uia deiciant, (ut) qui honestum hominem uenire magno puluere ostendant. Omnes iam mulos habent qui crustallina et murrina et caelata magnorum artificum manu portent: turpe est uideri eas te habere sarcinas solas quae tuto concuti possint. Omnium paedagogia oblita facie uehantur ne sol, ne frigus teneram cutem laedat: turpe est neminem esse in comitatu tuo puerorum cuius sana facies medicamentum desideret.

(8) Horum omnium sermo uitandus est: hi sunt qui uitia tradunt et alio aliunde transferunt. Pessimum genus (horum) hominum uidebatur qui uerbage starent: sunt quidam qui uitia gestant. Horum sermo multum nocet; nam etiam si non statim proficit, semina in animo relinquit sequiturque nos etiam cum ab illis discessimus, resurrecturum postea malum. (9) Quemadmodum qui audierunt synphoniam ferunt secum in auribus modulationem illam ad dulcedinem cantuum, quae cogitationes impedit nec ad seria patitur intendi, sic adulatorum et praua laudantium sermo diutius haeret quam auditur. Nec facile est animo dulcem sonum excutere: prosequitur et durat et ex interuallo recurrit. Ideo cludendae sunt aures malis uocibus et quidem primis; nam cum initium fecerunt admissaeque sunt, plus audent. (10) Inde ad haec peruenitur uerba: 'uirtus et philosophia et iustitia uerborum inanum crepitus est; una felicitas est bene uitae facere; esse, bibere, frui patrimonio, hoc est uiuere, hoc est se mortalem esse meminisse. Fluunt dies et irreparabilis uita decurrit. Dubitamus? Quid iuuat sapere et aetati non semper uoluptates recepturae interim, dum potest, dum poscit, ingerere frugalitatem? ~Eo~ mortem praecurre et quidquid illa ablatura est iam sibi ~interere~. Non amicam habes, non puerum qui amicae moueat inuidiam; cottidie sobrius prodis; sic cenas tamquam ephemeridem patri adprobaturus: non est istud uiuere sed alienae uitae interesse. (11) Quanta dementia est heredis sui res procurare et sibi negare omnia ut tibi ex amico inimicum magna faciat hereditas; plus enim gaudebit tua morte quo plus acceperit. Istos tristes et superciliosos alienae uitae censors, suae hostes, publicos paedagogos assis ne feceris nec dubitaueris bonam uitam quam opinionem bonam malle. ' (12) Hae uoces non aliter fugiendae sunt

quam illae quas Ulixes nisi alligatus praeteruehinoluit. Idem possunt: abducunt a patria, a parentibus, ab amicis, a uirtutibus, et ~inter spem uitam misera nisi turpis inludunt~. Quanto satius est rectumsequi limitem et eo se perducere ut ea demum sint tibi iucunda quae honesta! (13) Quod adsequi poterimus si scierimus duo esse genera rerum quae nos aut inuitent aut fugent. Inuitant (ut) diuitiae, uoluptates, forma, ambitio, cetera blanda et adridentia: fugat labor, mors, dolor, ignominia, uictus adstrictior. Debemus itaque exerceri ne haec timeamus, ne illa cupiamus. In contrarium pugnemus et ab inuitantibus recedamus, aduersus potentia concitemur.

(14) Non uides quam diuersus sit descendendum habitus et ascendendum? qui per primum eunt resupinant corpora, qui in arduum, incumbunt. Nam si descendas, pondus suum in priorem partem dare, si ascendas, retro abducere, cum uitio, Lucili, consentire est. In uoluptates descenditur, in aspera et dura subeundum est: hic impellamus corpora, illic refrenemus. (15) Hoc nunc me existimas dicere, eos tantum perniciosos esse auribus nostris qui uoluptatem laudant, qui doloris metus, per se formidabiles res, incutiunt? Illos quoque nocere nobis existimo qui nos sub specie Stoicae sectae hortantur ad uitia. Hoc enim iactant: solum sapientem et doctum esse amatorem. ‘Solutus aptus est ad hanc artem; aequum conbibendi et conuiuendi sapiens est peritissimus. Quaeramus ad quam usque aetatem iuuenes amandisint. ‘ (16) Haec Graecae consuetudini data sint, nos ad illa potius aures derigamus: ‘nemo est casu bonus: discenda uirtus est. Voluptas humilis res et pusilla est et in nullo habenda pretio, communis cum mutis animalibus, ad quam minima et contemptissima aduolant. Gloria uanum et uolubile quiddam est auraque mobilius. Paupertas nulli malum est nisi repugnanti. Mors malum non est: quid <sit> quaeris? sola ius aequum generis humani. Superstitio error insanus est: amandos timet, quos colit uiolat. Quid enim interest utrum deos neget an infames? ‘ (17) Haec discenda, immo ediscenda sunt: non debet excusationes uitio philosophia suggerere. Nullam habet spem salutis aeger quem ad intemperantiam medicus hortatur. Vale.

CXXIV. SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM.

(1) Possum multa tibi ueterum praecepta referre,
ni refugis tenuisque piget cognoscere curas.

Non refugis autem nec ulla te subtilitas abigit: non est elegantiae tuae tantum magna sectari, sicut illud probo, quod omnia ad aliquem profectum redigis et tunc tantum offenderis ubi summa subtilitate nihil agitur. Quod ne nunc quidem fieri laborabo.

Quaeritur utrum sensu comprehendatur an intellectu bonum; huic adiunctum est in mutis animalibus et infantibus non esse. (2) Quicumque uoluptatem in summo ponunt sensibile iudicant bonum, nos contra intellegibile, qui illud animo damus. Si de bono sensus iudicarent, nullam uoluptatem reiceremus; nulla enim non inuitat, nulla non delectat; et e contrario nullum dolorem uolentes subiremus; nullus enim non offendit sensum. (3) Praeterea non essent digni reprehensione quibus nimium uoluptas placet quibusque summus est doloris timor. Atqui inprobamus gulae ac libidini addictos et contemni musillos qui nihil uiriliter ausuri sunt doloris metu. Quid autem peccant si sensibus, id est iudicibus boni ac mali, parent? his enim tradidistis ad petitionis et fugae arbitrium. (4) Sed uidelicet ratio isti rei praeposita est: illa quemadmodum de beata uita, quemadmodum de uirtute, de honesto, sic et de bono maloque constituit. Nam apud istos uilissimae parti datur de meliore sententia, ut de bono pronuntiet sensus, obtusa res et hebes et in homine quam in aliis animalibus tardior. (5) Quid si quis uellet non oculis sed tactu minuta discernere? Subtilior adhuc acies nulla quam oculorum et intentior daret bonum malumque dinoscere. Vides in quanta ignorantia ueritatis uersetur et quam humi sublimia ac diuina proiecerit apud quem de summo, bono malo, iudicat tactus. (6) ‘Quemadmodum’ inquit ‘omnis scientia atque ars aliquid debet habere manifestum sensuque comprehensum ex quo oriatur et crescat, sic beata uita fundamentum et initium a manifestis ducit et eo quod sub sensum cadat. Nempe uos a manifestis beatam uitam initium sui capere dicitis. ‘ (7) Dicimus beata esse quae secundum naturam sint; quid autem secundum naturam sit palam et protinus apparet, sicut

quid sit integrum. Quod secundum naturam est, quod contigit protinus nato, non dico bonum, sed initium boni. Tu summum bonum, uoluptatem, infantiae donas, ut inde incipiat nascens quo consummatus homo peruenit; cacumen radicis loco ponis. (8) Si quis diceret illum in materno utero latentem, sexus quoque incerti, tenerum et imperfectum et informem iam in aliquo bono esse, aperte uideretur errare. Atqui quantulum interest inter eum qui cum (que) maxime uitam accipit et illum qui maternorum uiscerum latens onus est? Uterque, quantum ad intellectum boni ac mali, aequè maturus est, et non magis infans adhuc boni capax est quam arbor aut mutum aliquod animal. Quare autem bonum in arbore animalique muto non est? quia nec ratio. Ob hoc in infante quoque non est; nam et huic deest. Tunc ad bonum perueniet cum ad rationem peruenerit. (9) Est aliquod inrationale animal, est aliquod nondum rationale, est rationale sed imperfectum: in nullo horum bonum, ratio illud secum adfert. Quid ergo inter ista quaeret tuli distat? In eo quod inrationale est numquam erit bonum; in eo quod nondum rationale est tunc esse bonum non potest; <in eo quod rationale est> sed imperfectum iam potest bonum <esse>, sed non est. (10) Ita dico, Lucili: bonum non in quolibet corpore, non in qualibet aetate inuenitur et tantum abest ab infantia quantum a primo ultimum, quantum ab initio perfectum; ergo nec in tenero, modo coalescente corpusculo est. Quidni non sit? non magis quam in semine. (11) Hoc sic dicas: aliquod arboris ac sati bonum nouimus: hoc non est in prima fronde quae emissa cum maxime solum rumpit. Est aliquod bonum tritici: hoc nondum est in herba lactente nec cum folliculo se exerit spica mollis, sed cum frumentum aestas et debita maturitas coxit. Quemadmodum omnis natura bonum suum nisi consummata non profert, ita hominis bonum non est in homine nisi cum illi ratio perfecta est. (12) Quod autem hoc bonum? Dicam: liber animus, erectus, alia subiciens sibi, se nulli. Hoc bonum adeo non recipit infantia ut pueritia non speret, adulescentia inprobe speret; bene agitur cum senectute si ad illud longo studio intentoque peruenit. Si hoc est bonum, et intellegibile est. (13) ‘Dixisti’ inquit ‘aliquod bonum esse arboris, aliquod herbae; potest ergo aliquod esse et infantis. ‘ Verum bonum nec in arboribus nec in mutis animalibus: hoc quod in illis bonum est precario bonum dicitur. ‘Quod est?’ inquis. Hoc quod secundum cuiusque naturam

est. Bonum quidem cadere in mutum animal nullo modo potest; felicioris meliorisque naturae est. Nisi ubi rationi locus est, bonum non est. (14) Quattuor hae naturae sunt, arboris, animalis, hominis, dei: haec duo, quae rationalia sunt, eandem naturam habent, illo diuersa sunt quod alterum immortale, alterum mortale est. Ex his ergo unius bonum natura perficit, dei scilicet, alterius cura, hominis. Cetera tantum in sua natura perfecta sunt, non uere perfecta, a quibus abest ratio. Hoc enim demum perfectum est quod secundum uniuersam naturam perfectum, uniuersa autem natura rationalis est: cetera possunt in suo genere esse perfecta. (15) In quo non potest beata uita esse nec id potest quo beata uita efficitur; beata autem uita bonis efficitur. Inmuto animali non est beata uita <nec id quo beata uita> efficitur: inmuto animali bonum non est. (16) Mutum animal sensu comprehendit praesentia; praeteritorum reminiscitur cum <in> id incidit quo sensus admoneretur, tamquam equus reminiscitur uiae cum ad initium eius admotus est. In stabulo quidem nulla illi uia est quamuis saepe calcatae memoria (est) . Tertium uero tempus, id est futurum, ad muta non pertinet. (17) Quomodo ergo potest eorum uideri perfecta natura quibus usus perfecti temporis non est? Tempus enim tribus partibus constat, praeterito, praesente, uenturo. Animalibus tantum quod breuissimum est <et> in transcurso datum, praesens: praeteriti rara memoria est nec umquam reuocatur nisi praesentium occursum. (18) Non potest ergo perfectae naturae bonum in imperfecta esse natura, aut si natura talis (habet) hoc habet, habent et sata. Nec illud nego, ad ea quae uidentur secundum naturam magnos esse mutis animalibus impetus et concitatos, sed inordinatos ac turbidos; numquam autem aut inordinatum est bonum aut turbidum. (19) ‘Quid ergo?’ inquis ‘muta animalia perturbate et indisposite mouentur?’ Dicerem illa perturbate et indisposite moueri si natura illorum ordinem caperet: nunc mouentur secundum naturam suam. Perturbatum enim id est quod esse aliquando et non perturbatum potest; sollicitum est quod potest esse securum. Nulli uitium est nisi cui uirtus potest esse: mutis animalibus talis ex natura sua motus est. (20) Sed ne te diu teneam, erit aliquod bonum in muto animali, erit aliqua uirtus, erit aliquid perfectum, sed nec bonum absolute nec uirtus nec perfectum. Haec enim rationalibus solis contingunt, quibus datum est scire quare, quatenus, quemadmodum.

Ita bonum in nullo est nisi in quo ratio. (21) Quo nunc pertineat ista disputatio quaeris, et quid animo tuo profutura sit? Dico: et exercet illum et acuit et utique aliquid acturum occupatione honesta tenet. Prodest autem etiam quo moratur ad praua properantes. Sed <et> illud dico: nullo modo prodesse possum magis quam si tibi bonum tuum ostendo, si te a mutis animalibus separo, si cum deo pono. (22) . (23) Vis tu relictis in quibus uinci te necesse est, dum in aliena niteris, ad bonum reuerti tuum? Quod est hoc? animus scilicet emendatus ac purus, aemulator dei, super humana se extollens, nihil extra se sui ponens. Rationale animal es. Quod ergo in te bonum est? perfecta ratio. Hanc tu ad suum finem hinc euoca, <sine> in quantum potest plurimum crescere. (24) Tunc beatum esse te iudica cum tibi ex te gaudium omne nascetur, cum uisis quae homines eripiunt, optant, custodiunt, nihil inueneris, nondico quod malis, sed quod uelis. Breuem tibi formulam dabo qua te metiaris, qua perfectum esse iam sentias: tunc habebis tuum cum intelleges infelicissimos esse felices. Vale.

LIBER VICENSIMUS

CXVIII. SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM.

(1) Exigis a me frequentiores epistulas. Rationes conferamus: soluendoneon eris. Conuenerat quidem ut tua priora essent: tu scriberes, ego rescriberem. Sed non ero difficilis: bene credi tibi scio. Itaque in antecessum dabonec faciam quod Cicero, uir disertissimus, facere Atticum iubet, ut etiam'si rem nullam habebit, quod in buccam uenerit scribat'. (2) Numquam potestdeesse quod scribam, ut omnia illa quae Ciceronis implent epistulas transeam:quis candidatus laboret; quis alienis, quis suis uiribus pugnet; quis consulatumfiducia Caesaris, quis Pompei, quis arcae petat; quam durus sit feneratorCaecilius, a quo minoris centesimis propinqui nummum mouere non possint. Sua satius est mala quam aliena tractare, se excutere et uidere quam multarumrerum candidatus sit, et non suffragari. (3) Hoc est, mi Lucili, egregium,hoc securum ac liberum, nihil petere et tota fortunae comitia transire. Quam putas esse iucundum tribubus uocatis, cum candidati in templis suispendeant et alius nummos pronuntiet, alius per sequestrem agat, alius eorummanus osculis conterat quibus designatus contingendam manum negaturus est,omnes attoniti uocem praeconis expectent, stare otiosum et spectare illasnundinas nec ementem quicquam nec uendentem? (4) Quanto hic maiore gaudiofruitur qui non praetoria aut consularia comitia securus intuetur, sedmagna illa in quibus alii honores anniuersarios petunt, alii perpetuaspotestates, alii bellorum euentus prosperos triumphosque, alii diuitias,alii matrimonia ac liberos, alii salutem suam suorumque! Quanti animi reseat solum nihil petere, nulli supplicare, et dicere, 'nihil mihi tecum,fortuna; non facio mei tibi copiam. Scio apud te Catones repelli, Vatiniosfieri. Nihil rogo. ' Hoc est priuatam facere fortunam. (5) Licet ergo haec in uicem scribere et hanc semper integram egereremateriam circumspicientibus tot milia hominum inquieta, qui ut aliquidpestiferi consequantur per mala nituntur in malum petuntque mox fugiendaaaut etiam fastidienda. (6) Cui enim adsecuto satis fuit quod optanti nimiumuidebatur? Non est, ut existimant homines, auida felicitas sed pusilla;itaque neminem satiat. Tu ista credis excelsa quia longe ab illis iaces;ei uero qui ad illa peruenit humilia sunt. Mentior nisi adhuc

quaerit escendere: istud quod tu summum putas gradus est. (7) Omnes autem male habet ignorantia ueri. Tamquam ad bona feruntur decepti rumoribus, deinde mala esse aut inania aut minora quam sperauerint adepti ac multa passi uident; maiorque pars miratur ex interuallo fallentia, et uulgo bona pro magnis sunt.

(8) Hoc ne nobis quoque eueniat, quaeramus quid sit bonum. Varia eius interpretatio fuit, alius illud aliter expressit. Quidam ita finiunt: 'bonum est quod inuitat animos, quod ad se uocat'. Huic statim opponitur: quid si inuitat quidem sed in perniciem? scis quam multa mala blanda sint. Verum et ueri simile inter se differunt. Ita quod bonum est uero iungitur; non est enim bonum nisi uerum est. At quod inuitat ad se et ad licefacit uerisimile est: subrepat, sollicitat, adtrahit. (9) Quidam ita finierunt: 'bonum est quod ad petitionem sui mouet, uel quod impetum animi tendentis ad semouet'. 'Et huic idem opponitur; multa enim impetum animi mouent quae petantur petentium malo. Melius illi qui ita finierunt: 'bonum est quod ad se impetum animi secundum naturam mouet et ita demum petendum est cum coepit esse expetendum'. Iam et honestum est; hoc enim est perfecte petendum. (10) Locus ipse me admonet ut quid intersit inter bonum honestumque dicam. Aliquid inter se mixtum habent et inseparabile: nec potest bonum esse nisi cuius aliquid honesti inest, et honestum utique bonum est. Quid ergo inter duos interest? Honestum est perfectum bonum, quo beata uita completur, cuius contactu alia quoque bona fiunt. (11) Quod dico tale est: sunt quaedam neque bona neque mala, tamquam militia, legatio, iurisdictio. Haec cum honeste administrata sunt, bona esse incipiunt et ex dubio in bonum transeunt. Bonum societate honesti fit, honestum per se bonum est; bonum ex honesto fluit, honestum ex se est. Quod bonum est malum esse potuit; quod honestum est nisi bonum esse non potuit.

(12) Hanc quidam finitionem reddiderunt: 'bonum est quod secundum naturam est'. Adtende quid dicam: quod bonum, est secundum naturam: non protinus quod secundum naturam est etiam bonum est. Multa naturae quidem consentiunt, sed tam pusilla sunt ut non conueniat illis boni nomen; leuia enim sunt, contemnenda. Nullum est minimum contemnendum bonum; nam quamdiu exiguum est bonum non est: cum bonum esse coepit, non est

exiguum. Unde ad cognoscitur bonum? si perfecte secundum naturam est. (13) 'Fateris' inquis 'quod bonum est secundum naturam esse; haec eius proprietas est. Fateris et alia secundum naturam quidem esse sed bona non esse. Quomodo ergo illud bonum est cum haec non sint? quomodo ad aliam proprietatem peruenit cum utrique praecipuum illud commune sit, secundum naturam esse?'

(14) Ipsa scilicet magnitudine. Nec hoc nouum est, quaedam crescendo mutari. Infans fuit; factus est pubes: alia eius proprietas fit; ille enim irrationalis est, hic rationalis. Quaedam incremento non tantum in maius exeunt sed in aliud. (15) 'Non fit' inquit 'aliud quod maius fit. Utrum lagonam an dolium impleas uino, nihil refert: in utroque proprietas uini est. Et exiguum mellis pondus et magnum saporem non differt. ' Diuersa ponis exempla; in istis enim eadem qualitas est; quamuis augeantur, manet. (16) Quaedam amplificata in suo genere et in sua proprietate perdurant; quaedam post multa incrementa ultima demum uertit adiectio et nouam illis aliamque quam in qua fuerunt condicionem imprimit. Unus lapis facit fornicem, ille qui latera inclinata cuneauit et interuentus uinxit. Summa adiectio quare plurimum facit uel exigua? quia non auget sed implet. (17) Quaedam processu priorem exuunt formam et in nouam transeunt. Ubi aliquid animus diu protulit et magnitudinem eius sequendo lassatus est, infinitum coepit uocari; quod longe aliud factum est quam fuit cum magnum uideretur sed finitum. Eodem modo aliquid difficulter secari cogitauimus: nouissime crescente hac difficultate insecabile inuentum est. Sic ab eo quod uix et aegre mouebatur processimus ad immobile. Eadem ratione aliquid secundum naturam fuit: hoc in aliam proprietatem magnitudo sua transtulit bonum fecit. Vale.

CXIX. SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM.

(1) Quotiens aliquid inueni, non expecto donec dicas ‘in commune’: ipse mihi dico. Quid sit quod inuenerim quaeris? Sinum laxa, merum lucrum est. Docebo quomodo fieri diues celerrime possis. Quam ualde cupis audire! nec inmerito: ad maximas te diuitias compendiaria ducam. Opus erit tamen tibi creditore: ut negotiari possis, aes alienum facias oportet, sed nolo per intercessorem mutueris, nolo proxenetae nomen tuum iactent. (2) Paratum tibi creditorem dabo Catonianum illum, a te mutuum sumes. Quantulumcumque est, satis erit si, quidquid deerit, id a nobis petierimus. Nihil enim, mi Lucili, interest utrum non desideres an habeas. Summa rei in utroque eadem est: non torqueberis. Nec illud praecipio, ut aliquid naturae neges — contumax est, non potest uinci, suum poscit — sed ut quidquid naturam excedit scias precarium esse, non necessarium.

(3) Esurio: edendum est. Utrum hic panis sit plebeius an siligineus ad naturam nihil pertinet: illa uentrem non delectari uult sed impleri. Sitio: utrum haec aqua sit quam ex lacu proximo excepero an ea quam multa niue clusero, ut rigore refrigeretur alieno, ad naturam nihil pertinet. Illa hoc unum iubet, sitim extinguere; utrum sit aureum poculum an crustallinum an murreum an Tiburtinus calix an manus concaua, nihil refert. (4) Finem omnium rerum specta, et superuacua dimittes. Fames me appellat: ad proxima quaeque porrigatur manus; ipsa mihi commendabit quodcumque conprendero. Nihil contemnit esuriens. (5) Quid sit ergo quod me delectauerit quaeris? Videtur mihi egregie dictum, ‘sapiens diuitiarum naturalium est quaesitor acerrimus’. ‘Inanime’ inquis ‘lance muneras. Quid est istud? Ego iam paraueram fiscos; circumspiciebam in quod me mare negotiaturus inmitterem, quod publicum agitare, quas arcesserem merces.

Decipere est istud, docere paupertatem cum diuitias promiseris. ‘Ita tu pauperem iudicas cui nihil deest? ‘Suo’ inquis ‘et patientiae suae beneficio, non fortunae. ‘ Ideo ergo illum non iudicas diuitem quia diuitiae eius desinere non possunt? (6) Utrum mauis habere multum an satis? Qui multum habet plus cupit, quod est argumentum nondum illum satis habere; qui satis habet consecutus est quod

numquam diuiti contigit, finem. An has ideo non putas esse diuitias quia propter illas nemo proscriptus est? quia propter illas nulli uenenum filius, nulli uxor inpegit? quia in bello tutae sunt? quia in pace otiosae? quia nec habere illas periculosum est nec operosum disponere?

(7) 'At parum habet qui tantum non alget, non esurit, non sitit. ' Plus Iuppiter non habet. Numquam parum est quod satis est, et numquam multum est quod satis non est. Post Dareum et Indos pauper est Alexander. Mentior? Quaerit quod suum faciat, scrutatur maria ignota, in oceanum classes nouas mittit et ipsa, ut ita dicam, mundi claustra perrumpit. Quod naturae satis est homini non est. (8) Inuentus est qui concupisceret aliquid post omnia: tanta est caecitas mentium et tanta initiorum suorum unicuique, cum processit, obliuio. Ille modo ignobilis anguli non sine controuersia dominus tacto fine terrarum per suum rediturus orbem tristis est. (9) Neminem pecunia diuitem fecit, immo contra nulli non maiorem sui cupidinem incussit. Quaeris quae sit huius rei causa? plus incipit habere posse qui plus habet. Ad summam quem uoles mihi ex his quorum nomina cum Crasso Licinoque numerantur in medium licet protrahas; adferat census et quidquid habet et quidquid sperat simul computet: iste, si mihi credis, pauper est, si tibi, potest esse. (10) At hic qui se ad quod exigit natura composuit non tantum extra sensum est paupertatis sed extra metum. Sed ut scias quam difficile sit res suas ad naturalem modum coartare, hic ipse quem circumcidimus, quem tu uocas pauperem, habet aliquid et superuacui. (11) At excaecant populum et in se conuertunt opes, si numerati multum ex aliqua domo effertur, si multum auri tecto quoque eius inlinitur, si familia aut corporibus electa aut spectabilis cultu est. Omnium istorum felicitas in publicum spectat: ille quem nos et populo et fortunae subduximus beatus introsum est. (12) Nam quod ad illos pertinet apud quos falso diuitiarum nomen inuasit occupata paupertas, sic diuitias habent quomodo habere dicimur febrem, cum illa nos habeat. E contrario dicere solemus 'febris illum tenet': eodem modo dicendum est 'diuitiae illum tenent'. Nihil ergo monuisse te malim quam hoc, quod nemo monetur satis, ut omnia naturalibus desideriis metiaris, quibus aut gratis satis fiat aut paruo: tantum miscere uitia desideriis noli. (13) Quaeris quali mensa, quali argento, quam paribus ministeriis et

leuibus adferatur cibus? Nihil praeter cibum natura desiderat.

Num, tibi cum fauces urit sitis, aurea quaeris
pocula? num esuriens fastidis omnia praeter
pauonem rhombumque?

(14) Ambitiosa non est fames, contenta desinere est; quo desinat non nimis curat. Infelicis luxuriae ista tormenta sunt: quaerit quemadmodum post saturitatem quoque esuriat, quemadmodum non impleat uentrem sed farciat, quemadmodum sitim prima potione sedatam reuocet. Egregie itaque Horatius negat ad sitim pertinere quo poculo (aquae) aut quam eleganti manu ministretur. Nam si pertinere ad te iudicas quam crinitus puer et quam perlucidum tibi poculum porrigat, non sitis.

(15) Inter reliqua hoc nobis praestitit natura praecipuum, quod necessitati fastidium excussit. Recipiunt superuacua dilectum: 'hoc parum decens, illud parum lautum, oculos hoc meos laedit'. Id actum est ab illo mundi conditore, qui nobis uiuendi iura discripsit, ut salui essemus, non ut delicati: ad salutem omnia parata sunt et in promptu, delicis omnia misere ac sollicite comparantur. (16) Utamur ergo hoc naturae beneficio inter magna numerando et cogitemus nullo nomine melius illam meruisse de nobis quam quia quidquid ex necessitate desideratur sine fastidio sumitur. Vale.

CXX. SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM.

(1) Epistula tua per plures quaestiunculas uagata est sed in una constitit hanc expediri desiderat, quomodo ad nos boni honestique notitia peruenerit. Haec duo apud alios diuersa sunt, apud nos tantum diuisa. (2) Quid sithoc dicam. Bonum putant esse aliqui id quod utile est. Itaque hoc et diuitiiset equo et uino et calceo nomen inponunt; tanta fit apud illos boni uilitaset adeo in sordida usque descendit. Honestum putant cui ratio recti officiconstat, tamquam pie curatam patris senectutem, adiutam amici paupertatem, fortem expeditionem, prudentem moderatamque sententiam. (3) <nos> istaduo quidem facimus, sed ex uno.

Nihil est bonum nisi quod honestum est; quod honestum, est utique bonum. Superuacuum iudico adicere quid interista discriminis sit, cum saepe dixerim. Hoc unum dicam, nihil nobis uideri <bonum> quo quis et male uti potest; uides autem diuitiis, nobilitate, uiribus quam multi male utantur. Nunc ergo ad id reuertor de quo desideras dici, quomodo ad nos primaboni honestique notitia peruenerit. (4) Hoc nos natura docere non potuit: semina nobis scientiae dedit, scientiam non dedit. Quidam aiunt nos innotitiam incidisse, quod est incredibile, uirtutis alicui speciem casu occurrisse. Nobis uidetur obseruatio collegisse et rerum saepe factarum inter se conlatio; per analogian nostri intellectum et honestum et bonum iudicant. Hoc uerbum cum Latini grammatici ciuitate donauerint, ego damnandum non puto, <immo> in ciuitatem suam redigendum. Utar ergo illo non tantum tamquam recepto sed tamquam usitato. Quae sit haec analogia dicam. (5) Noueramus corporis sanitatem: ex hac cogitauimus esse aliquam et animi. Noueramus uires corporis: ex his collegimus esse et animi robur. Aliqua benigna facta, aliqua humana, aliqua fortia nos obstupescerant: haec coepimus tamquam perfecta mirari. Suberant illis multa uitia quae species conspicua licuius facti fulgorque celabat: haec dissimulauimus. Natura iubet augere laudanda, nemo non gloriam ultra uerum tulit: ex his ergo speciem ingentis boni traximus. (6) Fabricius Pyrrhi regis aurum reppulit maiusque regno iudicauit regias opes posse contemnere. Idem medico Pyrrhi promittente uenenum se regi daturum monuit Pyrrhum

caueret insidias.

Eiusdem animi fuit auro non uinci, ueneno non uincere. Admirati sumus ingentem uirum quem non regis, non contra regem promissa flexissent, boni exempli tenacem, quod difficillimum est, in bello innocentem, qui aliquod esse crederet etiam in hostes nefas, qui in summa paupertate quam sibi decus fecerat non aliter refugit diuitias quam uenenum. 'Viue' inquit 'beneficio meo, Pyrrhe, et gaude quod adhuc dolebas, Fabricium non posse corrumpi. ' (7) Horatius Cocles solus impleuit pontis angustias adimique a tergo sibi reditum, dummodo iter hosti auferretur, iussit et tam diu prementibus restitit donec reuulsa ingenti ruina tigna sonuerunt. Postquam respexit et extra periculum esse patriam periculo suo sensit, 'ueniat, si quis uult' inquit 'sic euntem sequi' iecitque se in praeceps et non minus sollicitus in illo rapido alueo fluminis ut armatus quam ut saluus exiret, retento armorum uictricium decorem tam tutus redit quam si ponte uenisset. (8) Haec et eiusmodi facta imaginem nobis ostendere uirtutis.

Adiciam quod mirum fortasse uideatur: mala interdum speciem honesti obtulere et optimum ex contrario enituit. Sunt enim, ut scis, uirtutibus uitia confinia, et perditis quoque ac turpibus recti similitudo est: sic mentitur prodigus liberalem, cum plurimum intersit utrum quis dare sciat an seruare nesciat. Multi, inquam, sunt, Lucili, qui non donant sed proiciunt: non uoco ego liberalem pecuniae suae iratum. Imitatur negligentia facilitatem, temeritas fortitudinem. (9) Haec nos similitudo coegit adtendere et distinguere specie quidem uicina, re autem plurimum inter se dissidentia. Dum obseruamus eos quos insignes egregium opus fecerat, coepimus adnotare quis rem aliquam generoso animo fecisset et magno impetu, sed semel. Hunc uidimus in bello fortem, in foro timidum, animose paupertatem ferentem, humiliter infamiam: factum laudauimus, contempsimus uirum.

(10) Alium uidimus aduersus amicos benignum, aduersus inimicos temperatum, et publica et priuata sancte ac religiose administrantem; non deesse ei in iis quae toleranda erant patientiam, in iis quae agenda prudentiam. Vidimus ubitribuendum esset plena manudentem, ubi laborandum, pertinacem et obnixum et lassitudinem corporis animo subleuantem. Praeterea idem erat semper et in omni actu par sibi, iam non consilio bonus, sed more eo perductus ut non tantum recte

facereposset, sed nisi recte facere non posset. (11) Intelleximus in illo perfectam esse uirtutem. Hanc in partes diuisimus: oportebat cupiditates refrenari, metus conprimi, facienda prouideri, reddenda distribui: comprehendimus temperantiam, fortitudinem, prudentiam, iustitiam et suum cuique dedimus officium. Ex quo ergo uirtutem intelleximus? ostendit illam nobis ordo eius et decor et constantia et omnium inter se actionum concordia et magnitudo super omnia efferens sese. Hinc intellecta est illa beata uita secundo defluens cursu, arbitrii sui tota. (12) Quomodo ergo hoc ipsum nobis apparuit? dicam. Numquam uir ille perfectus adeptusque uirtutem fortunae maledixit, numquam accidentia tristis exceperit, ciuem esse se uniuersi et militem credens labores uelut imperatos subit. Quidquid inciderat non tamquam malum aspernatusest et in se casu delatum, sed quasi delegatum sibi. 'Hoc qualecumque est' inquit 'meum est; asperum est, durum est, in hoc ipso nauemus operam. (13) Necessario itaque magnus apparuit qui numquam malis ingemuit, numquam de fato suo questus est; fecit multis intellectum sui et non aliter quam in tenebris lumen effulsit aduertitque in se omnium animos, cum esset placidus et lenis, humanis diuinisque rebus pariter aequus. (14) Habebat perfectum animum et ad summam sui adductum, supra quam nihil est nisi mens dei, ex quo pars et in hoc pectus mortale defluxit; quod numquam magis diuinum est quam ubi mortalitatem suam cogitat et scit in hoc natum hominem, ut uita defungeretur, nec domum esse hoc corpus sed hospitium, et quidem breue hospitium, quod relinquendum est ubi te grauem esse hospiti uideas.

(15) Maximum, inquam, mi Lucili, argumentum est animi ab altiore sede uenientis, si haec in quibus uersatur humilia iudicat et angusta, si exire non metuit; scit enim quo exiturus sit qui unde uenerit meminit. Non uidemus quam multa nos incommoda exagitant, quam male nobis conueniat hoc corpus? (16) Nunc de capite, nunc de uentre, nunc de pectore ac faucibus querimur; alias nerui nos, alias pedes uexant, nunc deiectio, nunc destillatio; aliquando superest sanguis, aliquando deest: hinc atque illinc temptamur et expellimur. Hoc euenire solet in alieno habitantibus. (17) At nos corpus tam putresortiti nihilominus aeterna proponimus et in quantum potest aetas humanam protendi, tantum spe occupamus, nulla contenti pecunia, nulla potentia. Quid hac re fieri impudentius, quid stultius

potest? Nihil satis est morituris, immo morientibus; cotidie enim propius ab ultimo stamus, et illo unde nobiscadendum est hora nos omnis inpellit. (18) Vide in quanta caecitate mens nostra sit: hoc quod futurum dico cum maxime fit, et pars eius magna iam facta est; nam quod uiximus tempus eo loco est quo erat antequam uiximus. Erramus autem qui ultimum timemus diem, cum tantumdem in mortem singuli conferant. Non ille gradus lassitudinem facit in quo deficimus, sed ille profitetur; ad mortem dies extremus peruenit, accedit omnis; carpit nos illa, non corripit. Ideo magnus animus conscius sibi melioris naturae dat quidem operam ut in hac statione qua positus est honeste se atque industrie gerat, ceterum nihil horum quae circa sunt suum iudicat, sed ut commodatus sit, peregrinus et properans.

(19) Cum aliquem huius uideremus constantiae, quidni subiret nos species non usitatae indolis? utique si hanc, ut dixi, magnitudinem ueram esse ostendebat aequalitas. Vero tenor permanet, falsa non durant. Quidam alternis Vatinii, alternis Catones sunt; et modo parum illis seuerus est Curius, parum pauper Fabricius, parum frugi et contentus uilibus Tubero, modo Licinum diuitis, Apicium cenis, Maecenatem delicis prouocant. (20) Maximum indicium est malae mentis fluctuatio et inter simulationem uirtutum amoremque uitiorum adsidua iactatio. (is)

Habebat saepe ducentos,
saepe decem seruos; modo reges atque tetrarchas,
omnia magna loquens, modo 'sit mihi mensa tripes et
concha salis puri, toga quae defendere frigus
quamuis crassa queat'. Decies centena dedisses
huic parco, paucis contento: quinque diebus
nil erat.

(21) Homines multi tales sunt qualem hunc describit Horatius Flaccus, numquam eundem, ne similem quidem sibi; adeo in diuersum aberrat. Multos dixi? prope est ut omnes sint. Nemo non cotidie et consilium mutat et uotum: modo uxorem uult habere, modo amicam, modo regnare uult, modo id agit ne quis sit officiosior seruus, modo dilatat se usque ad inuidiam, modo subsidit

contrahitur infra humilitatem uere iacentium, nunc pecuniam spargit, nunc rapit. (22) Sic maxime coarguitur animus imprudens: alius prodit atque alius et, quo turpius nihil iudico, inpar sibi est. Magnam rem puta unum hominem agere. Praeter sapientem autem nemo unum agit, ceteri multiformes sumus. Modo frugi tibi uidebimur et graues, modo prodigi et uani; mutamus subinde personam et contrariam ei sumimus quam exuimus. Hoc ergo a te exige, ut qualem institueris praestare te, talem usque ad exitum serues; effice ut possis laudari, si minus, ut agnosci. De aliquo quem here uidisti meriti dici potest 'hic qui est?': tanta mutatio est. Vale.

CXXI. SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM.

(1) Litigabis, ego uideo, cum tibi hodiernam quaestiunculam, in quasatis diu haesimus, exposuero; iterum enim exclamabis ‘hoc quid ad mores? ‘Sed exclama, dum tibi primum alios opponam cum quibus litiges, Posidoniumet Archidemum (hi iudicium accipient) , deinde dicam: non quidquid moraleest mores bonos facit.

(2) Aliud ad hominem alendum pertinet, aliud adexercendum, aliud ad uestiendum, aliud ad docendum, aliud ad delectandum;omnia tamen ad hominem pertinent, etiam si non omnia meliorem eum faciunt. Mores alia aliter attingunt: quaedam illos corrigunt et ordinant, quaedamnaturam eorum et originem scrutantur.

(3) Cum <quaero> quare hominemnatura produxerit, quare praetulerit animalibus ceteris, longe me iudicasmores reliquisse? falsum est. Quomodo enim scies qui habendi sint nisi quid homini sit optimum inueneris, nisi naturam eius inspexeris? Tunc demumintelleges quid faciendum tibi, quid uitandum sit, cum didiceris quid naturaetae debeas. (4) ‘Ego’ inquis ‘uolo discere quomodo minus cupiam, minustimeam. Superstitionem mihi excute; doce leue esse uanumque hoc quod felicitasdictur, unam illi syllabam facillime accedere. ‘ Desiderio tuo satis faciam:et uirtutes exhortabor et uitia conuerberabo. Licet aliquis nimium inmoderatumquein hac parte me iudicet, non desistam persequi nequitiam et adfectus efferatissimosinhibere et uoluptates ituras in dolorem conpescere et uotis obstrepere. Quidni? cum maxima malorum optauerimus, et ex gratulatione natum sit quidquidadloquimur.

(5) Interim permitte mihi ea quae paulo remotiora uidentur excutere. Quaerebamus an esset omnibus animalibus constitutionis suae sensus. Esseautem ex eo maxime apparet quod membra apte et expedite mouent non aliterquam in hoc erudita; nulli non partium suarum agilitas est. Artifex instrumentasua tractat ex facili, rector nauis scite gubernaculum flectit, pictorcolores quos ad reddendam similitudinem multos uariosque ante se posuitcelerrime denotat et inter ceram opusque facili uultu ac manu commeat:sic animal in omnem usum sui mobilest.

(6) Mirari solemus saltandi peritos quod in omnem significationem rerum et adfectuum parata illorum est manus et uerborum uelocitatem gestus adsequitur: quod illis ars praestat, his natura. Nemo aegre molitur artus suos, nemo in usu sui haesitat. Hoc edita protinus faciunt; cum hac scientia prodeunt; instituta nascuntur.

(7) 'Ideo' inquit 'partes suas animalia apte mouent quia, si aliter mouerint, dolorem sensura sunt. Ita, ut uos dicitis, coguntur, metusque illa in rectum, non uoluntas mouet. 'Quod est falsum; tarda enim sunt quae necessitate inpelluntur, agilitas sponte motis est. Adeo autem non adigit illa ad hoc doloris timor ut in naturalem motum etiam dolore prohibente nitantur. (8) Sic infans qui stare meditatur et ferre se adsuescit, simul temptare uires suas coepit, cadit et cum fletu totiens resurgit donec seper dolorem ad id quod natura poscit exercuit. Animalia quaedam tergi durioris in uersa tam diu se torquent ac pedes exerunt et obliquant donec ad locum reponantur. Nullum tormentum sentit supina testudo, inquieta est tamend desiderio naturalis status nec ante desinit niti, quater se, quam in pedes constitit. (9) Ergo omnibus constitutionis suae sensus est et inde membrorum tam expedita tractatio, nec ullum maius indicium habemus cum hac illa aduiendum uenire notitia quam quod nullum animal ad usum sui rude est.

(10) 'Constitutio' inquit 'est, ut uos dicitis, principale animi quodammodo se habens erga corpus. Hoc tam perplexum et subtile et uobis quoque uix enarrabile quomodo infans intellegit? Omnia animalia dialectica nasci oportet ut istam finitionem magnae parti hominum togatorum obscuram intellegant. '(11) Verum erat quod opponis si ego ab animalibus constitutionis finitionem intellegi dicerem, non ipsam constitutionem. Facilius natura intellegitur quam enarratur. Itaque infans ille quid sit constitutio non nouit, constitutionem suam nouit; et quid sit animal nescit, animal esse se sentit. (12) Praeterea ipsam constitutionem suam crasse intellegit et summatim et obscure. Nos quoque animum habere nos scimus: quid sit animus, ubi sit, qualis sit aut unde nescimus. Qualis ad nos (peruenerit) animi nostri sensus, quamuis naturam eius ignoremus ac sedem, talis ad omnia animalia constitutionis suae sensus est. Necesse est enim id sentiant per quod alia quoque sentiunt; necesse est eius sensum habeant cui parent, a quo reguntur. (13) Nemo non ex nobis

intellegit esse aliquid quod impetus suos moueat: quid sit illudignorat. Et conatum sibi esse scit: quis sit aut unde sit nescit. Sic infantibusquoque animalibusque principalis partis suae sensus est non satis dilucidusnec expressus.

(14) ‘Dicitis’ inquit ‘omne animal primum constitutioni suae conciliari,hominis autem constitutionem rationalem esse et ideo conciliari hominemsibi non tamquam animali sed tamquam rationali; ea enim parte sibi carusest homo qua homo est. Quomodo ergo infans conciliari constitutioni rationalipotest, cum rationalis nondum sit?’ (15) Unicuique aetati sua constitutioest, alia infanti, alia puero, <alia adulescenti>, alia seni: omnesei constitutioni conciliantur in qua sunt. Infans sine dentibus est: huicconstitutioni suae conciliatur. Enati sunt dentes: huic constitutioni conciliatur. Nam et illa herba quae in segetem frugemque uentura est aliam constitutionemhabet tenera et uix eminens sulco, aliam cum conualuit et molli quidemculmo, sed quo ferat onus suum, constitit, aliam cum flauescit et ad areamspectat et spica eius induruit: in quamcumque constitutionem uenit, eamtuetur, in eam componitur. (16) Alia est aetas infantis, pueri, adulescentis,senis; ego tamen idem sum qui et infans fui et puer et adulescens. Sic,quamuis alia atque alia cuique constitutio sit, conciliatio constitutionissuae eadem est. Non enim puerum mihi aut iuuenem aut senem, sed me naturacommendat. Ergo infans ei constitutioni suae conciliatur quae tunc infantiest, non quae futura iuueni est; neque enim si aliquid illi maius in quodtranseat restat, non hoc quoque in quo nascitur secundum naturam est. (17) Primum sibi ipsum conciliatur animal; debet enim aliquid esse ad quod aliareferantur. Voluptatem peto. Cui? mihi; ergo mei curam ago. Dolorem refugio. Pro quo? pro me; ergo mei curam ago. Si omnia propter curam mei facio,ante omnia est mei cura. Haec animalibus inest cunctis, nec inseritur sedinnascitur. (18) Producit fetus suos natura, non abicit; et quia tutelacertissima ex proximo est, sibi quisque commissus est. Itaque, ut in prioribusepistulis dixi, tenera quoque animalia et materno utero uel ouo modo effusaquid sit infestum ipsa protinus norunt et mortifera deuitant; umbram quoquetransuolantium reformidant obnoxia auibis raptu uiuentibus. Nullum animalad uitam prodit sine metu mortis.

(19) ‘Quemadmodum’ inquit ‘editum animal intellectum habere

aut salutaris aut mortiferae rei potest? ‘ Primum quaeritur an intellegat, non quemadmodum intellegat. Esse autem illis intellectum ex eo apparet quod nihil amplius, si intellexerint, facient. Quid est quare pauonem, quare anserem gallinam non fugiat, at tanto minorem et ne notum quidem sibi accipitrem? quare pulli faem timeant, canem non timeant? Apparet illis inesse nocituris scientiam non experimento collectam; nam antequam possint experisci, cauent. (20) Deinde ne hoc casu existimes fieri, nec metuunt alia quam debent necumquam obliuiscuntur huius tutelae et diligentiae: aequalis est illis apernicioso fuga. Praeterea non fiunt timidiora uiuendo; ex quo quidem apparet non usu illa in hoc peruenire sed naturali amore salutis suae. Et tardum est et uarium quod usus docet: quidquid natura tradit et aequale omnibus est et statim. (21) Si tamen exigis, dicam quomodo omne animal perniciosum intellegere cogatur. Sentit se carne constare; itaque sentit quid sit quod secari caro, quo uri, quo obteri possit, quae sint animalia armata ad nocendum: horum speciem trahit inimicam et hostilem. Inter se ista coniuncta sunt; simul enim conciliatur saluti suae quidque et iuuatura petit, laesura formidat. Naturales ad utilia impetus, naturales a contrariis aspernationes sunt; sine ulla cogitatione quae hoc dictet, sine consilio fit quidquid natura praecepit. (22) Non uides quanta sit subtilitas apibus ad fingenda domicilia, quanta diuidui laboris obeundi undique concordia? Non uides quam nulli mortalium imitabilis illa aranei textura, quanti operis sit fila disponere, alia in rectum inmissa firmamenti loco, alia in orbem currentia ex densiora, qua minora animalia, in quorum perniciem illa tenduntur, uelut retibus implicata teneantur? (23) Nascitur ars ista, non discitur. Itaque nullum est animal altero doctius: uidebis araneorum pares telas, par in fauiculis angulorum omnium foramen. Incertum est et inaequabile quidquid ars tradit: ex aequo uenit quod natura distribuit. Haec nihil magis quam tutelam sui et eius peritiam tradidit, ideoque etiam simul incipiunt et discere et uiuere. (24) Nec est mirum cum eo nasci illa sine quo frustra nascerentur. Primum hoc instrumentum <in> illa natura contulit ad permanendum, (in) conciliationem et caritatem sui. Non poterant salua esse nisi uellent; nec (non) hoc per se profuturum erat, sed sine hoc nulla res profuisset. Sed in nullo dependes utilitatem sui, <ne> neglegentiam quidem; tacitis quoque et brutis, quamquam in cetera

torpeant, ad uiuendum sollertia est. Videbis quae aliis inutilia sunt
sibi ipsa non deesse. Vale.

CXXII. SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM.

(1) Detrimentum iam dies sensit; resiliuit aliquantum, ita tamen ut liberale adhuc spatium sit si quis cum ipso, ut ita dicam, die surgat. Officiosiormeliorque si quis illum expectat et lucem primam excipit: turpis qui altosole semisomnus iacet, cuius uigilia medio die incipit; et adhuc multishoc antelucanum est. (2) Sunt qui officia lucis noctisque peruerterintnec ante diducant oculos hesterna graues crapula quam adpetere nox coepit. Qualis illorum condicio dicitur quos natura, ut ait Vergilius, pedibusnostris subditos e contrario posuit,

nosque ubi primus equis Oriens adflauit anhelis,
illis sera rubens accendit lumina Vesper,

talis horum contraria omnibus non regio sed uita est. (3) Sunt quidam ineadem urbe antipodes qui, ut M. Cato ait, nec orientem umquam solem uideruntnec occidentem. Hos tu existimas scire quemadmodum uiuendum sit, qui nesciuntquando?

Et hi mortem timent, in quam se uiui condiderunt? tam infausti ominisquam nocturnae aues sunt. Licet in uino unguentoque tenebras suas exigant,licet epulis et quidem in multa fericula discoctis totum peruersae uigiliaetempus educant, non conuiuantur sed iusta sibi faciunt. Mortuis certe interdiuparentatur. At mehercules nullus agenti dies longus est. Extendamus uitam:huius et officium et argumentum actus est. Circumscribatur nox et aliquidex illa in diem transferatur. (4) Aues quae conuiuiis comparantur, ut in motaefacile pinguescant, in obscuro continentur; ita sine ulla exercitationeiacentibus tumor pigrum corpus inuadit et ~superba umbra~ iners saginasubcrescit. At istorum corpora qui se tenebris dicauerunt foeda uisuntur,quippe suspectior illis quam morbo pallentibus color est: languidi et euanidialbent, et in uiuis caro morticina est. Hoc tamen minimum in illis malorumdixerim: quanto plus tenebrarum in animo est! ille in se stupet, ille caligat,inuidet caecis. Quis umquam oculos tenebrarum causa habuit?

(5) Interrogas quomodo haec animo prauitas fiat auersandi diem et

totam uitam in noctem transferendi? Omnia uitia contra naturam pugnant, omniadebitum ordinem deserunt; hoc est luxuriae propositum, gaudere peruersis nec tantum discedere a recto sed quam longissime abire, deinde etiam e contrario stare. (6) Non uidentur tibi contra naturam uiuere <qui> ieiunibunt, qui uinum recipiunt inanibus uenis et ad cibum ebrii transeunt? Atqui frequens hoc adulescentium uitium est, qui uires excolunt <ut> in ipso paene balinei limine inter nudos bibant, immo potent et sudorem quem mouerunt potionibus crebris ac feruentibus subinde destringant. Postprandium aut cenam bibere uulgare est; hoc patres familiae rustici faciunt et uerae uoluptatis ignari: merum illud delectat quod non innatat cibo, quod libere penetrat ad neruos; illa ebrietas iuuat quae in uacuum uenit. (7) Non uidentur tibi contra naturam uiuere qui commutant cum feminis uestem? Non uiuunt contra naturam qui spectant ut pueritia splendeat tempore alieno? Quid fieri crudelius uel miserius potest? numquam uir erit, ut diu uirumpati possit? et cum illum contumeliae sexus eripuisse debuerat, non ne aetas quidem eripiet? (8) Non uiuunt contra naturam qui hieme concupiscunt rosam fomentoque aquarum calentium et locorum apta mutatione bruma lilium (florem uernum) exprimunt? Non uiuunt contra naturam qui pomaria in summis turribus serunt? quorum siluae in tectis domuum ac fastigiis nutant, inde ortis radicibus quo inprobe cacumina egissent? Non uiuunt contra naturam qui fundamenta thermarum in mari iaciunt et delicate natare ipsi sibi non uidentur nisi calentia stagna fluctu ac tempestate feriantur? (9) Cum instituerunt omnia contra naturae consuetudinem uelle, nouissime in totum ab illa desciscunt. ‘Lucet: somni tempus est. Quies est: nunc exerceamur, nunc gestemur, nunc prandeamus. Iam lux propius accedit: tempus est cenae. Non oportet id facere quod populus; res sordida est trita ac uulgari uia uiuere. Dies publicus relinquatur: proprium nobis ac peculiare mane fiat.’ (10) Isti uero mihi defunctorum loco sunt; quantulum enim a funere absunt et quidem acerbo qui ad faces et cereos uiuunt? Hanc uitam agere eodem tempore multos meminimus, inter quos et Acilium Butam praetorium, cui post patrimonium ingens consumptum Tiberius paupertatem confitenti ‘sero’ inquit ‘exspectatus es’. (11) Recitabat Montanus Iulius carmen, tolerabilis poeta et amicitia Tiberi notus et frigore. Ortus et occasus libentissime

inserebat; itaque cum indignaretur quidam illum totodie recitasse et negaret accedendum ad recitationes eius, Natta Pinarius ait: 'numquid possum liberalius agere? paratus sum illum audire ab ortu ad occasum'.

(12) Cum hos uersus recitasset
incipit ardentes Phoebus producere flammās,
spargere <se> rubicunda dies; iam tristis hirundo
argutis reditura cibos inmittere nidis
incipit et molli partitos ore ministrat,

Varus eques Romanus, M. Vinicii comes, cenarum bonarum adsectator, quasinprobitate linguae merebatur, exclamauit 'incipit Buta dormire'. (13) Deinde cum subinde recitasset

iam sua pastores stabulis armenta locarunt,
iam dare sopitis nox pigra silentia terris
incipit,

idem Varus inquit 'quid dicis? iam nox est? ibo et Butam salutabo'. Nihil erat notius hac eius uita in contrarium circumacta; quam, ut dixi, multi eodem tempore egerunt. (14) Causa autem est ita uiuendi quibusdam, non quia aliquid existiment noctem ipsam habere iucundius, sed quia nihil uiuat solitum, et grauis malae conscientiae lux est, et omnia concupiscentia ut contemnenti prout magno aut paruo empta sunt fastidio est lumen gratuitum. Praeterea luxuriosi uitam suam esse in sermonibus dum uiuunt uolunt; nam si tacetur, perdere se putant operam. Itaque aliquotiens faciunt quod excitet famam. Multi bona comedunt, multi amicas habent: ut inter istos nomen inuenias, opus est non tantum luxuriosam rem sed notabilem facere; in tam occupata ciuitate fabulas uulgaris nequitia non inuenit. (15) Pedonem Albinouanum narrantem audieramus (erat autem fabulator elegantissimus) habitasse sesupra domum Sex. Papini. Is erat ex hac turba lucifugarum. 'Audio' inquit 'circa horam tertiam noctis flagellorum sonum. Quaero quid faciat: dicitur rationes accipere. Audio circa horam sextam noctis clamorem concitatum. Quaero quid sit: dicitur uocem exercere.

Quaero circa horam octauam noctisquid sibi ille sonus rotarum uelit: gestari dicitur. (16) Circa lucem discurritur,pueri uocantur, cellarii, coqui tumultuantur. Quaero quid sit: dicitur mulsum et halicam poposcisse, a balneo exisse. “Excedebat” inquit “huiusdiem cena. “ Minime; ualde enim frugaliter uiuebat; nihil consumebat nisi noctem. ‘ Itaque Peto dicentibus illum quibusdam avarum et sordidum ‘uos’inquit ‘illum et lychnobium dicetis’. (17) Non debes admirari si tantas inuenis uitiorum proprietates: uariasunt, innumerabiles habent facies, conprendi eorum genera non possunt. Simplex recti cura est, multiplex prauis, et quantumuis nouas declinationes capit. Idem moribus euenit: naturam sequentium faciles sunt, soluti sunt,exiguas differentias habent; (his) distorti plurimum et omnibus et inter se dissident. (18) Causa tamen praecipua mihi uidetur huius morbi uitae communis fastidium. Quomodo cultu se a ceteris distinguunt, quomodo elegantiae cenarum, munditiae uehiculorum, sic uolunt separari etiam temporum dispositione. Nolunt solita peccare quibus peccandi praemium infamia est. Hanc petunt omnes isti qui, ut ita dicam, retro uiuunt. (19) Ideo, Lucili, tenenda nobis uia est quam natura praescripsit, nec ab illa declinandum: illamsequentibus omnia facilia, expedita sunt, contra illam nitentibus non alia uita est quam contra aquam remigantibus. Vale.

CXXIII. SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

(1) Itinere confectus incommodo magis quam longo in Albanum meum multanocte perueni: nihil habeo parati nisi me. Itaque in lectulo lassitudinempono, hanc coci ac pistoris moram boni consulo. Mecum enim de hoc ipsoloquor, quam nihil sit graue quod leuiter excipias, quam indignandum nihil<dum nihil> ipse indignando adstruas. (2) Non habet panem meus pistor;sed habet uilicus, sed habet atriensis, sed habet colonus. ‘Malum panem’inquis. Expecta: bonus fiet; etiam illum tibi tenerum et siligineum famesreddet. Ideo non est ante edendum quam illa imperat. Expectabo ergo necante edam quam aut bonum panem habere coepero aut malum fastidire desiero. (3) Necessarium est paruo adsuescere: multae difficultates locorum, multaetemporum etiam locupletibus et instructis ~aduobus optantem prohibent et~occurrent. Quidquid uult habere nemo potest, illud potest, nolle quod nonhabet, rebus oblatis hilaris uti. Magna pars libertatis est bene moratusuenter et contumeliae patiens. (4) Aestimari non potest quantam uoluptatemcapiam ex eo quod lassitudo mea sibi ipsa adquiescit: non unctores, nonbalineum, non ullum aliud remedium quam temporis quaero. Nam quod laborcontraxit quies tollit. Haec qualiscumque cena aditali iucundior erit. (5) ~Aliquod enim~ experimentum animi sumpsi subito; hoc enim est simpliciuset uerius. Nam ubi se praeparauit et indixit sibi patientiam, non aequaeapparet quantum habeat uerae firmitatis: illa sunt certissima argumentaquae ex tempore dedit, si non tantum aequus molestias sed placidus aspexit;si non excanduit, non litigauit; si quod dari deberet ipse sibi non desiderandosuppleuit et cogitauit aliquid consuetudini suae, sibi nihil deesse.

(6) Multa quam superuacua essent non intelleximus nisi deesse coeperunt; utebatur enim illis non quia debebamus sed quia habebamus. Quam multa autem paramus quia alii parauerunt, quia apud plerosque sunt! Inter causas malorum nostrorum est quod uiuimus ad exempla, nec ratione componimur sed consuetudine abducimur. Quod si pauci facerent nollemus imitari, cum plures facere coeperunt quasi honestius sit quia frequentius, sequimur; et recti apud nos locum tenet error ubi publicus factus est. (7) Omnes

iam sic peregrinantur ut illos Numidarum praecurrat equitatus, ut agmen cursorum antecedit: turpe est nullos esse qui occurrentis uia deiciant, (ut) qui honestum hominem uenire magno puluere ostendant. Omnes iam mulos habent qui crustallina et murrina et caelata magnorum artificum manu portent: turpe est uideri eas te habere sarcinas solas quae tuto concuti possint. Omnium paedagogia oblita facie uehantur ne sol, ne frigus teneram cutem laedat: turpe est neminem esse in comitatu tuo puerorum cuius sana facies medicamentum desideret.

(8) Horum omnium sermo uitandus est: hi sunt qui uitia tradunt et alio aliunde transferunt. Pessimum genus (horum) hominum uidebatur qui uerbagescunt: sunt quidam qui uitia gestant. Horum sermo multum nocet; nam etiam si non statim proficit, semina in animo relinquit sequiturque nos etiam cum ab illis discessimus, resurrecturum postea malum. (9) Quemadmodum qui audierunt synphoniam ferunt secum in auribus modulationem illam ad dulcedinem cantuum, quae cogitationes impedit nec ad seria patitur intendi, sic adulatorum et praua laudantium sermo diutius haeret quam auditur. Nec facile est animo dulcem sonum excutere: prosequitur et durat et ex interuallo recurrit. Ideo claudendae sunt aures malis uocibus et quidem primis; nam cum initium fecerunt admissaeque sunt, plus audient. (10) Inde ad haec perueniunt uerba: 'uirtus et philosophia et iustitia uerborum inanium crepitus est; una felicitas est bene uitae facere; esse, bibere, frui patrimonio, hoc est uiuere, hoc est se mortalem esse meminisse. Fluunt dies et irreparabilis uita decurrit. Dubitamus? Quid iuuat sapere et aetati non semper uoluptates recepturae interim, dum potest, dum poscit, ingerere frugalitatem? ~Eo~ mortem praecurre et quidquid illa ablatura est iam sibi ~interere~. Non amicam habes, non puerum qui amicae moueat inuidiam; cottidie sobrius prodis; sic cenas tamquam ephemeridem patri adprobaturus: non est istud uiuere sed alienae uitae interesse. (11) Quanta dementia est heredis sui res procurare et sibi negare omnia ut tibi ex amico inimicum magna faciat hereditas; plus enim gaudebit tua morte quo plus acceperit. Istos tristes et superciliosos alienae uitae censors, suae hostes, publicos paedagogos assis ne feceris nec dubitaueris bonam uitam quam opinionem bonam malle. ' (12) Hae uoces non aliter fugiendae sunt

quam illae quas Ulixes nisi alligatus praeteruehinoluit. Idem possunt: abducunt a patria, a parentibus, ab amicis, a uirtutibus, et ~inter spem uitam misera nisi turpis inludunt~. Quanto satius est rectumsequi limitem et eo se perducere ut ea demum sint tibi iucunda quae honesta! (13) Quod adsequi poterimus si scierimus duo esse genera rerum quae nos aut inuitent aut fugent. Inuitant (ut) diuitiae, uoluptates, forma, ambitio, cetera blanda et adridentia: fugat labor, mors, dolor, ignominia, uictus adstrictior. Debemus itaque exerceri ne haec timeamus, ne illa cupiamus. In contrarium pugnemus et ab inuitantibus recedamus, aduersus potentia concitemur.

(14) Non uides quam diuersus sit descendendum habitus et ascendendum? qui per primum eunt resupinant corpora, qui in arduum, incumbunt. Nam si descendas, pondus suum in priorem partem dare, si ascendas, retro abducere, cum uitio, Lucili, consentire est. In uoluptates descenditur, in aspera et dura subeundum est: hic impellamus corpora, illic refrenemus. (15) Hoc nunc me existimas dicere, eos tantum perniciosos esse auribus nostris qui uoluptatem laudant, qui doloris metus, per se formidabiles res, incutiunt? Illos quoque nocere nobis existimo qui nos sub specie Stoicae sectae hortantur ad uitia. Hoc enim iactant: solum sapientem et doctum esse amatorem. ‘Solutus aptus est ad hanc artem; aequus conbibendi et conuiuendi sapiens est peritissimus. Quaeramus ad quam usque aetatem iuuenes amandisint. ‘ (16) Haec Graecae consuetudini data sint, nos ad illa potius aures derigamus: ‘nemo est casus bonus: discenda uirtus est. Voluptas humilis res et pusilla est et in nullo habenda pretio, communis cum mutis animalibus, ad quam minima et contemptissima aduolant. Gloria uanum et uolubile quiddam est auraque mobilius. Paupertas nulli malum est nisi repugnanti. Mors malum non est: quid <sit> quaeris? sola ius aequum generis humani. Superstitio error insanus est: amandos timet, quos colit uiolat. Quid enim interest utrum deos neget an infames? ‘ (17) Haec discenda, immo ediscenda sunt: non debet excusationes uitio philosophia suggerere. Nullam habet spem salutis aeger quem ad intemperantiam medicus hortatur. Vale.

CXXIV. SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM.

(1) Possum multa tibi ueterum praecepta referre,
ni refugis tenuisque piget cognoscere curas.

Non refugis autem nec ulla te subtilitas abigit: non est elegantiae tuae tantum magna sectari, sicut illud probo, quod omnia ad aliquem profectum redigis et tunc tantum offenderis ubi summa subtilitate nihil agitur. Quod ne nunc quidem fieri laborabo.

Quaeritur utrum sensu comprehendatur an intellectu bonum; huic adiunctum est in mutis animalibus et infantibus non esse. (2) Quicumque uoluptatem in summo ponunt sensibile iudicant bonum, nos contra intellegibile, qui illud animo damus. Si de bono sensus iudicarent, nullam uoluptatem reiceremus; nulla enim non inuitat, nulla non delectat; et e contrario nullum dolorem uolentes subiremus; nullus enim non offendit sensum. (3) Praeterea non essent digni reprehensione quibus nimium uoluptas placet quibusque summus est doloris timor. Atqui inprobamus gulae ac libidini addictos et contemni musillos qui nihil uiriliter ausuri sunt doloris metu. Quid autem peccant si sensibus, id est iudicibus boni ac mali, parent? his enim tradidistis ad petitionis et fugae arbitrium. (4) Sed uidelicet ratio isti rei praeposita est: illa quemadmodum de beata uita, quemadmodum de uirtute, de honesto, sic et de bono maloque constituit. Nam apud istos uilissimae parti datur de meliore sententia, ut de bono pronuntiet sensus, obtusa res et hebes et in homine quam in aliis animalibus tardior. (5) Quid si quis uellet non oculis sed tactu minuta discernere? Subtilior adhuc acies nulla quam oculorum et intentior daret bonum malumque dinoscere. Vides in quanta ignorantia ueritatis uersetur et quam humi sublimia ac diuina proiecerit apud quem de summo, bono malo, iudicat tactus. (6) ‘Quemadmodum’ inquit ‘omnis scientia atque ars aliquid debet habere manifestum sensuque comprehensum ex quo oriatur et crescat, sic beata uita fundamentum et initium a manifestis ducit et eo quod sub sensum cadat. Nempe uos a manifestis beatam uitam initium sui capere dicitis. ‘ (7) Dicimus beata esse quae secundum naturam sint; quid autem secundum naturam sit palam et protinus apparet, sicut

quid sit integrum. Quod secundum naturam est, quod contigit protinus nato, non dico bonum, sed initium boni. Tu summum bonum, uoluptatem, infantiae donas, ut inde incipiat nascens quo consummatus homo peruenit; cacumen radicis loco ponis. (8) Si quis diceret illum in materno utero latentem, sexus quoque incerti, tenerum et imperfectum et informem iam in aliquo bono esse, aperte uideretur errare. Atqui quantulum interest inter eum qui cum (que) maxime uitam accipit et illum qui maternorum uiscerum latens onus est? Uterque, quantum ad intellectum boni ac mali, aequè maturus est, et non magis infans adhuc boni capax est quam arbor aut mutum aliquod animal. Quare autem bonum in arbore animalique muto non est? quia nec ratio. Ob hoc in infante quoque non est; nam et huic deest. Tunc ad bonum perueniet cum ad rationem peruenerit. (9) Est aliquod inrationale animal, est aliquod nondum rationale, est rationale sed imperfectum: in nullo horum bonum, ratio illud secum adfert. Quid ergo inter ista quaeret tuli distat? In eo quod inrationale est numquam erit bonum; in eo quod nondum rationale est tunc esse bonum non potest; <in eo quod rationale est> sed imperfectum iam potest bonum <esse>, sed non est. (10) Ita dico, Lucili: bonum non in quolibet corpore, non in qualibet aetate inuenitur et tantum abest ab infantia quantum a primo ultimum, quantum ab initio perfectum; ergo nec in tenero, modo coalescente corpusculo est. Quidni non sit? non magis quam in semine. (11) Hoc sic dicas: aliquod arboris ac sati bonum nouimus: hoc non est in prima fronde quae emissa cum maxime solum rumpit. Est aliquod bonum tritici: hoc nondum est in herba lactente nec cum folliculo se exerit spica mollis, sed cum frumentum aestas et debita maturitas coxit. Quemadmodum omnis natura bonum suum nisi consummata non profert, ita hominis bonum non est in homine nisi cum illi ratio perfecta est. (12) Quod autem hoc bonum? Dicam: liber animus, erectus, alia subiciens sibi, se nulli. Hoc bonum adeo non recipit infantia ut pueritia non speret, adulescentia inprobe speret; bene agitur cum senectute si ad illud longo studio intentoque peruenit. Si hoc est bonum, et intellegibile est. (13) ‘Dixisti’ inquit ‘aliquod bonum esse arboris, aliquod herbae; potest ergo aliquod esse et infantis. ‘ Verum bonum nec in arboribus nec in mutis animalibus: hoc quod in illis bonum est precario bonum dicitur. ‘Quod est?’ inquis. Hoc quod secundum cuiusque naturam

est. Bonum quidem cadere in mutum animal nullo modo potest; felicius meliorisque naturae est. Nisi ubi rationi locus est, bonum non est. (14) Quattuor hae naturae sunt, arboris, animalis, hominis, dei: haec duo, quae rationalia sunt, eandem naturam habent, illo diuersa sunt quod alterum immortale, alterum mortale est. Ex his ergo unius bonum natura perficit, dei scilicet, alterius cura, hominis. Cetera tantum in sua natura perfecta sunt, non uere perfecta, a quibus abest ratio. Hoc enim demum perfectum est quod secundum uniuersam naturam perfectum, uniuersa autem natura rationalis est: cetera possunt in suo genere esse perfecta. (15) In quo non potest beata uita esse nec id potest quo beata uita efficitur; beata autem uita bonis efficitur. Inmuto animali non est beata uita <nec id quo beata uita> efficitur: inmuto animali bonum non est. (16) Mutum animal sensu comprehendit praesentia; praeteritorum reminiscitur cum <in> id incidit quo sensus admoneretur, tamquam equus reminiscitur uiae cum ad initium eius admotus est. In stabulo quidem nulla illi uia est quamuis saepe calcatae memoria (est) . Tertium uero tempus, id est futurum, ad muta non pertinet. (17) Quomodo ergo potest eorum uideri perfecta natura quibus usus perfecti temporis non est? Tempus enim tribus partibus constat, praeterito, praesente, uenturo. Animalibus tantum quod breuissimum est <et> in transcurso datum, praesens: praeteriti rara memoria est nec umquam reuocatur nisi praesentium occursum. (18) Non potest ergo perfectae naturae bonum in imperfecta esse natura, aut si natura talis (habet) hoc habet, habent et sata. Nec illud nego, ad ea quae uidentur secundum naturam magnos esse mutis animalibus impetus et concitatos, sed inordinatos ac turbidos; numquam autem aut inordinatum est bonum aut turbidum. (19) ‘Quid ergo?’ inquis ‘muta animalia perturbate et indisposite mouentur?’ Dicerem illa perturbate et indisposite moueri si natura illorum ordinem caperet: nunc mouentur secundum naturam suam. Perturbatum enim id est quod esse aliquando et non perturbatum potest; sollicitum est quod potest esse securum. Nulli uitium est nisi cui uirtus potest esse: mutis animalibus talis ex natura sua motus est. (20) Sed ne te diu teneam, erit aliquod bonum in muto animali, erit aliqua uirtus, erit aliquid perfectum, sed nec bonum absolute nec uirtus nec perfectum. Haec enim rationalibus solis contingunt, quibus datum est scire quare, quatenus, quemadmodum.

Ita bonum in nullo est nisi in quo ratio. (21) Quo nunc pertineat ista disputatio quaeris, et quid animo tuo profutura sit? Dico: et exercet illum et acuit et utique aliquid acturum occupatione honesta tenet. Prodest autem etiam quo moratur ad praua properantes. Sed <et> illud dico: nullo modo prodesse possum magis quam si tibi bonum tuum ostendo, si te a mutis animalibus separo, si cum deo pono. (22) . (23) Vis tu relictis in quibus uinci te necesse est, dum in aliena niteris, ad bonum reuerti tuum? Quod est hoc? animus scilicet emendatus ac purus, aemulator dei, super humana se extollens, nihil extra se sui ponens. Rationale animal es. Quod ergo in te bonum est? perfecta ratio. Hanc tu ad suum finem hinc euoca, <sine> in quantum potest plurimum crescere. (24) Tunc beatum esse te iudica cum tibi ex te gaudium omne nascetur, cum uisis quae homines eripiunt, optant, custodiunt, nihil inueneris, nondico quod malis, sed quod uelis. Breuem tibi formulam dabo qua te metiaris, qua perfectum esse iam sentias: tunc habebis tuum cum intelleges infelicissimos esse felices. Vale.

LIBER VICENSIMVS SECVNDVS

EXCERPTA GELLII

Gel. N.A. 12.2.3

fr. 1. 1

is dictust ollis popularibus olim qui tum vivebant homines atque aevum agitabant, flos delibatuspopuli Suadaeque medulla.

Gel. N.A. 12.2.4

fr. 2.1

admiror eloquentissimos viros et deditos Ennio pro optimis ridicula laudasse. Cicero certe interbonos eius versus et hos refert.

Gel. N.A. 12.2.5

fr. 3.1

non miror fuisse qui hos versus scriberet, cum fuerit qui laudaret; nisi forte Cicero, summusorator, agebat causam suam et volebat suos versus videri bonos.

Gel. N.A. 12.2.6

fr. 4.1

apud ipsum quoque Ciceronem invenies etiam in prosa oratione quaedam ex quibus intellegasillum non perdidisse operam quod Ennium legit.

Gel. N.A. 12.2.7

fr. 5. 1

‘ut Menelao Laconi quaedam fuit suaviloquens iucunditas’ . . .
‘breviloquentiam in dicendo colat’.

Gel. N.A. 12.2.8

fr. 6. 1

non fuit Ciceronis hoc vitium sed temporis; necesse erat haec dici, cum illa legerentur.

Gel. N.A. 12.2.10

fr. 7. 1

Vergilius quoque noster non ex alia causa duos quosdam versus et enormes et aliquid supramensuram trahentis interposuit quam ut Ennianus populus adgnosceret in novo carmine aliquid antiquitatis.

Gel. N.A. 12.2.11

fr. 8. 1

quidam sunt tam magni sensus Q. Ennii ut, licet scripti sint inter hircosos, possint tamen interunguentatos placere.

Gel. N.A. 12.2.11

fr. 9.1

qui huiusmodi versus amant, liqueat tibi eosdem admirari et Soterici lectos.

Gel. N.A. 12.2.13

fr. 10. 1

quid enim refert quantum habeas? Multo illud plus est quod non habes.

The Essays

ON ANGER — De Ira

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LIBER I

I.

1. Exegisti a me, Nouate, ut scriberem quemadmodum posset ira leniri, nec inmerito mihi uideris hunc praecipue adfectum pertimuisse maxime ex omnibus taetrum ac rabidum. Ceteris enim aliquid quieti placidique inest, hic totus concitatus et in impetu est, doloris armorum, sanguinis suppliciorum minime humana furens cupiditate, dum alteri noceat sui neglegens, in ipsa inruens tela et ultionis secum ultorem tracturae auidus.

2. Quidam itaque e sapientibus uiris iram dixerunt breuem insaniam; aequae enim inpotens sui est, decoris oblita, necessitudinum immemor, in quod coepit pertinax et intenta, rationi consiliisque praeclusa, uanis agitata causis, ad dispectum aequi uerique inhabilis, ruinis simillima quae super id quod oppressere franguntur. 3. Vt scias autem non esse sanos quos ira possedit, ipsum illorum habitum intueri; nam ut furentium certa indicia sunt audax et minax uultus, tristis frons, torua facies, citatus gradus, inquietae manus, color uersus, crebra et uehementius acta suspiria, ita irascentium eadem signa sunt: 4. flagrant ac micant oculi, multus ore toto rubor exaestuante ab imis praecordiis sanguine, labra quatiuntur, dentes comprimuntur, horrent ac surriguntur capilli, spiritus coactus ac stridens, articulorum se ipsos torquentium sonus, gemitus mugitusque et parum explanatis uocibus sermo praeruptus et conplosae saepius manus et pulsata humus pedibus et totum concitum corpus magnasque irae minas agens, foeda uisu et horrenda facies deprauantium se atque intumescentium — nescias utrum magis detestabile uitium sit an deforme.

5. Cetera licet abscondere et in abdito alere: ira se profert et in faciem exit, quantoque maior, hoc efferuescit manifestius. Non uides ut omnium animalium, simul ad nocendum insurrexerunt, praecurrant notae ac tota corpora solitum quietumque egrediantur habitum et feritatem suam exasperent? 6. Spumant apris ora, dentes acuuntur adtritu, taurorum cornua iactantur in uacuum et harena pulsu pedum spargitur, leones fremunt, inflantur iritatis colla serpentibus, rabidarum canum tristis aspectus est: nullum est animal tam horrendum tam perniciosumque natura ut non appareat in illo,

simul ira inuasit, nouae feritatis accessio. 7. Nec ignoro ceteros quoque adfectus uix occultari, libidinem metumque et audaciam dare sui signa et posse praenosci; neque enim ulla uehementior intrat agitatio quae nihil moueat in uultu. Quid ergo interest? quod alii adfectus apparent, hic eminent.

II.

1. Iam uero si effectus eius damnaque intueri uelis, nulla pestis humano generi pluris stetit. Videbis caedes ac uenena et reorum mutuas sordes et urbium clades et totarum exitia gentium et principum sub ciuili hasta capita uenalia et subiectas tectis faces nec intra moenia coercitos ignes sed ingentia spatia regionum hostili flamma relucentia. 2. Aspice nobilissimarum ciuitatum fundamenta uix notabilia: has ira deiecit. Aspice solitudines per multa milia sine habitatore desertas: has ira exhaustit. Aspice tot memoriae proditos duces mali exempla fati: alium ira in cubili suo confodit, alium intra sacra mensae iura percussit, alium intra leges celebrisque spectaculum fori lancinauit, alium filii parricidio dare sanguinem iussit, alium seruili manu regalem aperire iugulum, alium in cruce membra diffindere. 3. Et adhuc singulorum supplicia narro: quid si tibi libuerit, relictis in quos ira uiritim exarsit, aspicere caesas gladio contiones et plebem inmisso milite contrucidatam et in perniciem promiscuam totos populos capitis damna<tos> * * *?

3(fr1).1

Ira omnia ex optimo et iustissimo in contrarium mutat. Quemcumque obtinuerit, nullius eum meminisse officii sinit: da eam patri, inimicus est; da filio, parricida est; da matri, nouerca est; da ciui, hostis est; da regi, tyrannus est.

Lactant. De Ira Dei 17.13

3(fr2).1

Ira est cupiditas ulciscendae iniuriae aut, ut ait Posidonius, cupiditas puniendi eius a quo te inique putes laesum. Quidam ita finierunt: ira est incitatio animi ad nocendum ei qui aut nocuit aut nocere uoluit.

4. * * * tamquam aut curam nostram deserentibus aut auctoritatem contemnentibus. Quid? gladiatoribus quare populus irascitur, et tam inique ut iniuriam putet quod non libenter pereunt? contemni se

iudicat et uultu gestu ardore ex spectatore in aduersarium uertitur. 5. Quidquid est tale, non est ira, sed quasi ira, sicut puerorum qui, si ceciderunt, terram uerberari uolunt et saepe ne sciunt quidem cur irascantur, sed tantum irascuntur, sine causa et sine iniuria, non tamen sine aliqua iniuriae specie nec sine aliqua poenae cupiditate. Deluduntur itaque imitatione plagarum et simulatis deprecantium lacrimis placantur et falsa ultione falsus dolor tollitur.

III.

1. 'Irascimur' inquit 'saepe non illis qui laeserunt, sed iis qui laesuri sunt; ut scias iram non ex iniuria nasci.' Verum est irasci nos laesuris, sed ipsa cogitatione nos laedunt, et iniuriam qui facturus est iam facit. 2. 'Vt scias' inquit 'non esse iram poenae cupiditatem, infirmissimi saepe potentissimis irascuntur nec poenam concupiscunt quam non sperant.' Primum diximus cupiditatem esse poenae exigendae, non facultatem; concupiscunt autem homines et quae non possunt. Deinde nemo tam humilis est qui poenam uel summi hominis sperare non possit: ad nocendum <omnes> potentes sumus.

3. Aristotelis finitio non multum a nostra abest; ait enim iram esse cupiditatem doloris reponendi. Quid inter nostram et hanc finitionem intersit, exequi longum est. Contra utramque dicitur feras irasci nec iniuria inritatas nec poenae dolorisue alieni causa; nam etiam si haec efficiunt, non haec petunt. 4. Sed dicendum est feras ira carere et omnia praeter hominem; nam cum sit inimica rationi, nusquam tamen nascitur nisi ubi rationi locus est. Impetus habent ferae, rabiem feritatem incursum, iram quidem non magis quam luxuriam, et in quasdam uoluptates intemperantiores homine sunt. 5. Non est quod credas illi qui dicit:

non aper irasci meminit, non fidere cursu
cerua nec armentis incurrere fortibus ursi.

Irasci dicit incitari, inpingi; irasci quidem non magis sciunt quam ignoscere. 6. Muta animalia humanis adfectibus carent, habent autem similes illis quosdam impulsus; alioqui, si amor in illis esset et odium, esset amicitia et simultas, dissensio et concordia; quorum aliqua in illis quoque extant uestigia, ceterum humanorum pectorum propria bona malaque sunt. 7. Nulli nisi homini concessa prudentia est, prouidentia diligentia cogitatio, nec tantum uirtutibus humanis animalia sed etiam uitiiis prohibita sunt. Tota illorum ut extra ita intra forma humanae dissimilis est; regium est illud et principale aliter ductum. Vt uox est quidem, sed non explanabilis et perturbata et uerborum inefficax, ut lingua, sed deuincta nec in motus uarios

soluta, ita ipsum principale parum subtile, parum exactum. Capit ergo uisus speciesque rerum quibus ad impetus euocetur, sed turbidas et confusas. 8. Ex eo procursus illorum tumultusque uehementes sunt, metus autem sollicitudinesque et tristitia et ira non sunt, sed his quaedam similia; ideo cito cadunt et mutantur in contrarium et, cum acerrime saeuierunt expaueruntque, pascuntur, et ex fremitu discursuque uesano statim quies soporque sequitur.

IV.

1. Quid esset ira satis explicitum est. Quo distet ab iracundia apparet: quo ebrius ab ebrioso et timens a timido. Iratus potest non esse iracundus: iracundus potest aliquando iratus non esse. 2. Cetera quae pluribus apud Graecos nominibus in species iram distinguunt, quia apud nos uocabula sua non habent, praeteribo, etiam si amarum nos acerbumque dicimus, nec minus stomachosum rabiosum clamosum difficilem asperum, quae omnia irarum differentiae sunt; inter hos morosum ponas licet, delicatum iracundiae genus. 3. Quaedam enim sunt irae quae intra clamorem considant, quaedam non minus pertinaces quam frequentes, quaedam saevae manu uerbis parciores, quaedam in uerborum maledictorumque amaritudinem effusae; quaedam ultra querellas et auersationes non exeunt, quaedam altae grauesque sunt et introrsus uersae: mille aliae species sunt mali multiplicis.

V.

1. Quid esset ira quaesitum est, an in ullum aliud animal quam in hominem caderet, quo ab iracundia distaret, quot eius species essent: nunc quaeramus an ira secundum naturam sit et an utilis atque ex aliqua parte retinenda.

2. An secundum naturam sit manifestum erit, si hominem inspexerimus. Quo quid est mitius, dum in recto animi habitus est? quid autem ira crudelius est? Quid homine aliorum amantius? quid ira infestius? Homo in adiutorium mutuum genitus est, ira in exitium; hic congregari uult, illa discedere, hic prodesse, illa nocere, hic etiam ignotis succurrere, illa etiam carissimos petere; hic aliorum commodis uel inpendere se paratus est, illa in periculum, dummodo deducat, descendere. 3. Quis ergo magis naturam rerum ignorat quam qui optimo eius operi et emendatissimo hoc ferum ac perniciosum uitium adsignat? Ira, ut diximus, auida poenae est, cuius cupidinem inesse pacatissimo hominis pectori minime secundum eius naturam est. Beneficiis enim humana uita constat et concordia, nec terrore sed mutuo amore in foedus auxiliumque commune constringitur.

VI.

1. 'Quid ergo? non aliquando castigatio necessaria est?' Quidni? sed haec sine ira, cum ratione; non enim nocet sed medetur specie nocendi. Quemadmodum quaedam hastilia detorta ut corrigamus adurimus et adactis cuneis, non ut frangamus sed ut explicemus, elidimus, sic ingenia uitio praua dolore corporis animique corrigimus. 2. Nempe medicus primo in leuibus uitiiis temptat non multum ex cotidiana consuetudine inflectere et cibis potionibus exercitationibus ordinem inponere ac uoletudinem tantum mutata uitae dispositione firmare. Proximum est ut modus proficiat. Si modus et ordo non proficit, subducit aliqua et circumcidit; si ne adhoc quidem respondet, interdicit cibis et abstinentia corpus exonerat; si frustra molliora cesserunt, ferit uenam membrisque, si adhaerentia nocent et morbum diffundunt, manus adfert; nec ulla dura uidetur curatio cuius salutaris effectus est. 3. Ita legum praesidem ciuitatisque rectorem decet, quam diu potest, uerbis et his mollioribus ingenia curare, ut facienda suadeat cupiditatemque honesti et aequi conciliet animis faciatque uitiorum odium, pretium uirtutum; transeat deinde ad tristiore orationem, qua moneat adhuc et exprobet; nouissime ad poenas et has adhuc leues, reuocabiles decurrat; ultima supplicia sceleribus ultimis ponat, ut nemo pereat nisi quem perire etiam pereuntis intersit. 4. Hoc uno medentibus erit dissimilis, quod illi quibus uitam non potuerunt largiri facilem exitum praestant, hic damnatos cum dedecore et traductione uita exigit, non quia delectetur ullius poena — procul est enim a sapiente tam inhumana feritas — sed ut documentum omnium sint, et quia uiui noluerunt prodesse, morte certe eorum res publica utatur.

Non est ergo natura hominis poenae adpetens; ideo ne ira quidem secundum naturam hominis, quia poenae adpetens est. 5. Et Platonis argumentum adferam — quid enim nocet alienis uti ea parte qua nostra sunt? 'Vir bonus' inquit 'non laedit.' Poena laedit; bono ergo poena non conuenit, ob hoc nec ira, quia poena irae conuenit. Si uir bonus poena non gaudet, non gaudebit ne eo quidem adfectu cui poena uoluptati est; ergo non est naturalis ira.

VII.

1. Numquid, quamuis non sit naturalis ira, adsumenda est, quia utilis saepe fuit? Extollit animos et incitat, nec quicquam sine illa magnificum in bello fortitudo gerit, nisi hinc flamma subdita est et hic stimulus peragitauit misitque in pericula audaces. Optimum itaque quidam putant temperare iram, non tollere, eoque detracto quod exundat ad salutarem modum cogere, id uero retinere sine quo languebit actio et uis ac uigor animi resoluatur. 2. Primum facilius est excludere perniciose quam regere et non admittere quam admissa moderari; nam cum se in possessione posuerunt, potentiora rectore sunt nec recidi se minuiue patiuntur. 3. Deinde ratio ipsa, cui freni traduntur, tam diu potens est quam diu diducta est ab adfectibus; si miscuit se illis et inquinauit, non potest continere quos summouere potuisset. Commota enim semel et excussa mens ei seruit quo inpellitur. 4. Quarundam rerum initia in nostra potestate sunt, ulteriora nos ui sua rapiunt nec regressum relinquunt. Vt in praeceps datis corporibus nullum sui arbitrium est nec resistere morariue deiecta potuerunt, sed consilium omne et paenitentiam inreuocabilis praecipitatio abscidit et non licet eo non peruenire quo non ire licuisset, ita animus, si in iram amorem aliosque se proiecit adfectus, non permittitur reprimere impetum; rapiat illum oportet et ad imum agat pondus suum et uitiorum natura procliuis.

VIII.

1. Optimum est primum inritamentum irae protinus spernere ipsisque repugnare seminibus et dare operam ne incidamus in iram. Nam si coepit ferre transuersos, difficilis ad salutem recursus est, quoniam nihil rationis est ubi semel adfectus inductus est iusque illi aliquod uoluntate nostra datum est: faciet de cetero quantum uolet, non quantum permiseris. 2. In primis, inquam, finibus hostis arcendus est; nam cum intrauit et portis se intulit, modum a captiuis non accipit. Neque enim sepositus est animus et extrinsecus speculatur adfectus, ut illos non patiatul ultra quam oportet procedere, sed in adfectum ipse mutatur ideoque non potest utilem illam uim et salutarem proditam iam infirmatamque reuocare. 3. Non enim, ut dixi, separatas ista sedes suas diductasque habent, sed adfectus et ratio in melius peiusque mutatio animi est. Quomodo ergo ratio occupata et oppressa uitii resurget, quae irae cessit? aut quemadmodum ex confusione se liberabit in qua peiorum mixtura praeualuit? 4. ‘Sed quidam’ inquit ‘in ira se continent.’ Vtrum ergo ita ut nihil faciant eorum quae ira dictat an ut aliquid? Si nihil faciunt, apparet non esse ad actiones rerum necessariam iram, quam uos, quasi fortius aliquid ratione haberet, aduocabatis. 5. Denique interrogo: ualentior est quam ratio an infirmior? Si ualentior, quomodo illi modum ratio poterit inponere, cum parere nisi inbecilliora non soleant? Si infirmior est, sine hac per se ad rerum effectus sufficit ratio nec desiderat inbecillioris auxilium. 6. ‘At irati quidam constant sibi et se continent.’ Quando? cum iam ira euanescit et sua sponte decedit, non cum in ipso feruore est; tunc enim potentior est. 7. ‘Quid ergo? non aliquando in ira quoque et dimittunt incolumes intactosque quos oderunt et a nocendo abinent?’ Faciunt: quando? cum adfectus repercussit adfectum et aut metus aut cupiditas aliquid inpetrauit. Non rationis tunc beneficio quieuit, sed adfectuum infida et mala pace.

IX.

1. Deinde nihil habet in se utile nec acuit animum ad res bellicas; numquam enim uirtus uitio adiuuanda est se contenta. Quotiens impetu opus est, non irascitur sed exurgit et in quantum putauit opus esse concitatur remittiturque, non aliter quam quae tormentis exprimuntur tela in potestate mittentis sunt in quantum torqueantur.

2. 'Ira' inquit Aristoteles 'necessaria est, nec quicquam sine illa expugnari potest, nisi illa inplet animum et spiritum accendit; utendum autem illa est non ut duce sed ut milite.' Quod est falsum; nam si exaudit rationem sequiturque qua ducitur, iam non est ira, cuius proprium est contumacia; si uero repugnat et non ubi iussa est quiescit sed libidine ferociaque prouehitur, tam inutilis animi minister est quam miles qui signum receptui neglegit.

3. Itaque si modum adhiberi sibi patitur, alio nomine appellanda est, desit ira esse, quam effrenatam indomitamque intellego; si non patitur, perniciosa est nec inter auxilia numeranda: ita aut ira non est aut inutilis est.

4. Nam si quis poenam exigit non ipsius poenae auidus sed quia oportet, non est adnumerandus iratis. Hic erit utilis miles qui scit parere consilio; adfectus quidem tam mali ministri quam duces sunt.

X.

1. Ideo numquam adsumet ratio in adiutorium inprouidos et uiolentos impetus apud quos nihil ipsa auctoritatis habeat, quos numquam comprimere possit nisi pares illis similisque opposuerit, ut irae metum, inertiae iram, timori cupiditatem. 2. Absit hoc a uirtute malum, ut umquam ratio ad uitia confugiat! Non potest hic animus fidele otium capere, quatiatur necesse est fluctueturque, qui malis suis tutus est, qui fortis esse nisi irascitur non potest, industrius nisi cupit, quietus nisi timet: in tyrannide illi uiuendum est in alicuius adfectus uenienti seruitutem. Non pudet uirtutes in clientelam uitiorum demittere? 3. Deinde desinit quicquam posse ratio, si nihil potest sine adfectu, et incipit par illi similisque esse. Quid enim interest, si aequae adfectus inconsulta res est sine ratione quam ratio sine adfectu inefficax? Par utrumque est, ubi esse alterum sine altero non potest. Quis autem sustineat adfectum exaequare rationi? 4. 'Ita' inquit 'utilis adfectus est, si modicus est.' Immo si natura utilis est. Sed si inpatiens imperii rationisque est, hoc dumtaxat moderatione consequetur, ut quo minor fuerit minus noceat; ergo modicus adfectus nihil aliud quam malum modicum est.

XI.

1. 'Sed aduersus hostes' inquit 'necessaria est ira.' Nusquam minus: ubi non effusos esse oportet impetus sed temperatos et oboedientes. Quid enim est aliud quod barbaros tanto robustiores corporibus, tanto patientiores laborum comminuat nisi ira infestissima sibi? Gladiatores quoque ars tuetur, ira denudat. 2. Deinde quid opus est ira, cum idem proficiat ratio? An tu putas uenatorem irasci feris? atqui et uenientis excipit et fugientis persequitur, et omnia illa sine ira facit ratio. Quid Cimbrorum Teutonorumque tot milia superfusa Alpibus ita sustulit ut tantae cladis notitiam ad suos non nuntius sed fama pertulerit, nisi quod erat illis ira pro uirtute? Quae ut aliquando propulit strauitque obuia, ita saepius sibi exitio est. 3. Germanis quid est animosius? Quid ad incursum acrius? Quid armorum cupidius, quibus innascuntur innutriunturque, quorum unica illis cura est in alia negligentibus? Quid induratus ad omnem patientiam, ut quibus magna ex parte non tegimenta corporum prouisa sint, non suffugia aduersus perpetuum caeli rigorem? 4. Hos tamen Hispani Gallicque et Asiae Syriaeque molles bello uiri, antequam legio uisatur, caedunt ob nullam aliam rem opportunos quam iracundiam. Agedum illis corporibus, illis animis delicias luxum opes ignorantibus da rationem, da disciplinam: ut nil amplius dicam, necesse erit certe nobis mores Romanos repetere. 5. Quo alio Fabius adfectas imperii uires recreauit quam quod cunctari et trahere et morari sciit, quae omnia irati nesciunt? Perierat imperium, quod tunc in extremo stabat, si Fabius tantum ausus esset quantum ira suadebat: habuit in consilio fortunam publicam et aestimatis uiribus, ex quibus iam perire nihil sine uniuerso poterat, dolorem ultionemque seposuit, in unam utilitatem et occasiones intentus; iram ante uicit quam Hannibalem. 6. Quid Scipio? non relicto Hannibale et Punico exercitu omnibusque quibus irascendum erat bellum in Africam transtulit, tam lentus ut opinionem luxuriae segnitiaeque malignis daret? 7. Quid alter Scipio? non circa Numantiam multum diuque sedit et hunc suum publicumque dolorem aequo animo tulit, diutius Numantiam quam Carthaginem uinci? Dum circumuallat et includit hostem, eo compulit ut ferro ipsi suo caderent. 8. Non est itaque utilis ne in proeliis

quidem aut bellis ira; in temeritatem enim prona est et pericula, dum inferre uult, non cauet. Illa certissima est uirtus quae se diu multumque circumpexit et rexit et ex lento ac destinato prouexit.

XII.

1. 'Quid ergo?' inquit 'uir bonus non irascitur, si caedi patrem suum uiderit, si rapi matrem?' Non irascetur, sed uindicabit, sed tuebitur. Quid autem times ne parum magnus illi stimulus etiam sine ira pietas sit? Aut dic eodem modo: 'quid ergo? cum uideat secari patrem suum filiumue, uir bonus non flebit nec linquetur animo?' Quae accidere feminis uidemus, quotiens illas leuis periculi suspicio perculit. 2. Officia sua uir bonus exequetur inconfusus, intrepidus; et sic bono uiro digna faciet ut nihil faciat uiro indignum. Pater caedetur: defendam; caesus est: exequar, quia oportet, non quia dolet. 3. 'Irascuntur boni uiri pro suorum iniuriis.' Cum hoc dicis, Theophraste, quaeris inuidiam praeceptis fortioribus et relicto iudice ad coronam uenis: quia unusquisque in eiusmodi suorum casu irascitur, putas iudicatuos homines id fieri debere quod faciunt; fere enim iustum quisque adfectum iudicat quem agnoscit. 4. Sed idem faciunt, si calda non bene praebetur, si uitreum fractum est, si calceus luto sparsus est. Non pietas illam iram sed infirmitas mouet, sicut pueris, qui tam parentibus amissis flebunt quam nucibus. 5. Irasci pro suis non est pii animi sed infirmi: illud pulchrum dignumque, pro parentibus liberis amicis ciuibus prodire defensorem ipso officio ducente, uolentem iudicantem prouidentem, non impulsus et rabidum. Nullus enim adfectus uindicandi cupidior est quam ira, et ob id ipsum ad uindicandum inhabilis: praerapida et amens, ut omnis fere cupiditas, ipsa sibi in id in quod properat opponitur. Itaque nec in pace nec in bello umquam bono fuit; pacem enim similem belli efficit, in armis uero obliuiscitur Martem esse communem uenitque in alienam potestatem dum in sua non est.

6. Deinde non ideo uitia in usum recipienda sunt quia aliquando aliquid effecerunt; nam et febres quaedam genera uoletudinis leuant, nec ideo non ex toto illis caruisse melius est: abominandum remedi genus est sanitatem debere morbo. Simili modo ira, etiam si aliquando ut uenenum et praecipitatio et naufragium ex inopinato profuit, non ideo salutaris iudicanda est; saepe enim saluti fuere pestifera.

XIII.

1. Deinde quae habenda sunt, quo maiora eo meliora et optabiliora sunt. Si iustitia bonum est, nemo dicet meliorem futuram si quid detractum ex ea fuerit; si fortitudo bonum est, nemo illam desiderabit ex aliqua parte deminui. 2. Ergo et ira quo maior hoc melior; quis enim ullius boni accessionem recusauerit? Atqui augeri illam inutile est; ergo et esse; non est bonum quod incremento malum fit.

3. 'Vtilis' inquit 'ira est, quia pugnaciores facit.' Isto modo et ebrietas; facit enim proteruos et audaces multique meliores ad ferrum fuere male sobrii; isto modo dic et phrenesin atque insaniam uiribus necessariam, quia saepe ualidiores furor reddit. 4. Quid? non aliquotiens metus ex contrario fecit audacem, et mortis timor etiam inertissimos excitauit in proelium? Sed ira ebrietas metus aliaque eiusmodi foeda et caduca inritamenta sunt nec uirtutem instruunt, quae nihil uitii eget, sed segnem alioqui animum et ignauum paulum adleuant. 5. Nemo irascendo fit fortior, nisi qui fortis sine ira non fuisset; ita non in adiutorium uirtutis uenit, sed in uicem. Quid quod si bonum esset ira, perfectissimum quemque sequeretur? Atqui iracundissimi infantes senesque et aegri sunt, et inualidum omne natura querulum est.

XIV.

1. 'Non potest' inquit 'fieri' Theophrastus 'ut non uir bonus irascatur malis.' Isto modo quo melior quisque, hoc iracundior erit: uide ne contra placidior solutusque adfectibus et cui nemo odio sit. 2. Peccantis uero quid habet cur oderit, cum error illos in eiusmodi delicta compellat? Non est autem prudentis errantis odisse; alioqui ipse sibi odio erit. Cogitet quam multa contra bonum morem faciat, quam multa ex iis quae egit ueniam desiderent: iam irascetur etiam sibi. Neque enim aequus iudex aliam de sua, aliam de aliena causa sententiam fert. 3. Nemo, inquam, inuenietur qui se possit absolvere, et innocentem quisque se dicit respiciens testem, non conscientiam. Quanto humanius mitem et patrium animum praestare peccantibus et illos non persequi sed reuocare! Errantem per agros ignorantia uiae melius est ad rectum iter admouere quam expellere.

XV.

1. Corrigendus est itaque qui peccat et admonitione et ui, et molliter et aspere, meliorque tam sibi quam aliis faciendus non sine castigatione, sed sine ira; quis enim cui medetur irascitur? At corrigi nequeunt nihilque in illis lene aut spei bonae capax est: tollantur e coetu mortalium facturi peiora quae contingunt, et quo uno modo possunt desinant mali esse, sed hoc sine odio. 2. Quid enim est cur oderim eum cui tum maxime prosum cum illum sibi eripio? Num quis membra sua tunc odit cum abscidit? Non est illa ira, sed misera curatio. Rabidos effligimus canes et trucem atque inmansuetum bouem occidimus et morbidis pecoribus, ne gregem polluant, ferrum demittimus; portentosos fetus extinguimus, liberos quoque, si debiles monstrosique editi sunt, mergimus; nec ira sed ratio est a sanis inutilia discernere. 3. Nil minus quam irasci punientem decet, cum eo magis ad emendationem poena proficiat, si iudicio ~lata~ est. Inde est quod Socrates seruo ait ‘caederem te, nisi irascerer’. Admonitionem serui in tempus sanius distulit, illo tempore se admonuit. Cuius erit tandem temperatus adfectus, cum Socrates non sit ausus se irae committere?

XVI.

1. Ergo ad coercionem errantium sceleratorumque irato castigatore non opus est; nam cum ira delictum animi sit, non oportet peccata corrigere peccantem. ‘Quid ergo? non irascar latroni? Quid ergo? non irascar uenefico?’ Non; neque enim mihi irascor, cum sanguinem mitto. Omne poenae genus remedi loco admoueo. 2. ‘Tu adhuc in prima parte uersaris errorum, nec grauiter laberis sed frequenter: obiurgatio te primum secreta deinde publicata emendare temptabit. Tu longius iam processisti quam ut possis uerbis sanari: ignominia contineberis. Tibi fortius aliquid et quod sentias inurendum est: in exilium et loca ignota mitteris. In te duriora remedia iam solida nequitia desiderat: et uincula publica et carcer adhibebitur. 3. Tibi insanabilis animus et sceleribus scelera contexens, et iam non causis, quae numquam malo defuturæ sunt, inpelleris, sed satis tibi est magna ad peccandum causa peccare; perbibisti nequitiam et ita uisceribus inmiscuisti ut nisi cum ipsis exire non possit; olim miser mori quaeris: bene de te merebimur, auferemus tibi istam qua uexas uexaris insaniam et per tua alienaque uolutato supplicia id quod unum tibi bonum superest repraesentabimus, mortem.’ Quare irascar cui cum maxime prosum? interim optimum misericordiae genus est occidere. 4. Si intrassem ualetudinarium exercitus [et sciens] aut domus diuitis, non idem imperassem omnibus per diuersa aegrotantibus: uaria in tot animis uitia uideo et ciuitati curandae adhibitus sum; pro cuiusque morbo medicina quaeratur, hunc sanet uerecundia, hunc peregrinatio, hunc dolor, hunc egestas, hunc ferrum. 5. Itaque et, si peruersa induenda magistratui uestis et conuocanda classico contio est, procedam in tribunal non furens nec infestus sed uultu legis et illa sollemnia uerba leni magis grauique quam rabida uoce concipiam et <lege> agi iubebo non iratus sed seuerus; et cum ceruicem noxio imperabo praecidi et cum parricidas insuam culleo et cum mittam in supplicium militare et cum Tarpeio proditorem hostemue publicum inponam, sine ira eo uultu animoque ero quo serpentes et animalia uenenata percutio. 6. ‘Iracundia opus est ad puniendum.’ Quid? tibi lex uidetur irasci iis quos non nouit, quos non uidit, quos non futuros sperat? Illius itaque sumendus est

animus, quae non irascitur sed constituit. Nam si bono uiro ob mala facinora irasci conuenit, et ob secundas res malorum hominum inuidere conueniet. Quid enim est indignius quam florere quosdam et eos indulgentia fortunae abuti quibus nulla potest satis mala inueniri fortuna? Sed tam commoda illorum sine inuidia uidebit quam scelera sine ira; bonus iudex damnat improbanda, non odit. 7. 'Quid ergo? non, cum eiusmodi aliquid sapiens habebit in manibus, tangetur animus eius eritque solito commotior?' Fateor: sentiet leuem quendam tenuemque motum; nam, ut dicit Zenon, in sapientis quoque animo, etiam cum uulnus sanatum est, cicatrix manet. Sentiet itaque suspiciones quasdam et umbras adfectuum, ipsis quidem carebit.

XVII.

1. Aristoteles ait adfectus quosdam, si quis illis bene utatur, pro armis esse. Quod uerum foret, si uelut bellica instrumenta sumi deponique possent induentis arbitrio: haec arma quae Aristoteles uirtuti dat ipsa per se pugnant, non expectant manum, et habent, non habentur. 2. Nil aliis instrumentis opus est, satis nos instruxit ratione natura. Hoc dedit telum, firmum perpetuum obsequens, nec anceps nec quod in dominum remitti posset. Non ad prouidendum tantum, sed ad res gerendas satis est per se ipsa ratio; etenim quid est stultius quam hanc ab iracundia petere praesidium, rem stabilem ab incerta, fidelem ab infida, sanam ab aegra? 3. Quid quod <ad> actiones quoque, in quibus solis opera iracundiae uidetur necessaria, multo per se ratio fortior est? Nam cum iudicauit aliquid faciendum, in eo perseuerat; nihil enim melius inuentura est se ipsa quo mutetur; ideo stat semel constitutis. 4. Iram saepe misericordia retro egit; habet enim non solidum robur sed uanum tumorem uiolentisque principiis utitur, non aliter quam qui a terra uenti surgunt et fluminibus paludibusque concepti sine pertinacia uehementes sunt: 5. incipit magno impetu, deinde deficit ante tempus fatigata, et, quae nihil aliud quam crudelitatem ac noua genera poenarum uersauerat, cum animaduertendum est, iam [ira] fracta lenisque est. Adfectus cito cadit, aequalis est ratio. 6. Ceterum etiam ubi perseuerauit ira, nonnumquam, si plures sunt qui perire meruerunt, post duorum triumue sanguinem occidere desinit. Primi eius ictus acres sunt: sic serpentium uenena a cubili erepentium nocent, innoxii dentes sunt cum illos frequens morsus exhaustit. 7. Ergo non paria patiuntur qui paria commiserant, et saepe qui minus commisit plus patitur, quia recentiori obiectus est. Et in totum inaequalis est: modo ultra quam oportet excurrit, modo citerius debito resistit; sibi enim indulget et ex libidine iudicat et audire non uult et patrocinio non relinquit locum et ea tenet quae inuasit et eripi sibi iudicium suum, etiam si prauum est, non sinit.

XVIII.

1. Ratio utrique parti tempus dat, deinde aduocationem et sibi petit, ut excutiendae ueritati spatium habeat: ira festinat. Ratio id iudicare uult quod aequum est: ira id aequum uideri uult quod iudicauit. 2. Ratio nil praeter ipsum de quo agitur spectat: ira uanis et extra causam obuersantibus commouetur. Vultus illam securior, uox clarius, sermo liberior, cultus delicatior, aduocatio ambitiosior, fauor popularis exasperant; saepe infesta patrono reum damnat; etiam si ingeritur oculis ueritas, amat et tuetur errorem; coargui non uult, et in male coeptis honestior illi pertinacia uidetur quam paenitentia.

3. Cn. Piso fuit memoria nostra uir a multis uitis integer, sed prauus et cui placebat pro constantia rigor. Is cum iratus duci iussisset eum qui ex commeatu sine commilitone redierat, quasi interfecisset quem non exhibebat, roganti tempus aliquid ad conquirendum non dedit. Damnatus extra uallum productus est et iam ceruicem porrigebat, cum subito apparuit ille commilito qui occisus uidebatur. 4. Tunc centurio supplicio praepositus condere gladium speculatorem iubet, damnatum ad Pisonem reducit redditurus Pisoni innocentiam; nam militi fortuna reddiderat. Ingenti concursu deducuntur complexi alter alterum cum magno gaudio castrorum commilitones. Conscondit tribunal furens Piso ac iubet duci utrumque, et eum militem qui non occiderat et eum qui non perierat. 5. Quid hoc indignius? quia unus innocens apparuerat, duo peribant. Piso adiecit et tertium; nam ipsum centurionem qui damnatum reducerat duci iussit. Constituti sunt in eodem illo loco perituri tres ob unius innocentiam. 6. O quam sollers est iracundia ad fingendas causas furoris! 'Te' inquit 'duci iubeo, quia damnatus es; te, quia causa damnationis commilitoni fuisti; te, quia iussus occidere imperatori non paruisti.' Excogitauit quemadmodum tria crimina faceret, quia nullum inuenerat.

XIX.

1. Habet, inquam, iracundia hoc mali: non uult regi. Irascitur ueritati ipsi, si contra uoluntatem suam apparuit; cum clamore et tumultu et totius corporis iactatione quos destinauit insequitur adiectis conuiciis maledictisque. 2. Hoc non facit ratio; sed si ita opus est, silens quietaque totas domus funditus tollit et familias rei publicae pestilentes cum coniugibus ac liberis perdit, tecta ipsa diruit et solo exaequat et inimica libertati nomina exstirpat: hoc non frendens nec caput quassans nec quicquam indecorum iudici faciens, cuius tum maxime placidus esse debet et in statu uultus cum magna pronuntiat. 3. 'Quid opus est' inquit Hieronymus 'cum uelis caedere aliquem, tua prius labra mordere?' Quid si ille uidisset desilientem de tribunali proconsulem et fasces lictori auferentem et suamet uestimenta scindentem, quia tardius scindebantur aliena? 4. Quid opus est mensam euertere? quid pocula adfligere? quid se in columnas inpingere? quid capillos auellere, femur pectusque percutere? ~Quantam~ iram putas, quae, quia in alium non tam cito quam uult erumpit, in se reuertitur? Tenentur itaque a proximis et rogantur ut sibi ipsi placentur.

5. Quorum nil facit quisquis uacuis ira meritam cuique poenam iniungit. Dimittit saepe eum cuius peccatum deprendit: si paenitentia facti spem bonam pollicetur, si intellegit non ex alto uenire nequitiam sed summo, quod aiunt, animo inhaerere, dabit inpunitatem nec accipientibus nocituram nec dantibus; 6. nonnumquam magna scelera leuius quam minora compescet, si illa lapsu, non crudelitate commissa sunt, his inest latens et operta et inueterata calliditas; idem delictum in duobus non eodem malo adficiet, si alter per negligentiam admisit, alter curauit ut nocens esset. 7. Hoc semper in omni animaduersione seruabit, ut sciat alteram adhiberi ut emendet malos, alteram ut tollat; in utroque non praeterita sed futura intuebitur (nam, ut Plato ait, nemo prudens punit quia peccatum est, sed ne peccetur; reuocari enim praeterita non possunt, futura prohibentur) et quos uolet nequitiae male cedentis exempla fieri palam occidet, non tantum ut pereant ipsi, sed ut alios pereundo deterreant. 8. Haec cui expendenda aestimandaque sunt,

uides quam debeat omni perturbatione liber accedere ad rem summa diligentia tractandam, potestatem uitae necisque: male irato ferrum committitur.

XX.

1. Ne illud quidem iudicandum est, aliquid iram ad magnitudinem animi conferre. Non est enim illa magnitudo: tumor est; nec corporibus copia uitiosi umoris intentis morbus incrementum est sed pestilens abundantia. 2. Omnes quos uecors animus supra cogitationes extollit humanas altum quiddam et sublime spirare se credunt; ceterum nil solidi subest, sed in ruinam prona sunt quae sine fundamentis creuere. Non habet ira cui insistat; non ex firmo mansuroque oritur, sed uentosa et inanis est, tantumque abest a magnitudine animi quantum a fortitudine audacia, a fiducia insolentia, ab austeritate tristitia, a seueritate crudelitas. 3. Multum, inquam, interest inter sublimem animum et superbum. Iracundia nihil amplum decorumque molitur; contra mihi uidetur ueternosi et infelicis animi, inbecillitatis sibi consciï, saepe indolescere, ut exulcerata et aegra corpora quae ad tactus leuissimos gemunt. Ita ira muliebre maxime ac puerile uitium est. ‘At incidit et in uiros.’ Nam uiris quoque puerilia ac muliebria ingenia sunt. 4. ‘Quid ergo? non aliquae uoces ab iratis emittuntur quae magno emissae uideantur animo?’ <Immo> ueram ignorantibus magnitudinem, qualis illa dira et abominanda ‘oderint, dum metuant’. Sullano scias saeculo scriptam. Nescio utrum sibi peius optauerit ut odio esset an ut timori. ‘Oderint.’ Occurrit illi futurum ut execrentur insidientur opprimant: quid adiecit? Di illi male faciant, adeo repperit dignum odio remedium. ‘Oderint’ — quid? ‘dum pareant’? Non. ‘dum probent’? Non. Quid ergo? ‘dum timeant’. Sic ne amari quidem uellem. 5. Magno hoc dictum spiritu putas? Falleris; nec enim magnitudo ista est sed immanitas. Non est quod credas irascentium uerbis, quorum strepitus magni, minaces sunt, intra mens pauidissima. 6. Nec est quod existimes uerum esse quod apud disertissimum uirum <T.> Liuium dicitur: ‘uir ingenii magni magis quam boni.’ Non potest istud separari: aut et bonum erit aut nec magnum, quia magnitudinem animi inconcussam intellego et introrsus solidam et ab imo parem firmamque, qualis inesse malis ingeniis non potest. 7. Terribilia enim esse et tumultuosa et exitiosa possunt: magnitudinem quidem, cuius firmamentum roburque bonitas est, non habebunt. 8. Ceterum

sermone, conatu et omni extra paratu facient magnitudinis fidem; eloquentur aliquid quod tu magni <animi> putes, sicut C. Caesar, qui iratus caelo quod obstreperetur pantomimis, quos imitabatur studiosius quam spectabat, quodque comessatio sua fulminibus terreretur (prorsus parum certis), ad pugnam uocauit Iouem et quidem sine missione, Homericum illum exclamans uersum:

e m anaeir ego se.

9. Quanta dementia fuit! Putauit aut sibi noceri ne ab Ioue quidem posse aut se nocere etiam Ioui posse. Non puto parum momenti hanc eius uocem ad incitandas coniuratorum mentes addidisse; ultimae enim patientiae uisum est eum ferre qui Iouem non ferret.

XXI.

1. Nihil ergo in ira, ne cum uidetur quidem uehemens et deos hominesque despiciens, magnum, nihil nobile est. Aut si uidetur alicui magnum animum ira producere, uideatur et luxuria — ebore sustineri uult, purpura uestiri, auro tegi, terras transferre, maria concludere, flumina praecipitare, nemora suspendere; 2. uideatur et auaritia magni animi — aceruis auri argentique incubat et prouinciarum nominibus agros colit et sub singulis uilicis latiores habet fines quam quos consules sortiebantur; 3. uideatur et libido magni animi — transnat freta, puerorum greges castrat, sub gladium mariti uenit morte contempta; uideatur et ambitio magni animi — non est contenta honoribus annuis; si fieri potest, uno nomine occupare fastus uult, per omnem orbem titulos disponere. 4. Omnia ista, non refert in quantum procedant extendantque se, angusta sunt, misera depressa; sola sublimis et excelsa uirtus est, nec quicquam magnum est nisi quod simul placidum.

LIBER II

I.

1. Primus liber, Nouate, benigniorem habuit materiam; facilis enim in procliui uitiorum decursus est. Nunc ad exiliora ueniendum est; quaerimus enim ira utrum iudicio an impetu incipiat, id est utrum sua sponte moueatur an quemadmodum pleraque quae intra nos <non> insciis nobis oriuntur. 2. Debet autem in haec se demittere disputatio ut ad illa quoque altiora possit exsurgere; nam et in corpore nostro ossa neruique et articuli, firmamenta totius et uitalia, minime speciosa uisu, prius ordinantur, deinde haec ex quibus omnis in faciem aspectumque decor est; post haec omnia, qui maxime oculos rapit, color ultimus perfecto iam corpore adfunditur.

3. Iram quin species oblata iniuriae moueat non est dubium; sed utrum speciem ipsam statim sequatur et non accedente animo excurrat, an illo adsentiente moueatur quaerimus. 4. Nobis placet nihil illam per se audere sed animo adprobante; nam speciem capere acceptae iniuriae et ultionem eius concupiscere et utrumque coniungere, nec laedi se debuisse et uindicari debere, non est eius impetus qui sine uoluntate nostra concitatur. Ille simplex est, hic compositus et plura continens: intellexit aliquid, indignatus est, damnauit, ulciscitur: haec non possunt fieri, nisi animus eis quibus tangebatur adsensus est.

II.

1. 'Quorsus' inquis 'haec quaestio pertinet?' Vt sciamus quid sit ira; nam si inuitis nobis nascitur, numquam rationi succumbet. Omnes enim motus qui non uoluntate nostra fiunt inuicti et ineuitabiles sunt, ut horror frigida adpersis, ad quosdam tactus aspernatio; ad peiores nuntios surriguntur pili et rubor ad inproba uerba suffunditur sequiturque uertigo praerupta cernentis: quorum quia nihil in nostra potestate est, nulla quominus fiant ratio persuadet. 2. Ira praeceptis fugatur; est enim uoluntarium animi uitium, non ex his quae condicione quadam humanae sortis eueniunt ideoque etiam sapientissimis accidunt, inter quae et primus ille ictus animi ponendus est qui nos post opinionem iniuriae mouet. 3. Hic subit etiam inter ludicra scaenae spectacula et lectiones rerum uetustarum. Saepe Clodio Ciceronem expellenti et Antonio occidenti uidemur irasci. Quis non contra Mari arma, contra Sullae proscriptionem concitatur? Quis non Theodoto et Achillae et ipsi puero non puerile auso facinus infestus est? 4. Cantus nos nonnumquam et citata modulatio instigat Martiusque ille tubarum sonus; mouet mentes et atrox pictura et iustissimorum suppliciorum tristis aspectus; 5. inde est quod adridemus ridentibus et contristat nos turba maerentium et efferuescimus ad aliena certamina. Quae non sunt irae, non magis quam tristitia est quae ad conspectum mimici naufragii contrahit frontem, non magis quam timor qui Hannibale post Cannas moenia circumsidente lectorum percurrit animos, sed omnia ista motus sunt animorum moueri nolentium, nec adfectus sed principia proludentia adfectibus. 6. Sic enim militaris uiri in media pace iam togati aures tuba suscitatur equosque castrenses erigit crepitus armorum. Alexandrum aiunt Xenophanto canente manum ad arma misisse.

III.

1. Nihil ex his quae animum fortuito inpellunt adfectus uocari debet: ista, ut ita dicam, patitur magis animus quam facit. Ergo adfectus est non ad oblatas rerum species moueri, sed permittere se illis et hunc fortuitum motum prosecui. 2. Nam si quis pallorem et lacrimas procidentis et iniritationem umoris obsceni altumue suspirium et oculos subito acriores aut quid his simile indicium adfectus animique signum putat, fallitur nec intellegit corporis hos esse pulsus. 3. Itaque et fortissimus plerumque uir dum armatur expalluit et signo pugnae dato ferocissimo militi paulum genua tremuerunt et magno imperatori antequam inter se acies arietarent cor exiluit et oratori eloquentissimo dum ad dicendum componitur summa riguerunt. 4. Ira non moueri tantum debet sed excurrere; est enim impetus; numquam autem impetus sine adsensu mentis est, neque enim fieri potest ut de ultione et poena agatur animo nesciente. Putauit se aliquis laesum, uoluit ulcisci, dissuadente aliqua causa statim resedit: hanc iram non uoco, motum animi rationi parentem: illa est ira quae rationem transsilit, quae secum rapit. 5. Ergo prima illa agitatio animi quam species iniuriae incussit non magis ira est quam ipsa iniuriae species; ille sequens impetus, qui speciem iniuriae non tantum accepit sed adprobauit, ira est, concitatio animi ad ultionem uoluntate et iudicio pergentis. Numquam dubium est quin timor fugam habeat, ira impetum; uide ergo an putes aliquid sine adsensu mentis aut peti posse aut caueri.

IV.

1. Et ut scias quemadmodum incipiant adfectus aut crescant aut efferantur, est primus motus non uoluntarius, quasi praeparatio adfectus et quaedam comminatio; alter cum uoluntate non contumaci, tamquam oporteat me uindicari cum laesus sim, aut oporteat hunc poenas dare cum scelus fecerit; tertius motus est iam inpotens, qui non si oportet ulcisci uult sed utique, qui rationem euicit. 2. Primum illum animi ictum effugere ratione non possumus, sicut ne illa quidem quae diximus accidere corporibus, ne nos oscitatio aliena sollicitet, ne oculi ad intimationem subitam digitorum comprimantur: ista non potest ratio uincere, consuetudo fortasse et adsidua observatio extenuat. Alter ille motus, qui iudicio nascitur, iudicio tollitur.

V.

1. Illud etiamnunc quaerendum est, ii qui uulgo saeuiunt et sanguine humano gaudent, an irascantur cum eos occidunt a quibus nec acceperunt iniuriam nec accepisse ipsos existimant: qualis fuit Apollodorus aut Phalaris. 2. Haec non est ira, feritas est; non enim quia accepit iniuriam nocet, sed parata est dum noceat uel accipere, nec illi uerbera lacerationesque in ultionem petuntur sed in uoluptatem. 3. Quid ergo? Origo huius mali ab ira est, quae ubi frequenti exercitatione et satietate in obliuionem clementiae uenit et omne foedus humanum eiecit animo, nouissime in crudelitatem transit; rident itaque gaudentque et uoluptate multa perfruuntur plurimumque ab iratorum uultu absunt, per otium saeui. 4. Hannibalem aiunt dixisse, cum fossam sanguine humano plenam uidisset, ‘o formosum spectaculum!’ Quanto pulchrius illi uisum esset, si flumen aliquod lacumque conplesset! Quid mirum si hoc maxime spectaculo caperis, innatus sanguini et ab infante caedibus admotus? Sequetur te fortuna crudelitati tuae per uiginti annos secunda dabitque oculis tuis gratum ubique spectaculum; uidebis istud et circa Trasumenum et circa Cannas et nouissime circa Carthaginem tuam. 5. Volesus nuper, sub diuo Augusto proconsul Asiae, cum trecentos uno die securi percussisset, incedens inter cadauera uultu superbo, quasi magnificum quiddam conspiciendumque fecisset, graece proclamauit ‘o rem regiam!’ Quid hic rex fecisset? Non fuit haec ira sed maius malum et insanabile.

VI.

1. 'Virtus' inquit 'ut honestis rebus propitia est, ita turpibus irata esse debet.' Quid si dicat uirtutem et humilem et magnam esse debere? Atqui hoc dicit qui illam extolli uult et deprimi, quoniam laetitia ob recte factum clara magnificaque est, ira ob alienum peccatum sordida et angusti pectoris est. 2. Nec umquam committet uirtus ut uitia dum compescit imitetur; iram ipsam castigandam habet, quae nihilo melior est, saepe etiam peior iis delictis quibus irascitur. Gaudere laetarique proprium et naturale uirtutis est: irasci non est ex dignitate eius, non magis quam maerere; atqui iracundiae tristitia comes est et in hanc omnis ira uel post paenitentiam uel post repulsam reuoluitur. 3. Et si sapientis est peccatis irasci, magis irascetur maioribus et saepe irascetur: sequitur ut non tantum iratus sit sapiens sed iracundus. Atqui si nec magnam iram nec frequentem in animo sapientis locum habere credimus, quid est quare non ex toto illum hoc adfectu liberemus? 4. Modus enim esse non potest, si pro facto cuiusque irascendum est; nam aut iniquus erit, si aequaliter irascetur delictis inaequalibus, aut iracundissimus, si totiens excanduerit quotiens iram scelera meruerint.

VII.

1. Et quid indignius quam sapientis adfectum ex aliena pendere nequitia? Desinet ille Socrates posse eundem uultum domum referre quem domo extulerat? Atqui si irasci sapiens turpiter factis debet et concitari contristarique ob scelera, nihil est aerumnosius sapiente: omnis illi per iracundiam maeroremque uita transibit. 2. Quod enim momentum erit quo non improbanda uideat? Quotiens processerit domo, per sceleratos illi auarosque et prodigos et inpudens et ob ista felices incedendum erit; nusquam oculi eius flectentur ut non quod indignantur inueniant: deficiet si totiens a se iram quotiens causa poscet exegerit. 3. Haec tot milia ad forum prima luce properantia, quam turpes lites, quanto turpiores aduocatos habent! Alius iudicia patris accusat, quae <non> mereri satius fuit, alius cum matre consistit, alius delator uenit eius criminis cuius manifestior reus est; et iudex damnaturus quae fecit eligitur et corona pro mala causa <stat> bona patroni uoce corrupta.

VIII.

1. Quid singula persequor? Cum uideris forum multitudine refertum et saepta concursu omnis frequentiae plena et illum circum in quo maximam sui partem populus ostendit, hoc scito, istic tantundem esse uitiorum quantum hominum. 2. Inter istos quos togatos uides nulla pax est: alter in alterius exitium leui compendio ducitur; nulli nisi ex alterius iniuria quaestus est; felicem oderunt, infelicem contemnunt; maiorem grauantur, minori graues sunt; diuersis stimulantur cupiditatibus; omnia perdita ob leuem uoluptatem praedamque cupiunt. Non alia quam in ludo gladiatorio uita est cum isdem uiuentium pugnantiumque. 3. Ferarum iste conuentus est, nisi quod illae inter se placidae sunt morsuque similium abstinent, hi mutua laceratione satiantur. ~Hoc uno~ ab animalibus mutis differunt, quod illa mansuescunt alentibus, horum rabies ipsos a quibus est nutrita depascitur.

IX.

1. Numquam irasci desinet sapiens, si semel coeperit: omnia sceleribus ac uitiiis plena sunt; plus committitur quam quod possit coercitione sanari; certatur ingenti quidem nequitiae certamine. Maior cotidie peccandi cupiditas, minor uerecundia est; expulso melioris aequiorisque respectu quocumque uisum est libido se inpingit, nec furtiua iam scelera sunt: praeter oculos eunt, adeoque in publicum missa nequitia est et in omnium pectoribus eualuit ut innocentia non rara sed nulla sit. 2. Numquid enim singuli aut pauci rupere legem? undique uelut signo dato ad fas nefasque miscendum coorti sunt:

non hospes ab hospite tutus,
non socer a genero; fratrum quoque gratia rara est;
imminet exitio uir coniugis, illa mariti;
lurida terribiles miscent aconita nouercae,
filius ante diem patrios inquirat in annos.

3. Et quota ista pars scelerum est? Non descripsit castra ex una parte contraria et parentium liberorumque sacramenta diuersa, subiectam patriae ciuis flammam et agmina infestorum equitum ad conquirendas proscriptorum latebras circumuolitantia et uiolatos fontes uenenis et pestilentiam manu factam et praeductam obsessis parentibus fossam, plenos carceres et incendia totas urbes concremantia dominationesque funestas et regnorum publicorumque exitiorum clandestina consilia, et pro gloria habita quae, quam diu opprimi possunt, scelera sunt, raptus ac stupra et ne os quidem libidini exceptum. 4. Adde nunc publica periuria gentium et rupta foedera et in praedam ualidioris quidquid non resistebat abductum, circumscriptiones furta fraudes infitiationes quibus trina non sufficiunt fora. Si tantum irasci uis sapientem quantum scelerum indignitas exigit, non irascendum illi sed insaniendum est.

X.

1. Illud potius cogitabis, non esse irascendum erroribus. Quid enim si quis irascatur in tenebris parum uestigia certa ponentibus? Quid si quis surdis imperia non exaudientibus? Quid si pueris, quod neglecto dispectu officiorum ad lusus et ineptos aequalium iocos spectent? Quid si illis irasci uelis qui aegrotant senescunt fatigantur? Inter cetera mortalitatis incommoda et hoc est, caligo mentium nec tantum necessitas errandi sed errorum amor. 2. Ne singulis irascaris, uniuersis ignoscendum est, generi humano uenia tribuenda est. Si irasceris iuuenibus senibusque quod peccant, irascere infantibus: peccaturi sunt. Numquis irascitur pueris, quorum aetas nondum nouit rerum discrimina? maior est excusatio et iustior hominem esse quam puerum. 3. Hac condicione nati sumus, animalia obnoxia non paucioribus animi quam corporis morbis, non quidem obtusa nec tarda, sed acumine nostro male utentia, alter alteri uitiorum exempla: quisquis sequitur priores male iter ingressos, quidni habeat excusationem, cum publica uia errauerit? 4. In singulos seueritas imperatoris destringitur, at necessaria uenia est ubi totus deseruit exercitus. Quid tollit iram sapientis? turba peccantium. Intellegit quam et iniquum sit et periculosum irasci publico uitio.

5. Heraclitus quotiens prodierat et tantum circa se male uiuentium, immo male pereuntium uiderat, flebat, miserebatur omnium qui sibi laeti felicesque occurrebant, miti animo, sed nimis inbecillo: et ipse inter deplorandos erat. Democritum contra aiunt numquam sine risu in publico fuisse; adeo nihil illi uidebatur serium eorum quae serio gerebantur. Vbi istic irae locus est? aut ridenda omnia aut flenda sunt.

6. Non irascetur sapiens peccantibus. Quare? quia scit neminem nasci sapientem sed fieri, scit paucissimos omni aeuo sapientis euadere, quia condicionem humanae uitae perspectam habet; nemo autem naturae sanus irascitur. Quid enim si mirari uelit non in siluestribus dumis poma pendere? Quid si miretur spineta sentesque non utili aliqua fruge conpleri? Nemo irascitur ubi uitium natura defendit. 7. Placidus itaque sapiens et aequus erroribus, non hostis sed corrector peccantium, hoc cotidie procedit animo: 'multi mihi

occurrent uino dediti, multi libidinosi, multi ingrati, multi auari, multi furiis ambitionis agitati.' Omnia ista tam propitius aspiciet quam aegros suos medicus. 8. Numquid ille cuius nauigium multam undique laxatis compagibus aquam trahit nautis ipsique nauigio irascitur? occurrit potius et aliam excludit undam, aliam egerit, manifesta foramina praecludit, latentibus et ex occulto sentinam ducentibus labore continuo resistit, nec ideo intermittit quia quantum exhaustum est subnascitur. Lento adiutorio opus est contra mala continua et fecunda, non ut desinant, sed ne uincant.

XI.

1. 'Vtilis est' inquit 'ira, quia contemptum effugit, quia malos terret.' Primum ira, si quantum minatur ualeat, ob hoc ipsum quod terribilis est et inuisa est; periculosius est autem timeri quam despici. Si uero sine uiribus est, magis exposita contemptui est et derisum non effugit; quid enim est iracundia in superuacuum tumultuante frigidius? 2. Deinde non ideo quaedam, quia sunt terribiliora, potiora sunt, nec hoc sapienti dici uelim: 'quod ferae, sapientis quoque telum est, timeri.' Quid? non timetur febris, podagra, ulcus malum? Numquid ideo quicquam in istis boni est? At contra omnia despecta foedaeque et turpia ~ipso quo~ timentur. Sic ira per se deformis est et minime metuenda, at timetur a pluribus sicut deformis persona ab infantibus. 3. Quid quod semper in auctores redundat timor nec quisquam metuitur ipse securus? Occurrat hoc loco tibi Laberianus ille uersus qui medio ciuili bello in theatro dictus totum in se populum non aliter conuertit quam si missa esset uox publici adfectus:

necesse est multos timeat quem multi timent.

4. Ita natura constituit ut quidquid alieno metu magnum est a suo non uacet. Leonum quam pauida sunt ad leuissimos sonos pectora! acerrimas feras umbra et uox et odor insolitus exagitat: quidquid terret et trepidat. Non est ergo quare concupiscat quisquam sapiens timeri, nec ideo iram magnum quiddam putet quia formidini est, quoniam quidem etiam contemptissima timentur, ut uenena et ossa pestifera et morsus. 5. Nec mirum est, cum maximos ferarum greges linea pinnis distincta contineat et in insidias agat, ab ipso adfectu dicta formido; uanis enim uana terrori sunt. Curriculi motus rotarumque uersata facies leones redegit in caueam, elephantos porcina uox terret. 6. Sic itaque ira metuitur quomodo umbra ab infantibus, a feris rubens pinna. Non ipsa in se quicquam habet firmum aut forte, sed leues animos mouet.

XII.

1. 'Nequitia' inquit 'de rerum natura tollenda est, si uelis iram tollere; neutrum autem potest fieri.' Primum potest aliquis non algere, quamuis [ex rerum natura] hiemps sit, et non aestuare, quamuis menses aestiui sint: aut loci beneficio aduersus intemperiem anni tutus est aut patientia corporis sensum utriusque peruicit. 2. Deinde uerte istud: necesse est prius uirtutem ex animo tollas quam iracundiam recipias, quoniam cum uirtutibus uitia non coeunt, nec magis quisquam eodem tempore et iratus potest esse et uir bonus quam aeger et sanus. 3. 'Non potest' inquit 'omnis ex animo ira tolli, nec hoc hominis natura patitur.' Atqui nihil est tam difficile et arduum quod non humana mens uincat et in familiaritatem perducatur adsidua meditatio, nullique sunt tam feri et sui iuris adfectus ut non disciplina perdomentur. 4. Quodcumque sibi imperauit animus optinuit: quidam ne umquam riderent consecuti sunt; uino quidam, alii uenere, quidam omni umore interdixere corporibus; alius contentus breui somno uigiliam indefatigabilem extendit; didicerunt tenuissimis et aduersis funibus currere et ingentia uixque humanis toleranda uiribus onera portare et in inmensam altitudinem mergi ac sine ulla respirandi uice perpeti maria. Mille sunt alia in quibus pertinacia impedimentum omne transcendit ostenditque nihil esse difficile cuius sibi ipsa mens patientiam indiceret. 5. Istis quos paulo ante rettuli aut nulla tam pertinacis studii aut non digna merces fuit — quid enim magnificum consequitur ille qui meditatus est per intentos funes ire, qui sarcinae ingenti ceruices supponere, qui somno non submittere oculos, qui penetrare in imum mare? — et tamen ad finem operis non magno auctoramento labor peruenit: 6. nos non aduocabimus patientiam, quos tantum praemium expectat, felicitis animi inmotae tranquillitas? Quantum est effugere maximum malum, iram, et cum illa rabiem saeuitiam crudelitatem furorem, alios comites eius adfectus!

XIII.

1. Non est quod patrociniū nobis quaeramus et excusatam licentiam, dicentes aut utile id esse aut ineuitabile; cui enim tandem uitio aduocatus defuit? Non est quod dicas excidi non posse: sanabilibus aegrotamus malis ipsaque nos in rectum genitos natura, si emendari uelimus, iuuat. Nec, ut quibusdam uisum est, arduum in uirtutes et asperum iter est: plano adeuntur. 2. Non uanae uobis auctor rei uenio. Facilis est ad beatam uitam uia: inite modo bonis auspiciis ipsisque dis bene iuuantibus. Multo difficilius est facere ista quae facitis. Quid est animi quiete otiosius, quid ira laboriosius? Quid clementia remissius, quid crudelitate negotiosius? Vacat pudicitia, libido occupatissima est. Omnium denique uirtutum tutela facilis est, uitia magno coluntur. 3. Debet ira remoueri — hoc ex parte fatentur etiam qui dicunt esse minuendam: tota dimittatur, nihil profutura est. Sine illa facilius rectiusque scelera tollentur, mali punientur et transducentur in melius. Omnia quae debet sapiens sine ullius malae rei ministerio efficiet nihilque admiscebit cuius modum sollicitius obseruet.

XIV.

1. Numquam itaque iracundia admittenda est, aliquando simulanda, si segnes audientium animi concitandi sunt, sicut tarde consurgentis ad cursum equos stimulis facibusque subditis excitamus. Aliquando incutiendus est iis metus apud quos ratio non proficit: irasci quidem non magis utile est quam maerere, quam metuere. 2. 'Quid ergo? non incidunt causae quae iram lacesant?' Sed tunc maxime illi opponendae manus sunt. Nec est difficile uincere animum, cum athletae quoque, in uilissima sui parte occupati, tamen ictus doloresque patientur ut uires caedentis exhauriant, nec cum ira suadet feriunt, sed cum occasio. 3. Pyrrhum, maximum praeceptorem certaminis gymnici, solitum aiunt iis quos exercebat praecipere ne irascerentur; ira enim perturbat artem et qua noceat tantum aspicit. Saepe itaque ratio patientiam suadet, ira uindictam, et qui primis defungi malis potuimus in maiora deuoluimur. 4. Quosdam unius uerbi contumelia non aequo animo lata in exilium proiecit, et qui leuem iniuriam silentio ferre noluerant grauissimis malis obruti sunt, indignatique aliquid ex plenissima libertate deminui seruile in sese adtraxerunt iugum.

XV.

1. 'Vt scias' inquit 'iram habere in se generosi aliquid, liberas uidebis gentes quae iracundissimae sunt, ut Germanos et Scythas.' Quod euenit quia fortia solidaque natura ingenia, antequam disciplina molliantur, prona in iram sunt. Quaedam enim non nisi melioribus innascuntur ingeniis, sicut ualida arbusta et laeta quamuis neglecta tellus creat et alta fecundi soli silua est; 2. itaque et ingenia natura fortia iracundiam ferunt nihilque tenue et exile capiunt ignea et feruida, sed imperfectus illis uigor est ut omnibus quae sine arte ipsius tantum naturae bono exsurgunt, sed nisi cito domita sunt, quae fortitudini apta erant audaciae temeritque consuescunt. 3. Quid? non mitioribus animis uitia leniora coniuncta sunt, ut misericordia et amor et uerecundia? Itaque saepe tibi bonam indolem malis quoque suis ostendam; sed non ideo uitia non sunt si naturae melioris indicia sunt. 4. Deinde omnes istae feritate liberae gentes leonum luporumque ritu ut seruire non possunt, ita nec imperare; non enim humani uim ingenii, sed feri et intractabilis habent; nemo autem regere potest nisi qui et regi. 5. Fere itaque imperia penes eos fuere populos qui mitiore caelo utuntur: in frigora septemtrionemque uergentibus 'inmansueta ingenia' sunt, ut ait poeta,
suoque simillima caelo.

XVI.

1. 'Animalia' inquit 'generosissima habentur quibus multum inest irae.' Errat qui ea in exemplum hominis adducit quibus pro ratione est impetus: homini pro impetu ratio est. Sed ne illis quidem omnibus idem prodest: iracundia leones adiuuat, pauor ceruos, accipitrem impetus, columbam fuga.
2. Quid quod ne illud quidem uerum est, optima animalia esse iracundissima? Feras putem, quibus ex raptu alimenta sunt, meliores quo iratiores: patientiam laudauerim boum et equorum frenos sequentium. Quid est autem cur hominem ad tam infelicia exempla reuoces, cum habeas mundum deumque, quem ex omnibus animalibus, ut solus imitetur, solus intellegit?
3. 'Simplicissimi' inquit 'omnium habentur iracundi.' Fraudulentis enim et uersutis comparantur et simplices uidentur quia expositi sunt. Quos quidem non simplices dixerim sed incautos: stultis luxuriosis nepotibusque hoc nomen inponimus et omnibus utiis parum callidis.

XVII.

1. 'Orator' inquit 'iratus aliquando melior est.' Immo imitatus iratum; nam et histriones in pronuntiando non irati populum mouent, sed iratum bene agentes; et apud iudices itaque et in contione et ubicumque alieni animi ad nostrum arbitrium agendi sunt, modo iram, modo metum, modo misericordiam, ut aliis incutiamus, ipsi simulabimus, et saepe id quod ueri adfectus non effecissent effecit imitatio adfectuum.

2. 'Languidus' inquit 'animus est qui ira caret.' Verum est, si nihil habeat ira ualentius. Nec latronem oportet esse nec praedam, nec misericordem nec crudelem: illius nimis mollis animus, huius nimis durus est; temperatus sit sapiens et ad res fortius agendas non iram sed uim adhibeat.

XVIII.

1. Quoniam quae de ira quaeruntur tractauimus, accedamus ad remedia eius. Duo autem, ut opinor, sunt: ne incidamus in iram, et ne in ira peccemus. Vt in corporum cura alia de tuenda ualetudine, alia de restituenda praecepta sunt, ita aliter iram debemus repellere, aliter compescere. Vt uitemus, quaedam ad uniuersam uitam pertinentia praecipientur: ea in educationem et in sequentia tempora diuidentur.

2. Educatio maximam diligentiam plurimumque profuturam desiderat; facile est enim teneros adhuc animos componere, difficulter reciduntur uitia quae nobiscum creuerunt.

XIX.

1. Opportunissima ad iracundiam feruidi animi natura est. Nam cum elementa sint quattuor, ignis aquae aeris terrae, potestates pares his sunt, feruida frigida arida atque umida; et locorum itaque et animalium et corporum et morum uarietates mixtura elementorum facit, et proinde aliquo magis incumbunt ingenia prout alicuius elementi maior uis abundauit. Inde quasdam umidas uocamus aridasque regiones et calidas et frigidas. 2. Eadem animalium hominumque discrimina sunt: refert quantum quisque umidi in se calidique contineat; cuius in illo elementi portio praeualebit, inde mores erunt. Iracundos feruida animi natura faciet; est enim actuosus et pertinax ignis: frigidi mixtura timidos facit; pigrum est enim contractumque frigus. 3. Volunt itaque quidam ex nostris iram in pectore moueri efferuescente circa cor sanguine; causa cur hic potissimum adsignetur irae locus non alia est quam quod in toto corpore calidissimum pectus est. 4. Quibus umidi plus inest, eorum paulatim crescit ira, quia non est paratus illis calor sed motu adquiritur; itaque puerorum feminarumque irae acres magis quam graues sunt leuiioresque dum incipiunt. Siccis aetatibus uehemens robustaque est ira, sed sine incremento, non multum sibi adiciens, quia inclinaturum calorem frigus insequitur: senes difficiles et queruli sunt, ut aegri et conualescentes et quorum aut lassitudine aut detractatione sanguinis exhaustus est calor; 5. in eadem causa sunt siti fameque tabidi et quibus exsanguie corpus est maligneque alitur et deficit. Vinum incendit iras, quia calorem auget; pro cuiusque natura quidam ebrii efferuescunt, quidam saucii. Neque ulla alia causa est cur iracundissimi sint flauī rubentesque, quibus talis natura color est qualis fieri ceteris inter iram solet; mobilis enim illis agitatusque sanguis est.

XX.

1. Sed quemadmodum natura quosdam procliues in iram facit, ita multae incidunt causae quae idem possint quod natura: alios morbus aut iniuria corporum in hoc perduxit, alios labor aut continua peruigilia noctesque sollicitae et desideria amoresque; quidquid aliud aut corpori nocuit aut animo, aegram mentem in querellas parat. 2. Sed omnia ista initia causaeque sunt: plurimum potest consuetudo, quae si grauis est alit uitium. Naturam quidem mutare difficile est, nec licet semel mixta nascentium elementa conuertere; sed in hoc nosse profuerit, ut calentibus ingeniis subtrahas uinum, quod pueris Plato negandum putat et ignem uetat igne incitari. Ne cibis quidem implendi sunt; distendentur enim corpora et animi cum corpore tumescent. 3. Labor illos citra lassitudinem exerceat, ut minuatur, non ut consumatur calor nimiusque ille feruor despumet. Lusus quoque proderunt; modica enim uoluptas laxat animos et temperat. 4. Vmidioribus siccioribusque et frigidis non est ab ira periculum, sed inertiora uitia metuenda sunt, pauor et difficultas et desperatio et suspiciones; mollienda itaque fouendaque talia ingenia et in laetitiam euocanda sunt. Et quia aliis contra iram, aliis contra tristitiam remediis utendum est nec dissimillimis tantum ista sed contrariis curanda sunt, semper ei occurremus quod increuerit.

XXI.

1. Plurimum, inquam, proderit pueros statim salubriter institui; difficile autem regimen est, quia dare debemus operam ne aut iram in illis nutriamus aut indolem retundamus. 2. Diligenti obseruatione res indiget; utrumque enim, et quod extollendum et quod deprimendum est, similibus alitur, facile autem etiam adtendentem similia decipiunt. 3. Crescit licentia spiritus, seruitute comminuitur; adsurgit si laudatur et in spem sui bonam adducitur, sed eadem ista insolentiam et iracundiam generant: itaque sic inter utrumque regendus est ut modo frenis utamur modo stimulis. 4. Nihil humile, nihil seruile patiatur; numquam illi necesse sit rogare suppliciter nec prosit rogasse, potius causae suae et prioribus factis et bonis in futurum promissis donetur. 5. In certaminibus aequalium nec uinci illum patiamur nec irasci; demus operam ut familiaris sit iis cum quibus contendere solet, ut in certamine adsuescat non nocere uelle sed uincere; quotiens superauerit et dignum aliquid laude fecerit, attolli non gestire patiamur; gaudium enim exultatio, exultationem tumor et nimia aestimatio sui sequitur. 6. Dabimus aliquod laxamentum, in desidiam uero otiumque non resoluemus et procul a contactu deliciarum retinebimus; nihil enim magis facit iracundos quam educatio mollis et blanda. Ideo unicis quo plus indulgetur, pupillisque quo plus licet, corruptior animus est. Non resistet offensis cui nihil umquam negatum est, cuius lacrimas sollicita semper mater abstersit, cui de paedagogo satisfactum est. 7. Non uides ut maiorem quamque fortunam maior ira comitetur? In diuitibus et nobilibus et magistratibus praecipue apparet, cum quidquid leue et inane in animo erat secunda se aura sustulit. Felicitas iracundiam nutrit, ubi aures superbas adsentatorum turba circumstetit: ‘tibi enim ille respondeat? Non pro fastigio te tuo metiris; ipse te proicis’ et alia quibus uix sanae et ab initio bene fundatae mentes restiterunt. 8. Longe itaque ab adsentatione pueritia remouenda est: audiat uerum. Et timeat interim, uereatur semper, maioribus adsurgat. Nihil per iracundiam exoret: quod flenti negatum fuerit quieto offeratur. Et diuitias parentium in conspectu habeat, non in usu. 9. Exprobrentur illi perperam facta. Pertinebit ad rem praeceptores paedagogosque pueris

placidos dari: proximis adplicatur omne quod tenerum est et in eorum similitudinem crescit; nutricum et paedagogorum rettulere mox adulescentium mores. 10. Apud Platonem educatus puer cum ad parentes relatus uociferantem uideret patrem: 'numquam' inquit 'hoc apud Platonem uidi.' Non dubito quin citius patrem imitatus sit quam Platonem. 11. Tenuis ante omnia uictus <sit> et non pretiosa uestis et similis cultus cum aequalibus: non irascetur aliquem sibi comparari quem ab initio multis parem feceris.

XXII.

1. Sed haec ad liberos nostros pertinent; in nobis quidem sors nascendi et educatio nec uitii locum nec iam praecepti habet: sequentia ordinanda sunt. 2. Contra primas itaque causas pugnare debemus; causa autem iracundiae opinio iniuriae est, cui non facile credendum est. Ne apertis quidem manifestisque statim accedendum; quaedam enim falsa ueri speciem ferunt. Dandum semper est tempus: ueritatem dies aperit. 3. Ne sint aures criminantibus faciles; hoc humanae naturae uitium suspectum notumque nobis sit, quod quae inuiti audimus libenter credimus et antequam iudicemus irascimur. 4. Quid quod non criminationibus tantum sed suspicionibus inpellimur et ex uultu risuque alieno peiora interpretati innocentibus irascimur? Itaque agenda est contra se causa absentis et in suspensio ira retinenda; potest enim poena dilata exigi, non potest exacta reuocari.

XXIII.

1. Notus est ille tyrannicida qui, imperfecto opere comprehensus et ab Hippiā tortus ut conscios indicaret, circumstantes amicos tyranni nominavit quibusque maxime curam salutem eius sciebat. Et cum ille singulos, ut nominati erant, occidi iussisset, interrogavit equis superesset: 'tu' inquit 'solus; neminem enim alium cui carus esses reliqui.' Effecit ira ut tyrannus tyrannicidae manus accommodaret et praesidia sua gladio suo caederet. 2. Quanto animosius Alexander! qui cum legisset epistolam matris, qua admonebatur ut a ueneno Philippi medici caueret, acceptam potionem non deterritus bibit: plus sibi de amico suo credidit. Dignus fuit qui innocentem haberet, dignus qui faceret. 3. Hoc eo magis in Alexandro laudo quia nemo tam obnoxius irae fuit; quo rarior autem moderatio in regibus, hoc laudanda magis est. 4. Fecit hoc et C. Caesar ille qui uictoria civili clementissime usus est: cum scrinia deprendisset epistularum ad Cn. Pompeium missarum ab iis qui uidebantur aut in diuersis aut in neutris fuisse partibus, combussit. Quamuis moderate soleret irasci, maluit tamen non posse; gratissimum putauit genus ueniae nescire quid quisque peccasset.

XXIV.

1. Plurimum mali credulitas facit. Saepe ne audiendum quidem est, quoniam in quibusdam rebus satius est decipi quam diffidere. Tollenda ex animo suspicio et coniectura, fallacissima inritamenta: ‘ille me parum humane salutauit; ille osculo meo non adhaesit; ille inchoatum sermonem cito abrupit; ille ad cenam non uocauit; illius uultus auersior uisus est.’ 2. Non deerit suspicioni argumentatio: simplicitate opus est et benigna rerum aestimatione. Nihil nisi quod in oculos incurret manifestumque erit credamus, et quotiens suspicio nostra uana apparuerit, obiurgemus credulitatem; haec enim castigatio consuetudinem efficiet non facile credendi.

XXV.

1. Inde et illud sequitur, ut minimis sordidissimisque rebus non exacerbemur. Parum agilis est puer aut tepidior aqua poturo aut turbatus torus aut mensa negligentius posita: ad ista concitari insania est. Aeger et infelicis uoletudinis est quem leuis aura contraxit, adfecti oculi quos candida uestis obturbat, dissolutus deliciis cuius latus alieno labore condoluit. 2. Mindyriden aiunt fuisse ex Sybaritarum ciuitate qui, cum uidisset fodientem et altius rastrum adleuantem, lassum se fieri questus uetuit illum opus in conspectu suo facere; idem habere se peius questus est, quod foliis rosae duplicatis incubuisset. 3. Vbi animum simul et corpus uoluptates corrumpere, nihil tolerabile uidetur, non quia dura sed quia mollis patitur. Quid est enim cur tussis alicuius aut sternutamentum aut musca parum curiose fugata in rabiem agat aut obuersatus canis aut clauis negligentis serui manibus elapsa? 4. Feret iste aequo animo ciuile conuicium et ingesta in contione curiaue maledicta cuius aures tracti subsellii stridor offendit? Perpetietur hic famem et aestiuae expeditionis sitim qui puero male diluenti niuem irascitur? Nulla itaque res magis iracundiam alit quam luxuria intemperans et inpatiens: dure tractandus animus est ut ictum non sentiat nisi grauem.

XXVI.

1. Irascimur aut iis a quibus ne accipere quidem potuimus iniuriam, aut iis a quibus accipere iniuriam potuimus. 2. Ex prioribus quaedam sine sensu sunt, ut liber quem minutioribus litteris scriptum saepe proiecimus et mendosum lacerauimus, ut uestimenta quae, quia displicebant, scidimus: his irasci quam stultum est, quae iram nostram nec meruerunt nec sentiunt! 3. 'Sed offendunt nos uidelicet qui illa fecerunt.' Primum saepe antequam hoc apud nos distinguamus irascimur. Deinde fortasse ipsi quoque artifices excusationes iustas adferent: alius non potuit melius facere quam fecit, nec ad tuam contumeliam parum didicit; alius non in hoc ut te offenderet fecit. Ad ultimum quid est dementius quam bilem in homines collectam in res effundere? 4. Atqui ut his irasci dementis est quae anima carent, sic mutis animalibus, quae nullam iniuriam nobis faciunt, quia uelle non possunt; non est enim iniuria nisi a consilio profecta. Nocere itaque nobis possunt ut ferrum aut lapis, iniuriam quidem facere non possunt. 5. Atqui contemni se quidam putant, ubi idem equi obsequentes alteri equiti, alteri contumaces sunt, tamquam iudicio, non consuetudine et arte tractandi quaedam quibusdam subiectiora sint. 6. Atqui ut his irasci stultum est, ita pueris et non multum a puerorum prudentia distantibus; omnia enim ista peccata apud aequum iudicem pro innocentia habent inprudenciam.

XXVII.

1. Quaedam sunt quae nocere non possunt nullamque uim nisi beneficam et salutarem habent, ut di immortales, qui nec uolunt obesse nec possunt; natura enim illis mitis et placida est, tam longe remota ab aliena iniuria quam a sua. 2. Dementes itaque et ignari ueritatis illis inputant saeuitiam maris, inmodicos imbres, pertinaciam hiemis, cum interim nihil horum quae nobis nocent prosuntque ad nos proprie derigatur. Non enim nos causa mundo sumus hiemem aestatemque referendi: suas ista leges habent, quibus diuina exercentur; nimis nos suspicimus, si digni nobis uidemur propter quos tanta moueantur. Nihil ergo horum in nostram iniuriam fit, immo contra nihil non ad salutem. 3. Quaedam esse diximus quae nocere non possint, quaedam quae nolint. In iis erunt boni magistratus parentesque et praeceptores et iudices, quorum castigatio sic accipienda est quomodo scalpellum et abstinencia et alia quae profutura torquent. 4. Adfecti sumus poena: succurrat non tantum quid patiamur sed quid fecerimus, in consilium de uita nostra mittamur; si modo uerum ipsi nobis dicere uoluerimus, pluris litem nostram aestimabimus.

XXVIII.

1. Si uolumus aequi rerum omnium iudices esse, hoc primum nobis persuadeamus, neminem nostrum esse sine culpa; hinc enim maxima indignatio oritur: ‘nihil peccauit’ et ‘nihil feci’. Immo nihil fateris. Indignamur aliqua admonitione aut coercitione nos castigatos, cum illo ipso tempore peccemus, quod adicimus malefactis adrogantiam et contumaciam. 2. Quis est iste qui se profitetur omnibus legibus innocentem? Vt hoc ita sit, quam angusta innocentia est ad legem bonum esse! Quanto latius officiorum patet quam iuris regula! Quam multa pietas humanitas liberalitas iustitia fides exigunt, quae omnia extra publicas tabulas sunt! 3. Sed ne ad illam quidem artissimam innocentiae formulam praestare nos possumus: alia fecimus, alia cogitauimus, alia optauimus, aliis fauimus; in quibusdam innocentes sumus, quia non successit. 4. Hoc cogitantes aequiores simus delinquentibus, credamus obiurgantibus; utique bonis ne irascamur (cui enim non, si bonis quoque?), minime dis; non enim illorum <uitio>, sed lege mortalitatis patimur quidquid incommodi accidit. ‘At morbi doloresque incurrunt.’ Vtique aliquo defungendum est domicilium putre sortitis. 5. Dicitur aliquis male de te locutus: cogita an priorfeceris, cogita de quam multis loquaris. Cogitemus, inquam, alios non facere iniuriam sed reponere, alios pro nobis facere, alios coactos facere, alios ignorantes, etiam eos qui uolentes scientesque faciunt ex iniuria nostra non ipsam iniuriam petere: aut dulcedine urbanitatis prolapsus est, aut fecit aliquid, non ut nobis obesset, sed quia consequi ipse non poterat, nisi nos reppulisset; saepe adulatio dum blanditur offendit. 6. Quisquis ad se rettulerit quotiens ipse in suspicionem falsam inciderit, quam multis officiis suis fortuna speciem iniuriae induerit, quam multos post odium amare coeperit, poterit non statim irasci, utique si sibi tacitus ad singula quibus offenditur dixerit ‘hoc et ipse commisi’. 7. Sed ubi tam aequum iudicem inuenies? Is qui nullius non uxorem concupiscit et satis iustas causas putat amandi quod aliena est, idem uxorem suam aspici non uult; et fidei acerrimus exactor est perfidus, et mendacia persequitur ipse periurus, et litem sibi inferri aegerrime calumniator patitur; pudicitiam seruulorum adtemptari non uult qui non pepercit

suae. 8. Aliena uitia in oculis habemus, a tergo nostra sunt: inde est quod tempestiua filii conuiuia pater deterior filio castigat, et nihil alienae luxuriae ignoscit qui nihil suae negauit, et homicidae tyrannus irascitur, et punit furta sacrilegus. Magna pars hominum est quae non peccatis irascitur sed peccantibus. Faciet nos moderatiores respectus nostri, si consuluerimus nos: ‘numquid et ipsi aliquid tale commisimus? Numquid sic errauimus? Expeditne nobis ista damnare?’

XXIX.

1. Maximum remedium irae mora est. Hoc ab illa pete initio, non ut ignoscat sed ut iudicet: graues habet impetus primos; desinet, si expectat. Nec uniuersam illam temptaueris tollere: tota uincetur, dum partibus carpitur. 2. Ex iis quae nos offendunt alia renuntiantur nobis, alia ipsi audimus aut uidemus. De iis quae narrata sunt non debemus cito credere: multi mentiuntur ut decipiant, multi quia decepti sunt; alius criminatione gratiam captat et fingit iniuriam ut uideatur doluisse factam; est aliquis malignus et qui amicitias cohaerentis diducere uelit; est ~suspicax~ et qui spectare ludos cupiat et ex longinquo tutoque speculetur quos conlisit. 3. De paruula summa iudicaturus tibi res sine teste non probaretur, testis sine iureiurando non ualeret, utrique parti dares actionem, dares tempus, non semel audires; magis enim ueritas elucet quo saepius ad manum uenit: amicum condemnas de praesentibus? Antequam audias, antequam interroges, antequam illi aut accusatorem suum nosse liceat aut crimen, irascaris? Iam enim, iam utrimque <quid> diceretur audisti? 4. Hic ipse qui ad te detulit desinet dicere, si probare debuerit: 'non est' inquit 'quod me protrahas; ego productus negabo; alioqui nihil umquam tibi dicam.' Eodem tempore et instigat et ipse se certamini pugnaeque subtrahit. Qui dicere tibi nisi clam non uult, paene non dicit: quid est iniquius quam secreto credere, palam irasci?

XXX.

1. Quorundam ipsi testes sumus: in his naturam excutiemus uoluntatemque facientium. Puer est: aetati donetur, nescit an peccet. Pater est: aut tantum profuit ut illi etiam iniuriae ius sit, aut fortasse ipsum hoc meritum eius est quo offendimur. Mulier est: errat. Iussus est: necessitati quis nisi iniquus suscenset? Laesus est: non est iniuria pati quod prior feceris. Iudex est: plus credas illius sententiae quam tuae. Rex est: si nocentem punit, cede iustitiae, si innocentem, cede fortunae. 2. Mutum animal est aut simile muto: imitaris illud, si irasceris. Morbus est aut calamitas: leuius transiliet sustinentem. Deus est: tam perdis operam cum illi irasceris quam cum illum alteri precaris iratum. Bonus uir est qui iniuriam fecit: noli credere. Malus: noli mirari; dabit poenas alteri quas debet tibi, et iam sibi dedit qui peccauit.

XXXI.

1. Duo sunt, ut dixi quae iracundiam concitant: primum, si iniuriam uidemur accepisse — de hoc satis dictum est; deinde, si inique accepisse — de hoc dicendum est. 2. Iniqua quaedam iudicant homines quia pati non debuerint, quaedam quia non sperauerint. Indigna putamus quae inopinata sunt; itaque maxime commouent quae contra spem expectationemque euenerunt, nec aliud est quare in domesticis minima offendant, in amicis iniuriam uocemus negligentiam. 3. ‘Quomodo ergo’ inquit ‘inimicorum nos iniuriae mouent?’ Quia non expectauimus illas aut certe non tantas. Hoc efficit amor nostri nimius: inuiolatos nos etiam inimicis iudicamus esse debere; regis quisque intra se animum habet, ut licentiam sibi dari uelit, in se nolit. 4. Aut ignorantia itaque nos aut insolentia iracundos facit [ignorantia rerum]. Quid enim mirum est malos mala facinora edere? Quid noui est, si inimicus nocet, amicus offendit, filius labitur, seruus peccat? Turpissimam aiebat Fabius imperatori excusationem esse ‘non putau’, ego turpissimam homini puto. Omnia puta, expecta: etiam in bonis moribus aliquid existet asperius. 5. Fert humana natura insidiosos animos, fert ingratos, fert cupidos, fert impios. Cum de unius moribus iudicabis, de publicis cogita. Vbi maxime gaudebis, maxime metues; ubi tranquilla tibi omnia uidentur, ibi nocitura non desunt sed quiescunt. Semper futurum aliquid quod te offendat existima: gubernator numquam ita totos sinus securus explicuit ut non expedite ad contrahendum armamenta disponeret.

6. Illud ante omnia cogita, foedam esse et execrabilem uim nocendi et alienissimam homini, cuius beneficio etiam saeua mansuescunt. Aspice elephantorum iugo colla summissa et taurorum pueris pariter ac feminis persultantibus terga inpune calcata et repentis inter pocula sinusque innoxio lapsu dracones et intra domum ursorum leonumque ora placida tractantibus adulantisque dominum feras: pudebit cum animalibus permutasse mores. 7. Nefas est nocere patriae; ergo ciui quoque, nam hic pars patriae est — sanctae partes sunt, si uniuersum uenerabile est; ergo et homini, nam hic in maiore tibi urbe ciuis est. Quid si nocere uelint manus pedibus, manibus

oculi? Vt omnia inter se membra consentiunt quia singula seruari totius interest, ita homines singulis parcent quia ad coetum geniti sunt, salua autem esse societas nisi custodia et amore partium non potest. 8. Ne uiperas quidem et natrices et si qua morsu aut ictu nocent effligeremus, si in reliquum mansuefacere possemus aut efficere ne nobis aliisue periculo essent; ergo ne homini quidem nocebimus quia peccauit, sed ne peccet, nec umquam ad praeteritum sed ad futurum poena referetur; non enim irascitur sed cauet. Nam si puniendus est cuicumque prauum maleficumque ingenium est, poena neminem excipiet.

XXXII.

1. 'At enim ira habet aliquam uoluptatem et dulce est dolorem reddere.' Minime; non enim ut in beneficiis honestum est merita meritis repensare, ita iniurias iniuriis. Illic uinci turpe est, hic uincere. Inhumanum uerbum est et quidem pro iusto receptum ultio [et talio]. Non multum differt nisi ordine qui dolorem regerit: tantum excusatius peccat. 2. M. Catonem ignorans in balineo quidam percussit imprudens; quis enim illi sciens faceret iniuriam? Postea satis facienti Cato, 'non memini' inquit 'me percussum.' Melius putauit non agnoscere quam uindicare. 3. 'Nihil' inquis 'illi post tantam petulantiam mali factum est?' Immo multum boni: coepit Catonem nosse. Magni animi est iniurias despicere; ultionis contumeliosissimum genus est non esse uisum dignum ex quo peteretur ultio. Multi leues iniurias altius sibi demisere dum uindicant: ille magnus et nobilis qui more magnae ferae latratus minutorum canum securus exaudit.

XXXIII.

1. 'Minus' inquit 'contemnemur, si uindicauerimus iniuriam.' Si tamquam ad remedium uenimus, sine ira ueniamus, non quasi dulce sit uindicari, sed quasi utile; saepe autem satius fuit dissimulare quam ulcisci. Potentiorum iniuriae hilari uultu, non patienter tantum ferendae sunt: facient iterum, si se fecisse crediderint. Hoc habent pessimum animi magna fortuna insolentes: quos laeserunt et oderunt.

2. Notissima uox est eius qui in cultu regum consenuerat: cum illum quidam interrogaret quomodo rarissimam rem in aula consecutus esset, senectutem, 'iniurias' inquit 'accipiendo et gratias agendo'. Saepe adeo iniuriam uindicare non expedit ut ne fateri quidem expediat.

3. C. Caesar Pastoris splendidi equitis Romani filium cum in custodia habuisset munditiis eius et cultioribus capillis offensus, rogante patre ut salutem sibi filii concederet, quasi de supplicio admonitus duci protinus iussit; ne tamen omnia inhumane faceret aduersum patrem, ad cenam illum eo die inuitauit.

4. Venit Pastor uultu nihil exprobrante. Propinauit illi Caesar heminam et posuit illi custodem: perdurauit miser, non aliter quam si fili sanguinem biberet. Vnguentum et coronas misit et obseruare iussit an sumeret: sumpsit. Eo die quo filium extulerat, immo quo non extulerat, iacebat conuiuia centesimus et potiones uix honestas natalibus liberorum podagricus senex hauriebat, cum interim non lacrimam emisit, non dolorem aliquo signo erumpere passus est; cenauit tamquam pro filio exorasset.

5. Quaeris quare? habebat alterum. Quid ille Priamus? Non dissimulauit iram et regis genua complexus est, funestam perfusamque cruore fili manum ad os suum rettulit, cenauit? Sed tamen sine unguento, sine coronis, et illum hostis saeuissimus multis solaciis ut cibum caperet hortatus est, non ut pocula ingentia super caput posito custode siccaret.

6. Contempsissem Romanum patrem, si sibi timuisset: nunc iram compescuit pietas. Dignus fuit cui permetteretur a conuiuio ad ossa fili legenda discedere; ne hoc quidem permisit benignus interim et comis adulescens: propinationibus senem crebris, ut cura leniretur admonens, lacescebat. Contra ille se laetum et oblitum quid eo actum esset die praestitit; perierat alter filius, si carnifici conuiuia non placuisset.

XXXIV.

1. Ergo ira abstinendum est, siue par est qui lacesendus est siue superior siue inferior. Cum pare contendere anceps est, cum superiore furiosum, cum inferiore sordidum. Pusilli hominis et miseri est repetere mordentem: mures formicaeque, si manum admoueris, ora conuertunt; inbecillia se laedi putant, si tanguntur. 2. Faciet nos mitiores, si cogitauerimus quid aliquando nobis profuerit ille cui irascimur, et meritis offensa redimetur. Illud quoque occurrat, quantum nobis commendationis allatura sit clementiae fama, quam multos uenia amicos utiles fecerit. 3. Ne irascamur inimicorum et hostium liberis: inter Sullanae crudelitatis exempla est quod ab re publica liberos proscriptorum summouit; nihil est iniquius quam aliquem heredem paterni odii fieri. 4. Cogitemus, quotiens ad ignoscendum difficiles erimus, an expediat nobis omnes inexorabiles esse. Quam saepe ueniam qui negauit petit! Quam saepe eius pedibus aduolutus est quem a suis reppulit! Quid est gloriosius quam iram amicitia mutare? Quos populus Romanus fideliores habet socios quam quos habuit pertinacissimos hostes? Quod hodie esset imperium, nisi salubris prouidentia uictos permiscuisset uictoribus? 5. Irascetur aliquis: tu contra beneficiis prouoca; cadit statim simulas ab altera parte deserta; nisi paria non pugnant. Sed utrimque certabit ira, concurratur: ille est melior qui prior pedem rettulit, uictus est qui uicit. Percussit te: recede; referiendo enim et occasionem saepius feriendi dabis et excusationem; non poteris reuelli, cum uoles.

XXXV.

1. Numquid uelit quisquam tam grauiter hostem ferire ut relinquit manum in uulnere et se ab ictu reuocare non possit? Atqui tale ira telum est: uix retrahitur. Arma nobis expedita prospicimus, gladium commodum et habilem: non uitabimus impetus animi ~hos~ graues et onerosos et inreuocabiles? 2. Ea demum uelocitas placet quae ubi iussa est uestigium sistit nec ultra destinata procurrat flectique et cursu ad gradum reduci potest; aegros scimus neruos esse, ubi inuitis nobis mouentur; senex aut infirmi corporis est qui cum ambulare uult currit: animi motus eos putemus sanissimos ualidissimosque qui nostro arbitrio ibunt, non suo ferentur.

3. Nihil tamen aequè profuerit quam primum intueri deformitatem rei, deinde periculum. Non est ullius adfectus facies turbatio: pulcherrima ora foedauit, toruos uultus ex tranquillissimis reddit; linquit decor omnis iratos, et siue amictus illis compositus est ad legem, trahent uestem omnemque curam sui effundent, siue capillorum natura uel arte iacentium non informis habitus, cum animo inhorrescunt; tumescunt uenae; concutietur crebro spiritus pectus, rabida uocis eruptio colla distendet; tum artus trepidi, inquietae manus, totius corporis fluctuatio. 4. Qualem intus putas esse animum cuius extra imago tam foeda est? Quanto illi intra pectus terribilior uultus est, acrior spiritus, intentior impetus, rupturus se nisi eruperit! 5. Quales sunt hostium uel ferarum caede madentium aut ad caedem euntium aspectus, qualia poetae inferna monstra finxerunt succincta serpentibus et igneo flatu, quales ad bella excitanda discordiamque in populos diuidendam pacemque lacerandam deae taeterrimae inferum exeunt, talem nobis iram figuremus, flamma lumina ardentia, sibilo mugituque et gemitu et stridore et si qua his inuisior uox est perstreptentem, tela manu utraque quatientem (neque enim illi se tegere curae est), toruam cruentamque et cicatricosam et uerberibus suis liuidam, incessus uesani, offusam multa caligine, incursitantem uastantem fugantemque et omnium odio laborantem, sui maxime, si aliter nocere non possit, terras maria caelum ruere cupientem, infestam pariter inuisamque. 6. Vel, si uidetur, sit qualis apud uates nostros est

sanguineum quatiens dextra Bellona flagellum

aut

scissa gaudens uadit Discordia palla

aut si qua magis dira facies excogitari diri adfectus potest.

XXXVI.

1. Quibusdam, ut ait Sextius, iratis profuit aspexisse speculum. Perturbauit illos tanta mutatio sui; uelut in rem praesentem adducti non agnouerunt se: et quantum ex uera deformitate imago illa speculo repercussa reddebat! 2. Animus si ostendi et si in ulla materia perlucere posset, intuentis confunderet ater maculosusque et aestuans et distortus et tumidus. Nunc quoque tanta deformitas eius est per ossa carnesque et tot impedimenta effluentis: quid si nudus ostenderetur? 3. Speculo quidem neminem deterritum ab ira credideris. Quid ergo? qui ad speculum uenerat ut se mutaret, iam mutauerat: iratis quidem nulla est formosior effigies quam atrox et horrida qualesque esse etiam uideri uolunt.

4. Magis illud uidendum est, quam multis ira per se nocuerit. Alii nimio feruore rupere uenas et sanguinem supra uires elatus clamor egressit et luminum suffudit aciem in oculos uehementius umor egestus et in morbos aegri reccidere. Nulla celerior ad insaniam uia est. 5. Multi itaque continuauerunt irae furorem nec quam expulerant mentem umquam receperunt: Aiace in mortem egit furor, in furorem ira. Mortem liberis, egestatem sibi, ruinam domui inprecantur, et irasci se negant non minus quam insanire furiosi. Amicissimis hostes uitandique carissimis, legum nisi qua nocent immemores, ad minima mobiles, non sermone, non officio adiri faciles, per uim omnia gerunt, gladiis et pugnare parati et incumbere.

6. Maximum enim illos malum cepit et omnia exsuperans uitia. Alia paulatim intrant, repentina et uniuersa uis huius est. Omnis denique alios adfectus sibi subicit: amorem ardentissimum uincit, transfoderunt itaque amata corpora et in eorum quos occiderant iacuerunt complexibus; auaritiam, durissimum malum minimeque flexibile, ira calcauit, adactam opes suas spargere et domui rebusque in unum conlatis inicere ignem. Quid? non ambitiosus magno aestimata proiecit insignia honoremque delatum reppulit? Nullus adfectus est in quem non ira dominetur.

LIBER III

I.

1. Quod maxime desiderasti, Nouate, nunc facere temptabimus, iram excidere animis aut certe refrenare et impetus eius inhibere. Id aliquando palam aperteque faciendum est, ubi minor uis mali patitur, aliquando ex occulto, ubi nimium ardet omnique impedimento exasperatur et crescit; refert quantas uires quamque integras habeat, utrum reuerberanda et agenda retro sit an cedere ei debeamus dum tempestas prima desaeuit, ne remedia ipsa secum ferat. 2. Consilium pro moribus cuiusque capiendum erit; quosdam enim preces uincunt, quidam insultant instantque summissis, quosdam terrendo placabimus; alios obiurgatio, alios confessio, alios pudor coepto deiecit, alios mora, lentum praecipitis mali remedium, ad quod nouissime descendendum est. 3. Ceteri enim adfectus dilationem recipiunt et curari tardius possunt, huius incitata et se ipsa rapiens uiolentia non paulatim procedit sed dum incipit tota est; nec aliorum more uitiorum sollicitat animos, sed abducit et inpotentes sui cupidosque uel communis mali exagitat, nec in ea tantum in quae destinauit sed in occurrentia obiter furit. 4. Cetera uitia inpellunt animos, ira praecipitat. Etiam si resistere contra adfectus suos non licet, at certe adfectibus ipsis licet stare: haec, non secus quam fulmina procellaeque et si qua alia inreuocabilia sunt quia non eunt sed cadunt, uim suam magis ac magis tendit. 5. Alia uitia a ratione, hoc a sanitate desciscit; alia accessus lenes habent et incrementa fallentia: in iram deiectus animorum est. Nulla itaque res urget magis attonita et in uires suas prona et siue successit superba, siue frustratur insana; ne repulsa quidem in taedium acta, ubi aduersarium fortuna subduxit, in se ipsa morsus suos uertit. Nec refert quantum sit ex quo surrexerit; ex leuissimis enim in maxima euadit.

II.

1. Nullam transit aetatem, nullum hominum genus excipit. Quaedam gentes beneficio egestatis non nouere luxuriam; quaedam, quia exercitae et uagae sunt, effugere pigritiam; quibus incultus mos agrestisque uita est, circumscriptio ignota est et fraus et quodcumque in foro malum nascitur: nulla gens est quam non ira instiget, tam inter Graios quam inter barbaros potens, non minus perniciose leges metuentibus quam quibus iura distinguit modus uirium. 2. Denique cetera singulos corripiunt, hic unus adfectus est qui interdum publice concipitur. Numquam populus uniuersus feminae amore flagrauit nec in pecuniam aut lucrum tota ciuitas spem suam misit; ambitio uiritim singulos occupat, in potentia non est malum publicum; saepe in iram uno agmine itum est. 3. Viri feminae, senes pueri, principes uulgiusque consensere, et tota multitudo paucissimis uerbis concitata ipsum concitatorem antecessit; ad arma protinus ignesque discursum est et indicta finitimis bella aut gesta cum ciuibus; 4. totae cum stirpe omni crematae domus, et modo eloquio fauorabili habitus in multo honore iram suae contionis excepit; in imperatorem suum legiones pila torserunt; dissedit plebs tota cum patribus; publicum consilium senatus non expectatis dilectibus nec nominato imperatore subitos irae suae duces legit ac per tecta urbis nobiles consecratos uiros supplicium manu sumpsit; 5. uiolatae legationes rupto iure gentium rabiesque infanda ciuitatem tulit, nec datum tempus quo resideret tumor publicus, sed deductae protinus classes et oneratae tumultuario milite; sine more, sine auspiciis populus ductu irae suae egressus fortuita raptaque pro armis gessit, deinde magna clade temeritatem audacis irae luit. 6. Hic barbaris forte inuentibus in bella exitus est: cum mobiles animos species iniuriae perculit, aguntur statim et qua dolor trahit ruinae modo legionibus incidunt, incompositi interriti incauti, pericula adpetentes sua; gaudent feriri et instare ferro et tela corpore urgere et per suum uulnus exire.

III.

1. 'Non est' inquis 'dubium quin magna ista et pestifera sit uis: ideo quemadmodum sanari debeat monstra.' Atqui, ut in prioribus libris dixi, stat Aristoteles defensor irae et uetat illam nobis exsecari: calcar ait esse uirtutis, hac erepta inermem animum et ad conatus magnos pigrum inertemque fieri. 2. Necessarium est itaque foeditatem eius ac feritatem coarguere et ante oculis ponere quantum monstri sit homo in hominem furens quantoque impetu ruat non sine pernicie sua perniciosus et ea deprimens quae mergi nisi cum mergente non possunt. 3. Quid ergo? sanum hunc aliquis uocat qui uelut tempestate correptus non it sed agitur et furenti malo seruit, nec mandat ultionem suam sed ipse eius exactor animo simul ac manu saeuit, carissimorum eorumque quae mox amissa fleturus est carnifex? 4. Hunc aliquis adfectum uirtuti adiutorem comitemque dat, consilia sine quibus uirtus nihil gerit obturbantem? Caducae sinistraeque sunt uires et in malum suum ualidae in quas aegrum morbus et accessio erexit. 5. Non est ergo quod me putes tempus in superuacuis consumere, quod iram, quasi dubiae apud homines opinionis sit, infamem, cum sit aliquis et quidem de inlustribus philosophis qui illi indicat operas et tamquam utilem ac spiritus subministrantem in proelia, in actus rerum, ad omne quodcumque calore aliquo gerendum est uocet. 6. Ne quem fallat tamquam aliquo tempore, aliquo loco profutura, ostendenda est rabies eius effrenata et attonita apparatusque illi reddendus est suus, eculei et fidiculae et ergastula et cruces et circumdati defossis corporibus ignes et cadauera quoque trahens uncus, uaria uinculorum genera, uaria poenarum, lacerationes membrorum, inscriptiones frontis et bestiarum immanium caueae: inter haec instrumenta conlocetur ira dirum quiddam atque horridum stridens, omnibus per quae furit taetrior.

IV.

1. Vt de ceteris dubium sit, nulli certe adfectui peior est uultus, quem in prioribus libris descripsimus: asperum et acrem et nunc subducto retrorsus sanguine fugatoque pallentem, nunc in os omni calore ac spiritu uerso subrubicundum et similem cruento, uenis tumentibus, oculis nunc trepidis et exilientibus, nunc in uno obtutu defixis et haerentibus; 2. adice dentium inter se arietatorum ut aliquem esse cupientium non alium sonum quam est apris tela sua adtritu acuentibus; adice articulorum crepitum cum se ipsae manus frangunt et pulsatum saepius pectus, anhelitus crebros tractosque altius gemitus, instabile corpus, incerta uerba subitis exclamationibus, tremantia labra interdumque compressa et dirum quiddam exsibilantia. 3. Ferarum mehercules, siue illas fames agitat siue infixum uisceribus ferrum, minus taetra facies est, etiam cum uenatorem suum semianimes morsu ultimo petunt, quam hominis ira flagrantis. Age, si exaudire uoces ac minas uacet, qualia excarnificati animi uerba sunt!

4. Nonne reuocare se quisque ab ira uolet, cum intellexerit illam a suo primum malo incipere? Non uis ergo admoneam eos qui iram <in> summa potentia exercent et argumentum uirium existimant et in magnis magnae fortunae bonis ponunt paratam ultionem, quam non sit potens, immo ne liber quidem dici possit irae suae captius? 5. Non uis admoneam, quo diligentior quisque sit et ipse se circumspiciat, alia animi mala ad pessimos quosque pertinere, iracundiam etiam eruditis hominibus et in alia sanis inrepere? adeo ut quidam simplicitatis indicium iracundiam dicant et uulgo credatur facillimus quisque huic <maxime> obnoxius.

V.

1. 'Quorsus' inquis 'hoc pertinet?' Vt nemo se iudicet tutum ab illa, cum lenes quoque natura et placidos in saeuitiam ac uiolentiam euocet. Quemadmodum aduersus pestilentiam nihil prodest firmitas corporis et diligens ualetudinis cura (promiscue enim inbecilla robustaque inuadit), ita ab ira tam inquietis moribus periculum est quam compositis et remissis, quibus eo turpior ac periculosior est quo plus in illis mutat. 2. Sed cum primum sit non irasci, secundum desinere, tertium alienae quoque irae mederi, dicam primum quemadmodum in iram non incidamus, deinde quemadmodum nos ab illa liberemus, nouissime quemadmodum irascentem retineamus placemusque et ad sanitatem reducamus.

3. Ne irascamur praestabimus, si omnia uitia irae nobis subinde proposuerimus et illam bene aestimauerimus. Accusanda est apud nos, damnanda; perscrutanda eius mala et in medium protrahenda sunt; ut qualis sit appareat, comparanda cum pessimis est. 4. Auaritia acquirit et contrahit, quo aliquis melior utatur: ira inpendit, paucis gratuita est. Iracundus dominus quot in fugam seruos egit, quot in mortem! Quanto plus irascendo quam id erat propter quod irascebatur amisit! Ira patri luctum, marito diuortium attulit, magistratui odium, candidato repulsam. 5. Peior est quam luxuria, quoniam illa sua uoluptate fruitur, haec alieno dolore. Vincit malignitatem et inuidiam; illae enim infelicem fieri uolunt, haec facere; illae fortuitis malis delectantur, haec non potest expectare fortunam: nocere ei quem odit, non noceri uult. 6. Nihil est simultatibus grauius: has ira conciliat. Nihil est bello funestius: in hoc potentium ira prorumpit; ceterum etiam illa plebeia ira et priuata inerme et sine uiribus bellum est. Praeterea ira, ut seponamus quae mox secutura sunt, damna insidias perpetuam ex certaminibus mutuis sollicitudinem, dat poenas dum exigit; naturam hominis eiurat: illa in amorem hortatur, haec in odium; illa prodesse iubet, haec nocere. 7. Adice quod, cum indignatio eius a nimio sui suspectu ueniat, ut animosa uideatur, pusilla est et angusta; nemo enim non eo a quo se contemptum iudicat minor est. At ille ingens animus et uerus aestimator sui non uindicat iniuriam, quia non sentit. 8. Vt tela a duro

resiliunt et cum dolore caedentis solida feriuntur, ita nulla magnum
animum iniuria ad sensum sui adducit, fragilior eo quod petit.
Quanto pulchrius uelut nulli penetrabilem telo omnis iniurias
contumeliasque respuere! Ultio doloris confessio est; non est magnus
animus quem incuruat iniuria. Aut potentior te aut inbecillior laesit:
si inbecillior, parce illi, si potentior, tibi.

VI.

1. Nullum est argumentum magnitudinis certius quam nihil posse quo instigeris accidere. Pars superior mundi et ordinatio ac propinqua sideribus nec in nubem cogitur nec in tempestatem inpellitur nec uersatur in turbinem; omni tumultu caret: inferiora fulminantur. Eodem modo sublimis animus, quietus semper et in statione tranquilla conlocatus, omnia infra se premens quibus ira contrahitur, modestus et uenerabilis est et dispositus; quorum nihil inuenies in irato. 2. Quis enim traditus dolori et furens non primam reiecit uerecundiam? Quis impetu turbidus et in aliquem ruens non quidquid in se uenerandi habuit abiecit? Cui officiorum numerus aut ordo constitit incitato? Quis linguae temperauit? Quis ullam partem corporis tenuit? Quis se regere potuit inmissum? 3. Proderit nobis illud Democriti salutare praeceptum, quo monstratur tranquillitas si neque priuatim neque publice multa aut maiora uiribus nostris egerimus. Numquam tam feliciter in multa discurrenti negotia dies transit ut non aut ex homine aut ex re offensa nascatur quae animum in iras paret. 4. Quemadmodum per frequentia urbis loca properanti in multos incursitandum est et aliubi labi necesse est, aliubi retineri, aliubi respergi, ita in hoc uitae actu dissipato et uago multa impedimenta, multae querellae incidunt: alius spem nostram fefellit, alius distulit, alius intercept; non ex destinato proposita fluxerunt. 5. Nulli fortuna tam dedita est ut multa temptanti ubique respondeat; sequitur ergo ut is cui contra quam proposuerat aliqua cesserunt inpatiens hominum rerumque sit, ex leuissimis causis irascatur nunc personae, nunc negotio, nunc loco, nunc fortunae, nunc sibi. 6. Itaque ut quietus possit esse animus, non est iactandus nec multarum, ut dixi, rerum actu fatigandus nec magnarum supraque uires adpetitarum. Facile est leuia aptare ceruicibus et in hanc aut illam partem transferre sine lapsu, at quae alienis in nos manibus inposita aegre sustinemus, uicti in proximo effundimus; etiam dum stamus sub sarcina, inpares oneri uacillamus.

VII.

1. Idem accidere in rebus ciuilibus ac domesticis scias. Negotia expedita et habilia sequuntur actorem, ingentia et supra mensuram gerentis nec dant se facile et, si occupata sunt, premunt atque abducunt administrantem tenerique iam uisa cum ipso cadunt: ita fit ut frequenter inrita sit eius uoluntas qui non quae facilia sunt adgreditur, sed uult facilia esse quae adgressus est. 2. Quotiens aliquid conaberis, te simul et ea quae paras quibusque pararis ipse metire; faciet enim te asperum paenitentia operis infecti. Hoc interest utrum quis feruidi sit ingenii an frigidi atque humilis: generoso repulsa iram exprimet, languido inertique tristitiam. Ergo actiones nostrae nec paruae sint nec audaces et improbae, in uicinum spes exeat, nihil conemur quod mox adepti quoque successisse miremur.

VIII.

1. Demus operam ne accipiamus iniuriam, quia ferre nescimus. Cum placidissimo et facillimo et minime anxio morosoque uiuendum est; sumuntur a conuersantibus mores et ut quaedam in contactos corporis uitia transiliunt, ita animus mala sua proximis tradit: ebriosus conuictores in amorem meri traxit, inpudicorum coetus fortem quoque et silice natum uirum emolliit, auaritia in proximos uirus suum transtulit. 2. Eadem ex diuerso ratio uirtutum est, ut omne quod secum habent mitigent; nec tam ualetudini profuit utilis regio et salubrius caelum quam animis parum firmis in turba meliore uersari. 3. Quae res quantum possit intelleges, si uideris feras quoque conuictu nostro mansuescere nullique etiam immani bestiae uim suam permanere, si hominis contubernium diu passa est: retunditur omnis asperitas paulatimque inter placida dediscitur. Accedit huc quod non tantum exemplo melior fit qui cum quietis hominibus uiuit, sed quod causas irascendi non inuenit nec uitium suum exercet. Fugere itaque debet omnis quos irritaturos iracundiam sciet. 'Qui sunt' inquit 'isti?' 4. Multi ex uariis causis idem facturi: offendet te superbus contemptu, dicax contumelia, petulans iniuria, liuidus malignitate, pugnax contentione, uentosus et mendax uanitate; non feres a suspicioso timeri, a pertinace uinci, a delicato fastidiri. 5. Elige simplices faciles moderatos, qui iram tuam nec euocent et ferant; magis adhuc proderunt summissi et humani et dulces, non tamen usque in adulationem, nam iracundos nimia adsentatio offendit: erat certe amicus noster uir bonus sed irae paratioris, cui non magis tutum erat blandiri quam male dicere. 6. Caelium oratorem fuisse iracundissimum constat. Cum quo, ut aiunt, cenabat in cubiculo lectae patientiae cliens, sed difficile erat illi in copulam coniecto rixam eius cui cohaerebat effugere; optimum iudicauit quidquid dixisset sequi et secundas agere. Non tulit Caelius adsentientem et exclamauit, 'dic aliquid contra, ut duo simus!' Sed ille quoque, quod non irasceret iratus, cito sine aduersario desit. 7. Eligamus ergo uel hos potius, si conscii nobis iracundiae sumus, qui uultum nostrum ac sermonem sequantur: facient quidem nos delicatos et in malam consuetudinem inducent nihil contra

uoluntatem audiendi, sed proderit uitio suo interuallum et quietem dare. Difficiles quoque et indomiti natura blandientem ferent: nihil asperum tetricumque palpanti est. 8. Quotiens disputatio longior et pugnacior erit, in prima resistamus, antequam robur accipiat: alit se ipsa contentio et demissos altius tenet; facilius est se a certamine abstinere quam abducere.

IX.

1. Studia quoque grauiora iracundis omittenda sunt aut certe citra lassitudinem exercenda, et animus non inter dura uersandus, sed artibus amoenis tradendus: lectio illum carminum obleniat et historia fabulis detineat; mollius delicatiusque tractetur. 2. Pythagoras perturbationes animi lyra componebat; quis autem ignorat lituos et tubas concitamenta esse, sicut quosdam cantus blandimenta quibus mens resoluatur? Confusis oculis prosunt uirentia et quibusdam coloribus infirma acies adquiescit, quorundam splendore praestringitur: sic mentes aegras studia laeta permulcent. 3. Forum aduocationes iudicia fugere debemus et omnia quae exulcerant uitium, aequae cauere lassitudinem corporis; consumit enim quidquid in nobis mite placidumque est et acria concitat. 4. Ideo quibus stomachus suspectus est, processuri ad res agendas maioris negotii bilem cibo temperant, quam maxime mouet fatigatio, siue quia calorem in media compellit et nocet sanguini cursumque eius uenis laborantibus sistit, siue quia corpus attenuatum et infirmum incumbit animo; certe ob eandem causam iracundiores sunt uoletudine aut aetate fessi. Fames quoque et sitis ex isdem causis uitanda est: exasperat et incendit animos. 5. Vetus dictum est a lasso rixam quaeri; aequae autem et ab esuriente et a sitiante et ab omni homine quem aliqua res urit. Nam ut ulcera ad leuem tactum, deinde etiam ad suspicionem tactus condolescunt, ita animus adfectus minimis offenditur, adeo ut quosdam salutatio et epistula et oratio et interrogatio in litem euocent: numquam sine querella aegra tanguntur.

X.

1. Optimum est itaque ad primum mali sensum mederi sibi, tum uerbis quoque suis minimum libertatis dare et inhibere impetum. 2. Facile est autem adfectus suos, cum primum oriuntur, deprehendere: morborum signa praecurrunt. Quemadmodum tempestatis ac pluuiæ ante ipsas notæ ueniunt, ita iræ amoris omniumque istarum procellarum animos uexantium sunt quædam prænuntia. 3. Qui comitali uitio solent corripiri iam aduentare ualetudinem intellegunt, si calor summa deseruit et incertum lumen neruorumque trepidatio est, si memoria sublabitur caputque uersatur; solitis itaque remediis incipientem causam occupant, et odore gustuque quidquid est quod alienat animos repellitur, aut fomentis contra frigus rigoremque pugnatur; aut, si parum medicina profecit, uitauerunt turbam et sine teste ceciderunt. 4. Prodest morbum suum nosse et uires eius antequam spatientur opprimere. Videamus quid sit quod nos maxime concitet: alium uerborum, alium rerum contumeliæ mouent; hic uult nobilitati, hic formæ suæ parci; hic elegantissimus haberi cupit, ille doctissimus; hic superbiæ inpatiens est, hic contumaciæ; ille seruos non putat dignos quibus irascatur, hic intra domum saeuus est, foris mitis; ille rogari iniuriam iudicat, hic non rogari contumeliam. Non omnes ab eadem parte feriuntur; scire itaque oportet quid in te inbecillum sit, ut id maxime protegas.

XI.

1. Non expedit omnia uidere, omnia audire. Multae nos iniuriae transeant, ex quibus plerasque non accipit qui nescit. Non uis esse iracundus? ne fueris curiosus. Qui inquit quid in se dictum sit, qui malignos sermones etiam si secreto habiti sunt eruit, se ipse inquietat. Quaedam interpretatio eo perducit ut uideantur iniuriae; itaque alia differenda sunt, alia deridenda, alia donanda. 2. Circumscribenda multis modis ira est; pleraque in lusum iocumque uertantur. Socraten aiunt colapho percussum nihil amplius dixisse quam molestum esse quod nescirent homines quando cum galea prodire deberent. 3. Non quemadmodum facta sit iniuria refert, sed quemadmodum lata; nec uideo quare difficilis sit moderatio, cum sciam tyrannorum quoque tumida et fortuna et licentia ingenia familiarem sibi saeuitiam repressisse. 4. Pisistratum certe, Atheniensium tyrannum, memoriae proditur, cum multa in crudelitatem eius ebrius conuiuia dixisset nec deessent qui uellent manus ei commodare et alius hinc alius illinc faces subderent, placido animo tulisse et hoc inritantibus respondisse, non magis illi se suscensere quam si quis obligatis oculis in se incucurrisset.

XII.

1. Magna pars querellas manu fecit aut falsa suspicando aut leuia adgrauando. Saepe ad nos ira uenit, saepius nos ad illam. Quae numquam arcessenda est: etiam cum incidit, reiciatur. 2. Nemo dicit sibi, 'hoc propter quod irascor aut feci aut fecisse potui'; nemo animum facientis sed ipsum aestimat factum: atqui ille intuendus est, uoluerit an inciderit, coactus sit an deceptus, odium secutus sit an praemium, sibi morem gesserit an manum alteri commodauerit. Aliquid aetas peccantis facit, aliquid fortuna, ut ferre ac pati aut humanum sit aut utile. 3. Eo nos loco constituamus quo ille est cui irascimur: nunc facit nos iracundos iniqua nostri aestimatio et quae facere uellemus pati nolumus. 4. Nemo se differt; atqui maximum remedium irae dilatio est, ut primus eius feruor relanguescat et caligo quae premit mentem aut residat aut minus densa sit. Quaedam ex his quae te praecipitem ferebant hora, non tantum dies molliet, quaedam ex toto euanescent; si nihil egerit petita aduocatio, apparebit iam iudicium esse, non iram. Quidquid uoles quale sit scire, tempori trade: nihil diligenter in fluctu cernitur. 5. Non potuit inpetrare a se Plato tempus, cum seruo suo irasceretur, sed ponere illum statim tunicam et praebere scapulas uerberibus iussit, sua manu ipse caesurus; postquam intellexit irasci se, sicut sustulerat manum suspensam detinebat et stabat percussuro similis; interrogatus deinde ab amico qui forte interuenerat quid ageret, 'exigo' inquit 'poenas ab homine iracundo.' 6. Velut stupens gestum illum saeuitori deformem sapienti uiro seruabat, oblitus iam serui, quia alium quem potius castigaret inuenerat. Itaque abstulit sibi in suos potestatem et ob peccatum quoddam commotior 'tu,' inquit 'Speusippe, seruulum istum uerberibus obiurga; nam ego irascor.' 7. Ob hoc non cecidit propter quod alius cecidisset. 'Irascor' inquit; 'plus faciam quam oportet, libentius faciam: non sit iste seruus in eius potestate qui in sua non est.' Aliquis uult irato committi ultionem, cum Plato sibi ipse imperium abrogauerit? Nihil tibi liceat dum irasceris. Quare? quia uis omnia licere.

XIII.

1. Pugna tecum ipse: si <uis> uincere iram, non potest te illa. Incipis uincere, si absconditur, si illi exitus non datur. Signa eius obruamus et illam quantum fieri potest occultam secretamque teneamus. 2. Cum magna id nostra molestia fiet (cupit enim exilire et incendere oculos et mutare faciem), sed si eminere illi extra nos licuit, supra nos est. In imo pectoris secessu recondatur, feraturque, non ferat. Immo in contrarium omnia eius indicia flectamus: uultus remittatur, uox lenior sit, gradus lentior; paulatim cum exterioribus interiora formantur. 3. In Socrate irae signum erat uocem summittere, loqui parcius; apparebat tunc illum sibi obstare. Deprendebatur itaque a familiaribus et coarguebatur, nec erat illi exprobratio latitantis irae ingrata. Quidni gauderet quod iram suam multi intellegerent, nemo sentiret? Sensissent autem, nisi ius amicis obiurgandi se dedisset, sicut ipse sibi in amicos sumpserat. 4. Quanto magis hoc nobis faciendum est! Rogemus amicissimum quemque ut tunc maxime libertate aduersus nos utatur cum minime illam pati poterimus, nec adsentiat irae nostrae; contra [nos] potens malum et apud nos gratiosum, dum consipimus, dum nostri sumus, aduocemus. 5. Qui uinum male ferunt et ebrietatis suae temeritatem ac petulantiam metuunt, mandant suis ut e conuiuio auferantur; intemperantiam in morbo suam experti parere ipsis in aduersa uoletudine uetant. 6. Optimum est notis utiis inpedimenta prospicere et ante omnia ita componere animum ut etiam grauissimis rebus subitisque concussus iram aut non sentiat aut magnitudine inopinatae iniuriae exortam in altum retrahat nec dolorem suum profiteatur. 7. Id fieri posse apparebit, si pauca ex turba ingenti exempla protulero, ex quibus utrumque discere licet, quantum mali habeat ira ubi hominum praepotentium potestate tota utitur, quantum sibi imperare possit ubi metu maiore compressa est.

XIV.

1. Cambysen regem nimis deditum uino Praexaspes unus ex carissimis monebat ut parcius biberet, turpem esse dicens ebrietatem in rege, quem omnium oculi auresque sequerentur. Ad haec ille 'ut scias' inquit 'quemadmodum numquam excidam mihi, adprobabo iam et oculos post uinum in officio esse et manus.' 2. Bibit deinde liberalius quam alias capacioribus scyphis et iam grauis ac uinolentus obiurgatoris sui filium procedere ultra limen iubet adleuataque super caput sinistra manu stare. Tunc intendit arcum et ipsum cor adulescentis (id enim petere se dixerat) figit rescissoque pectore haerens in ipso corde spiculum ostendit ac respiciens patrem interrogauit satisne certam haberet manum. At ille negauit Apollinem potuisse certius mittere. 3. Di illum male perdant animo magis quam condicione mancipium! eius rei laudator fuit cuius nimis erat spectatorem fuisse. Occasionem blanditiarum putauit pectus filii in duas partes diductum et cor sub uulnere palpitans: controuersiam illi facere de gloria debuit et reuocare iactum, ut regi liberet in ipso patre certio rem manum ostendere. 4. O regem cruentum! o dignum in quem omnium suorum arcus uerterentur! Cum execrati fuerimus illum conuiuia suppliciis funeribusque soluentem, tamen sceleratius telum illud laudatum est quam missum. Videbimus quomodo se pater gerere debuerit stans super cadauer filii sui caedemque illam cuius et testis fuerat et causa: id de quo nunc agitur apparet, iram suppressi posse. 5. Non male dixit regi, nullum emisit ne calamitosi quidem uerbum, cum aequè cor suum quam filii transfixum uideret. Potest dici merito deuorasse uerba; nam si quid tamquam iratus dixisset, nihil tamquam pater facere potuisset. 6. Potest, inquam, uideri sapientius se in illo casu gessisse quam cum de potandi modo praeciperet <ei> quem satius erat uinum quam sanguinem bibere, cuius manus poculis occupari pax erat. Accessit itaque ad numerum eorum qui magnis cladibus ostenderunt quanti constarent regum amicis bona consilia.

XV.

1. Non dubito quin Harpagus quoque tale aliquid regi suo Persarumque suaserit, quo offensus liberos illi epulandos adposuit et subinde quaesiit an placeret conditura; deinde, ut satis illum plenum malis suis uidit, adferri capita illorum iussit et quomodo esset acceptus interrogauit. Non defuerunt misero uerba, non os concurrat: ‘apud regem’ inquit ‘omnis cena iucunda est.’ Quid hac adulatione profecit? ne ad reliquias inuitaretur. 2. Non ueto patrem damnare regis sui factum, non ueto quaerere dignam tam truci portento poenam, sed hoc interim colligo, posse etiam ex ingentibus malis nascentem iram abscondi et ad uerba contraria sibi cogi. 3. Necessaria ista est doloris refrenatio, utique hoc sortitis uitae genus et ad regiam adhibitis mensam: sic estur apud illos, sic bibitur, sic respondetur; funeribus suis adridendum est. An tanti sit uita uidebimus: alia ista quaestio est. Non consolabimur tam triste ergastulum, non adhortabimur ferre imperia carnificum: ostendemus in omni seruitute apertam libertati uiam. Is aeger animo et suo uitio miser est, cui miserias finire secum licet. 4. Dicam et illi qui in regem incidit sagittis pectora amicorum petentem et illi cuius dominus liberorum uisceribus patres saturat: ‘quid gemis, demens? Quid expectas ut te aut hostis aliquis per exitium gentis tuae uindictet aut rex a longinquo potens aduolet? quocumque respexeris, ibi malorum finis est. Vides illum praecipitem locum? illac ad libertatem descenditur. Vides illud mare, illud flumen, illum puteum? libertas illic in imo sedet. Vides illam arborem breuem retorridam infelicem? pendet inde libertas. Vides iugulum tuum, guttur tuum, cor tuum? effugia seruitutis sunt. Nimis tibi operosos exitus monstro et multum animi ac roboris exigentes? Quaeris quod sit ad libertatem iter? quaelibet in corpore tuo uena.’

XVI.

1. Quam diu quidem nihil tam intolerabile nobis uidetur ut nos expellat e uita, iram, in quocumque erimus statu, remoueamus. Perniciosa est seruientibus; omnis enim indignatio in tormentum suum proficit et imperia grauiora sentit quo contumacius patitur. Sic laqueos fera dum iactat adstringit; sic aues uiscum, dum trepidantes excutiunt, plumis omnibus inlinunt. Nullum tam artum est iugum quod non minus laedat ducentem quam repugnantem: unum est leuamentum malorum ingentium, pati et necessitatibus suis obsequi.

2. Sed cum utilis sit seruientibus adfectuum suorum et huius praecipue rabidi atque effreni continentia, utilior est regibus: perierunt omnia ubi quantum ira suadet fortuna permittit, nec diu potest quae multorum malo exercetur potentia stare; periclitatur enim ubi eos qui separatim gemunt communis metus iunxit. Plerosque itaque modo singuli mactauerunt, modo uniuersi, cum illos conferre in unum iras publicus dolor coegisset.

3. Atqui plerique sic iram quasi insigne regium exercuerunt, sicut Dareus, qui primus post ablatum mago imperium Persas et magnam partem orientis obtinuit. Nam cum bellum Scythis indixisset orientem cingentibus, rogatus ab Oeobazo nobili sene ut ex tribus liberis unum in solacium patri relinqueret, duorum opera uteretur, plus quam rogabatur pollicitus omnis se illi dixit remissurum et occisos in conspectu parentis abiecit, crudelis futurus si omnis abduxisset.

4. At quanto Xerses facilior! qui Pythio quinque filiorum patri unius uacationem petenti quem uellet eligere permisit, deinde quem elegerat in partes duas distractum ab utroque uiae latere posuit et hac uictima lustrauit exercitum. Habuit itaque quem debuit exitum: uictus et late longeque fusus ac stratam ubique ruinam suam cernens medius inter suorum cadauera incessit.

XVII.

1. Haec barbaris regibus feritas in ira fuit, quos nulla eruditio, nullus litterarum cultus inbuerat: dabo tibi ex Aristotelis sinu regem Alexandrum, qui Clitum carissimum sibi et una educatum inter epulas transfodit manu quidem sua, parum adulantem et pigre ex Macedone ac libero in Persicam seruitutem transeuntem. 2. Nam Lysimachum aequae familiarem sibi leoni obiecit. Numquid ergo hic Lysimachus felicitate quadam dentibus leonis elapsus ob hoc, cum ipse regnaret, mitior fuit? 3. Nam Telesphorum Rhodium amicum suum undique decurtatum, cum aures illi nasumque abscidisset, in cauea uelut nouum aliquod animal et inusitatum diu pauit, cum oris detruncati mutilatique deformitas humanam faciem perdidisset; accedebat fames et squalor et inluuies corporis in stercore suo destituti; 4. callosis super haec genibus manibusque, quas in usum pedum angustiae loci cogeabant, lateribus uero adritu exulceratis non minus foeda quam terribilis erat forma eius uisentibus, factusque poena sua monstrum misericordiam quoque amiserat. Tamen, cum dissimillimus esset homini qui illa patiebatur, dissimilior erat qui faciebat.

XVIII.

1. Vtinam ista saeuitia intra peregrina exempla mansisset nec in Romanos mores cum aliis aduenticiis uitis etiam suppliciorum irarumque barbaria transisset! M. Mario, cui uicatim populus statuas posuerat, cui ture ac uino supplicabat, L. Sulla praefringi crura, erui oculos, amputari linguam manus iussit, et, quasi totiens occideret quotiens uulnerabat, paulatim et per singulos artus lacerauit. 2. Quis erat huius imperii minister? quis nisi Catilina iam in omne facinus manus exercens? Is illum ante bustum Quinti Catuli carpebat grauissimus mitissimi uiri cineribus, supra quos uir mali exempli, popularis tamen et non tam inmerito quam nimis amatus, per stilicidia sanguinem dabat. Dignus erat Marius qui illa pateretur, Sulla qui iuberet, Catilina qui faceret, sed indigna res publica quae in corpus suum pariter et hostium et uindicum gladios reciperet. 3. Quid antiqua perscrutor? modo C. Caesar Sex. Papinium, cui pater erat consularis, Betilienum Bassum quaestorem suum, procuratoris sui filium, aliosque et senatores et equites Romanos uno die flagellis cecidit, torsit, non quaestionis sed animi causa; 4. deinde adeo inpatiens fuit differendae uoluptatis, quam ingentem crudelitas eius sine dilatione poscebat, ut in xysto maternorum hortorum (qui porticum a ripa separat) inambulans quosdam ex illis cum matronis atque aliis senatoribus ad lucernam decollaret. Quid instabat? Quod periculum aut priuatum aut publicum una nox minabatur? Quantulum fuit lucem expectare denique, ne senatores populi Romani soleatus occideret!

XIX.

1. Quam superba fuerit crudelitas eius ad rem pertinet scire, quamquam aberrare alicui possimus uideri et in deuium exire; sed hoc ipsum pars erit irae super solita saeuientis. Ceciderat flagellis senatores: ipse effecit ut dici posset ‘solet fieri’. Torserat per omnia quae in rerum natura tristissima sunt, fidiculis talaribus, eculeo igne uultu suo. 2. Et hoc loco respondebitur: ‘magnam rem! si tres senatores quasi nequam mancipia inter uerbera et flammam diuisit homo qui de toto senatu trucidando cogitabat, qui optabat ut populus Romanus unam ceruicem haberet, ut scelera sua tot locis ac temporibus diducta in unum ictum et unum diem cogeret.’ Quid tam inauditum quam nocturnum supplicium? Cum latrocinia tenebris abscondi soleant, animaduersiones quo notiores sunt plus in exemplum emendationemque proficiunt. 3. Et hoc loco respondebitur mihi: ‘quod tanto opere admiraris isti beluae cotidianum est; ad hoc uiuit, ad hoc uigilat, ad hoc lucubrat.’ Nemo certe inuenietur alius qui imperauerit omnibus iis in quos animaduerti iubebat os inserta spongea includi, ne uocis emittendae haberent facultatem. Cui umquam morituro non est relictum qua gemeret? Timuit ne quam liberio rem uocem extremus dolor mitteret, ne quid quod nollet audiret; sciebat autem innumerabilia esse quae obicere illi nemo nisi periturus auderet. 4. Cum spongeae non inuenirentur, scindi uestimenta miserorum et in os farciri pannos imperauit. Quae ista saeuitia est? Liceat ultimum spiritum trahere, da exiturae animae locum, liceat illam non per uulnus emittere. 5. Adicere his longum est quod patres quoque occisorum eadem nocte dimissis per domos centurionibus confecit, id est, homo misericors luctu liberauit. Non enim Gai saeuitiam sed irae propositum est describere, quae non tantum uiritim furit sed gentes totas lancinat, sed urbes et flumina et tuta ab omni sensu doloris conuerberat.

XX.

1. Sic rex Persarum totius populi nares recidit in Syria, unde Rhinocolura loco nomen est. Pepercisse illum iudicas quod non tota capita praecidit? nouo genere poenae delectatus est. 2. Tale aliquid passi forent et Aethiopes, qui ob longissimum uitae spatium Macrobioe appellantur; in hos enim, quia non supinis manibus exceperant seruitutem missisque legatis libera responsa dederant, quae contumeliosa reges uocant, Cambyses fremebat et non prouisis com meatibus, non exploratis itineribus, per inuia, per arentia trahebat omnem bello utilem turbam. Cui intra primum iter deerant necessaria, nec quicquam subministrabat sterilis et inculta humanoque ignota uestigio regio; 3. sustinebant famem primo tenerrima frondium et cacumina arborum, tum coria igne mollita et quidquid necessitas cibum fecerat; postquam inter harenas radices quoque et herbae defecerant apparuitque inops etiam animalium solitudo, decimum quemque sortiti alimentum habuerunt fame saeuus. 4. Agebat adhuc regem ira praecipitem, cum partem exercitus amisisset, partem comedisset, donec timuit ne et ipse uocaretur ad sortem: tum demum signum receptui dedit. Seruabantur interim generosae illi aues et instrumenta epularum camelis uehebantur, cum sortirentur milites eius quis male periret, quis peius uiueret.

XXI.

1. Hic iratus fuit genti et ignotae et inneritae, sensurae tamen: Cyrus flumini. Nam cum Babylona oppugnaturus festinaret ad bellum, cuius maxima momenta in occasionibus sunt, Gynden late fusum amnem uado transire temptauit, quod uix tutum est etiam cum sensit aestatem et ad minimum deductus est. 2. Ibi unus ex iis equis qui trahere regium currum albi solebant abreptus uehementer commouit regem; iurauit itaque se amnem illum regis comitatus auferentem eo redacturum ut transiri calcarique etiam a feminis posset. 3. Hoc deinde omnem transtulit belli apparatus et tam diu adsedit operi donec centum et octoginta cuniculis diuisum alueum in trecentos et sexaginta riuos dispergeret et siccum relinqueret in diuersum fluentibus aquis. 4. Periit itaque et tempus, magna in magnis rebus iactura, et militum ardor, quem inutilis labor fregit, et occasio adgrediendi inparatos, dum ille bellum indictum hosti cum flumine gerit. 5. Hic furor — quid enim aliud uoces? — Romanos quoque contigit. C. enim Caesar uillam in Herculansense pulcherrimam, quia mater sua aliquando in illa custodita erat, diruit fecitque eius per hoc notabilem fortunam; stantem enim praenauigabamus, nunc causa dirutae quaeritur.

XXII.

1. Et haec cogitanda sunt exempla quae uites, et illa ex contrario quae sequaris, moderata, lenia, quibus nec ad irascendum causa defuit nec ad ulciscendum potestas. 2. Quid enim facilius fuit Antigono quam duos manipulares duci iubere, qui incumbentes regis tabernaculo faciebant quod homines et periculosissime et libentissime faciunt, de rege suo male existimabant? Audierat omnia Antigonus, utpote cum inter dicentes et audientem palla interesset; quam ille leuiter commouit et ‘longius’ inquit ‘discedite, ne uos rex audiat.’ 3. Idem quadam nocte, cum quosdam ex militibus suis exaudisset omnia mala inprecantis regi, qui ipsos in illud iter et inextricabile lutum deduxisset, accessit ad eos qui maxime laborabant et cum ignorantis a quo adiuuarentur explicuisset, ‘nunc’ inquit ‘male dicite Antigono, cuius uitio in has miserias incidistis; ei autem bene optate qui uos ex hac uoragine eduxit.’ 4. Idem tam miti animo hostium suorum male dicta quam ciuium tulit. Itaque cum in paruulo quodam castello Graeci obsiderentur et fiducia loci contemnentes hostem multa in deformitatem Antigoni iocarentur et nunc staturam humilem, nunc conlisum nasum deriderent, ‘gaudeo’ inquit ‘et aliquid boni spero, si in castris Silenum habeo.’ 5. Cum hos dicaces fame domuisset, captis sic usus est ut eos qui militiae utiles erant in cohortes describeret, ceteros praeconi subiceret, idque se negauit facturum fuisse, nisi expediret iis dominum habere qui tam malam haberent linguam.

XXIII.

1. Huius nepos fuit Alexander, qui lanceam in conuiuas suos torquebat, qui ex duobus amicis quos paulo ante rettuli alterum ferae obiecit, alterum sibi. Ex his duobus tamen qui leoni obiectus est uixit. 2. Non habuit hoc auitum ille uitium, ne paternum quidem; nam si qua alia in Philippo uirtus, fuit et contumeliarum patientia, ingens instrumentum ad tutelam regni. Demochares ad illum Parrhesiastes ob nimiam et procacem linguam appellatus inter alios Atheniensium legatos uenerat. Audita benigne legatione Philippus ‘dicite’ inquit ‘mihi facere quid possim quod sit Atheniensibus gratum.’ Excepit Demochares et ‘te’ inquit ‘suspendere.’ 3. Indignatio circumstantium ad tam inhumanum responsum exorta erat; quos Philippus contumescere iussit et Thersitam illum saluum incolumemque dimittere. ‘At uos’ inquit ‘ceteri legati, nuntiate Atheniensibus multo superbiores esse qui ista dicunt quam qui inpune dicta audiunt.’

4. Multa et diuus Augustus digna memoria fecit dixitque ex quibus appareat iram illi non imperasse. Timagenes historiarum scriptor quaedam in ipsum, quaedam in uxorem eius et in totam domum dixerat, nec perdiderat dicta; magis enim circumfertur et in ore hominum est temeraria urbanitas. 5. Saepe illum Caesar monuit, moderatius lingua uteretur; perseueranti domo sua interdixit. Postea Timagenes in contubernio Pollionis Asini consenuit ac tota ciuitate directus est: nullum illi limen praeclusa Caesaris domus abstulit. 6. Historias quas postea scripserat recitauit [et combussit] et libros acta Caesaris Augusti continentis in ignem inposuit; inimicitias gessit cum Caesare: nemo amicitiam eius extimuit, nemo quasi fulguritum refugit, fuit qui praeberet tam alte cadenti sinum. 7. Tulit hoc, ut dixi, Caesar patienter, ne eo quidem motus quod laudibus suis rebusque gestis manus attulerat; numquam cum hospite inimici sui questus est. 8. Hoc dumtaxat Pollioni Asinio dixit, ‘theriotropheis’; paranti deinde excusationem obstitit et ‘fruere,’ inquit ‘mi Pollio, fruere!’ et cum Pollio diceret ‘si iubes, Caesar, statim illi domo mea interdican’, ‘hoc me’ inquit ‘putas facturum, cum ego uos in gratiam reduxerim?’ Fuerat enim aliquando Timageni Pollio iratus nec ullam

aliam habuerat causam desinendi quam quod Caesar coeperat.

XXIV.

1. Dicat itaque sibi quisque, quotiens lacessitur: 'numquid potentior sum Philippo? illi tamen inpune male dictum est. Numquid in domo mea plus possum quam toto orbe terrarum diuus Augustus potuit? ille tamen contentus fuit a conuiciatore suo secedere.' 2. Quid est quare ego serui mei clarius responsum et contumaciorem uultum et non peruenientem usque ad me murmurationem flagellis et compedibus expiem? Quis sum, cuius aures laedi nefas sit? Ignouerunt multi hostibus: ego non ignoscam pigris negligentibus garrulis? 3. Puerum aetas excuset, feminam sexus, extraneum libertas, domesticum familiaritas. Nunc primum offendit: cogitemus quam diu placuerit; saepe et alias offendit: feramus quod diu tulimus. Amicus est: fecit quod noluit; inimicus: fecit quod debuit. 4. Prudentiori credamus, stultiori remittamus; pro quocumque illud nobis respondeamus, sapientissimos quoque uiros multa delinquere, neminem esse tam circumspectum cuius non diligentia aliquando sibi ipsa excidat, neminem tam maturum cuius non grauitatem in aliquod feruidius factum casus inpingat, neminem tam timidum offensarum qui non in illas dum uitat incidat.

XXV.

1. Quomodo homini pusillo solacium in malis fuit etiam magnorum uirorum titubare fortunam et aequiore animo filium in angulo fleuit qui uidit acerba funera etiam ex regia duci, sic animo aequiore fert ab aliquo laedi, ab aliquo contemni, cuicumque uenit in mentem nullam esse tantam potentiam in quam non occurrat iniuria. 2. Quod si etiam prudentissimi peccant, cuius non error bonam causam habet? Respiciamus quotiens adulescentia nostra in officio parum diligens fuerit, in sermone parum modesta, in uino parum temperans. Si iratus est, demus illi spatium quo dispicere quid fecerit possit: ipse se castigabit. Denique debeat poenas: non est quod cum illo paria faciamus. 3. Illud non ueniet in dubium, quin se exemerit turbae et altius steterit quisquis despexit lacescentis: proprium est magnitudinis uerae non sentire percussum. Sic immanis fera ad latratum canum lenta respexit, sic inritus ingenti scopulo fluctus adsultat. Qui non irascitur, inconcussus iniuria perstitit, qui irascitur, motus est. 4. At ille quem modo altiore omni incommodo posui tenet amplexu quodam summum bonum, nec homini tantum sed ipsi fortunae respondet: ‘omnia licet facias, minor es quam ut serenitatem meam obducas. Vetat hoc ratio, cui uitam regendam dedi. Plus mihi nocitura est ira quam iniuria. Quidni plus? illius modus certus est, ista quo usque me latura sit dubium est.’

XXVI.

1. 'Non possum' inquis 'pati; graue est iniuriam sustinere.' Mentiris; quis enim iniuriam non potest ferre qui potest iram? Adice nunc quod id agis ut et iram feras et iniuriam. Quare fers aegri rabiem et phrenetici uerba, puerorum proteruas manus? nempe quia uidentur nescire quid faciant. Quid interest quo quisque uitio fiat imprudens? imprudentia par in omnibus patrocinium est. 2. 'Quid ergo?' inquis 'inpune illi erit?' Puta uelle te, tamen non erit; maxima est enim factae iniuriae poena fecisse, nec quisquam grauius adficitur quam qui ad supplicium paenitentiae traditur. 3. Deinde ad condicionem rerum humanarum respiciendum est, ut omnium accidentium aequi iudices simus; iniquus autem est qui commune uitium singulis obiecit. Non est Aethiopis inter suos insignitus color, nec rufus crinis et coactus in nodum apud Germanos uirum dedecet: nihil in uno iudicabis notabile aut foedum quod genti suae publicum est. Et ista quae rettuli unius regionis atque anguli consuetudo defendit: uide nunc quanto in iis iustior uenia sit quae per totum genus humanum uulgata sunt. 4. Omnes inconsulti et inprouidi sumus, omnes incerti queruli ambitiosi — quid lenioribus uerbis ulcus publicum abscondo? — omnes mali sumus. Quidquid itaque in alio reprehenditur, id unusquisque in sinu suo inueniet. Quid illius pallorem, illius maciem notas? pestilentia est. Placidiores itaque inuicem simus: mali inter malos uiuimus. Vna nos res facere quietos potest, mutuae facilitatis conuentio. 5. 'Ille iam mihi nocuit, ego illi nondum.' Sed iam aliquem fortasse laesisti, sed laedes. Noli aestimare hanc horam aut hunc diem, totum inspicere mentis tuae habitum: etiam si nihil mali fecisti, potes facere.

XXVII.

1. Quanto satius est sanare iniuriam quam ulcisci! Multum temporis ultio absumit, multis se iniuriis obicit dum una dolet; diutius irascimur omnes quam laedimur. Quanto melius est abire in diuersum nec uitia uitiiis opponere! Numquis satis constare sibi uideatur, si mulam calcibus repetat et canem morsu? 2. 'Ista' inquis 'peccare se nesciunt.' Primum quam iniquus est apud quem hominem esse ad inpetrandam ueniam nocet! Deinde, si cetera animalia hoc irae tuae subducit quod consilio carent, eodem loco tibi sit quisquis consilio caret; quid enim refert an alia mutis dissimilia habeat, si hoc quod in omni peccato muta defendit simile habet, caliginem mentis? 3. Peccauit: hoc enim primum? hoc enim extremum? Non est quod illi credas, etiam si dixerit 'iterum non faciam': et iste peccabit et in istum alius et tota uita inter errores uolutabitur. Mansuete inmansueta tractanda sunt. 4. Quod in luctu dici solet efficacissime, et in ira dicetur: utrum aliquando desines an numquam? Si aliquando, quanto satius est iram relinquere quam ab ira relinqui! An semper haec agitatio permanebit? Vides quam impacatam tibi denunties uitam? qualis enim erit semper tumentis? 5. Adice nunc quod, cum bene te ipse succenderis et subinde causas quibus stimuleris renouaueris, sua sponte ira discedet et uires illi dies subtrahet: quanto satius est a te illam uinci quam a se!

XXVIII.

1. Huic irasceris, deinde illi; seruis, deinde libertis; parentibus, deinde liberis; notis, deinde ignotis: ubique enim causae supersunt nisi deprecator animus accessit. Hinc te illo furor rapiet, illinc alio, et nouis subinde inritamentis orientibus continuabitur rabies: age, infelix, ecquando amabis? O quam bonum tempus in re mala perdis!

2. Quanto nunc erat satius amicos parare, inimicos mitigare, rem publicam administrare, transferre in res domesticas operam, quam circumspicere quid alicui facere possis mali, quod aut dignitati eius aut patrimonio aut corpori uulnus infligas, cum id tibi contingere sine certamine ac periculo non possit, etiam si cum inferiore concurses!

3. Vinctum licet accipias et ad arbitrium tuum omni patientiae expositum: saepe nimia uis caedentis aut articulum loco mouit aut neruum in iis quos fregerat dentibus fixit; multos iracundia mancos, multos debiles fecit, etiam ubi patientem est nanta materiam. Adice nunc quod nihil tam inbecille natum est ut sine elidentis periculo pereat: inbecillos ualentissimis alias dolor, alias casus exaequat.

4. Quid quod pleraque eorum propter quae irascimur offendunt nos magis quam laedunt? Multum autem interest utrum aliquis uoluntati meae obstet an desit, eripiat an non det. Atqui in aequo ponimus utrum aliquis auferat an neget, utrum spem nostram praecidat an differat, utrum contra nos faciat an pro se, amore alterius an odio nostri.

5. Quidam uero non tantum iustas causas standi contra nos sed etiam honestas habent: alius patrem tuetur, alius fratrem, alius patriam, alius amicum; his tamen non ignoscimus id facientibus quod nisi facerent inprobaremus, immo, quod est incredibile, saepe de facto bene existimamus, de faciente male.

6. At mehercules uir magnus ac iustus fortissimum quemque ex hostibus suis et pro libertate ac salute patriae pertinacissimum suspicit et talem sibi ciuem, talem militem contingere optat.

XXIX.

1. Turpe est odisse quem laudes; quanto uero turpius ob id aliquem odisse propter quod misericordia dignus est, si captiuus in seruitutem subito depressus reliquias libertatis tenet nec ad sordida ac laboriosa ministeria agilis occurrit, si ex otio piger equum uehiculumque domini cursu non exaequat, si inter cotidiana peruigilia fessum somnus oppressit, si rusticum laborem recusat aut non fortiter obiit a seruitute urbana et feriata translatus ad durum opus! 2. Distinguamus utrum aliquis non possit an nolit: multos absoluemus, si coeperimus ante iudicare quam irasci. Nunc autem primum impetum sequimur, deinde, quamuis uana nos concitauerint, perseueramus, ne uideamur coepisse sine causa, et, quod iniquissimum est, pertinaciores nos facit iniquitas irae; retinemus enim illam et augemus, quasi argumentum sit iuste irascentis grauius irasci.

XXX.

1. Quanto melius est initia ipsa perspicere quam leuia sint, quam innoxia! Quod accidere uides animalibus mutis, idem in homine deprendes: friuolis turbamur et inanibus. Taurum color rubicundus excitat, ad umbram aspis exsurgit, ursos leonesque mappa proritat: omnia quae natura fera ac rabida sunt consternantur ad uana. 2. Idem inquietis et stolidis ingeniis euenit: rerum suspitione feriuntur, adeo quidem ut interdum iniurias uocent modica beneficia, in quibus frequentissima, certe acerbissima iracundiae materia est. Carissimis enim irascimur quod minora nobis praestiterint quam mente concepimus quamque alii tulerunt, cum utriusque rei paratum remedium sit. 3. Magis alteri indulsit: nostra nos sine comparatione delectent; numquam erit felix quem torquebit felicior. Minus habeo quam speraui: sed fortasse plus speraui quam debui. Haec pars maxime metuenda est, hinc perniciosissimae irae nascuntur et sanctissima quaeque inuasurae. 4. Dium Iulium plures amici confecerunt quam inimici, quorum non expleuerat spes inexplebiles. Voluit quidem ille — neque enim quisquam liberalius uictoria usus est, ex qua nihil sibi uindicauit nisi dispensandi potestatem — sed quemadmodum sufficere tam improbis desideriis posset, cum tantum omnes concupiscerent quantum unus poterat? 5. Vidit itaque strictis circa sellam suam gladiis commilitones suos, Cimbrum Tillium, acerrimum paulo ante partium defensorem, aliosque post Pompeium demum Pompeianos. Haec res sua in reges arma conuertit fidissimosque eo compulit ut de morte eorum cogitarent pro quibus et ante quos mori uotum habuerant.

XXXI.

1. Nulli ad aliena respicienti sua placent: inde dis quoque irascimur quod aliquis nos antecedit, obliti quantum hominum retro sit et paucis invidentem quantum sequatur a tergo ingentis invidiae. Tanta tamen inopportunitas hominum est ut, quamvis multum acceperint, iniuriae loco sit plus accipere potuisse. 2. 'Dedit mihi praeturam, sed consulatum speraueram; dedit duodecim fasces, sed non fecit ordinarium consulem; a me numerari uoluit annum, sed deest mihi ad sacerdotium; cooptatus in collegium sum, sed cur in unum? consummauit dignitatem meam, sed patrimonio nihil contulit; ea dedit mihi quae debebat alicui dare, de suo nihil protulit.' 3. Age potius gratias pro his quae accepisti; reliqua expecta et nondum plenum esse te gaude: inter uoluptates est superesse quod speres. Omnes uicisti: primum esse te in animo amici tui laetare. Multi te uincunt: considera quanto antecedas plures quam sequaris. Quod sit in te uitium maximum quaeris? falsas rationes conficis: data magno aestimas, accepta paruo.

XXXII.

1. Aliud in alio nos deterreat: quibusdam timeamus irasci, quibusdam uereamur, quibusdam fastidiamus. Magnam rem sine dubio fecerimus, si seruulum infelicem in ergastulum miserimus! Quid properamus uerberare statim, crura protinus frangere? non peribit potestas ista, si differetur. 2. Sine id tempus ueniat quo ipsi iubeamus: nunc ex imperio irae loquemur; cum illa abierit, tunc uidebimus quanto ista lis aestimanda sit. In hoc enim praecipue fallimur: ad ferrum uenimus, ad capitalia supplicia, et uinculis carcere fame uindicamus rem castigandam flagris leuioribus. 3. ‘Quomodo’ inquis ‘nos iubes intueri quam omnia per quae laedi uideamur exigua misera puerilia sint!’ Ego uero nihil magis suaserim quam sumere ingentem animum et haec propter quae litigamus discurrimus anhelamus uidere quam humilia et abiecta sint, nulli qui altum quiddam aut magnificum cogitat respicienda.

XXXIII.

1. Circa pecuniam plurimum uociferationis est: haec fora defetigat, patres liberosque committit, uenena miscet, gladios tam percussoribus quam legionibus tradit; haec est sanguine nostro dilibuta; propter hanc uxorū maritorūque noctes strepunt litibus et tribunalia magistratuum premit turba, reges saeuiunt rapiuntque et ciuitates longo saeculorum labore constructas euertunt ut aurum argentumque in cinere urbium scrutentur. 2. Libet intueri fiscos in angulo iacentis: hi sunt propter quos oculi clamore exprimantur, fremitu iudiciorum basilicae resonent, euocati ex longinquis regionibus iudices sedeant iudicaturi utrius iustior auaritia sit. 3. Quid si ne propter fiscum quidem sed pugnum aeris aut inputatum a seruo denarium senex sine herede moriturus stomacho dirrumpitur? Quid si propter usuram uel milesimam ualetudinarius fenerator distortis pedibus et manibus ad computandum non relictis clamat ac per uadimonia asses suos in ipsis morbi accessionibus uindicat? 4. Si totam mihi ex omnibus metallis quae cum maxime deprimimus pecuniam proferas, si in medium proicias quidquid thesauri tegunt, auaritia iterum sub terras referente quae male egresserat, omnem istam congeriem non putem dignam quae frontem uiri boni contrahat. Quanto risu proseguenda sunt quae nobis lacrimas educunt!

XXXIV.

1. Cedo nunc, perseguere cetera, cibos potiones horumque causa paratas in ambitionem munditias, uerba contumeliosa, motus corporum parum honorificos, contumacia iumenta et pigra mancipia, et suspiciones et interpretationes malignas uocis alienae, quibus efficitur ut inter iniurias naturae numeretur sermo homini datus: crede mihi, leuia sunt propter quae non leuiter excandescimus qualiaque pueros in rixam et iurgium concitant. 2. Nihil ex iis quae tam tristes agimus serium est, nihil magnum: inde, inquam, uobis ira et insania est, quod exigua magno aestimatis. Auferre hic mihi hereditatem uoluit; hic me diu in spem supremam captato criminatus est; hic scortum meum concupiuit: quod uinculum amoris esse debebat seditionis atque odi causa est, idem uelle. 3. Iter angustum rixas transeuntium concitat, diffusa et late patens uia ne populos quidem conludit: ista quae adpetitis, quia exigua sunt nec possunt ad alterum nisi alteri erepta transferri, eadem adfectantibus pugnas et iurgia excitant.

XXXV.

1. Respondisse tibi seruum indignaris libertumque et uxorem et clientem: deinde idem de re publica libertatem sublatam quereris quam domi sustulisti. Rursus, si tacuit interrogatus, contumaciam uocas. 2. Et loquatur et taceat et rideat! 'Coram domino?' inquis. Immo coram patre familiae. Quid clamas? quid uociferaris? quid flagella media cena petis quod serui loquuntur, quod non eodem loco turba contionis est, silentium solitudinis? 3. In hoc habes aures, ut non modulata tantum et mollia et ex dulci tracta compositaque accipiant: et risum audias oportet et fletum, et blanditias et lites, et prospera et tristia, et hominum uoces et fremitus animalium latratusque. Quid miser expauescis ad clamorem serui, ad tinnitum aeris aut ianuae impulsus? cum tam delicatus fueris, tonitrua audienda sunt. 4. Hoc quod de auribus dictum est transfer ad oculos, qui non minus fastidio laborant si male instituti sunt: macula offenduntur et sordibus et argento parum splendido et stagno non ad solum perlucente. 5. Hi nempe oculi, qui non ferunt nisi uarium ac recenti cura nitens marmor, qui mensam nisi crebris distinctam uenis, qui nolunt domi nisi auro pretiosiora calcare, aequissimo animo foris et scabras lutosasque semitas spectant et maiorem partem occurrentium squalidam, parietes insularum exesos rimosos inaequales. Quid ergo aliud est quod illos in publico non offendat, domi moueat, quam opinio illic aequa et patiens, domi morosa et querula?

XXXVI.

1. Omnes sensus perducendi sunt ad firmitatem; natura patientes sunt, si animus illos desit corrumpere, qui cotidie ad rationem reddendam uocandus est. Faciebat hoc Sextius, ut consummato die, cum se ad nocturnam quietem recepisset, interrogaret animum suum: ‘quod hodie malum tuum sanasti? Cui uitio obstitisti? Qua parte melior es?’ 2. Desinet ira et moderatior erit quae sciet sibi cotidie ad iudicem esse ueniendum. Quicquam ergo pulchrius hac consuetudine excutiendi totum diem? Qualis ille somnus post recognitionem sui sequitur, quam tranquillus, quam altus ac liber, cum aut laudatus est animus aut admonitus et speculator sui censorque secretus cognouit de moribus suis! 3. Vtor hac potestate et cotidie apud me causam dico. Cum sublatum e conspectu lumen est et conticuit uxor moris iam mei conscia, totum diem meum scrutor factaque ac dicta mea remetior; nihil mihi ipse abscondo, nihil transeo. Quare enim quicquam ex erroribus meis timeam, cum possim dicere: ‘uide ne istud amplius facias, nunc tibi ignosco. 4. In illa disputatione pugnacius locutus es: noli postea congregi cum imperitis; nolunt discere qui numquam didicerunt. Illum liberius admonuisti quam debebas, itaque non emendasti sed offendisti: de cetero uide, [ne] non tantum an uerum sit quod dicis, sed an ille cui dicitur ueri patiens sit: admoneri bonus gaudet, pessimus quisque rectorem asperrime patitur.

XXXVII.

1. In conuiuio quorundam te sales et in dolorem tuum iacta uerba tetigerunt: uitare uulgares conuictus memento; solutior est post uinum licentia, quia ne sobriis quidem pudor est. 2. Iratum uidisti amicum tuum ostiario cauidici alicuius aut diuitis quod intrantem summouerat, et ipse pro illo iratus extremo mancipio fuisti: irascere ergo catenario cani? et hic, cum multum latrauit, obiecto cibo mansuescit. 3. Recede longius et ride! Nunc iste se aliquem putat quod custodit litigatorum turba limen obsessum; nunc ille qui intra iacet felix fortunatusque est et beati hominis iudicat ac potentis indicium difficilem ianuam: nescit durissimum esse ostium carceris. Praesume animo multa tibi esse patienda: numquis se hieme algere miratur, numquis in mari nausiare, in uia concuti? Fortis est animus ad quae praeparatus uenit. 4. Minus honorato loco positus irasci coepisti conuiuatori, uocatori, ipsi qui tibi praeferebatur: demens, quid interest quam lecti premas partem? honestiorem te aut turpiorem potest facere puluinus? 5. Non aequis quendam oculis uidisti, quia de ingenio tuo male locutus est: recipis hanc legem? Ergo te Ennius, quo non delectaris, odisset et Hortensius similitudines tibi indiceret et Cicero, si derideres carmina eius, inimicus esset. Vis tu aequo animo pati candidatus suffragia?’

XXXVIII.

1. Contumeliam tibi fecit aliquis: numquid maiorem quam Diogeni philosopho Stoico, cui de ira cum maxime disserenti adulescens proteruus inspuit? Tulit hoc ille leniter et sapienter: 'non quidem' inquit 'irascor, sed dubito tamen an oporteat irasci.' 2. Quanto <Cato> noster melius! qui, cum agenti causam in frontem mediam quantum poterat adtracta pingui salivā inspisset Lentulus ille patrum nostrorum memoria factiosus et inpotens, abstersit faciem et 'adfirmabo' inquit 'omnibus, Lentule, falli eos qui te negant os habere.'

XXXIX.

1. Contigit iam nobis, Nouate, bene componere animum: aut non sentit iracundiam aut superior est. Videamus quomodo alienam iram leniamus; nec enim sani esse tantum uolumus, sed sanare.

2. Primam iram non audebimus oratione mulcere: surda est et amens; dabimus illi spatium. Remedia in remissionibus prosunt; nec oculos tumentis temptamus uim rigentem mouendo incitaturi, nec cetera uitia dum feruent: initia morborum quies curat. 3. ‘Quantulum’ inquis ‘prodest remedium tuum, si sua sponte desinentem iram placat!’ Primum, ut citius desinat efficit; deinde custodit, ne reccidat; ipsum quoque impetum, quem non audet lenire, fallit: remouebit omnia ultionis instrumenta, simulabit iram ut tamquam adiutor et doloris comes plus auctoritatis in consiliis habeat, moras nectet et, dum maiorem poenam quaerit, praesentem differet. 4. Omni arte requiem furori dabit: si uehementior erit, aut pudorem illi cui non resistat incutiet aut metum; si infirmior, sermones inferet uel gratos uel novos et cupiditate cognoscendi auocabit. Medicum aiunt, cum regis filiam curare deberet nec sine ferro posset, dum tumentem mammam leniter fouet, scalpellum spongia tectum induxisse: repugnasset puella remedio palam admoto, eadem, quia non expectauit, dolorem tulit. Quaedam non nisi decepta sanantur.

XL.

1. Alteri dices ‘uide ne inimicis iracundia tua uoluptati sit’, alteri ‘uide ne magnitudo animi tui creditumque apud plerosque robur cadat. [alteri] Indignor mehercules et non inuenio dolendi modum, sed tempus expectandum est; dabit poenas. Serua istud in animo tuo: cum potueris, et pro mora reddes.’ 2. Castigare uero irascentem et ultro obirasci incitare est: uarie adgredieris blandequē, nisi forte tanta persona eris ut possis iram comminuere, quemadmodum fecit diuus Augustus, cum cenaret apud Vedium Pollionem. Fregerat unus ex seruis eius crustallinum; rapi eum Veditus iussit ne uulgari quidem more periturum: murenis obici iubebatur, quas ingentis in piscina continebat. Quis non hoc illum putaret luxuriae causa facere? saeuitia erat. 3. Euasit e manibus puer et confugit ad Caesaris pedes, nihil aliud petiturus quam ut aliter periret, ne esca fieret. Motus est nouitate crudelitatis Caesar et illum quidem mitti, crustallina autem omnia coram se frangi iussit conplerique piscinam. 4. Fuit Caesari sic castigandus amicus; bene usus est uiribus suis: ‘e conuiuio rapi homines imperas et noui generis poenis lancinari? Si calix tuus fractus est, uiscera hominis distrahentur? Tantum tibi placebis ut ibi aliquem duci iubeas ubi Caesar est?’ 5. Sic cui tantum potentiae est ut iram ex superiore loco adgredi possit, male tractet, at talem dumtaxat qualem modo rettuli, feram immanem sanguinariam, quae iam insanabilis est nisi maius aliquid extimuit.

XLI.

1. Pacem demus animo quam dabit praeceptorum salutarium adsidua meditatio actusque rerum boni et intenta mens ad unius honesti cupiditatem. Conscientiae satis fiat, nil in famam laboremus; sequatur uel mala, dum bene merentis. 2. ‘At uulgi animosa miratur et audaces in honore sunt, placidi pro inertibus habentur.’ Primo forsitan aspectu; sed simul aequalitas uitae fidem fecit non segnitiam illam animi esse sed pacem, ueneratur illos populus idem colitque. 3. Nihil ergo habet in se utile taeter iste et hostilis adfectus, at omnia ex contrario mala, ferrum et ignes. Pudore calcato caedibus inquinuit manus, membra liberorum dispersit, nihil uacuum reliquit a scelere, non gloriae memor, non infamiae metuens, inemendabilis cum ex ira in odium occalluit.

XLII.

1. Careamus hoc malo purgemusque mentem et exstirpemus radicitus quae quamuis tenuia undecumque haeserint renascentur, et iram non temperemus sed ex toto remoueamus — quod enim malae rei temperamentum est? Poterimus autem, adnitamur modo. 2. Nec ulla res magis proderit quam cogitatio mortalitatis. Sibi quisque atque alteri dicat: ‘quid iuuat tamquam in aeternum genitos iras indicere et breuissimam aetatem dissipare? Quid iuuat dies quos in uoluptatem honestam inpendere licet in dolorem alicuius tormentumque transferre? Non capiunt res istae iacturam nec tempus uacat perdere. 3. Quid ruimus in pugnam? Quid certamina nobis arcessimus? Quid inbecillitatis obliti ingentia odia suscipimus et ad frangendum fragiles consurgimus? Iam istas inimicitias quas inplacabili gerimus animo febris aut aliquod aliud malum corporis uetabit geri; iam par acerrimum media mors dirimet. 4. Quid tumultuamur et uitam seditiosi conturbamus? stat supra caput fatum et pereuntis dies inputat propiusque ac propius accedit; istud tempus quod alienae destinas morti fortasse circa tuam est.

XLIII.

1. Quin potius uitam breuem colligis placidamque et tibi et ceteris praestas? Quin potius amabilem te dum uiuis omnibus, desiderabilem cum excesseris reddis? Quid illum nimis ex alto tecum agentem detrahare cupis? Quid illum oblatrantem tibi, humilem quidem et contemptum sed superioribus acidum ac molestum, exterere uiribus tuis temptas? Quid seruo, quid domino, quid regi, quid clienti tuo irasceris? Sustine paulum: uenit ecce mors quae uos pares faciat. 2. Videre solemus inter matutina harenae spectacula tauri et ursi pugnam inter se conligatorum, quos, cum alter alterum uexarunt, suus confector expectat: idem facimus, aliquem nobiscum adligatum lacessimus, cum uicto uictorique finis et quidem maturus immineat. Quieti potius pacatique quantulumcumque superest exigamus; nulli cadauer nostrum iaceat inuisum. 3. Saepe rixam conclamatum in uicinia incendium soluit et interuentus ferae latronem uiatoremque diducit: conluctari cum minoribus malis non uacat, ubi metus maior apparuit. Quid nobis cum dimicatione et insidiis? Numquid amplius isti cui irasceris quam mortem optas? etiam te quiescente morietur. Perdis operam, si facere uis quod futurum est. 4. “Nolo” inquis “utique occidere, sed exilio, sed ignominia, sed damno adficere.” Magis ignosco ei qui uulnus inimici quam qui pusulam concupiscit; hic enim non tantum mali animi est sed pusilli. Siue de ultimis suppliciis cogitas siue de leuioribus, quantulum est temporis quo aut ille poena sua torqueatur aut tu malum gaudium ex aliena percipias! 5. Iam istum spiritum expuemus. Interim, dum trahimus, dum inter homines sumus, colamus humanitatem; non timori cuiquam, non periculo simus; detrimenta iniurias, conuicia uellicationes contemnamus et magno animo breuia feramus incommoda: dum respicimus, quod aiunt, uersamusque nos, iam mortalitas aderit.’

ON THE SHORTNESS OF LIFE — De Brevitate Vitæ

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I.

1 Maior pars mortalium, Pauline, de naturae malignitate conqueritur, quod in exiguum aevi gignimur, quod haec tam uelociter, tam rapide dati nobis temporis spatia decurrant, adeo ut exceptis admodum paucis ceteros in ipso uitae apparatu uita destituat. Nec huic publico, ut opinantur, malo turba tantum et imprudens uulgus ingemuit; clarorum quoque uirorum hic affectus querellas euocauit. 2 Inde illa maximi medicorum exclamatio est: “uitam breuem esse, longam artem”. Inde Aristotelis cum rerum natura exigentis minime conueniens sapienti uiro lis: “aetatis illam animalibus tantum indulsisse, ut quina aut dena saecula educerent, homini in tam multa ac magna genito tanto citeriorem terminum stare.” 3 Non exiguum temporis habemus, sed multum perdidimus. Satis longa uita et in maximarum rerum consummationem large data est, si tota bene collocaretur; sed ubi per luxum ac negligentiam diffluit, ubi nulli bonae rei impenditur, ultima demum necessitate cogente, quam ire non intelleximus transisse sentimus. 4 Ita est: non accipimus breuem uitam sed fecimus, nec inopes eius sed prodigi sumus. Sicut amplae et regiae opes, ubi ad malum dominum peruenerunt, momento dissipantur, at quamuis modicae, si bono custodi traditae sunt, usu crescunt: ita aetas nostra bene disponenti multum patet.

II.

1 Quid de rerum natura querimur? Illa se benigne gessit: uita, si uti scias, longa est. [At] alium insatiabilis tenet auaritia; alium in superuacuis laboribus operosa sedulitas; alius uino madet, alius inertia torpet; alium defetigat ex alienis iudiciis suspensa semper ambitio, alium mercandi praeceps cupiditas circa omnis terras, omnia maria spe lucri ducit; quosdam torquet cupido militiae numquam non aut alienis periculis intentos aut suis anxios; sunt quos ingratus superiorum cultus uoluntaria seruitute consumat; 2 multos aut affectatio alienae formae aut suae querella detinuit; plerosque nihil certum sequentis uaga et inconstans et sibi displicens leuitas per noua consilia iactauit; quibusdam nihil quo cursum derigant placet, sed marcentis oscitantisque fata deprendunt, adeo ut quod apud maximum poetarum more oraculi dictum est uerum esse non dubitem: “Exigua pars est uitae qua uiuimus. Ceterum quidem omne spatium non uita sed tempus est. 3 Urgent et circumstant uitia undique nec resurgere aut in dispectum ueri attollere oculos sinunt. Et immersos et in cupiditatem infixos premunt, numquam illis recurrere ad se licet. Si quando aliqua fortuito quies contigit, uelut profundo mari, in quo post uentum quoque uolutatio est, fluctuantur nec umquam illis a cupiditatibus suis otium stat. 4 De istis me putas dicere, quorum in confesso mala sunt? Aspice illos ad quorum felicitatem concurritur: bonis suis effocantur. Quam multis diuitiae graues sunt! Quam multorum eloquentia et cotidiana ostentandi ingenii sollicitatio sanguinem educit! Quam multi continuis uoluptatibus pallent! Quam multis nihil liberi relinquit circumfusus clientium populus! Omnis denique istos ab infimis usque ad summos pererrat: hic aduocat, hic adest, ille periclitatur, ille defendit, ille iudicat, nemo se sibi uindicat, alius in alium consumitur. Interroga de istis quorum nomina ediscuntur, his illos dinosci uidebis notis: ille illius cultor est, hic illius; suus nemo est. 5 Deinde dementissima quorundam indignatio est: queruntur de superiorum fastidio, quod ipsis adire uolentibus non uacauerint! Audet quisquam de alterius superbia queri, qui sibi ipse numquam uacat? Ille tamen te, quisquis es, insolenti quidem uultu sed aliquando respexit, ille aures suas ad

tua uerba demisit, ille te ad latus suum recepit: tu non inspicere te umquam, non audire dignatus es. Non est itaque quod ista officia cuiquam imputes, quoniam quidem, cum illa faceres, non esse cum alio uolebas, sed tecum esse non poteras.

III.

1 Omnia licet quae umquam ingenia fulserunt in hoc unum consentiant, numquam satis hanc humanarum mentium caliginem mirabuntur: praedia sua occupari a nullo patiuntur et, si exigua contentio est de modo finium, ad lapides et arma discurrent; in uitam suam incedere alios sinunt, immo uero ipsi etiam possessores eius futuros inducunt; nemo inuenitur qui pecuniam suam diuidere uelit, uitam unusquisque quam multis distribuit! Adstricti sunt in continendo patrimonio, simul ad iacturam temporis uentum est, profusissimi in eo cuius unius honesta auaritia est. 2 Libet itaque ex seniorum turba comprehendere aliquem: “Peruenisse te ad ultimum aetatis humanae uidemus, centesimus tibi uel supra premitur annus: agedum, ad computationem aetatem tuam reuoca. Duc quantum ex isto tempore creditor, quantum amica, quantum rex, quantum cliens abstulerit, quantum lis uxoriam, quantum seruorum coercitio, quantum officiosa per urbem discursatio; adice morbos quos manu fecimus, adice quod et sine usu iacuit: uidebis te pauciores annos habere quam numeras. 3 Repete memoria tecum quando certus consilii fueris, quotus quisque dies ut destinaueras recesserit, quando tibi usus tui fuerit, quando in statu suo uultus, quando animus intrepidus, quid tibi in tam longo aeuo facti operis sit, quam multi uitam tuam diripuerint te non sentiente quid perderes, quantum uanus dolor, stulta laetitia, auida cupiditas, blanda conuersatio abstulerit, quam exiguum tibi de tuo relictum sit: intelleges te immaturum mori.” 4 Quid ergo est in causa? Tamquam semper uicturi uiuitis, numquam uobis fragilitas uestra succurrit, non obseruatis quantum iam temporis transierit; uelut ex pleno et abundanti perditis, cum interim fortasse ille ipse qui alicui uel homini uel rei donatur dies ultimus sit. Omnia tamquam mortales timetis, omnia tamquam immortales concupiscitis. 5 Audies plerosque dicentes: “A quinquagesimo anno in otium secedam, sexagesimus me annus ab officiis dimittet.” Et quem tandem longioris uitae praedem accipis? Quis ista sicut disponis ire patietur? Non pudet te reliquias uitae tibi reseruare et id solum tempus bonae menti destinare quod in nullam rem conferri possit? Quam serum est tunc uiuere incipere cum desinendum est? Quae tam stulta

mortalitatis obliuio in quinquagesimum et sexagesimum annum differre sana consilia et inde uelle uitam inchoare quo pauci perduxerunt?

IV.

1 Potentissimis et in altum sublatis hominibus excidere uoces uidebis quibus otium optent, laudent, omnibus bonis suis praeferant. Cupiunt interim ex illo fastigio suo, si tuto liceat, descendere; nam ut nihil extra lacessat aut quatiat, in se ipsa fortuna ruit. 2 Diuus Augustus, cui dii plura quam ulli praestiterunt, non desiit quietem sibi precari et uacationem a re publica petere; omnis eius sermo ad hoc semper reuolutus est, ut speraret otium: hoc labores suos, etiam si falso, dulci tamen oblectabat solacio, aliquando se uicturum sibi. 3 In quadam ad senatum missa epistula, cum requiem suam non uacuum fore dignitatis nec a priore gloria discrepantem pollicitus esset, haec verba inueni: “Sed ista fieri speciosius quam promitti possunt. Me tamen cupido temporis optatissimi mihi prouexit, ut quoniam rerum laetitia moratur adhuc, praeciperem aliquid uoluptatis ex uerborum dulcedine.” 4 Tanta uisa est res otium, ut illam, quia usu non poterat, cogitatione praesumeret. Qui omnia uidebat ex se uno pendentia, qui hominibus gentibusque fortunam dabat, illum diem laetissimus cogitabat quo magnitudinem suam exueret. 5 Expertus erat quantum illa bona per omnis terras fulgentia sudoris exprimerent, quantum occultarum sollicitudinum tegerent: cum ciuibus primum, deinde cum collegis, nouissime cum affinibus coactus armis decernere mari terraque sanguinem fudit. Per Macedoniam, Siciliam, Aegyptum, Syriam Asiamque et omnis prope oras bello circumactus Romana caede lassos exercitus ad externa bella conuertit. Dum Alpes pacat immixtosque mediae paci et imperio hostes perdomat, dum [ut] ultra Rhenum et Euphraten et Danuuium terminos mouet, in ipsa urbe Murenarum, Caepionis Lepidi, Egnatiorum, aliorum in eum mucrones acuebantur. 6 Nondum horum effugerat insidias: filia et tot nobiles iuuenes adulterio uelut sacramento adacti iam infractam aetatem territabant Paulusque et iterum timenda cum Antonio mulier. Haec ulcera cum ipsis membris absciderat: alia subnascebantur; uelut graue multo sanguine corpus parte semper aliqua rumpebatur. Itaque otium optabat, in huius spe et cogitatione labores eius residebant, hoc uotum erat eius qui uoti compotes facere poterat.

V.

1 M. Cicero inter Catilinas, Clodios iactatus Pompeiosque et Crassos, partim manifestos inimicos, partim dubios amicos, dum fluctuatur cum re publica et illam pessum euntem tenet, nouissime abductus, nec secundis rebus quietus nec aduersarum patiens, quotiens illum ipsum consulatum suum non sine causa sed sine fine laudatum detestatur! 2 Quam flebiles uoces exprimit in quadam ad Atticum epistula iam uicto patre Pompeio, adhuc filio in Hispania fracta arma refouente! “Quid agam”, inquit, “hic, quaeris? Moror in Tusculano meo semiliber.” Alia deinceps adicit, quibus et priorem aetatem complorat et de praesenti queritur et de futura desperat. 3 Semiliberum se dixit Cicero: at me hercules numquam sapiens in tam humile nomen procedet, numquam semiliber erit, integrae semper libertatis et solidae, solutus et sui iuris et altior ceteris. Quid enim supra eum potest esse qui supra fortunam est?

VI.

1 Liuius Drusus, uir acer et uehemens, cum leges nouas et mala Gracchana mouisset stipatus ingenti totius Italiae coetu, exitum rerum non peruidens, quas nec agere licebat nec iam liberum erat semel incohatas relinquere, exsecratus inquietam a primordiis uitam dicitur dixisse: uni sibi ne puero quidem umquam ferias contigisse. Ausus est enim et pupillus adhuc et praetextatus iudicibus reos commendare et gratiam suam foro interponere tam efficaciter quidem, ut quaedam iudicia constet ab illo rapta. 2 Quo non erumperet tam immatura ambitio? Scires in malum ingens et priuatum et publicum euasuram tam praecoquem audaciam. Sero itaque querebatur nullas sibi ferias contigisse a puero seditiosus et foro grauis. Disputatur an ipse sibi manus attulerit; subito enim uulnere per inguen accepto collapsus est, aliquo dubitante an mors eius uoluntaria esset, nullo an tempestiua. 3 Superuacuum est commemorare plures qui, cum aliis felicissimi uiderentur, ipsi in se uerum testimonium dixerunt perosi omnem actum annorum suorum; sed his querellis nec alios mutauerunt nec se ipsos: nam cum uerba eruperunt, affectus ad consuetudinem relabuntur. 4 Vestra me hercules uita, licet supra mille annos exeat, in artissimum contrahetur: ista uitia nullum non saeculum deuorabunt; hoc uero spatium, quod quamuis natura currit ratio dilatat, cito uos effugiat necesse est; non enim apprenditis nec retinetis uel ocissimae omnium rei moram facitis, sed abire ut rem superuacua ac reparabilem sinitis.

VII.

1 In primis autem et illos numero qui nulli rei nisi uino ac libidini uacant; nulli enim turpius occupati sunt. Ceteri, etiam si uana gloriae imagine teneantur, speciose tamen errant; licet auaros mihi, licet iracundos enumeres uel odia exercentes iniusta uel bella, omnes isti uiriliter peccant: in uentrem ac libidinem projectorum inhonesta tabes est. 2 Omnia istorum tempora excute, aspice quam diu computent, quam diu insidientur, quam diu timeant, quam diu colant, quam diu colantur, quantum uadimonia sua atque aliena occupent, quantum conuiuia, quae iam ipsa officia sunt: uidebis quemadmodum illos respirare non sinant uel mala sua uel bona. 3 Denique inter omnes conuenit nullam rem bene exerceri posse ab homine occupato, non eloquentiam, non liberales disciplinas, quando districtus animus nihil altius recipit sed omnia uelut inculcata respuit. Nihil minus est hominis occupati quam uiuere: nullius rei difficilior scientia est. Professores aliarum artium uulgo multique sunt, quasdam uero ex his pueri admodum ita percepisse uisi sunt, ut etiam praecipere possent: uiuere tota uita descendum est et, quod magis fortasse miraberis, tota uita descendum est mori. 4 Tot maximi uiri, relictis omnibus impedimentis, cum diuitiis, officiis, uoluptatibus renuntiassent, hoc unum in extremam usque aetatem egerunt ut uiuere scirent; plures tamen ex his nondum se scire confessi uita abierunt, nedum ut isti sciant. 5 Magni, mihi crede, et supra humanos errores eminentis uiri est nihil ex suo tempore delibari sinere, et ideo eius uita longissima est, quia, quantumcumque patuit, totum ipsi uacauit. Nihil inde incultum otiosumque iacuit, nihil sub alio fuit, neque enim quicquam repperit dignum quod cum tempore suo permutaret custos eius parcissimus. Itaque satis illi fuit: iis uero necesse est defuisse ex quorum uita multum populus tulit. 6 Nec est quod putes hinc illos aliquando non intellegere damnum suum: plerosque certe audies ex iis quos magna felicitas grauat inter clientium greges aut causarum actiones aut ceteras honestas miserias exclamare interdum: "Viueri mihi non licet." 7 Quidni non liceat? Omnes illi qui te sibi aduocant tibi abducunt. Ille reus quot dies abstulit? Quot ille candidatus? Quot illa anus efferendis heredibus lassa? Quot ille ad irritandam auaritiam

captantium simulatus aeger? Quot ille potentior amicus, qui uos non in amicitiam sed in apparatu habet? Dispunge, inquam, et recense uitae tuae dies: uidebis paucos admodum et reiculos apud te resedis. 8 Assecutus ille quos optauerat fascis cupit ponere et subinde dicit: “Quando hic annus praeteribit?” Facit ille ludos, quorum sortem sibi obtingere magno aestimauit: “Quando”, inquit, “istos effugiam?” Diripitur ille toto foro patronus et magno concursu omnia ultra quam audiri potest complet: “Quando”, inquit, “res proferentur?” Praecipitat quisque uitam suam et futuri desiderio laborat, praesentium taedio. 9 At ille qui nullum non tempus in usus suos confert, qui omnes dies tamquam ultimum ordinat, nec optat crastinum nec timet. Quid enim est quod iam ulla hora nouae uoluptatis possit afferre? Omnia nota, omnia ad satietatem percepta sunt. De cetero fors fortuna ut uolet ordinet: uita iam in tuto est. Huic adici potest, detrahi nihil, et adici sic quemadmodum saturo iam ac pleno aliquid cibi: quod nec desiderat [et] capit. 10 Non est itaque quod quemquam propter canos aut rugas putes diu uixisse: non ille diu uixit, sed diu fuit. Quid enim, si illum multum putes nauigasse quem saeua tempestas a portu exceptum huc et illuc tulit ac uicibus uentorum ex diuerso furentium per eadem spatia in orbem egit? Non ille multum nauigauit, sed multum iactatus est.

VIII.

1 Mirari soleo cum uideo aliquos tempus petentes et eos qui rogantur facillimos; illud uterque spectat propter quod tempus petatum est, ipsum quidem neuter: quasi nihil petatur, quasi nihil datur. Re omnium pretiosissima ludatur; fallit autem illos, quia res incorporalis est, quia sub oculos non uenit ideoque uilissima aestimatur, immo paene nullum eius pretium est. 2 Annua, congiaria homines carissime accipiunt et illis aut laborem aut operam aut diligentiam suam locant: nemo aestimat tempus; utuntur illo laxius quasi gratuito. At eosdem aegros uide, si mortis periculum propius admotum est, medicorum genua tangentes, si metuunt capitale supplicium, omnia sua, ut uiuant, paratos impendere! Tanta in illis discordia affectuum est! 3 Quodsi posset quem-admodum praeteritorum annorum cuiusque numerus proponi, sic futurorum, quomodo illi qui paucos uiderent superesse trepidarent, quomodo illis parcerent! Atqui facile est quamuis exiguum dispensare quod certum est; id debet seruari diligentius quod nescias quando deficiat. 4 Nec est tamen quod putes illos ignorare quam cara res sit: dicere solent eis quos ualdissime diligunt paratos se partem annorum suorum dare: dant nec intellegunt: dant autem ita ut sine illorum incremento sibi detrahant. Sed hoc ipsum an detrahant nesciunt; ideo tolerabilis est illis iactura detrimenti latentis. 5 Nemo restituet annos, nemo iterum te tibi reddet. Ibit qua coepit aetas nec cursum suum aut reuocabit aut supprimet; nihil tumultuabitur, nihil admonebit uelocitatis suae: tacita labetur. Non illa se regis imperio, non fauore populi longius proferet: sicut missa est a primo die, curret, nusquam deuertetur, nusquam remorabitur. Quid fiet? Tu occupatus es, uita festinat; mors interim aderit, cui uelis nolis uacandum est.

IX.

1 Potestne quicquam stultius esse quam quorundam sensus, hominum eorum dico qui prudentiam iactant? Operosius occupati sunt. Vt melius possint uiuere, impendio uitae uitam instruunt. Cogitationes suas in longum ordinant; maxima porro uitae iactura dilatio est: illa primum quemque extrahit diem, illa eripit praesentia dum ulteriora promittit. Maximum uiuendi impedimentum est exspectatio, quae pendet ex crastino, perdit hodiernum. Quod in manu fortunae positum est disponis, quod in tua, dimittis. Quo spectas? Quo te extendis? Omnia quae uentura sunt in incerto iacent: protinus uiue. 2 Clamat ecce maximus uates et uelut diuino horrore instinctus salutare carmen canit:

Optima quaeque dies miseris mortalibus aeu
Prima fugit.

“Quid cunctaris?”, inquit, “Quid cessas? Nisi occupas, fugit.” Et cum occupaueris, tamen fugiet: itaque cum celeritate temporis utendi uelocitate certandum est et uelut ex torrenti rapido nec semper ituro cito hauriendum. 3 Hoc quoque pulcherrime ad exprobandam infinitam cogitationem quod non optimam quamque aetatem sed diem dicit. Quid securus et in tanta temporum fuga lentus menses tibi et annos in longam seriem, utcumque auiditati tuae uisum est, exporris? De die tecum loquitur et de hoc ipso fugiente. 4 Num dubium est ergo quin prima quaeque optima dies fugiat mortalibus miseris, id est occupatis? Quorum puerilis adhuc animos senectus opprimit, ad quam imparati inermesque perueniunt; nihil enim prouisum est: subito in illam necopinantes inciderunt, accedere eam cotidie non sentiebant. 5 Quemadmodum aut sermo aut lectio aut aliqua intentior cogitatio iter facientis decipit et peruenisse ante sciunt quam appropinquasse, sic hoc iter uitae assiduum et citatissimum quod uigilantes dormientesque eodem gradu facimus occupatis non apparet nisi in fine.

X.

1 Quod proposui si in partes uelim et argumenta diducere, multa mihi occurrent per quae probem breuissimam esse occupatorum uitam. Solebat dicere Fabianus, non ex his cathedrariis philosophis, sed ex ueris et antiquis, “contra affectus impetu, non subtilitate pugnandum, nec minutis uulneribus sed incursu auertendam aciem”. Non probabat cauillationes: “enim contundi debere, non uellicari.” Tamen, ut illis error exprobraretur suus, docendi non tantum deplorandi sunt. 2 In tria tempora uita diuiditur: quod fuit, quod est, quod futurum est. Ex his quod agimus breue est, quod acturi sumus dubium, quod egimus certum. Hoc est enim in quod fortuna ius perdidit, quod in nullius arbitrium reduci potest. 3 Hoc amittunt occupati; nec enim illis uacat praeterita respicere, et si uacet iniucunda est paenitendae rei recordatio. Inuiti itaque ad tempora male exacta animum reuocant nec audent ea retemptare quorum uitia, etiam quae aliquo praesentis uoluptatis lenocinio surripiebantur, retractando patescunt. Nemo, nisi quod omnia acta sunt sub censura sua, quae numquam fallitur, libenter se in praeteritum retorquet: 4 ille qui multa ambitiose concupiit superbe contempsit, impotenter uicit insidiosae deceptus, auare rapuit prodige effudit, necesse est memoriam suam timeat. Atqui haec est pars temporis nostri sacra ac dedicata, omnis humanos casus supergressa, extra regnum fortunae subducta, quam non inopia, non metus, non morborum incursus exagitet; haec nec turbari nec eripi potest; perpetua eius et intrepida possessio est. Singuli tantum dies, et hi per momenta, praesentes sunt; at praeteriti temporis omnes, cum iusseritis, aderunt, ad arbitrium tuum inspicere se ac detineri patientur, quod facere occupatis non uacat. 5 Securae et quietae mentis est in omnes uitae suae partes discurrere; occupatorum animi, uelut sub iugo sint, flectere se ac respicere non possunt. Abit igitur uita eorum in profundum; et ut nihil prodest, licet quantumlibet ingeras, si non subest quod excipiat ac seruet, sic nihil refert quantum temporis detur, si non est ubi subsidat: per quassos foratosque animos transmittitur. 6 Praesens tempus breuissimum est, adeo quidem ut quibusdam nullum uideatur; in cursu enim semper est, fluit et praecipitatur; ante desinit esse quam uenit, nec magis

moram patitur quam mundus aut sidera, quorum irrequieta semper agitatio numquam in eodem uestigio manet. Solum igitur ad occupatos praesens pertinet tempus, quod tam breue est ut arripi non possit, et id ipsum illis districtis in multa subducitur.

XI.

1 Denique uis scire quam non diu uiuant? Vide quam cupiant diu uiuere. Decrepiti senes paucorum annorum accessionem uotis mendicant: minores natu se ipsos esse fingunt; mendacio sibi blandiuntur et tam libenter se fallunt quam si una fata decipiant. Iam uero cum illos aliqua imbecillitas mortalitatis admonuit, quemadmodum pauentes moriuntur, non tamquam exeant de uita sed tamquam extrahantur. Stultos se fuisse ut non uixerint clamitant et, si modo euaserint ex illa uoletudine, in otio uicturos; tunc quam frustra parauerint quibus non fruerentur, quam in cassum omnis ceciderit labor cogitant. 2 At quibus uita procul ab omni negotio agitur, quidni spatiosa sit? Nihil ex illa delegatur, nihil alio atque alio spargitur, nihil inde fortunae traditur, nihil neglegentia interit, nihil largitione detrahitur, nihil superuacuum est: tota, ut ita dicam, in reditu est. Quantulacumque itaque abunde sufficit, et ideo, quandoque ultimus dies uenerit, non cunctabitur sapiens ire ad mortem certo gradu.

XII.

1 Quaeris fortasse quos occupatos uocem? Non est quod me solos putes dicere quos a basilica immissi demum canes eiciunt, quos aut in sua uides turba speciosius elidi aut in aliena contemptius, quos officia domibus suis euocant ut alienis foribus illidant, [aut] hasta praetoris infami lucro et quandoque suppurato exercet. 2 Quorundam otium occupatum est: in uilla aut in lecto suo, in media solitudine, quamuis ab omnibus recesserint, sibi ipsi molesti sunt: quorum non otiosa uita dicenda est sed desidiosa occupatio. Illum tu otiosum uocas qui Corinthia, paucorum furore pretiosa, anxia subtilitate concinnat et maiorem dierum partem in aeruginosis lamellis consumit? qui in ceromate (nam, pro facinus! ne Romanis quidem uitii laboramus) spectator puerorum rixantium sedet? qui iumentorum suorum greges in aetatum et colorum paria diducit? qui athletas nouissimos pascit? 3 Quid? Illos otiosos uocas quibus apud tonsorem multae horae transmittuntur, dum decerpitur si quid proxima nocte succreuit, dum de singulis capillis in consilium itur, dum aut disiecta coma restituitur aut deficiens hinc atque illinc in frontem compellitur? Quomodo irascuntur, si tonsor paulo neglegentior fuit, tamquam uirum tonderet! Quomodo excandescunt si quid ex iuba sua decisum est, si quid extra ordinem iacuit, nisi omnia in anulos suos reciderunt! Quis est istorum qui non malit rem publicam turbari quam comam suam? qui non sollicitior sit de capitis sui decore quam de salute? qui non comptior esse malit quam honestior? Hos tu otiosos uocas inter pectinem speculumque occupatos? 4 Quid illi qui in componendis, audiendis, discendis canticis operati sunt, dum uocem, cuius rectum cursum natura et optimum et simplicissimum fecit, in flexus modulationis inertissimae torquent, quorum digiti aliquod intra se carmen metientes semper sonant, quorum, cum ad res serias, etiam saepe tristes adhibiti sunt, exauditur tacita modulatio? Non habent isti otium, sed iners negotium. 5 Conuiuia me hercules horum non posuerim inter uacantia tempora, cum uideam quam solliciti argentum ordinent, quam diligenter exoletorum suorum tunicas succingant, quam suspensi sint quomodo aper a coco exeat, qua celeritate signo dato

glabri ad ministeria discurrant, quanta arte scindantur aues in frusta non enormia, quam curiose infelices pueruli ebriorum sputa detergeant: ex his elegantiae lautitiaeque fama captatur et usque eo in omnes uitae secessus mala sua illos sequuntur, ut nec bibant sine ambitione nec edant. 6 Ne illos quidem inter otiosos numeraueris qui sella se et lectica huc et illuc ferunt et ad gestationum suarum, quasi deserere illas non liceat, horas occurrunt, quos quando lauari debeant, quando natare, quando cenare alius admonet: [et] usque eo nimio delicati animi languore soluuntur, ut per se scire non possint an esuriant. 7 Audio quendam ex delicatis (si modo deliciae uocandae sunt uitam et consuetudinem humanam dediscere), cum ex balneo inter manus elatus et in sella positus esset, dixisse interrogando: "Iam sedeo?" Hunc tu ignorantem an sedeat putas scire an uiuat, an uideat, an otiosus sit? Non facile dixerim utrum magis miserear, si hoc ignorauit an si ignorare se finxit. 8 Multarum quidem rerum obliuionem sentiunt, sed multarum et imitantur; quaedam uitia illos quasi felicitatis argumenta delectant; nimis humilis et contempti hominis uidetur scire quid facias: i nunc et mimos multa mentiri ad exprobrandam luxuriam puta. Plura me hercules praetereunt quam fingunt et tanta incredibilium uitiorum copia ingenioso in hoc unum saeculo processit, ut iam mimorum arguere possimus negligentiam. Esse aliquem qui usque eo deliciis interierit ut an sedeat alteri credat! 9 Non est ergo hic otiosus, aliud illi nomen imponas; aeger est, immo mortuus est; ille otiosus est cui otii sui et sensus est. Hic uero semiuiuus, cui ad intellegendos corporis sui habitus indice opus est, quomodo potest hic ullius temporis dominus esse?

XIII 1 Persequi singulos longum est quorum aut latrunculi aut pila aut excoquendi in sole corporis cura consumpsere uitam. Non sunt otiosi quorum uoluptates multum negotii habent. Nam de illis nemo dubitabit quin operose nihil agant, qui litterarum inutilium studiis detinentur, quae iam apud Romanos quoque magna manus est. 2 Graecorum iste morbus fuit quaerere quem numerum Ulixes remigum habuisset, prior scripta esset Ilias an Odyssea, praeterea an eiusdem esset auctoris, alia deinceps huius notae, quae siue contineas nihil tacitam conscientiam iuant, siue proferas non doctior uidearis sed molestior. 3 Ecce Romanos quoque inuasit inane studium superuacua discendi; his diebus audiui quendam referentem quae

primus quisque ex Romanis ducibus fecisset: primus nauali proelio Duilius uicit, primus Curius Dentatus in triumpho duxit elephantos. Etiam nunc ista, etsi ad ueram gloriam non tendunt, circa ciuiliū tamen operum exempla uersantur; non est profutura talis scientia, est tamen quae nos speciosa rerum uanitate detineat. 4 Hoc quoque quaerentibus remittamus quis Romanis primus persuaserit nauem conscendere (Claudius is fuit, Caudex ob hoc ipsum appellatus quia plurium tabularum contextus caudex apud antiquos uocatur, unde publicae tabulae codices dicuntur et naues nunc quoque ex antiqua consuetudine quae commeatus per Tiberim subuehunt codicariae uocantur); 5 sane et hoc ad rem pertineat, quod Valerius Coruinus primus Messanam uicit et primus ex familia Valeriorum, urbis captae in se translato nomine, Messana appellatus est paulatimque uulgo permutante litteras Messala dictus: 6 num et hoc cuiquam curare permittes quod primus L. Sulla in circo leones solutos dedit, cum alioquin alligati darentur, ad conficiendos eos missis a rege Boccho iaculatoribus? Et hoc sane remittatur: num et Pompeium primum in circo elephantorum duodeuiginti pugnam edidisse commissis more proelii noxiis hominibus, ad ullam rem bonam pertinet? Princeps ciuitatis et inter antiquos principes (ut fama tradidit) bonitatis eximiae memorabile putauit spectaculi genus nouo more perdere homines. Depugnant? Parum est. Lancinantur? Parum est: ingenti mole animalium exterantur! 7 Satius erat ista in obliuionem ire, ne quis postea potens disceret inuideretque rei minime humanae. O quantum caliginis mentibus nostris obicit magna felicitas! Ille se supra rerum naturam esse tunc credidit, cum tot miserorum hominum cateruas sub alio caelo natis beluis obiceret, cum bellum inter tam disparia animalia committeret, cum in conspectum populi Romani multum sanguinis funderet mox plus ipsum fundere coactus; at idem postea Alexandrina perfidia deceptus ultimo mancipio transfodiendum se praeuit, tum demum intellecta inani iactatione cognominis sui. 8 Sed, ut illo reuertar unde decessi et in eadem materia ostendam superuacua quorundam diligentiam, idem narrabat Metellum, uictis in Sicilia Poenis triumphantem, unum omnium Romanorum ante currum centum et uiginti captiuos elephantos duxisse; Sullam ultimum Romanorum protulisse pomerium, quod numquam prouinciali sed Italico agro adquisito

proferre moris apud antiquos fuit. Hoc scire magis prodest quam Auentinum montem extra pomerium esse, ut ille affirmabat, propter alteram ex duabus causis, aut quod plebs eo secessisset aut quod Remo auspicante illo loco aues non addixissent, alia deinceps innumerabilia quae aut farta sunt mendaciis aut similia? 9 Nam ut concedas omnia eos fide bona dicere, ut ad praestationem scribant, tamen cuius ista errores minuent? cuius cupiditates prement? quem fortiolem, quem iustiolem, quem liberaliolem facient? Dubitare se interim Fabianus noster aiebat an satius esset nullis studiis admoueri quam his implicari.

XIV.

1 Soli omnium otiosi sunt qui sapientiae uacant, soli uiuunt; nec enim suam tantum aetatem bene tuentur: omne aeuum suo adiciunt; quicquid annorum ante illos actum est, illis adquisitum est. Nisi ingratis sumus, illi clarissimi sacrarum opinionum conditores nobis nati sunt, nobis uitam praeparauerunt. Ad res pulcherrimas ex tenebris ad lucem erutas alieno labore deducimur; nullo nobis saeculo interdictum est, in omnia admittimur et, si magnitudine animi egredi humanae imbecillitatis angustias libet, multum per quod spatiemur temporis est. 2 Disputare cum Socrate licet, dubitare cum Carneade, cum Epicuro quiescere, hominis naturam cum Stoicis uincere, cum Cynicis excedere. Cum rerum natura in consortium omnis aevi patiatur incedere, quidni ab hoc exiguo et caduco temporis transitu in illa toto nos demus animo quae immensa, quae aeterna sunt, quae cum melioribus communia? 3 Isti qui per officia discursant, qui se aliosque inquietant, cum bene insanierint, cum omnium limina cotidie perambulauerint nec ulla apertas fores praeterierint, cum per diuersissimas domos meritoriam salutationem circumtulerint, quotum quemque ex tam immensa et uariis cupiditatibus districta urbe poterunt uidere? 4 Quam multi erunt quorum illos aut somnus aut luxuria aut inhumanitas summoueat! Quam multi qui illos, cum diu torserint, simulata festinatione transcurrant! Quam multi per refertum clientibus atrium prodire uitabunt et per obscuros aedium aditus profugient, quasi non inhumanius sit decipere quam excludere! Quam multi hesternae crapula semisomnes et graues illis miseris suum somnum rumpentibus ut alienum exspectent, uix alleuatis labris insusurratum miliens nomen oscitatione superbissima reddent! 5 Hos in ueris officiis morari putamus, licet dicant, qui Zenonem, qui Pythagoran cotidie et Democritum ceterosque antistites bonarum artium, qui Aristotelen et Theophrastum uolent habere quam familiarissimos. Nemo horum non uacabit, nemo non uenientem ad se beatior, amantiorem sui dimittet, nemo quemquam uacuis a se manibus abire patietur; nocte conueniri, interdiu ab omnibus mortalibus possunt.

XV.

1 Horum te mori nemo coget, omnes docebunt; horum nemo annos tuos conterit, suos tibi contribuit; nullius ex his sermo periculosus erit, nullius amicitia capitalis, nullius sumptuosa obseruatio. Feres ex illis quicquid uoles; per illos non stabit quominus quantum plurimum cupieris haurias. 2 Quae illum felicitas, quam pulchra senectus manet, qui se in horum clientelam contulit! Habebit cum quibus de minimis maximisque rebus deliberet, quos de se cotidie consulat, a quibus audiat uerum sine contumelia, laudetur sine adulatione, ad quorum se similitudinem effingat. 3 Solemus dicere non fuisse in nostra potestate quos sortiremur parentes, forte nobis datos: bonis uero ad suum arbitrium nasci licet. Nobilissimorum ingeniorum familiae sunt: elige in quam adscisci uelis; non in nomen tantum adoptaberis, sed in ipsa bona, quae non erunt sordide nec maligne custodienda: maiora fient quo illa pluribus diuiseris. 4 Hi tibi dabunt ad aeternitatem iter et te in illum locum ex quo nemo deicitur subleuabunt. Haec una ratio est extendendae mortalitatis, immo in immortalitatem uertendae. Honores, monumenta, quicquid aut decretis ambitio iussit aut operibus extruxit cito subruitur, nihil non longa demolitur uetustas et mouet; at iis quae consecrauit sapientia nocere non potest; nulla abolebit aetas, nulla deminuet; sequens ac deinde semper ulterior aliquid ad uenerationem conferet, quoniam quidem in uicino uersatur inuidia, simplicius longe posita miramur. 5 Sapientis ergo multum patet uita; non idem illum qui ceteros terminus cludit; solus generis humani legibus soluitur; omnia illi saecula ut deo seruiunt. Transiit tempus aliquod? hoc recordatione comprehendit; instat? hoc utitur; uenturum est? hoc praecipit. Longam illi uitam facit omnium temporum in unum collatio.

XVI.

1 Illorum breuissima ac sollicitissima aetas est qui praeteritorum obliuiscuntur, praesentia neglegunt, de futuro timent: cum ad extrema uenerunt, sero intellegunt miseri tam diu se dum nihil agunt occupatos fuisse. 2 Nec est quod hoc argumento probari putes longam illos agere uitam, quia interdum mortem inuocant: uexat illos imprudentia incertis affectibus et incurrentibus in ipsa quae metuunt; mortem saepe ideo optant quia timent. 3 Illud quoque argumentum non est quod putes diu uiuentium, quod saepe illis longus uidetur dies, quod, dum ueniat condictum tempus cenae, tarde ire horas queruntur; nam si quando illos deseruerunt occupationes, in otio relictis aestuant nec quomodo id disponant ut extrahant sciunt. Itaque ad occupationem aliquam tendunt et quod interiacet omne tempus graue est, tam me hercules quam cum dies muneris gladiatorii edictus est, aut cum alicuius alterius uel spectaculi uel uoluptatis exspectatur constitutum, transilire medios dies uolunt. 4 Omnis illis speratae rei longa dilatio est; at illud tempus quod amant breue est et praeceps breuiusque multo, suo uitio; aliunde enim alio transfugiunt et consistere in una cupiditate non possunt. Non sunt illis longi dies, sed inuisi; at contra quam exiguae noctes uidentur, quas in complexu scortorum aut uino exigunt! 5 Inde etiam poetarum furor fabulis humanos errores alentium, quibus uisus est Iuppiter uoluptate concubitus delenitus duplicasse noctem; quid aliud est uitia nostra incendere quam auctores illis inscribere deos et dare morbo exemplo diuinitatis excusatam licentiam? Possunt istis non breuissimae uideri noctes quas tam care mercantur? Diem noctis exspectatione perdunt, noctem lucis metu.

XVII I Ipsae uoluptates eorum trepidae et uariis terroribus inquietae sunt subitque cum maxime exsultantis sollicita cogitatio: "Haec quam diu?" Ab hoc affectu reges suam fleuere potentiam, nec illos magnitudo fortunae suae delectauit, sed uenturus aliquando finis exterruit. 2 Cum per magna camporum spatia porrigeret exercitum nec numerum eius sed mensuram comprehenderet Persarum rex insolentissimus, lacrimas profudit, quod intra centum annos nemo ex tanta iuuentute superfuturus esset; at illis admoturus erat fatum ipse

qui flebat perditurusque alios in mari alios in terra, alios proelio alios fuga, et intra exiguum tempus consumpturus illos quibus centesimum annum timebat. 3 Quid quod gaudia quoque eorum trepida sunt? Non enim solidis causis innituntur, sed eadem qua oriuntur uanitate turbantur. Qualia autem putas esse tempora etiam ipsorum confessione misera, cum haec quoque quibus se attollunt et super hominem efferunt parum sincera sint? 4 Maxima quaeque bona sollicita sunt nec ulli fortunae minus bene quam optimae creditur; alia felicitate ad tuendam felicitatem opus est et pro ipsis quae succedere uotis uota facienda sunt. Omne enim quod fortuito obuenit instabile est: quod altius surrexerit, opportunius est in occasum. Neminem porro casura delectant; miserrimam ergo necesse est, non tantum breuissimam uitam esse eorum qui magno parant labore quod maiore possideant. 5 Operose assequuntur quae uolunt, anxii tenent quae assecuti sunt; nulla interim numquam amplius redituri temporis ratio est: nouae occupationes ueteribus substituuntur, spes spem excitat, ambitionem ambitio. Miseriarum non finis quaeritur, sed materia mutatur. Nostri nos honores torserunt? plus temporis alieni auferunt; candidati laborare desiimus? suffragatores incipimus; accusandi deposuimus molestiam? iudicandi nanciscimur; iudex desiit esse? quaesitor est; alienorum bonorum mercennaria procuratione consenuit? suis opibus distinetur. 6 Marius caliga dimisit? consulatus exercet; Quintius dictaturam properat peruadere? ab aratro reuocabitur. Ibit in Poenos nondum tantae maturus rei Scipio; uictor Hannibalis uictor Antiochi, sui consulatus decus fraterni sponsor, ni per ipsum mora esset, cum Ioue reponeretur: ciuiles seruatorem agitabunt seditiones et post fastiditos a iuvene diis aequos honores iam senem contumacis exilii delectabit ambitio. Numquam derunt uel felices uel miserae sollicitudinis causae; per occupationes uita trudetur; otium numquam agetur, semper optabitur.

XVIII.

1 Excerpe itaque te uulgo, Pauline carissime, et in tranquillio-
rem portum non pro aetatis spatio iactatus tandem recede. Cogita quot
fluctus subieris, quot tempestates partim priuatas sustinueris, partim
publicas in te conuerteris; satis iam per laboriosa et inquieta
documenta exhibita uirtus est; experire quid in otio faciat. Maior pars
aetatis, certe melior rei publicae datast: aliquid temporis tui sume
etiam tibi. 2 Nec te ad segnem aut inertem quietem uoco, non ut
somno et caris turbae uoluptatibus quicquid est in te indolis uiuidae
mergas; non est istud adquiescere: inuenies maiora omnibus adhuc
strenue tractatis operibus, quae repositus et securus agites. 3 Tu
quidem orbis terrarum rationes administras tam abstinenter quam
alienas, tam diligenter quam tuas, tam religiose quam publicas. In
officio amorem consequeris, in quo odium uitare difficile est; sed
tamen, mihi crede, satius est uitae suae rationem quam frumenti
publici nosse. 4 Istum animi uigorem rerum maximarum
capacissimum a ministerio honorifico quidem sed parum ad beatam
uitam apto reuoca, et cogita non id egisse te ab aetate prima omni
cultu studiorum liberalium ut tibi multa milia frumenti bene
committerentur; maius quiddam et altius de te promiseras. Non
derunt et frugalitatis exactae homines et laboriosae operae; tanto
aptiora [ex]portandis oneribus tarda iumenta sunt quam nobiles equi,
quorum generosam pernecitatem quis umquam graui sarcina pressit?
Cogita praeterea quantum sollicitudinis sit ad tantam te molem
obicere: cum uentre tibi humano negotium est; nec rationem patitur
nec aequitate mitigatur nec ulla prece flectitur populus esuriens.
Modo modo intra paucos illos dies quibus C. Caesar periit (si quis
inferis sensus est) hoc grauissime ferens quod decebat populo
Romano superstitute, septem aut octo certe dierum cibaria superesse!
Dum ille pontes nauibus iungit et uiribus imperi ludit, aderat
ultimum malorum obsessis quoque, alimentorum egestas; exitio
paene ac fame constitit et, quae famem sequitur, rerum omnium ruina
furiosi et externi et infeliciter superbi regis imitatio. 6 Quem tunc
animum habuerunt illi quibus erat mandata frumenti publici cura,
saxa, ferrum, ignes, Gaium excepturi? Summa dissimulatione tantum

inter uiscera latentis mali tegebant, cum ratione scilicet: quaedam enim ignorantibus aegris curanda sunt, causa multis moriendi fuit morbum suum nosse.

XIX.

1 Recipe te ad haec tranquilliora, tutiora, maiora! Simile tu putas esse, utrum cures ut incorruptum et a fraude aduehentium et a negligentia frumentum transfundatur in horrea, ne concepto umore uitietur et concalescat, ut ad mensuram pondusque respondeat, an ad haec sacra et sublimia accedas sciturus quae materia sit dei, quae uoluptas, quae condicio, quae forma; quis animum tuum casus exspectet; ubi nos a corporibus dimissos natura componat; quid sit quod huius mundi grauissima quaeque in medio sustineat, supra leuia suspendat, in summum ignem ferat, sidera uicibus suis excitet; cetera deinceps ingentibus plena miraculis? 2 Vis tu relicto solo mente ad ista respicere! Nunc, dum calet sanguis, uigentibus ad meliora eundum est. Exspectat te in hoc genere uitae multum bonarum artium, amor uirtutum atque usus, cupiditatum obliuio, uiuendi ac moriendi scientia, alta rerum quies.

XX.

1 Omnium quidem occupatorum condicio misera est, eorum tamen miserrima, qui ne suis quidem laborant occupationibus, ad alienum dormiunt somnum, ad alienum ambulant gradum, amare et odisse, res omnium liberrimas, iubentur. Hi si uolent scire quam brevis ipsorum uita sit, cogitent ex quota parte sua sit. 2 Cum uideris itaque praetextam saepe iam sumptam, cum celebre in foro nomen, ne inuideris: ista uitae damno parantur. Vt unus ab illis numeretur annus, omnis annos suos conterent. Quosdam antequam in summum ambitionis eniterentur, inter prima luctantis aetas reliquit; quosdam, cum in consummationem dignitatis per mille indignitates erepsissent, misera subiit cogitatio laborasse ipsos in titulum sepulcri; quorundam ultima senectus, dum in nouas spes ut iuuenta disponitur, inter conatus magnos et improbos inualida defecit. 3 Foedus ille quem in iudicio pro ignotissimis litigatoribus grandem natu et imperitae coronae assensiones captantem spiritus liquit; turpis ille qui uiuendo lassus citius quam laborando inter ipsa officia collapsus est; turpis quem accipiendis immorientem rationibus diu tractus risit heres. 4 Praeterire quod mihi occurrit exemplum non possum: Turannius fuit exactae diligentiae senex, qui post annum nonagesimum, cum uacationem procurationis ab C. Caesare ultro accepisset, componi se in lecto et uelut exanimem a circumstante familia plangi iussit. Lugebat domus otium domini senis nec finiuit ante tristitiam quam labor illi suus restitutus est. Adeone iuuat occupatum mori? 5 Idem plerisque animus est; diutius cupiditas illis laboris quam facultas est; cum imbecillitate corporis pugnant, senectutem ipsam nullo alio nomine grauem iudicant quam quod illos seponit. Lex a quinquagesimo anno militem non legit, a sexagesimo senatorem non citat: difficilior homines a se otium impetrant quam a lege. 6 Interim dum rapiuntur et rapiunt, dum alter alterius quietem rumpit, dum mutuo miseri sunt, uita est sine fructu, sine uoluptate, sine ullo profectu animi; nemo in conspicuo mortem habet, nemo non procul spes intendit, quidam uero disponunt etiam illa quae ultra uitam sunt, magnas moles sepulcrorum et operum publicorum dedicationes et ad rogum munera et ambitiosas exsequias. At me hercules istorum

funera, tamquam minimum uixerint, ad faces et cereos ducenda sunt.

THE PUMPKINIFICATION OF THE DIVINE CLAUDIUS — Apocolocyntosis divi Claudii

[1] Quid actum sit in caelo ante diem III idus Octobris anno novo, initio saeculi felicissimi, volo memoriae tradere. Nihil nec offensae nec gratiae dabitur. Haec ita vera si quis quaesiverit unde sciam, primum, si noluerō, non respondebo. Quis coacturus est? Ego scio me liberum factum, ex quo suum diem obiit ille, qui verum proverbium fecerat, aut regem aut fatuum nasci oportere. Si libuerit respondere, dicam quod mihi in buccam venerit. Quis unquam ab historico iuratores exegit? Tamen si necesse fuerit auctorem producere, quaerito ab eo qui Drusillam euntem in caelum vidit: idem Claudium vidisse se dicet iter facientem “non passibus aequis.” Velit nolit, necesse est illi omnia videre, quae in caelo aguntur: Appiae viae curator est, qua scis et divum Augustum et Tiberium Caesarem ad deos isse. Hunc si interrogaveris, soli narrabit: coram pluribus nunquam verbum faciet. Nam ex quo in senatu iuravit se Drusillam vidisse caelum ascendentem et illi pro tam bono nuntio nemo credidit, quod viderit, verbis conceptis affirmavit se non indicaturum, etiam si in medio foro hominem occisum vidisset. Ab hoc ego quae tum audiui, certa clara afferō, ita illum salvum et felicem habeam.

[2] Iam Phoebus breviorē via contraxerat arcum
lucis, et obscuri crescebant tempora somni,
iamque suum victrix augebat Cynthia regnum,
et deformis hiemps gratos carpebat honores
divitis autumnī, iussoque senescere Baccho
carpebat raras serus vindemitor uvas.

Puto magis intellegi, si dixerō: mensis erat October, dies III idus Octobris. Horam non possum certam tibi dicere, facilius inter philosophos quam inter horologia conveniet, tamen inter sextam et septimam erat. Nimis rustice! <Adeo his> adquiescunt omnes poetae, non contenti ortus et occasus describere ut etiam medium diem inquietent, tu sic transibis horam tam bonam?

Iam medium curru Phoebus diviserat orbem:
et propior nocti fessas quatiebat habenas
obliquo flexam deducens tramite lucem:

Claudius animam agere coepit nec invenire exitum poterat.

[3] Tum Mercurius, qui semper ingenio eius delectatus esset, unam e tribus Parcis seducit et ait: “Quid, femina crudelissima, hominem miserum torqueri pateris? Nec unquam tam diu cruciatus cesset? Annus sexagesimus [et] quartus est, ex quo cum anima luctatur. Quid huic et rei publicae invides? Patere mathematicos aliquando verum dicere, qui illum, ex quo princeps factus est, omnibus annis, omnibus mensibus efferunt. Et tamen non est mirum si errant et horam eius nemo novit; nemo enim unquam illum natum putavit. Fac quod faciendum est:

‘Dede neci, melior vacua sine regnet in aula.’”

Sed Clotho “ego mehercules” inquit “pusillum temporis adicere illi volebam, dum hos pauculos, qui supersunt, civitate donaret (constituerat enim omnes Graecos, Gallos, Hispanos, Britannos togatos videre), sed quoniam placet aliquos peregrinos in semen relinqui et tu ita iubes fieri, fiat.” Aperit tum capsulam et tres fusos profert: unus erat Augurini, alter Babae, tertius Claudii. “Hos” inquit “tres uno anno exiguis intervallis temporum divisos mori iubebo, nec illum incommittam. Non oportet enim eum, qui modo se tot milia hominum sequentia videbat, tot praecedentia, tot circumfusa, subito solum destitui. Contentus erit his interim convictoribus.”

[4] Haec ait et turpi convolvens stamina fuso
abrupit stolidae regalia tempora vitae.

At Lachesis redimita comas, ornata capillos,
Pieria crinem lauro frontemque coronans,
candida de niveo subtemina vellere sumit
felici moderanda manu, quae ducta colorem
assumpsere novum. Mirantur pensa sorores:
mutatur vilis pretioso lana metallo,
aurea formoso descendunt saecula filo.

Nec modus est illis, felicia vellera ducunt
et gaudent implere manus, sunt dulcia pensa.

Sponte sua festinat opus nulloque labore
mollia contorto descendunt stamina fuso.
Vincunt Tithoni, vincunt et Nestoris annos.
Phoebus adest cantuque iuvat gaudetque futuris,
et laetus nunc plectra movet, nunc pensa ministrat.
Detinet intentas cantu fallitque laborem.
Dumque nimis citharam fraternaue carmina laudant,
plus solito nevere manus, humanaue fata
laudatum transcendit opus. “Ne demite, Parcae”
Phoebus ait “vincat mortalis tempora vitae
ille, mihi similis vultu similisque decore
nec cantu nec voce minor. Felicia lassis
saecula praestabit legumque silentia rumpet.
Qualis discutiens fugientia Lucifer astra
aut qualis surgit redeuntibus Hesperus astris,
qualis cum primum tenebris Aurora solutis
induxit rubicunda diem, Sol aspicit orbem
lucidus, et primos a carcere concitat axes:
talis Caesar adest, talem iam Roma Neronem
aspiciet. Flagrat nitidus fulgore remisso
vultus, et adfuso cervix formosa capillo.”

Haec Apollo. At Lachesis, quae et ipsa homini formosissimo
faveret, fecit illud plena manu, et Neroni multos annos de suo donat.
Claudium autem iubent omnes

χαίροντας, εὐφημοῦντας ἐκπέμπειν δόμων.

Et ille quidem animam ebulliit, et ex eo desiit vivere videri.
Exspiravit autem dum comoedos audit, ut scias me non sine causa
illos timere. Ultima vox eius haec inter homines audita est, cum
maiores sonitum emisisset illa parte, qua facilius loquebatur: “vae
me, puto, concacavi me.” Quod an fecerit, nescio: omnia certe
concacavit.

[5] Quae in terris postea sint acta, supervacuum est referre. Scitis
enim optime, nec periculum est ne excidant memoriae quae gaudium
publicum impresserit: nemo felicitatis suae obliviscitur. In caelo
quae acta sint, audite: fides penes auctorem erit. Nuntiatur Iovi
venisse quendam bonae staturae, bene canum; nescio quid illum

minari, assidue enim caput movere; pedem dextrum trahere. Quaesisse se, cuius nationis esset: respondisse nescio quid perturbato sono et voce confusa; non intellegere se linguam eius, nec Graecum esse nec Romanum nec ullius gentis notae. Tum Iuppiter Herculem, qui totum orbem terrarum pererraverat et nosse videbatur omnes nationes, iubet ire et explorare, quorum hominum esset. Tum Hercules primo aspectu sane perturbatus est, ut qui etiam non omnia monstra timuerit. Ut vidit novi generis faciem, insolitum incessum, vocem nullius terrestris animalis sed qualis esse marinis beluis solet, raucam et implicatam, putavit sibi tertium decimum laborem venisse. Diligentius intuenti visus est quasi homo. Accessit itaque et quod facillimum fuit Graeculo, ait:

τίς πόθεν εἰς ἀνδρῶν, ποίη πόλις ἡδὲ τοκῆες;

Claudius gaudet esse illic philologos homines, sperat futurum aliquem historiis suis locum. Itaque et ipse Homérico versu Caesarem se esse significans ait:

Ἰλιόθεν με φέρων ἄνεμος Κικόνεσσι πέλασσευ

Erat autem sequens versus verior, aequae Homericus:

ἔνθα δ' ἐγὼ πόλιν ἔπραθον, ὤλεσα δ' αὐτούς.

[6] Et imposuerat Herculi minime vafro nisi fuisset illic Febris, quae fano suo relicto sola cum illo venerat: ceteros omnes deos Romae reliquerat. “Iste “ inquit “mera mendacia narrat. Ego tibi dico, quae cum illo tot annis vixi: Luguduni natus est, Marci municipem vides. Quod tibi narro, ad sextum decimum lapidem natus est a Vienna, Gallus germanus. Itaque quod Gallum facere oportebat, Romam cepit. Hunc ego tibi recipio Luguduni natum, ubi Licinus multis annis regnavit. Tu autem, qui plura loca calcasti quam ullus mulio perpetuarius, Lugudunenses scire debes, et multa milia inter Xanthum et Rhodanum interesse.” Excandescit hoc loco Claudius et quanto potest murmure irascitur. Quid diceret, nemo intellegebat, ille autem Febrim duci iubebat, illo gestu solutae manus et ad hoc unum satis firmæ, quo decollare homines solebat, iusserat illi collum praecidi. Putares omnes illius esse libertos: adeo illum nemo curabat.

[7] Tum Hercules “audi me” inquit “tu desine fatuari. Venisti huc, ubi mures ferrum rodunt. Citius mihi verum, ne tibi alogias excutiam.” Et quo terribilior esset, tragicus fit et ait:

“Exprome propere, sede qua genitus cluas,
hoc ne peremptus stipite ad terram accidas;
haec clava reges saepe mactavit feros.
Quid nunc profatu vocis incerto sonas?
Quae patria, quae gens mobile eduxit caput?
Edissere. Equidem regna tergemini petens
longinqua regis, unde ab Hesperio mari
Inachiam ad urbem nobile advexi pecus,
vidi duobus imminens fluviis iugum,
quod Phoebus ortu semper obverso videt,
ubi Rhodanus ingens amne praerapido fluit,
Ararque dubitans, quo suos cursus agat,
tacitus quietis adluit ripas vadis.
Estne illa tellus spiritus altrix tui?”

Haec satis animose et fortiter, nihilo minus mentis suae non est et timet $\mu\omega\rho\omicron\upsilon\ \pi\lambda\eta\gamma\acute{\eta}\nu$. Claudius ut vidit virum valentem, oblitus nugarum intellexit neminem Romae sibi parem fuisse, illic non habere se idem gratiae: gallum in suo sterquilino plurimum posse. Itaque quantum intellegi potuit, haec visus est dicere: “Ego te, fortissime deorum Hercule, speravi mihi adfuturum apud alios, et si qui a me notorem petisset, te fui nominaturus, qui me optime nosti. Nam si memoria repetis, ego eram qui tibi ante templum tuum ius dicebam totis diebus mense Iulio et Augusto. Tu scis, quantum illic miseriarum tulerim, cum causidicos audirem diem et noctem, in quod si incidisses, valde fortis licet tibi videaris, maluisses cloacas Augeae purgare: multo plus ego stercoris exhausti. “Sed quoniam volo” . . . [lacuna]

[8] . . . “non mirum quod in curiam impetum fecisti: nihil tibi clausi est. Modo dic nobis, qualem deum istum fieri velis. Ἐπικούρειος θεός non potest esse: οὔτε αὐτὸς πρᾶγμα ἔχει τι οὔτε ἄλλοις παρέχει; Stoicus? Quomodo potest ‘rotundus’ esse, ut ait Varro, ‘sine capite, sine praeputio’? Est aliquid in illo Stoici dei, iam video: nec cor nec caput habet. Si mehercules a Saturno petisset hoc beneficium, cuius mensem toto anno celebravit, Saturnalicus princeps, non tulisset illud, nedum ab Iove, quem quantum quidem in illo fuit, damnavit incesti. Silanum enim generum suum occidit

propterea quod sororem suam, festivissimam omnium puellarum, quam omnes Venerem vocarent, maluit Iunonem vocare. ‘Quare’ inquis’ quaero enim, sororem suam?’ Stulte, stude : Athenis dimidium licet, Alexandriae totum. ‘Quia Romae’ inquis ‘mures molas lingunt.’ Hic nobis curva corrigit? quid in cubiculo suo faciat, nescio, et iam ‘caeli scrutatur plagas’? Deus fieri vult: parum est quod templum in Britannia habet, quod hunc barbari colunt et ut deum orant $\mu\omega\rho\omicron\tilde{\upsilon}\ \epsilon\upsilon\iota\lambda\acute{\alpha}\tau\omicron\upsilon\ \tau\upsilon\chi\epsilon\tilde{\iota}\nu;$ ”

[9] Tandem Iovi venit in mentem, privatis intra curiam morantibus [senatoribus non licere] sententiam dicere nec disputare. “Ego” inquit “p. c. interrogare vobis permiseram, vos mera mapalia fecistis. Volo ut servetis disciplinam curiae. Hic qualiscunque est, quid de nobis existimabit? Illo dimisso primus interrogatur sententiam Ianus pater. Is designatus erat in kal. Iulias postmeridianus consul, homo quantumvis vafer, qui semper videt a ἅμα πρόσσω καὶ ὀπίσσω. Is multa diserte, quod in foro vivebat, dixit, quae notarius persequi non potuit, et ideo non refero, ne aliis verbis ponam, quae ab illo dicta sunt. Multa dixit de magnitudine deorum: non debere hunc vulgo dari honorem. “Olim” inquit “magna res erat deum fieri: iam Fabam mimum fecistis. Itaque ne videar in personam, non in rem dicere sententiam, censeo ne quis post hunc diem deus fiat ex his, qui ἀρούρης καρπὸν ἔδουσιν aut ex his, quos alit ζείδωρος ἄρουρα. Qui contra hoc senatus consultum deus factus, dictus pictusve erit, eum dedi Larvis et proximo munere inter novos auctoratos ferulis vapulare placet.” Proximus interrogatur sententiam Diespiter Vicae Potae filius, et ipse designatus consul, nummulariolus: hoc quaestu se sustinebat, vendere civitatulas solebat. Ad hunc belle accessit Hercules et auriculam illi tetigit. Censet itaque in haec verba: “Cum divus Claudius et divum Augustum sanguine contingat nec minus divam Augustam aviam suam, quam ipse deam esse iussit, longeque omnes mortales sapientia antecellat, sitque e re publica esse aliquem qui cum Romulo possit ‘ferventia rapa vorare,’ censeo uti divus Claudius ex hac die deus sit, ita uti ante eum qui optimo iure factus sit, eamque rem ad Metamorphosis Ovidi adiciendam.” Varias erant sententiae, et videbatur Claudius sententiam vincere. Hercules enim, qui videret ferrum suum in igne esse, modo huc modo illuc cursabat et aiebat: “Noli mihi invidere, mea res agitur: deinde tu si quid

volueris, in vicem faciam; manus manum lavat.”

[10] Tunc divus Augustus surrexit sententiae suae loco dicendae, et summa facundia disseruit: “Ego” inquit “p.c. vos testes habeo, ex quo deus factus sum, nullum me verbum fecisse: semper meum negotium ago. Sed non possum amplius dissimulare, et dolorem, quem graviorem pudor facit, continere. In hoc terra marique pacem peperī? Ideo civilia bella compescui? Ideo legibus urbem fundavi, operibus ornavi, ut — quid dicam p. c. non invenio: omnia infra indignationem verba sunt. Confugiendum est itaque ad Messalae Corvini, disertissimi viri, illam sententiam ‘pudet imperii.’ Hic, p.c., qui vobis non posse videtur muscam excitare, tam facile homines occidebat, quam canis adsidit. Sed quid ego de tot ac talibus viris dicam? Non vacat deflere publicas clades intuenti domestica mala. Itaque illa omittam, haec referam; nam etiam si soror mea Graece nescit, ego scio: ἔγγιον γόνυ κνήμης. Iste quem videtis, per tot annos sub meo nomine latens, hanc mihi gratiam rettulit, ut duas Iulias proneptes meas occideret, alteram ferro, alteram fame; unum abnepotem L. Silanum, videris, Iuppiter, an in causa mala, certe in tua, si aequus futurus es. Dic mihi, dive Claudī, quare quemquam ex his, quos quasque occidisti, antequam de causa cognosceres, antequam audires, damnasti? Hoc ubi fieri solet? In caelo non fit.

[11] “Ecce Iuppiter, qui tot annos regnat, uni Volcano crus fregit, quem

ρίψε ποδὸς τεταγὼν ἀπὸ βηλοῦ θεσπεσίῳ

et iratus fuit uxori et suspendit illam: numquid occidit? Tu Messalinam, cuius aequae avunculus maior eram quam tuus, occidisti. ‘Nescio’ inquis. Di tibi male faciant: adeo istuc turpius est, quod nescisti, quam quod occidisti. C. Caesarem non desiit mortuum persequi. Occiderat ille socerum: hic et generum. Gaius Crassi filium vetuit Magnum vocari: hic nomen illi reddidit, caput tulit. Occidit in una domo Crassum, Magnum, Scriboniam, +Tristionias, Assarionem, + nobiles tamen, Crassum vero tam fatuum, ut etiam regnare posset. Hunc nunc deum facere vultis? Videte corpus eius dis iratis natum. Ad summam, tria verba cito dicat, et servum me ducat. Hunc deum quis colet? Quis credet? Dum tales deos facitis, nemo vos deos esse credet. Summa rei, p. c., si honeste [me] inter vos gessi, si nulli clarius respondi, vindicate iniurias meas. Ego pro sententia mea hoc

censeo:” atque ita ex tabella recitavit: “quandoquidem divus Claudius occidit socerum suum Appium Silanum, generos duos Magnum Pompeium et L. Silanum, socerum filiae suae Crassum Frugi, hominem tam similem sibi quam ovo ovum, Scriboniam socrum filiae suae, uxorem suam Messalinam et ceteros quorum numerus iniri non potuit, placet mihi in eum severe animadverti, nec illi rerum iudicandarum vacationem dari, eumque quam primum exportari, et caelo intra triginta dies excedere, Olympo intra diem tertium.” Pedibus in hanc sententiam itum est. Nec mora, Cyllenius illum collo obtorto trahit ad inferos, [a caelo]

[illuc] unde negant redire quemquam.

[12] Dum descendunt per viam sacram, interrogat Mercurius, quid sibi velit ille concursus hominum, num Claudii funus esset. Et erat omnium formosissimum et impensa cura, plane ut scires deum efferri: tubicinum, cornicinum, omnis generis aenatorum tanta turba, tantus concentus, ut etiam Claudius audire posset. Omnes laeti, hilares: populus Romanus ambulabat tanquam liber, Agatho et pauci causidici plorabant, sed plane ex animo. Iurisconsulti e tenebris procedebant, pallidi, graciles, vix animam habentes, tanquam qui tum maxime reviviscerent. Ex his unus cum vidisset capita conferentes et fortunas suas deplorantes causidicos, accedit et ait: “dicebam vobis: non semper Saturnalia erunt.” Claudius ut vidit funus suum, intellexit se mortuum esse. Ingenti enim *μεγάλῳ χορικῷ* nenia cantabatur anapaestis:

“Fundite fletus, edite planctus,
resonet tristi clamore forum:
cecidit pulchre cordatus homo
quo non alius fuit in toto
fortior orbe.
Ille citato vincere cursu
poterat celeres, ille rebelles
fundere Parthos levibusque sequi
Persida telis, certaue manu
tendere nervum, qui praecipites
vulnere parvo figeret hostes,
pictaque Medi terga fugacis.

Ille Britannos ultra noti
litora ponti
et caeruleos scuta Brigantas
dare Romuleis colla catenis
iussit et ipsum nova Romanae
iura securis tremere Oceanum.
Deflete virum, quo non alius
potuit citius discere causas,
una tantum parte audita,
saepe et neutra. Quis nunc iudex
toto lites audiet anno?
Tibi iam cedit sede relictā,
qui dat populo iura silenti,
Cretaea tenens oppida centum.
Caedite maestis pectora palmis,
O causicidi, venale genus.
Vosque poetae lugete novi,
vosque in primis qui concusso
magna parastis lucra fritillo.”

[13] Delectabatur laudibus suis Claudius, et cupiebat diutius spectare. Inicit illi manum Talthybius deorum [nuntius] et trahit capite obvoluto, ne quis eum possit agnoscere, per campum Martium, et inter Tiberim et viam tectam descendit ad inferos. Antecesserat iam compendiarium Narcissus libertus ad patronum excipiendum, et venienti nitidus, ut erat a balineo, occurrit et ait: “Quid di ad homines?” “Celerius” inquit Mercurius “et venire nos nuntia.” Dicto citius Narcissus evolat. Omnia proclivia sunt, facile descenditur. Itaque quamvis podagricus esset, momento temporis pervenit ad ianuam Ditis, ubi iacebat Cerberus vel ut ait Horatius “belua centiceps.” Pusillum perturbatur — subalbam canem in deliciis habere adsueverat — ut illum vidit canem nigrum, villosum, sane non quem velis tibi in tenebris occurrere, et magna voce “Claudius” inquit “veniet.” Cum plausu procedunt cantantes: εὐρήκαμεν, συγχάλομεν. Hic erat C. Silius consul designatus, Iuncus praetorius, Sex. Traulus, M. Helvius, Trogus, Cotta, Vettius Valens, Fabius equites R. quos Narcissus duci iusserat. Medius erat in hac

cantantium turba Mnester pantomimus, quem Claudius decoris causa minorem fecerat. Ad Messalinam — cito rumor percrebuit Claudium venisse — convolant: primi omnium liberti Polybius, Myron, Arpocras, Amphaeus, Pheronactus, quos Claudius omnes, necubi imparatus esset, praemiseraat. Deinde praefecti duo Iustus Catonius et Rufrius Pollio. Deinde amici Saturninus Lusius et Pedit Pompeius et Lupus et Celer Asinius consulares. Novissime fratris filia, sororis filia, generi, soceri, socrus, omnes plane consanguinei. Et agmine facto Claudio occurrunt. Quos cum vidisset Claudius, exclamat πάντα φίλων πλήρη quomodo huc venistis vos?” Tum Pedit Pompeius: “Quid dicis, homo crudelissime? Quaeris, quomodo? Quis enim nos alius huc misit quam tu, omnium amicorum interfector? In ius eamus, ego tibi hic sellas ostendam.”

[14] Ducit illum ad tribunal Aeaci: is lege Cornelia quae de sicariis lata est, quaerebat. Postulat, nomen eius recipiat; edit subscriptionem: occisos senatores XXXV, equites R. CCXXI, ceteros ὅσα ψάμαθός τε κόνις τε. Advocatum non invenit. Tandem procedit P. Petronius, vetus convictor eius, homo Claudiana lingua disertus, et postulat advocationem. Non datur. Accusat Pedit Pompeius magnis clamoribus. Incipit patronus velle respondere. Aeacus, homo iustissimus, vetat, et illum altera tantum parte audita condemnat et ait: αἴκε πάθοις τὰ ἔρεξας, δίκη εὐθεῖα γένοιτο. Ingens silentium factum est. Stupebant omnes novitate rei attoniti, negabant hoc unquam factum. Claudio magis iniquum videbatur quam novum. De genere poenae diu disputatum est, quid illum pati oporteret. Erant qui dicerent, Sisyphum [satis] diu laturam fecisse, Tantalum siti periturum nisi illi succurreretur, aliquando Ixionis miseri rotam sufflaminandam. Non placuit ulli ex veteribus missionem dari, ne vel Claudius unquam simile speraret. Placuit novam poenam constitui debere, excogitandum illi laborem irritum et alicuius cupiditatis speciem sine effectum. Tum Aeacus iubet illum alea ludere pertuso fritillo. Et iam coeperat fugientes semper tesseras quaerere et nihil proficere.

[15] Nam quotiens missurus erat resonante fritillo, utraque subducto fugiebat tessera fundo. Cumque recollectos auderet mittere talos,

lusuro similis semper semperque petenti,
decepere fidem: refugit digitosque per ipsos
fallax adsiduo dilabitur alea furto.
Sic cum iam summi tanguntur culmina montis,
irrita Sisyphio volvantur pondera collo.

Apparuit subito C. Caesar et petere illum in servitutem coepit;
producit testes, qui illum viderant ab illo flagris, ferulis, colaphis
vapulantem. Adiudicatur C. Caesari; Caesar illum Aeaco donat. Is
Menandro liberto suo tradidit, ut a cognitionibus esset.

ON THE FIRMNESS OF THE WISE PERSON

— De Constantia Sapientis

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I.

1. * * * nobis magno consensu uitia commendant. Licet nihil aliud quod sit salutare temptemus, proderit tamen per se ipsum secedere: meliores erimus singuli. Quid quod secedere ad optimos uiros et aliquod exemplum eligere ad quod uitam derigamus licet? Quod <nisi> in otio non fit: tunc potest optineri quod semel placuit, ubi nemo interuenit qui iudicium adhuc inbecillum populo adiutore detorqueat; tunc potest uita aequali et uno tenore procedere, quam propositis diuersissimis scindimus. 2. Nam inter cetera mala illud pessimum est, quod uitia ipsa mutamus. Sic ne hoc quidem nobis contingit, permanere in malo iam familiari. Aliud ex alio placet uexatque nos hoc quoque, quod iudicia nostra non tantum praua sed etiam leuia sunt: fluctuamur aliudque ex alio comprehendimus, petita relinquimus, relictas repetimus, alternas inter cupiditatem nostram et paenitentiam uices sunt. 3. Pendemus enim toti ex alienis iudiciis et id optimum nobis uidetur quod petitores laudatoresque multos habet, non id quod laudandum petendumque est, nec uiam bonam ac malam per se aestimamus sed turba uestigiorum, in quibus nulla sunt redeuntium.

4. Dices mihi: 'quid ais, Seneca? deseris partes? Certe Stoici uestri dicunt: "usque ad ultimum uitae finem in actu erimus, non desinemus communi bono operam dare, adiuuare singulos, opem ferre etiam inimicis senili manu. Nos sumus qui nullis annis uacationem damus et, quod ait ille uir disertissimus,

canitiem galea premimus;

nos sumus apud quos usque eo nihil ante mortem otiosum est ut, si res patitur, non sit ipsa mors otiosa." Quid nobis Epicuri praecepta in ipsis Zenonis principiis loqueris? Quin tu bene gnauiter, si partium piget, transfugis potius quam prodis?' 5. Hoc tibi in praesentia respondebo: 'numquid uis amplius quam ut me similem ducibus meis praestem? Quid ergo est? non quo miserint me illi, sed quo duxerint ibo.'

II.

1. Nunc probabo tibi non desciscere me a praeceptis Stoicorum; nam ne ipsi quidem a suis descuerunt, et tamen excusatissimus essem, etiam si non praecepta illorum sequerer sed exempla. Hoc quod dico in duas diuidam partes: primum, ut possit aliquis uel a prima aetate contemplationi ueritatis totum se tradere, rationem uiuendi quaerere atque exercere secreto; 2. deinde, ut possit hoc aliquis emeritis stipendiis, profligatae aetatis, iure optimo facere et ~ad alios actus animos~ referre, uirginum Vestalium more, quae annis inter officia diuisis discunt facere sacra et cum didicerunt docent.

III.

1. Hoc Stoicis quoque placere ostendam, non quia mihi legem dixerim nihil contra dictum Zenonis Chrysippiae committere, sed quia res ipsa patitur me ire in illorum sententiam, quoniam si quis semper unius sequitur, non in curia sed in factione est. Vtinam quidem iam tenerentur omnia et in aperto et confesso ueritas esset nihilque ex decretis mutaremus! nunc ueritatem cum eis ipsis qui docent quaerimus.

2. Duae maxime et in hac re dissident sectae, Epicureorum et Stoicorum, sed utraque ad otium diuersa uia mittit. Epicurus ait: ‘non accedet ad rem publicam sapiens, nisi si quid interuenerit’; Zenon ait: ‘accedet ad rem publicam, nisi si quid impedierit.’ 3. Alter otium ex proposito petit, alter ex causa; causa autem illa late patet. Si res publica corruptior est quam <ut> adiuuari possit, si occupata est malis, non nitetur sapiens in superuacuum nec se nihil profuturus inpendet; si parum habebit auctoritatis aut uirium nec illum erit admissura res publica, si ualetudo illum impediet, quomodo nauem quassam non deduceret in mare, quomodo nomen in militiam non daret debilis, sic ad iter quod inhabile sciet non accedet. 4. Potest ergo et ille cui omnia adhuc in integro sunt, antequam ullas experiatur tempestates, in tuto subsistere et protinus commendare se bonis artibus et inlibatum otium exigere, uirtutum cultor, quae exerceri etiam quietissimis possunt. 5. Hoc nempe ab homine exigitur, ut prosit hominibus, si fieri potest, multis, si minus, paucis, si minus, proximis, si minus, sibi. Nam cum se utilem ceteris efficit, commune agit negotium. Quomodo qui se deteriorem facit non sibi tantummodo nocet sed etiam omnibus eis quibus melior factus prodesse potuisset, sic quisquis bene de se meretur hoc ipso aliis prodest quod illis profuturum parat.

IV.

1. Duas res publicas animo complectamur, alteram magnam et uere publicam qua di atque homines continentur, in qua non ad hunc angulum respicimus aut ad illum sed terminos ciuitatis nostrae cum sole metimur, alteram cui nos adscripsit condicio nascendi; haec aut Atheniensium erit aut Carthaginiensium aut alterius alicuius urbis quae non ad omnis pertineat homines sed ad certos. Quidam eodem tempore utrique rei publicae dant operam, maiori minorique, quidam tantum minori, quidam tantum maiori. 2. Huic maiori rei publicae et in otio deseruire possumus, immo uero nescio an in otio melius, ut quaeramus quid sit uirtus, una pluresne sint, natura an ars bonos uiros faciat; unum sit hoc quod maria terrasque et mari ac terris inserta complectitur, an multa eiusmodi corpora deus sparserit; continua sit omnis et plena materia ex qua cuncta gignuntur, an diducta et solidis inane permixtum; quae sit dei sedes, opus suum spectet an tractet, utrumne extrinsecus illi circumfusus sit an toti inditus; immortalis sit mundus an inter caduca et ad tempus nata numerandus. Haec qui contemplatur, quid deo praestat? ne tanta eius opera sine teste sint.

V.

1. Solemus dicere summum bonum esse secundum naturam uiuere: natura nos ad utrumque genuit, et contemplationi rerum et actioni. Nunc id probemus quod prius diximus. Quid porro? hoc non erit probatum, si se unusquisque consuluerit quantam cupidinem habeat ignota noscendi, quam ad omnis fabulas excitetur? 2. Nauigant quidam et labores peregrinationis longissimae una mercede perpetiuntur cognoscendi aliquid abditum remotumque. Haec res ad spectacula populos contrahit, haec cogit praeclusa rimari, secretiora exquirere, antiquitates euoluere, mores barbararum audire gentium. 3. Curiosum nobis natura ingenium dedit et artis sibi ac pulchritudinis suae conscia spectatores nos tantis rerum spectaculis genuit, perditura fructum sui, si tam magna, tam clara, tam subtiliter ducta, tam nitida et non uno genere formosa solitudini ostenderet. 4. Vt scias illam spectari uoluisse, non tantum aspici, uide quem nobis locum dederit: in media nos sui parte constituit et circumspectum omnium nobis dedit; nec erexit tantummodo hominem, sed etiam habilem contemplationis factura, ut ab ortu sidera in occasum labentia prosequi posset et uultum suum circumferre cum toto, sublime fecit illi caput et collo flexili inposuit; deinde sena per diem, sena per noctem signa producens nullam non partem sui explicuit, ut per haec quae optulerat oculis eius cupiditatem faceret etiam ceterorum. 5. Nec enim omnia nec tanta uisimus quanta sunt, sed acies nostra aperit sibi inuestigandi uiam et fundamenta uero iacit, ut inquisitio transeat ex apertis in obscura et aliquid ipso mundo inueniat antiquius: unde ista sidera exierint; quis fuerit uniuersi status, antequam singula in partes discederent; quae ratio mersa et confusa diduxerit; quis loca rebus adsignauerit, suapte natura grauia descenderint, euolauerint leuia, an praeter nisum pondusque corporum altior aliqua uis legem singulis dixerit; an illud uerum sit quo maxime probatur homines diuini esse spiritus, partem ac ueluti scintillas quasdam astrorum in terram desiluisse atque alieno loco haesisse. 6. Cogitatio nostra caeli munimenta perrumpit nec contenta est id quod ostenditur scire: ‘illud’ inquit ‘scrutor quod ultra mundum iacet, utrumne profunda uastitas sit an et hoc ipsum

terminis suis cludatur; qualis sit habitus exclusis, informia et confusa sint, [an] in omnem partem tantundem loci optinentia, an et illa in aliquem cultum discripta sint; huic cohaereant mundo, an longe ab hoc secesserint et hic in uacuo uolutetur; indiuidua sint per quae struitur omne quod natum futurumque est, an continua eorum materia sit et per totum mutabilis; utrum contraria inter se elementa sint, an non pugnent sed per diuersa conspirent.’ 7. Ad haec quaerenda natus, aestima quam non multum acceperit temporis, etiam si illud totum sibi uindicat. Qui licet nihil facilitate eripi, nihil neglegentia patiatur excidere, licet horas suas auarissime seruet et usque in ultimum aetatis humanae terminum procedat nec quicquam illi ex eo quod natura constituit fortuna concutiat, tamen homo ad immortalium cognitionem nimis mortalis est. 8. Ergo secundum naturam uiuo si totum me illi dedi, si illius admirator cultorque sum. Natura autem utrumque facere me uoluit, et agere et contemplationi uacare: utrumque facio, quoniam ne contemplatio quidem sine actione est.

VI.

1. 'Sed refert' inquis 'an ad illam uoluptatis causa accesseris, nihil aliud ex illa petens quam adsiduam contemplationem sine exitu; est enim dulcis et habet inlecebras suas.' Aduersus hoc tibi respondeo: aequè refert quo animo ciuilem agas uitam, an semper inquietus sis nec tibi umquam sumas ullum tempus quo ab humanis ad diuina respicias. 2. Quomodo res adpetere sine ullo uirtutum amore et sine cultu ingeni ac nudas edere operas minime probabile est (misceri enim ista inter se et conseri debent), sic imperfectum ac languidum bonum est in otium sine actu proiecta uirtus, numquam id quod didicit ostendens. 3. Quis negat illam debere profectus suos in opere temptare, nec tantum quid faciendum sit cogitare sed etiam aliquando manum exercere et ea quae meditata est ad uerum perducere? Quodsi per ipsum sapientem non est mora, si non actor deest sed agenda desunt, ecquid illi secum esse permittes? 4. Quo animo ad otium sapiens secedit? ut sciat se tum quoque ea acturum per quae posteris prosit. Nos certe sumus qui dicimus et Zenonem et Chrysippum maiora egisse quam si duxissent exercitus, gessissent honores, leges tulissent; quas non uni ciuitati, sed toti humano generi tulerunt. Quid est ergo quare tale otium non conueniat uiro bono, per quod futura saecula ordinet nec apud paucos contionetur sed apud omnis omnium gentium homines, quique sunt quique erunt? 5. Ad summam, quaero an ex praeceptis suis uixerint Cleanthes et Chrysippus et Zenon. <Non> dubie respondebis sic illos uixisse quemadmodum dixerant esse uiuendum: atqui nemo illorum rem publicam administrauit. 'Non fuit' inquis 'illis aut ea fortuna aut ea dignitas quae admitti ad publicarum rerum tractationem solet.' Sed idem nihilominus non segnem egere uitam: inuenerunt quemadmodum plus quies ipsorum hominibus prodesset quam aliorum discursus et sudor. Ergo nihilominus hi multum egisse uisi sunt, quamuis nihil publice agerent.

VII.

1. Praeterea tria genera sunt uitae, inter quae quod sit optimum quaeri solet: unum uoluptati uacat, alterum contemplationi, tertium actioni. Primum deposita contentione depositoque odio quod inplacabile diuersa sequentibus indiximus, uideamus ut haec omnia ad idem sub alio atque alio titulo perueniant: nec ille qui uoluptatem probat sine contemplatione est, nec ille qui contemplationi inseruit sine uoluptate est, nec ille cuius uita actionibus destinata est sine contemplatione est. 2. 'Plurimum' inquis 'discriminis est utrum aliqua res propositum sit an propositi alterius accessio.' Sit sane grande discrimen, tamen alterum sine altero non est: nec ille sine actione contemplatur, nec hic sine contemplatione agit, nec ille tertius, de quo male existimare consensimus, uoluptatem inertem probat sed eam quam ratione efficit firmam sibi; ita et haec ipsa uoluptaria secta in actu est. 3. Quidni in actu sit, cum ipse dicat Epicurus aliquando se recessurum a uoluptate, dolorem etiam adpetiturum, si aut uoluptati imminebit paenitentia aut dolor minor pro grauiore sumetur? 4. Quo pertinet haec dicere? ut appareat contemplationem placere omnibus; alii petunt illam, nobis haec statio, non portus est.

VIII.

1. Adice nunc [huc] quod e lege Chrysippi uiuere otioso licet: non dico ut otium patiat, sed ut eligat. Negant nostri sapientem ad quamlibet rem publicam accessurum; quid autem interest quomodo sapiens ad otium ueniat, utrum quia res publica illi deest an quia ipse rei publicae, si omnibus defutura res publica est? Semper autem deerit fastidiose quaerentibus. 2. Interrogo ad quam rem publicam sapiens sit accessurus. Ad Atheniensium, in qua Socrates damnatur, Aristoteles ne damnetur fugit? in qua opprimit inuidia uirtutes? Negabis mihi accessurum ad hanc rem publicam sapientem. Ad Carthaginiensium ergo rem publicam sapiens accedet, in qua adsidua seditio et optimo cuique infesta libertas est, summa aequi ac boni uilitas, aduersus hostes inhumana crudelitas, etiam aduersus suos hostilis? Et hanc fugiet. 3. Si percensere singulas uolueris, nullam inueniam quae sapientem aut quam sapiens pati possit. Quodsi non inuenitur illa res publica quam nobis fingimus, incipit omnibus esse otium necessarium, quia quod unum praeferri poterat otio nusquam est. 4. Si quis dicit optimum esse nauigare, deinde negat nauigandum in eo mari in quo naufragia fieri soleant et frequenter subitae tempestates sint quae rectorem in contrarium rapiant, puto hic me uetat nauem soluere, quamquam laudet nauigationem. * * *

ON CLEMENCY — De Clementia

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LIBER I

I.

1. Scribere de clementia, Nero Caesar, institui, ut quodam modo speculi vice fungerer et te tibi ostenderem perventurum ad voluptatem maximam omnium. Quamvis enim recte factorum verus fructus sit fecisse nec ullum virtutum pretium dignum illis extra ipsas sit, iuvat inspicere et circumire bonam conscientiam, tum immittere oculos in hanc immensam multitudinem discordem, seditiosam, impotentem, in perniciem alienam suamque pariter exsultaturam, si hoc iugum fregerit, et ita loqui secum: 2. 'Egone ex omnibus mortalibus placui electusque sum, qui in terris deorum vice fungerer? Ego vitae necisque gentibus arbiter; qualem quisque sortem statumque habeat, in mea manu positum est; quid cuique mortalium Fortuna datum velit, meo ore pronuntiat; ex nostro responso laetitiae causas populi urbesque concipiunt; nulla pars usquam nisi volente propitioque me floret; haec tot milia gladiatorum, quae pax mea comprimit, ad nutum meum stringentur; quas nationes funditus excidi, quas transportari, quibus libertatem dari, quibus eripi, quos reges mancipia fieri quorumque capiti regium circumdari decus oporteat, quae ruant urbes, quae oriantur, mea iuris dictio est. 3. In hac tanta facultate rerum non ira me ad iniqua supplicia compulit, non iuvenilis impetus, non temeritas hominum et contumacia, quae saepe tranquillissimis quoque pectoribus patientiam extorsit, non ipsa ostentandae per terrores potentiae dira, sed frequens magnis imperiis gloria. Conditum, immo constrictum apud me ferrum est, summa parsimonia etiam vilissimi sanguinis; nemo non, cui alia desunt, hominis nomine apud me gratosus est. 4. Severitatem abditam, at clementiam in procinctu habeo; sic me custodio, tamquam legibus, quas ex situ ac tenebris in lucem evocavi, rationem redditurus sim. Alterius aetate prima motus sum, alterius ultima; alium dignitati donavi, alium humilitati; quotiens nullam inveneram misericordiae causam, mihi peperci. Hodie dis immortalibus, si a me rationem repetant, adnumerare genus humanum paratus sum.'

5. Potes hoc, Caesar, audacter praedicare: omnia, quae in fidem tutelamque tuam venerunt, tuta haberi, nihil per te neque vi neque clam adimi rei publicae. Rarissimam laudem et nulli adhuc

principum concessam concupisti innocentiam. Non perdit operam nec bonitas ista tua singularis ingratos aut malignos aestimatores nancta est. Refertur tibi gratia; nemo unus homo uni homini tam carus umquam fuit, quam tu populo Romano, magnum longumque eius bonum. 6. Sed ingens tibi onus imposuisti; nemo iam divum Augustum nec Ti. Caesaris prima tempora loquitur nec, quod te imitari velit, exemplar extra te quaerit; principatus tuus ad gustum exigitur. Difficile hoc fuisset, si non naturalis tibi ista bonitas esset, sed ad tempus sumpta. Nemo enim potest personam diu ferre, ficta cito in naturam suam recidunt; quibus veritas subest quaeque, ut ita dicam, ex solido enascuntur, tempore ipso in maius meliusque procedunt.

7. Magnam adibat aleam populus Romanus, cum incertum esset, quo se ista tua nobilis indoles daret; iam vota publica in tuto sunt; nec enim periculum est, ne te subita tui capiat oblivio. Facit quidem avidos nimia felicitas, nec tam temperatae cupiditates sunt umquam, ut in eo, quod contigit, desinant; gradus a magnis ad maiora fit, et spes improbissimas conplectuntur insperata adsecuti; omnibus tamen nunc civibus tuis et haec confessio exprimitur esse felices et illa nihil iam his accedere bonis posse, nisi ut perpetua sint. 8. Multa illos cogunt ad hanc confessionem, qua nulla in homine tardior est: securitas alta, adfluens, ius supra omnem iniuriam positum; obversatur oculis laetissima forma rei publicae, cui ad summam libertatem nihil deest nisi pereundi licentia. 9. Praecipue tamen aequalis ad maximos imosque pervenit clementiae tuae admiratio; cetera enim bona pro portione fortunae suae quisque sentit aut exspectat maiora minoraque, ex clementia omnes idem sperant; nec est quisquam, cui tam valde innocentia sua placeat, ut non stare in conspectu clementiam paratam humanis erroribus gaudeat.

II.

1. Esse autem aliquos scio, qui clementia pessimum quemque putent sustineri, quoniam nisi post crimen supervacua est et sola haec virtus inter innocentes cessat. Sed primum omnium, sicut medicinae apud aegros usus, etiam apud sanos honor est, ita clementiam, quamvis poena digni invocent, etiam innocentes colunt. Deinde habet haec in persona quoque innocentium locum, quia interim fortuna pro culpa est; nec innocentiae tantum clementia succurrit, sed saepe virtuti, quoniam quidem condicione temporum incidunt quaedam, quae possint laudata puniri. Adice, quod magna pars hominum est, quae reverti ad innocentiam possit, si poenae remissio fuerit>. 2. Non tamen volgo ignoscere decet; nam ubi discrimen inter malos bonosque sublatum est, confusio sequitur et vitiorum eruptio; itaque adhibenda moderatio est, quae sanabilia ingenia distinguere a deploratis sciat. Nec promiscuam habere ac volgarem clementiam oportet nec abscisam; nam tam omnibus ignoscere crudelitas quam nulli. Modum tenere debemus; sed quia difficile est temperamentum, quidquid aequo plus futurum est, in partem humaniorem praeponderet.

III.

1. Sed haec suo melius loco dicentur. Nunc in tres partes omnem hanc materiam dividam. Prima erit manumissionis; secunda, quae naturam clementiae habitumque demonstret: nam cum sint vitia quaedam virtutes imitantia, non possunt secerni, nisi signa, quibus dinoscantur, impresseris; tertio loco quaeremus, quomodo ad hanc virtutem perducatur animus, quomodo confirmet eam et usu suam faciat.

2. Nullam ex omnibus virtutibus homini magis convenire, cum sit nulla humanior, constet necesse est non solum inter nos, qui hominem sociale animal communi bono genitum videri volumus, sed etiam inter illos, qui hominem voluptati donant, quorum omnia dicta factaque ad utilitates suas spectant; nam si quietem petit et otium, hanc virtutem naturae suae nactus est, quae pacem amat et manus retinet. 3. Nullum tamen clementia ex omnibus magis quam regem aut principem decet. Ita enim magnae vires decori gloriaeque sunt, si illis salutaris potentia est; nam pestifera vis est valere ad nocendum. Illius demum magnitudo stabilis fundataque est, quem omnes tam supra se esse quam pro se sciunt, cuius curam excubare pro salute singulorum atque universorum cottidie experiuntur, quo procedente non, tamquam malum aliquod aut noxium animal e cubili prosilierit, diffugiunt, sed tamquam ad clarum ac beneficum sidus certatim advolant. Obicere se pro illo mucronibus insidiantium paratissimi et substernere corpora sua, si per stragem illi humanam iter ad salutem struendum sit, somnum eius nocturnis excubiis muniunt, latera obiecti circumfusique defendunt, incurrentibus periculis se opponunt.

4. Non est hic sine ratione populis urbibusque consensus sic protegendum amandique reges et se suaque iactandi, quocumque desideravit imperantis salus; nec haec vilitas sui est aut dementia pro uno capite tot milia excipere ferrum ac multis mortibus unam animam redimere nonnumquam senis et invalidi.

5. Quemadmodum totum corpus animo deservit et, cum hoc tanto maius tantoque speciosius sit, ille in occulto maneat tenuis et in qua sede latitet incertus, tamen manus, pedes, oculi negotium illi gerunt, illum haec cutis munit, illius iussu iacemus aut inquieti discurremus,

cum ille imperavit, sive avarus dominus est, mare lucri causa scrutamur, sive ambitiosus, iam dudum dextram flammis obieci- mus aut voluntarii terram subsiluimus, sic haec immensa multitudo unius animae circumdata illius spiritu regitur, illius ratione flectitur pressura se ac fractura viribus suis, nisi consilio sustineretur.

IV.

1. Suam itaque incolumitatem amant, cum pro uno homine denas legiones in aciem deducunt, cum in primam frontem procurrunt et adversa vulneribus pectora ferunt, ne imperatoris sui signa vertantur. Ille est enim vinculum, per quod res publica cohaeret, ille spiritus vitalis, quem haec tot milia trahunt nihil ipsa per se futura nisi onus et praeda, si mens illa imperii subtrahatur.

Rege incolumi mens omnibus una;
amisso rupere fidem.

2. Hic casus Romanae pacis exitium erit, hic tanti fortunam populi in ruinas aget; tam diu ab isto periculo aberit hic populus, quam diu sciet ferre frenos, quos si quando abruperit vel aliquo casu discussos reponi sibi passus non erit, haec unitas et hic maximi imperii contextus in partes multas dissiliet, idemque huic urbi finis dominandi erit, qui parendi fuerit. 3. Ideo principes regesque et quocumque alio nomine sunt tutores status publici non est mirum amari ultra privatas etiam necessitudines; nam si sanis hominibus publica privatis potiora sunt, sequitur, ut is quoque carior sit, in quem se res publica convertit. Olim enim ita se induit rei publicae Caesar, ut seduci alterum non posset sine utriusque perniciem; nam et illi viribus opus est et huic capite.

V.

1. Longius videtur recessisse a proposito oratio mea, at mehercules rem ipsam premit. Nam si, quod adhuc colligit, tu animus rei publicae tuae es, illa corpus tuum, vides, ut puto, quam necessaria sit clementia; tibi enim parcis, cum videris alteri parcere. Parcendum itaque est etiam improbandis civibus non aliter quam membris languentibus, et, si quando misso sanguine opus est, sustinenda est manus, ne ultra, quam necesse sit, incidat. 2. Est ergo, ut dicebam, clementia omnibus quidem hominibus secundum naturam, maxime tamen decora imperatoribus, quanto plus habet apud illos, quod servet, quantoque in maiore materia apparet. Quantulum enim nocet privata crudelitas! principum saevitia bellum est. 3. Cum autem virtutibus inter se sit concordia nec ulla altera melior aut honestior sit, quaedam tamen quibusdam personis aptior est. Decet magnanimitas quemlibet mortalem, etiam illum, infra quem nihil est; quid enim maius aut fortius quam malam fortunam retundere? Haec tamen magnanimitas in bona fortuna laxiorem locum habet meliusque in tribunali quam in plano conspicitur.

4. Clementia, in quamcumque domum pervenerit, eam felicem tranquillamque praestabit, sed in regia, quo rarior, eo mirabilior. Quid enim est memorabilius quam eum, cuius irae nihil obstat, cuius graviori sententiae ipsi, qui pereunt, adsentiuntur, quem nemo interpellaturus est, immo, si vehementius excanduit, ne deprecaturus est quidem, ipsum sibi manum inicere et potestate sua in melius placidiusque uti hoc ipsum cogitantem: 'Occidere contra legem nemo non potest, servare nemo praeter me'? 5. Magnam fortunam magnus animus decet, qui, nisi se ad illam extulit et altior stetit, illam quoque infra ad terram deducit; magni autem animi proprium est placidum esse tranquillumque et iniurias atque offensiones superne despicere. Muliebre est furere in ira, ferarum vero nec generosarum quidem praemordere et urguere proiectos. Elephanti leonesque transeunt, quae impulerunt; ignobilis bestiae pertinacia est. 6. Non decet regem saeva nec inexorabilis ira, non multum enim supra eum eminet, cui se irascendo exaequat; at si dat vitam, si dat dignitatem periclitantibus et meritis amittere, facit, quod nulli nisi rerum potenti

licet; vita enim etiam superiori eripitur, numquam nisi inferiori datur.

7. Servare proprium est excellentis fortunae, quae numquam magis suspici debet, quam cum illi contigit idem posse quod dis, quorum beneficio in lucem edimur tam boni quam mali. Deorum itaque sibi animum adserens princeps alios ex civibus suis, quia utiles bonique sunt, libens videat, alios in numerum relinquat; quosdam esse gaudeat, quosdam patiatur.

VI.

1. Cogitato, in hac civitate, in qua turba per latissima itinera sine intermissione defluens eliditur, quotiens aliquid obstitit, quod cursum eius velut torrentis rapidi moraretur, in qua tribus eodem tempore theatris caveae postuluntur, in qua consumitur quicquid terris omnibus aratur, quanta solitudo ac vastitas futura sit, si nihil relinquitur, nisi quod iudex severus absolverit. 2. Quotus quisque ex quaesitoribus est, qui non ex ipsa ea lege teneatur, qua quaerit? quotus quisque accusator vacat culpa? Et nescio, an nemo ad dandam veniam difficilior sit, quam qui illam petere saepius meruit. 3. Peccavimus omnes, alii gravia, alii leviora, alii ex destinato, alii forte impulsu aut aliena nequitia ablati; alii in bonis consiliis parum fortiter stetimus et innocentiam inviti ac retinentes perdidimus; nec deliquimus tantum, sed usque ad extremum aevi delinquemus. 4. Etiam si quis tam bene iam purgavit animum, ut nihil obturbare eum amplius possit ac fallere, ad innocentiam tamen peccando pervenit.

VII.

1. Quoniam deorum feci mentionem, optime hoc exemplum principi constituam, ad quod formetur, ut se talem esse civibus, quales sibi deos velit. Expedit ergo habere inexorabilia peccatis atque erroribus numina, expedit usque ad ultimam infesta perniciem? Et quis regum erit tutus, cuius non membra haruspices colligant? 2. Quod si di placabiles et aequi delicta potentium non statim fulminibus persequuntur, quanto aequius est hominem hominibus praepositum miti animo exercere imperium et cogitare, uter mundi status gravior oculis pulchriorque sit, sereno et puro die, an cum fragoribus crebris omnia quatiuntur et ignes hinc atque illinc micant! Atqui non alia facies est quieti moratique imperii quam sereni caeli et nitentis. 3. Crudele regnum turbidum tenebrisque obscurum est, inter tremantes et ad repentinum sonitum expavescentes ne eo quidem, qui omnia perturbat, inconcusso. Facilius privatis ignoscitur pertinaciter se vindicantibus; possunt enim laedi, dolorque eorum ab iniuria venit; timent praeterea contemptum, et non rettulisse laedentibus gratiam infirmitas videtur, non clementia; at cui ultio in facili est, is omissa ea certam laudem mansuetudinis consequitur. 4. Humili loco positus exercere manum, litigare, in rixam procurrere ac morem irae suae gerere liberius est; leves inter paria ictus sunt; regi vociferatio quoque verborumque intemperantia non ex maiestate est.

VIII.

1. Grave putas eripi loquendi arbitrium regibus, quod humillimi habent. 'Ista' inquis 'servitus est, non imperium.' Quid? tu non experiris istud nobis esse, tibi servitutem? Alia condicio est eorum, qui in turba, quam non excedunt, latent, quorum et virtutes, ut appareant, diu luctantur et vitia tenebras habent; vestra facta dictaque rumor excipit, et ideo nullis magis curandum est, qualem famam habeant, quam qui, qualemcumque meruerint, magnam habituri sunt.

2. Quam multa tibi non licent, quae nobis beneficio tuo licent! Possum in qualibet parte urbis solus incedere sine timore, quamvis nullus sequatur comes, nullus sit domi, nullus ad latus gladius; tibi in tua pace armato vivendum est. Aberrare a fortuna tua non potes; obsidet te et, quocumque descendis, magno apparatu sequitur.

3. Est haec summae magnitudinis servitus non posse fieri minorem; sed cum dis tibi communis ipsa necessitas est. Nam illos quoque caelum adligatos tenet, nec magis illis descendere datum est quam tibi tutum: fastigio tuo adfixus es.

4. Nostros motus pauci sentiunt, prodire nobis ac recedere et mutare habitum sine sensu publico licet; tibi non magis quam soli latere contingit. Multa circa te lux est, omnium in istam conversi oculi sunt; prodire te putas? Oriris.

5. Loqui non potes, nisi ut vocem tuam, quae ubique sunt gentes, excipiant; irasci non potes, nisi ut omnia tremant, quia neminem adfligere, nisi ut, quidquid circa fuerit, quatiatur. Ut fulmina paucorum periculo cadunt, omnium metu, sic animadversiones magnarum potestatum terrent latius quam nocent, non sine causa; non enim, quantum fecerit, sed quantum facturus sit, cogitatur in eo, qui omnia potest.

6. Adice nunc, quod privatos homines ad accipiendas iniurias opportuno acceptarum patientia facit, regibus certior est ex mansuetudine securitas, quia frequens vindicta paucorum odium opprimit, omnium inritat.

7. Voluntas oportet ante saeviendi quam causa deficiat; alioqui, quemadmodum praecisae arbores plurimis ramis repullulant et multa satorum genera, ut densiora surgant, reciduntur, ita regia crudelitas auget inimicorum numerum tollendo; parentes enim liberique eorum, qui interfecti sunt, et propinqui et amici in locum singulorum succedunt.

IX.

1. Hoc quam verum sit, admonere te exemplo domestico volo. Divus Augustus fuit mitis princeps, si quis illum a principatu suo aestimare incipiat; in communi quidem rei publicae gladium movit. Cum hoc aetatis esset, quod tu nunc es, duodevicensimum egressus annum, iam pugiones in sinum amicorum absconderat, iam insidiis M. Antonii consulis latus petierat, iam fuerat collega proscriptionis. 2. Sed cum annum quadragensimum transisset et in Gallia moraretur, delatum est ad eum indicium L. Cinnae, stolidi ingenii virum, insidias ei struere; dictum est, et ubi et quando et quemadmodum adgredi vellet; unus ex consociis deferebat. 3. Constituit se ab eo vindicare et consilium amicorum advocari iussit. Nox illi inquieta erat, cum cogitaret adolescentem nobilem, hoc detracto integrum, Cn. Pompei nepotem, damnandum; iam unum hominem occidere non poterat, cui M. Antonius proscriptionis edictum inter cenam dictarat. 4. Gemens subinde voces varias emittebat et inter se contrarias: 'Quid ergo? Ego percussorem meum securum ambulare patiar me sollicito? Ergo non dabit poenas, qui tot civilibus bellis frustra petatum caput, tot navalibus, tot pedestribus proeliis incolume, postquam terra marique pax parata est, non occidere constituat, sed immolare?' (nam sacrificantem placuerat adorari.) 5. Rursus silentio interposito maiore multo voce sibi quam Cinnae irascebatur: 'Quid vivis, si perire te tam multorum interest? Quis finis erit suppliciorum? Quis sanguinis? Ego sum nobilibus adolescentulis expositum caput, in quod mucrones acuant; non est tanti vita, si, ut ego non peream, tam multa perdenda sunt.' 6. Interpellavit tandem illum Livia uxor et: 'Admittis' inquit 'muliebre consilium? Fac, quod medici solent, qui, ubi usitata remedia non procedunt, temptant contraria. Severitate nihil adhuc profecisti; Salvidienum Lepidus secutus est, Lepidum Murena, Murenam Caepio, Caepionem Egnatius, ut alios taceam, quos tantum ausos pudet. Nunc tempta, quomodo tibi cedat clementia; ignosce L. Cinnae. Deprensus est; iam nocere tibi non potest, prodesse famae tuae potest.' 7. Gavisus, sibi quod advocatum invenerat, uxori quidem gratias egit, renuntiari autem extemplo amicis, quos in consilium rogaverat, imperavit et

Cinnam unum ad se accersit dimissisque omnibus e cubiculo, cum alteram Cinnae poni cathedram iussisset: ‘Hoc’ inquit ‘primum a te peto, ne me loquentem interpelles, ne medio sermone meo proclames; dabitur tibi loquendi liberum tempus. 8. Ego te, Cinna, cum in hostium castris invenissem, non factum tantum mihi inimicum sed natum, servavi, patrimonium tibi omne concessi. Hodie tam felix et tam dives es, ut victo victores invideant. Sacerdotium tibi petenti praeteritis compluribus, quorum parentes mecum militaverant, dedi; cum sic de te meruerim, occidere me constituisti.’ 9. Cum ad hanc vocem exclamasset procul hanc ab se abesse dementiam: ‘Non praestas’ inquit ‘fidem, Cinna; convenerat, ne interloquereris. Occidere, inquam, me paras’; adiecit locum, socios, diem, ordinem insidiarum, cui commissum esset ferrum. 10. Et cum defixum videret nec ex conventionem iam, sed ex conscientia tacentem: ‘Quo’ inquit ‘hoc animo facis? ut ipse sis princeps? male mehercules cum populo Romano agitur, si tibi ad imperandum nihil praeter me obstat. Domum tueri tuam non potes, nuper libertini hominis gratia in privato iudicio superatus es; adeo nihil facilius potes quam contra Caesarem advocare. Cedo, si spes tuas solus impedio, Paulusne te et Fabius Maximus et Cossi et Servilii ferent tantumque agmen nobilium non inania nomina praeferentium, sed eorum, qui imaginibus suis decori sint?’

11. Ne totam eius orationem repetendo magnam partem voluminis occupem (diutius enim quam duabus horis locutum esse constat, cum hanc poenam, qua sola erat contentus futurus, extenderet): ‘Vitam’ inquit ‘tibi, Cinna, iterum do, prius hosti, nunc insidiatori ac parricidae. Ex hodierno die inter nos amicitia incipiat; contendamus, utrum ego meliore fide tibi vitam dederim an tu debeas.’ 12. Post hoc detulit ultro consulatum questus quod non auderet petere. Amicissimum fidelissimumque habuit, heres solus illi fuit. Nullis amplius insidiis ab ullo petitus est.

X.

1. Ignovit abavus tuus victis; nam si non ignovisset, quibus imperasset? Sallustium et Cocceios et Deillios et totam cohortem primae admissionis ex adversariorum castris conscripsit; iam Domitios, Messalas, Asinios, Cicerones, quidquid floris erat in civitate, clementiae suae debebat. Ipsum Lepidum quam diu mori passus est! Per multos annos tulit ornamenta principis retinentem et pontificatum maximum non nisi mortuo illo transferri in se passus est; maluit enim illum honorem vocari quam spoliū. 2. Haec eum clementia ad salutem securitatemque perduxit; haec gratum ac favorabilem reddidit, quamvis nondum subactis populi Romani cervicibus manum imposuisset; haec hodieque praestat illi famam, quae vix vivis principibus servit. 3. Deum esse non tamquam iussi credimus; bonum fuisse principem Augustum, bene illi parentis nomen convenisse fatemur ob nullam aliam causam, quam quod contumelias quoque suas, quae acerbiores principibus solent esse quam iniuriae, nulla crudelitate exsequebatur, quod probrosis in se dictis adrisit, quod dare illum poenas apparebat, cum exigeret, quod, quoscumque ob adulterium filiae suae damnaverat, adeo non occidit, ut dimissis, quo tutiores essent, diplomata daret. 4. Hoc est ignoscere, cum scias multos futuros, qui pro te irascantur et tibi sanguine alieno gratificentur, non dare tantum salutem, sed praestare.

XI.

1. Haec Augustus senex aut iam in senectutem annis vergentibus; in adulescentia caluit, arsit ira, multa fecit, ad quae invitus oculos retorquebat. Comparare nemo mansuetudini tuae audebit divum Augustum, etiam si in certamen iuvenilium annorum deduxerit senectutem plus quam maturam; fuerit moderatus et clemens, nempe post mare Actiacum Romano cruore infectum, nempe post fractas in Sicilia classes et suas et alienas, nempe post Perusinas aras et proscriptiones. 2. Ego vero clementiam non voco lassam crudelitatem; haec est, Caesar, clementia vera, quam tu praestas, quae non saevitiae paenitentia coepit, nullam habere maculam, numquam civilem sanguinem fudisse; haec est in maxima potestate verissima animi temperantia et humani generis comprehendens ut sui amor non cupiditate aliqua, non temeritate ingenii, non priorum principum exemplis corruptum, quantum sibi cives suos liceat, experiendo temptare, sed hebetare aciem imperii sui. 3. Praestitisti, Caesar, civitatem incruentam, et hoc, quod magno animo gloriatus es nullam te toto orbe stillam cruoris humani misisse, eo maius est mirabiliusque, quod nulli umquam gladius commissus est.

4. Clementia ergo non tantum honestiores sed tutiores praestat ornamentumque imperiorum est simul et certissima salus. Quid enim est, cur reges consenuerint liberisque ac nepotibus tradiderint regna, tyrannorum execrabilis ac brevis potestas sit? Quid interest inter tyrannum ac regem (species enim ipsa fortunae ac licentia par est), nisi quod tyranni in voluptatem saeviunt, reges non nisi ex causa ac necessitate?

XII.

1. 'Quid ergo? Non reges quoque occidere solent?' Sed quotiens id fieri publica utilitas persuadet; tyrannis saevitia cordi est. Tyrannus autem a rege factis distat, non nomine; nam et Dionysius maior iure meritoque praeferri multis regibus potest, et L. Sullam tyrannum appellari quid prohibet, cui occidendi finem fecit inopia hostium? 2. Descenderit licet e dictatura sua et se togae reddiderit, quis tamen umquam tyrannus tam avidae humanum sanguinem bibit quam ille, qui septem milia civium Romanorum contrucidari iussit et, cum in vicino ad aedem Bellonae sedens exaudisset conclamationem tot milium sub gladio gementium, exterrito senatu: 'Hoc agamus' inquit, 'P.C.; seditiosi pauculi meo iussu occiduntur'? 3. Hoc non est mentitus; pauci Sullae videbantur. Sed mox de Sulla, cum quaeremus, quomodo hostibus irascendum sit, utique si in hostile nomen cives et ex eodem corpore abrupti transierint; interim, hoc quod dicebam, clementia efficit, ut magnum inter regem tyrannumque discrimen sit, uterque licet non minus armis valletur; sed alter arma habet, quibus in munimentum pacis utitur, alter, ut magno timore magna odia compescat, nec illas ipsas manus, quibus se commisit, securus adspicit. 4. Contrariis in contraria agitur; nam cum invisus sit, quia timetur, timeri vult, quia invisus est, et illo execrabili versu, qui multos praecipites dedit, utitur: Oderint, dum metuant, ignarus, quanta rabies oriatur, ubi supra modum odia creverunt.

Temperatus enim timor cohibet animos, adsiduus vero et acer et extrema admovens in audaciam iacentes excitat et omnia experiri suadet. 5. Sic feras linea et pinnae clusas contineant, easdem a tergo eques telis incessat: temptabunt fugam per ipsa, quae fugerant, proculcabuntque formidinem. Acerrima virtus est, quam ultima necessitas extundit. Relinquat oportet securi aliquid metus multoque plus spei quam periculorum ostendet; alioqui, ubi quiescenti paria metuuntur, incurrere in pericula iuvat et ut aliena anima abuti.

XIII.

1. Placido tranquilloque regi fida sunt auxilia sua, ut quibus ad communem salutem utatur, gloriosusque miles (publicae enim securitati se dare operam videt) omnem laborem libens patitur ut parentis custos; at illum acerbum et sanguinarium necesse est graventur stipatores sui. 2. Non potest habere quisquam bonae ac fidae voluntatis ministros, quibus in tormentis ut eculeo et ferramentis ad mortem paratis utitur, quibus non aliter quam bestiis homines obiectat, omnibus reis aerumnosior ac sollicitior, ut qui homines deosque testes facinorum ac vindices timeat, eo perductus, ut non liceat illi mutare mores. Hoc enim inter cetera vel pessimum habet crudelitas: perseverandum est nec ad meliora patet regressus; scelera enim sceleribus tuenda sunt. Quid autem eo infelicius, cui iam esse malo necesse est? 3. O miserabilem illum, sibi certe! nam ceteris misereri eius nefas sit, qui caedibus ac rapinis potentiam exercuit, qui suspecta sibi cuncta reddidit tam externa quam domestica, cum arma metuat, ad arma confugiens, non amicorum fidei credens, non pietati liberorum; qui, ubi circumspexit, quaeque fecit quaeque facturus est, et conscientiam suam plenam sceleribus ac tormentis adaperuit, saepe mortem timet, saepius optat, invisior sibi quam servientibus. 4. E contrario is, cui curae sunt universa, qui alia magis, alia minus tuetur, nullam non rei publicae partem tamquam sui nutrit, inclinatus ad mitiora, etiam, si ex usu est animadvertere, ostendens, quam invitus aspero remedio manus admoveat, in cuius animo nihil hostile, nihil efferum est, qui potentiam suam placide ac salutariter exercet adprobare imperia sua civibus cupiens, felix abunde sibi visus, si fortunam suam publicarit, sermone adfabilis, aditu accessuque facilis, voltu, qui maxime populos demeretur, amabilis, aequis desideriis propensus, etiam inquis non acerbus, a tota civitate amatur, defenditur, colitur. 5. Eadem de illo homines secreto loquuntur quae palam; tollere filios cupiunt et publicis malis sterilitas indicta recluditur; bene se meritum de liberis suis quisque non dubitat, quibus tale saeculum ostenderit. Hic princeps suo beneficio tutus nihil praesidiis eget, arma ornamenti causa habet.

XIV.

1. Quod ergo officium eius est? Quod bonorum parentium, qui obiurgare liberos non numquam blande, non numquam minaciter solent, aliquando admonere etiam verberibus. Numquid aliquis sanus filium a prima offensa exheredat? nisi magnae et multae iniuriae patientiam evicerunt, nisi plus est, quod timet, quam quod damnat, non accedit ad decretorium stilum; multa ante temptat, quibus dubiam indolem et peiore iam loco positam revocet; simul deploratum est, ultima experitur. Nemo ad supplicia exigenda pervenit, nisi qui remedia consumpsit. 2. Hoc, quod parenti, etiam principi faciendum est, quem appellavimus Patrem Patriae non adulatione vana adducti. Cetera enim cognomina honori data sunt; Magnos et Felices et Augustos diximus et ambitiosae maiestati quicquid potuimus titulorum congegimus illis hoc tribuentes; Patrem quidem Patriae appellavimus, ut sciret datam sibi potestatem patriam, quae est temperantissima liberis consulens suaque post illos reponens. 3. Tarde sibi pater membra sua abscidat, etiam, cum absciderit, reponere cupiat et in abscidendo gemat cunctatus multum diuque; prope est enim, ut libenter damnet, qui cito; prope est, ut inique puniat, qui nimis.

XV.

1. Trichonem equitem Romanum memoria nostra, quia filium suum flagellis occiderat, populus graphiis in foro confodit; vix illum Augusti Caesaris auctoritas infestis tam patrum quam filiorum manibus eripuit. 2. Tarium, qui filium deprensum in parricidii consilio damnavit causa cognita, nemo non suspexit, quod contentus exsilio et exsilio delicato Massiliae parricidam continuit et annua illi praestitit, quanta praestare integro solebat; haec liberalitas effecit, ut, in qua civitate numquam deest patronus peioribus, nemo dubitaret, quin reus merito damnatus esset, quem is pater damnare potuisset, qui odisse non poterat.

3. Hoc ipso exemplo dabo, quem compares bono patri, bonum principem. Cogniturus de filio Tarius advocavit in consilium Caesarem Augustum; venit in privatos penates, adsedit, pars alieni consilii fuit, non dixit; 'Immo in meam domum veniat'; quod si factum esset, Caesaris futura erat cognitio, non patris. 4. Audita causa excussisque omnibus, et his, quae adulescens pro se dixerat, et his, quibus arguebatur, petit, ut sententiam suam quisque scriberet, ne ea omnium fieret, quae Caesaris fuisset; deinde, priusquam aperirentur codicilli, iuravit se Tarii, hominis locupletis, hereditatem non aditurum. 5. Dicit aliquis: 'Pusillo animo timuit, ne videretur locum spei suae aperire velle filii damnatione.' Ego contra sentio; quilibet nostrum debuisset adversus opiniones malignas satis fiducia habere in bona conscientia, principes multa debent etiam famae dare. Iuravit se non aditurum hereditatem. 6. Tarius quidem eodem die et alterum heredem perdidit, sed Caesar libertatem sententiae suae redemit; et postquam adprobavit gratuitam esse severitatem suam, quod principi semper curandum est, dixit relegandum, quo patri videretur. 7. Non culleum, non serpentes, non carcerem decrevit memor, non de quo censeret, sed cui in consilio esset; mollissimo genere poenae contentum esse debere patrem dixit in filio adulescentulo impulso in id scelus, in quo se, quod proximum erat ab innocentia, timide gessisset; debere illum ab urbe et a parentis oculis submoveri.

XVI.

1. O dignum, quem in consilium patres advocarent! O dignum, quem coheredem innocentibus liberis scriberent! Haec clementia principem decet; quocumque venerit, mansuetiora omnia faciat.

Nemo regi tam vilis sit, ut illum perire non sentiat; qualiscumque pars imperii est. 2. In magna imperia ex minoribus petamus exemplum. Non unum est imperandi genus; imperat princeps civibus suis, pater liberis, praeceptor discentibus, tribunus vel centurio militibus. 3. Nonne pessimus pater videbitur, qui adsiduis plagis liberos etiam ex levissimis causis compescet? Uter autem praeceptor liberalibus studiis dignior, qui excarnificabit discipulos, si memoria illis non constiterit aut si parum agilis in legendo oculus haeserit, an qui monitionibus et verecundia emendare ac docere malit? Tribunum centurionemque da saevum: desertores faciet, quibus tamen ignoscitur. 4. Numquidnam aequum est gravius homini et durius imperari, quam imperatur animalibus mutis? Atqui equum non crebris verberibus exterret domandi peritus magister; fiet enim formidolosus et contumax, nisi eum blandiente tactu permulseris. 5. Idem facit ille venator, quique instituit catulos vestigia sequi quique iam exercitatis utitur ad excitandas vel persequendas feras: nec crebro illis minatur (contundet enim animos et, quicquid est indolis, comminuetur trepidatione degeneri) nec licentiam vagandi errandique passim concedit. Adicias his licet tardiora agentes iumenta, quae, cum ad contumeliam et miserias nata sint, nimia saevitia cogantur iugum detractare.

XVII.

1. Nullum animal morosius est, nullum maiore arte tractandum quam homo, nulli magis parcendum. Quid enim est stultius quam in iumentis quidem et canibus erubescere iras exercere, pessima autem condicione sub homine hominem esse? Morbis medemur nec irascimur; atqui et hic morbus est animi; mollem medicinam desiderat ipsumque medentem minime infestum aegro. 2. Mali medici est desperare, ne curet: idem in iis, quorum animus adfectus est, facere debet is, cui tradita salus omnium est, non cito spem proicere nec mortifera signa pronuntiare; luctetur cum vitiis, resistat, aliis morbum suum exprobret, quosdam molli curatione decipiat citius meliusque sanaturus remediis fallentibus; agat princeps curam non tantum salutis, sed etiam honestae cicatricis. 3. Nulla regi gloria est ex saeva animadversione (quis enim dubitat posse?), at contra maxima, si vim suam continet, si multos irae alienae eripuit, neminem suae impendit.

XVIII.

1. Servis imperare moderate laus est. Et in mancipio cogitandum est, non quantum illud impune possit pati, sed quantum tibi permittat aequi bonique natura, quae parcere etiam captivis et pretio paratis iubet. Quanto iustius iubet hominibus liberis, ingenuis, honestis non ut mancipiis abuti sed ut his, quos gradu antecedas quorumque tibi non servitus tradita sit, sed tutela. 2. Servis ad statuam licet confugere; cum in servum omnia liceant, est aliquid, quod in hominem licere commune ius animantium vetet. Quis non Vedium Pollionem peius oderat quam servi sui, quod muraenas sanguine humano saginabat et eos, qui se aliquid offenderant, in vivarium, quid aliud quam serpentium, abici iubebat? O hominem mille mortibus dignum, sive devorandos servos obiciebat muraenis, quas esurus erat, sive in hoc tantum illas alebat, ut sic aleret.

3. Quemadmodum domini crudeles tota civitate commonstrantur invisique et detestabiles sunt, ita regum et iniuria latius patet et infamia atque odium saeculis traditur; quanto autem non nasci melius fuit, quam numerari inter publico malo natos!

XIX.

1. Excogitare nemo quicquam poterit, quod magis decorum regenti sit quam clementia, quocumque modo is et quocumque iure praepositus ceteris erit. Eo scilicet formosius id esse magnificentiusque fatebimur, quo in maiore praestabitur potestate, quam non oportet noxiam esse, si ad naturae legem componitur. 2. Natura enim commenta est regem, quod et ex aliis animalibus licet cognoscere et ex apibus; quarum regi amplissimum cubile est medioque ac tutissimo loco; praeterea opere vacat exactor alienorum operum, et amisso rege totum dilabitur, nec umquam plus unum patiuntur melioremque pugna quaerunt; praeterea insignis regi forma est dissimilisque ceteris cum magnitudine tum nitore. 3. Hoc tamen maxime distinguitur: iracundissimae ac pro corporis captu pugnacissimae sunt apes et aculeos in vulnere relinquunt, rex ipse sine aculeo est; noluit illum natura nec saevum esse nec ultionem magno constaturam petere telumque detraxit et iram eius inermem reliquit.

Exemplar hoc magnis regibus ingens; est enim illi mos exercere se in parvis et ingentium rerum documenta in minima parere. 4. Pudeat ab exiguis animalibus non trahere mores, cum tanto hominum moderatior esse animus debeat, quanto vehementius nocet. Utinam quidem eadem homini lex esset et ira cum telo suo frangeretur nec saepius liceret nocere quam semel nec alienis viribus exercere odia! Facile enim lassaretur furor, si per se sibi satis faceret et si mortis periculo vim suam effunderet. 5. Sed ne nunc quidem illi cursus tutus est; tantum enim necesse est timeat, quantum timeri voluit, et manus omnium observet et eo quoque tempore, quo non captatur, peti se iudicet nullumque momentum immune a metu habeat. Hanc aliquis agere vitam sustinet, cum liceat innoxium aliis, ob hoc securum, salutare potentiae ius laetis omnibus tractare? Errat enim, si quis existimat tutum esse ibi regem, ubi nihil a rege tutum est; securitas securitate mutua paciscenda est. 6. Non opus est instruere in altum editas arces nec in adscensum arduos colles emunire nec latera montium abscidere, multiplicibus se muris turribusque saepire: salvum regem clementia in aperto praestabit. Unum est

inexpugnabile munimentum amor civium.

7. Quid pulchrius est quam vivere optantibus cunctis et vota non sub custode nuncupantibus? Si paulum valetudo titubavit, non spem hominum excitari, sed metum? Nihil esse cuiquam tam pretiosum, quod non pro salute praesidis sui commutatum velit? 8. O ne ille, cui contingit ut sibi quoque vivere debeat? In hoc adsiduis bonitatis argumentis probavit non rem publicam suam esse, sed se rei publicae. Quis huic audeat struere aliquod periculum? Quis ab hoc non, si possit, fortunam quoque avertere velit, sub quo iustitia, pax, pudicitia, securitas, dignitas florent, sub quo opulenta civitas copia bonorum omnium abundat? Nec alio animo rectorem suum intuetur, quam si di immortales potestatem visendi sui faciant, intueamur venerantes colentesque. 9. Quid autem? Non proximum illis locum tenet is, qui se ex deorum natura gerit, beneficus ac largus et in melius potens? Hoc adfectare, hoc imitari decet, maximum ita haberi, ut optimus simul habeare.

XX.

1. A duabus causis punire princeps solet, si aut se vindicat aut alium. Prius de ea parte disseram, quae ipsum contingit; difficilius est enim moderari, ubi dolori debetur ultio, quam ubi exemplo. 2. Supervacuum est hoc loco admonere, ne facile credat, ut verum excutiat, ut innocentiae faveat et, ut appareat, non minorem agi rem periclitantis quam iudicis sciat; hoc enim ad iustitiam, non ad clementiam pertinet; nunc illum hortamur, ut manifeste laesus animum in potestate habeat et poenam, si tuto poterit, donet, si minus, temperet longeque sit in suis quam in alienis iniuriis exorabilior. 3. Nam quemadmodum non est magni animi, qui de alieno liberalis est, sed ille, qui, quod alteri donat, sibi detrahit, ita clementem vocabo non in alieno dolore facilem, sed eum, qui, cum suis stimulis exagitetur, non prosilit, qui intellegit magni animi esse iniurias in summa potentia pati nec quicquam esse gloriosius principe impune laeso.

XXI.

1. Ultio duas praestare res solet: aut solacium adfert ei, qui accepit iniuriam, aut in reliquum securitatem. Principis maior est fortuna, quam ut solacio egeat, manifestiorque vis, quam ut alieno malo opinionem sibi virium quaerat. Hoc dico, cum ab inferioribus petitus violatusque est; nam si, quos pares aliquando habuit, infra se videt, satis vindicatus est. Regem et servus occidit et serpens et sagitta; servavit quidem nemo nisi maior eo, quem servabat. 2. Uti itaque animose debet tanto munere deorum dandi auferendique vitam potens. In iis praesertim, quos scit aliquando sibi par fastigium obtinuisse, hoc arbitrium adeptus ultionem implevit perfecitque, quantum verae poenae satis erat; perdidit enim vitam, qui debet, et, quisquis ex alto ad inimici pedes abiectus alienam de capite regnoque sententiam exspectavit, in servatoris sui gloriam vivit plusque eius nomini confert incolumis, quam si ex oculis ablatum esset. Adsidium enim spectaculum alienae virtutis est; in triumpho cito transisset. 3. Si vero regnum quoque suum tuto relinqui apud eum potuit reponique eo, unde deciderat, ingenti incremento surgit laus eius, qui contentus fuit ex rege victo nihil praeter gloriam sumere. Hoc est etiam ex victoria sua triumphare testarique nihil se, quod dignum esset victore, apud victos invenisse. 4. Cum civibus et ignotis atque humilibus eo moderatius agendum est, quo minoris est adflixisse eos. Quibusdam libenter parcas, a quibusdam te vindicare fastidias et non aliter quam ab animalibus parvis sed obterentem inquinantibus reducenda manus est; at in iis, qui in ore civitatis servati punitique erunt, occasione notae clementiae utendum est.

XXII.

1. Transeamus ad alienas iniurias, in quibus vindicandis haec tria lex secuta est, quae princeps quoque sequi debet: aut ut eum, quem punit, emendet, aut ut poena eius ceteros meliores reddat, aut ut sublatis malis securiores ceteri vivant. Ipsos facilius emendabis minore poena; diligentius enim vivit, cui aliquid integri superest. Nemo dignitati perditae parcit; impunitatis genus est iam non habere poenae locum. 2. Civitatis autem mores magis corrigit parcitas animadversionum; facit enim consuetudinem peccandi multitudo peccantium, et minus gravis nota est, quam turba damnationum levat, et severitas, quod maximum remedium habet, adsiduitate amittit auctoritatem. 3. Constituit bonos mores civitati princeps et vitia eluit, si patiens eorum est, non tamquam probet, sed tamquam invitus et cum magno tormento ad castigandum veniat. Verecundiam peccandi facit ipsa clementia regentis; gravior multo poena videtur, quae a miti viro constituitur.

XXIII.

1. Praeterea videbis ea saepe committi, quae saepe vindicantur. Pater tuus plures intra quinquennium culleo insuit, quam omnibus saeculis insutos accepimus. Multo minus audebant liberi nefas ultimum admittere, quam diu sine lege crimen fuit. Summa enim prudentia altissimi viri et rerum naturae peritissimi maluerunt velut incredibile scelus et ultra audaciam positum praeterire quam, dum vindicant, ostendere posse fieri; itaque parricidae cum lege coeperunt, et illis facinus poena monstravit; pessimo vero loco pietas fuit, postquam saepius culleos vidimus quam cruces. 2. In qua civitate raro homines puniuntur, in ea consensus fit innocentiae et indulgetur velut publico bono. Putet se innocentem esse civitas, erit; magis irascetur a communi frugalitate desciscentibus, si paucos esse eos viderit. Periculosum est, mihi crede, ostendere civitati, quanto plures mali sint.

XXIV.

1. Dicta est aliquando a senatu sententia, ut servos a liberis cultus distingueret; deinde apparuit, quantum periculum immineret, si servi nostri numerare nos coepissent. Idem scito metuendum esse, si nulli ignoscitur; cito apparebit, pars civitatis deterior quanto praegravet. Non minus principi turpia sunt multa supplicia quam medico multa funera; remissius imperanti melius paretur. 2. Natura contumax est humanus animus et in contrarium atque arduum nitens sequiturque facilius quam ducitur; et ut generosi ac nobiles equi melius facili freno reguntur, ita clementiam voluntaria innocentia impetu suo sequitur, et dignam putat civitas, quam servet sibi. Plus itaque hac via proficitur.

XXV.

1. Crudelitas minime humanum malum est indignumque tam miti animo; ferina ista rabies est sanguine gaudere ac vulneribus et abiecto homine in silvestre animal transire. Quid enim interest, oro te, Alexander, leoni Lysimachum obicias an ipse laceres dentibus tuis? Tuum illud os est, tua illa feritas. O quam cuperes tibi potius ungues esse, tibi rictum illum edendorum hominum capacem! Non exigimus a te, ut manus ista, exitium familiare certissimum, ulli salutaris sit, ut iste animus ferox, insatiabile gentium malum, citra sanguinem caedemque satietur; clementia iam vocatur, ad occidendum amicum cum carnifex inter homines eligitur. 2. Hoc est, quare vel maxime abominanda sit saevitia, quod excedit fines primum solitos, deinde humanos, nova supplicia conquirat, ingenium advocat, ut instrumenta excogitet, per quae varietur atque extendatur dolor, delectatur malis hominum; tunc illi dirus animi morbus ad insaniam pervenit ultimam, cum crudelitas versa est in voluptatem et iam occidere hominem iuvat. 3. Matura talem virum a tergo sequitur aversio, odia, venena, gladii; tam multis periculis petitur, quam multorum ipse periculum est, privatisque non numquam consiliis, alias vero consternatione publica circumvenitur. Levis enim et privata perniciēs non totas urbes movet; quod late furere coepit et omnes adpetit, undique configitur. 4. Serpentes parvolae fallunt nec publice conquiruntur; ubi aliqua solitam mensuram transit et in monstrum excrevit, ubi fontes sputu inficit et, si adflavit, deurit obteritque, quacumque incessit, ballistis petitur. Possunt verba dare et evadere pusilla mala, ingentibus obviam itur. 5. Sic unus aeger ne domum quidem perturbat; at ubi crebris mortibus pestilentiam esse apparuit, conclamatio civitatis ac fuga est, et dis ipsis manus intentantur. Sub uno aliquo tecto flamma apparuit: familia vicinique aquam ingerunt; at incendium vastum et multas iam domos depastum parte urbis obruitur.

XXVI.

1. Crudelitatem privatorum quoque serviles manus sub certo crucis periculo ultae sunt; tyrannorum gentes populique et, quorum erat malum, et ei, quibus imminebat, excindere adgressi sunt. Aliquando sua praesidia in ipsos consurrexerunt perfidiamque et impietatem et feritatem et, quidquid ab illis didicerant, in ipsos exercuerunt. Quid enim potest quisquam ab eo sperare, quem malum esse docuit? Non diu nequitia apparet nec, quantum iubetur, peccat. 2. Sed puta esse tutam crudelitatem, quale eius regnum est? Non aliud quam captarum urbium forma et terribiles facies publici metus. Omnia maesta, trepida, confusa; voluptates ipsae timentur; non convivia securi ineunt, in quibus lingua sollicite etiam ebriis custodienda est, non spectacula, ex quibus materia criminis ac periculi quaeritur. Apparentur licet magna impensa et regiis opibus et artificum exquisitis nominibus, quem tamen ludi in carcere iuvent?

3. Quod istud, di boni, malum est occidere, saevire, delectari sono catenarum et civium capita decidere, quocumque ventum est, multum sanguinis fundere, adspectu suo terrere ac fugare! Quae alia vita esset, si leones ursique regnarent, si serpentibus in nos ac noxiosissimo cuique animali daretur potestas? 4. Illa rationis expertia et a nobis immanitatis crimine damnata abstinent suis, et tuta est etiam inter feras similitudo: horum ne a necessariis quidem sibi rabies temperat, sed externa suaque in aequo habet, quo plus se exercitat, eo incitator. A singulorum deinde caedibus in exitia gentium serpit et inicere tectis ignem, aratrum vetustis urbibus inducere potentiam putat; et unum occidi iubere aut alterum parum imperatorium credit; nisi eodem tempore grex miserorum sub ictu stetit, crudelitatem suam in ordinem coactam putat.

5. Felicitas illa multis salutem dare et ad vitam ab ipsa morte revocare et mereri clementia civicam. Nullum ornamentum principis fastigio dignius pulchriusque est quam illa corona ob cives servatos, non hostilia arma detracta victis, non currus barbarorum sanguine cruenti, non parta bello spolia. Haec divina potentia est gregatim ac publice servare; multos quidem occidere et indiscretos incendii ac ruinae potentia est.

LIBER II

I.

1. Ut de clementia scriberem, Nero Caesar, una me vox tua maxime compulit, quam ego non sine admiratione et, cum diceretur, audisse memini et deinde aliis narrasse, vocem generosam, magni animi, magnae lenitatis, quae non composita nec alienis auribus data subito erupit et bonitatem tuam cum fortuna tua litigantem in medium adduxit. 2. Animadversurus in latrones duos Burrus praefectus tuus, vir egregius et tibi principi natus, exigebat a te, scriberes, in quos et ex qua causa animadverti velles; hoc saepe dilatum ut aliquando fieret, instabat. Invitus invito cum chartam protulisset traderetque, exclamasti: ‘Vellem litteras nescirem!’ 3. O dignam vocem, quam audirent omnes gentes, quae Romanum imperium incolunt quaeque iuxta iacent dubiae libertatis quaeque se contra viribus aut animis attollunt! O vocem in contionem omnium mortalium mittendam, in cuius verba principes regesque iurarent! O vocem publica generis humani innocentia dignam, cui redderetur antiquum illud saeculum! 4. Nunc profecto consentire decebat ad aequum bonumque expulsa alieni cupidine, ex qua omne animi malum oritur, pietatem integritatemque cum fide ac modestia resurgere et vitia diuturno abusa regno dare tandem felici ac puro saeculo locum.

II.

1. Futurum hoc, Caesar, ex magna parte sperare et confidere libet. Tradetur ista animi tui mansuetudo diffundeturque paulatim per omne imperii corpus, et cuncta in similitudinem tuam formabuntur. A capite bona valetudo: inde omnia vegeta sunt atque erecta aut languore demissa, prout animus eorum vivit aut marcet. Erunt cives, erunt socii digni hac bonitate, et in totum orbem recti mores revertentur; parceretur ubique manibus tuis. 2. Diutius me morari hic patere, non ut blandum auribus tuis (nec enim hic mihi mos est; maluerim veris offendere quam placere adulando); quid ergo est? Praeter id, quod bene factis dictisque tuis quam familiarissimum esse te cupio, ut, quod nunc natura et impetus est, fiat iudicium, illud mecum considero multas voces magnas, sed detestabiles, in vitam humanam pervenisse celebresque volgo ferri, ut illam: 'oderint, dum metuant,' cui Graecus versus similis est, qui se mortuo terram misceri ignibus iubet, et alia huius notae. 3. Ac nescio quomodo ingenia in immani et invisa materia secundiore ore expresserunt sensus vehementes et concitados; nullam adhuc vocem audii ex bono lenique animosam. Quid ergo est? Ut raro, invitus et cum magna cunctatione, ita aliquando scribas necesse est istud, quod tibi in odium litteras adduxit, sed, sicut facis, cum magna cunctatione, cum multis dilationibus.

III.

1. Et ne forte decipiat nos speciosum clementiae nomen aliquando et in contrarium abducat, videamus, quid sit clementia qualisque sit et quos fines habeat.

Clementia est temperantia animi in potestate ulciscendi vel lenitas superioris adversus inferiorem in constituendis poenis. Plura proponere tutius est, ne una finitio parum rem comprehendat et, ut ita dicam, formula excidat; itaque dici potest et inclinatio animi ad lenitatem in poena exigenda. 2. Illa finitio contradictiones inveniet, quamvis maxime ad verum accedat, si dixerimus clementiam esse moderationem aliquid ex merita ac debita poena remittentem: reclamabitur nullam virtutem cuiquam minus debito facere. Atqui hoc omnes intellegunt clementiam esse, quae se flectit citra id, quod merito constitui posset.

IV.

1. Huic contrariam imperiti putant severitatem; sed nulla virtus virtuti contraria est. Quid ergo opponitur clementiae? Crudelitas, quae nihil aliud est quam atrocitas animi in exigendis poenis. ‘Sed quidam non exigunt poenas, crudeles tamen sunt, tamquam qui ignotos homines et obvios non in compendium, sed occidendi causa occidunt nec interficere contenti saeviunt, ut Busiris ille et Procrustes et piratae, qui captos verberant et in ignem vivos imponunt.’ 2. Haec crudelitas quidem; sed quia nec ultionem sequitur (non enim laesa est) nec peccato alicui irascitur (nullum enim antecessit crimen), extra finitionem nostram cadit; finitio enim continebat in poenis exigendis intemperantiam animi. Possumus dicere non esse hanc crudelitatem, sed feritatem, cui voluptati saevitia est; possumus insaniam vocare: nam varia sunt genera eius et nullum certius, quam quod in caedes hominum et lincinationes pervenit. 3. Illos ergo crudeles vocabo, qui puniendi causam habent, modum non habent, sicut in Phalari, quem aiunt non quidem in homines innocentes, sed super humanum ac probabilem modum saevisse. Possumus effugere cavillationem et ita finire, ut sit crudelitas inclinatio animi ad asperiora. Hanc clementia repellit longe iussam stare a se; cum severitate illi convenit.

4. Ad rem pertinet quaerere hoc loco, quid sit misericordia; plerique enim ut virtutem eam laudant et bonum hominem vocant misericordem. Et haec vitium animi est. Utraque circa severitatem circaque clementiam posita sunt, quae vitare debemus; per speciem enim severitatis in crudelitatem incidimus, per speciem clementiae in misericordiam. In hoc leviori periculo erratur, sed par error est a vero recedentium.

V.

1. Ergo quemadmodum religio deos colit, superstitio violat, ita clementiam mansuetudinemque omnes boni viri praestabunt, misericordiam autem vitabunt; est enim vitium pusilli animi ad speciem alienorum malorum succidentis. Itaque pessimo cuique familiarissima est; anus et mulierculae sunt, quae lacrimis nocentissimorum moventur, quae, si liceret, carcerem effringerent. Misericordia non causam, sed fortunam spectat; clementia rationi accedit.

2. Scio male audire apud imperitos sectam Stoicorum tamquam duram nimis et minime principibus regibusque bonum daturam consilium; obicitur illi, quod sapientem negat misereri, negat ignoscere. Haec, si per se ponantur, invisa sunt; videntur enim nullam relinquere spem humanis erroribus, sed omnia delicta ad poenam deducere. 3. Quod si est quidnam haec scientia, quae dediscere humanitatem iubet portumque adversus fortunam certissimum mutuo auxilio cludit? Sed nulla secta benignior leniorque est, nulla amantior hominum et communis boni attentior, ut propositum sit usui esse et auxilio nec sibi tantum, sed universis singulisque consulere. 4. Misericordia est aegritudo animi ob alienarum miseriarum speciem aut tristitia ex alienis malis contracta, quae accidere immerentibus credit; aegritudo autem in sapientem virum non cadit; serena eius mens est, nec quicquam incidere potest, quod illam obducatur. Nihilque aequè hominem quam magnus animus decet; non potest autem magnus esse idem ac maestus. 5. Maeror contundit mentes, abicit, contrahit; hoc sapienti ne in suis quidem accidet calamitatibus, sed omnem fortunae iram reverberabit et ante se franget; eandem semper faciem servabit, placidam, inconcussam, quod facere non posset, si tristitiam reciperet.

VI.

1. Adice, quod sapiens et providet et in expedito consilium habet; numquam autem liquidum sincerumque ex turbido venit. Tristitia inhabilis est ad dispiciendas res, utilia excogitanda, periculosa vitanda, aequa aestimanda; ergo non miseretur, quia id sine miseria animi non fit. 2. Cetera omnia, quae, qui miserentur, volo facere, libens et altus animo faciet; succurret alienis lacrimis, non accedet; dabit manum naufrago, exsuli hospitium, egenti stipem, non hanc contumeliosam, quam pars maior horum, qui misericordes videri volunt, abicit et fastidit, quos adiuvat, contingique ab iis timet, sed ut homo homini ex communi dabit; donabit lacrimis maternis filium et catenas solvi iubebit et ludo eximet et cadaver etiam noxium sepeliet, sed faciet ista tranquilla mente, voltu suo. 3. Ergo non miserebitur sapiens, sed succurret, sed proderit, in commune auxilium natus ac bonum publicum, ex quo dabit cuique partem. Etiam ad calamitosos pro portione improbandosque et emendandos bonitatem suam permittet; adflctis vero et forte laborantibus multo libentius subveniet. Quotiens poterit, fortunae intercedet; ubi enim opibus potius utetur aut viribus, quam ad restituenda, quae casus impulit? Voltum quidem non deiciet nec animum ob crus alicuius aridum aut pannosam maciem et innixam baculo senectutem; ceterum omnibus dignis proderit et deorum more calamitosos propitius respiciet.

4. Misericordia vicina est miseriae; habet enim aliquid trahitque ex ea. Imbecillos oculos esse scias, qui ad alienam lippitudinem et ipsi subfunduntur, tam mehercules quam morbum esse, non hilaritatem, semper adridere ridentibus et ad omnium oscitationem ipsum quoque os diducere; misericordia vitium est animorum nimis miseria paventium, quam si quis a sapiente exigit, prope est, ut lamentationem exigit et in alienis funeribus gemitus.

VII.

1. 'At quare non ignoscet?' Agedum constituamus nunc quoque, quid sit venia, et sciemus dari illam a sapiente non debere. Venia est poenae merita remissio. Hanc sapiens quare non debeat dare, reddunt rationem diutius, quibus hoc propositum est; ego ut breviter tamquam in alieno iudicio dicam: Ei ignoscitur, qui puniri debuit; sapiens autem nihil facit, quod non debet, nihil praetermittit, quod debet; itaque poenam, quam exigere debet, non donat. 2. Sed illud, quod ex venia consequi vis, honestiore tibi via tribuet; parcet enim sapiens, consulet et corrigit; idem faciet, quod, si ignosceret, nec ignoscet, quoniam, qui ignoscit, fatetur aliquid se, quod fieri debuit, omisisse. Aliquem verbis tantum admonebit, poena non adficiet aetatem eius emendabilem intuens; aliquem invidia criminis manifeste laborantem iubebit incolumem esse, quia deceptus est, quia per vinum lapsus; hostes dimittet salvos, aliquando etiam laudatos, si honestis causis pro fide, pro foedere, pro libertate in bellum acciti sunt. 3. Haec omnia non veniae, sed clementiae opera sunt. Clementia liberum arbitrium habet; non sub formula, sed ex aequo et bono iudicat; et absolvere illi licet et, quanti vult, taxare litem. Nihil ex his facit, tamquam iusto minus fecerit, sed tamquam id, quod constituit, iustissimum sit. Ignoscere autem est, quem iudices puniendum, non punire; venia debitae poenae remissio est. Clementia hoc primum praestat, ut, quos dimittit, nihil aliud illos pati debuisse pronuntiet; plenior est quam venia, honestior est. 4. De verbo, ut mea fert opinio, controversia est, de re quidem convenit. Sapiens multa remittet, multos parum sani, sed sanabilis ingenii servabit. Agricolas bonos imitabitur, qui non tantum rectas procerasque arbores colunt; illis quoque, quas aliqua depravavit causa, adminicula, quibus derigantur, adplicat; alias circumcidunt, ne proceritatem rami premant, quasdam infirmas vitio loci nutriunt, quibusdam aliena umbra laborantibus caelum aperiunt. 5. Videbit, quod ingenium qua ratione tractandum sit, quo modo in rectum prava flectantur. * * *

ON THE HAPPY LIFE — De Vita Beata

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I.

1. Viuere, Gallio frater, omnes beate uolunt, sed ad peruidendum quid sit quod beatam uitam efficiat caligant; adeoque non est facile consequi beatam uitam ut eo quisque ab ea longius recedat quo ad illam concitatus fertur, si uia lapsus est; quae ubi in contrarium ducit, ipsa uelocitas maioris interualli causa fit.

Proponendum est itaque primum quid sit quod adpetamus; tunc circumspectiendum qua contendere illo celerrime possimus, intellecturi in ipso itinere, si modo rectum erit, quantum cotidie profligetur quantoque propius ab eo simus ad quod nos cupiditas naturalis inpellit. 2. Quam diu quidem passim uagamur non ducem secuti sed fremitum et clamorem dissonum in diuersa uocantium, conteretur uita inter errores, breuis etiam si dies noctesque bonae menti laboremus. Decernatur itaque et quo tendamus et qua, non sine perito aliquo cui explorata sint ea in quae procedimus, quoniam quidem non eadem hic quae in ceteris peregrinationibus condicio est: in illis comprehensus aliquis limes et interrogati incolae non patiuntur errare, at hic tritissima quaeque uia et celeberrima maxime decipit. 3. Nihil ergo magis praestandum est quam ne pecorum ritu sequamur antecedentium gregem, pergentes non quo eundum est sed quo itur. Atqui nulla res nos maioribus malis implicat quam quod ad rumorem componimur, optima rati ea quae magno adsensu recepta sunt, quodque exempla <nobis pro> bonis multa sunt nec ad rationem sed ad similitudinem uiuimus. 4. Inde ista tanta coaceruatio aliorum super alios ruentium. Quod in strage hominum magna euenit, cum ipse se populus premit — nemo ita cadit ut non et alium in se adtrahat, primique exitio sequentibus sunt — hoc in omni uita accidere uideas licet. Nemo sibi tantummodo errat, sed alieni erroris et causa et auctor est; nocet enim adplicari antecedentibus et, dum unusquisque mauult credere quam iudicare, numquam de uita iudicatur, semper creditur, uersatque nos et praecipitat traditus per manus error. Alienis perimus exemplis: sanabimur, [si] separemur modo a coetu. 5. Nunc uero stat contra rationem defensor mali sui populus. Itaque id euenit quod in comitiis, in quibus eos factos esse praetores idem qui fecere mirantur, cum se mobilis fauor circumegit:

eadem probamus, eadem reprehendimus; hic exitus est omnis iudicii
in quo secundum plures datur.

II.

1. Cum de beata uita agetur, non est quod mihi illud discessionum more respondeas: 'haec pars maior esse uidetur.' Ideo enim peior est. Non tam bene cum rebus humanis agitur ut meliora pluribus placeant: argumentum pessimi turba est. 2. Quaeramus ergo quid optimum factu sit, non quid usitatissimum, et quid nos in possessione felicitatis aeternae constituat, non quid uulgo, ueritatis pessimo interpreti, probatum sit. Vulgum autem tam chlamydatos quam coronatos uoco; non enim colorem uestium quibus praetexta sunt corpora aspicio. Oculis de homine non credo, habeo melius et certius lumen quo a falsis uera diiudicem: animi bonum animus inueniat. Hic, si umquam respirare illi et recedere in se uacauerit, o quam sibi ipse uerum tortus a se fatebitur ac dicet: 3. 'quidquid feci adhuc infectum esse mallet, quidquid dixi cum recogito, mutis inuideo, quidquid optauit inimicorum execrationem puto, quidquid timui, di boni, quanto leuius fuit quam quod concupii! Cum multis inimicitias gessi et in gratiam ex odio, si modo ulla inter malos gratia est, redii: mihi ipsi nondum amicus sum. Omnem operam dedi ut me multitudini educerem et aliqua dote notabilem facerem: quid aliud quam telis me opposui et maleuolentiae quod morderet ostendi? 4. Vides istos qui eloquentiam laudant, qui opes sequuntur, qui gratiae adulantur, qui potentiam extollunt? omnes aut sunt hostes aut, quod in aequo est, esse possunt; quam magnus mirantium tam magnus inuidientium populus est. Quin potius quaero aliquod usu bonum, quod sentiam, non quod ostendam? ista quae spectantur, ad quae consistitur, quae alter alteri stupens monstrat, foris nitent, introrsus misera sunt.'

III.

1. Quaeramus aliquod non in speciem bonum, sed solidum et aequale et a secretiore parte formosius; hoc eruamus. Nec longe positum est: inuenietur, scire tantum opus est quo manum porrigas; nunc uelut in tenebris uicina transimus, offensantes ea ipsa quae desideramus.

2. Sed ne te per circumitus traham, aliorum quidem opiniones praeteribo — nam et enumerare illas longum est et coarguere: nostram accipe. Nostram autem cum dico, non alligo me ad unum aliquem ex Stoicis proceribus: est et mihi censendi ius. Itaque aliquem sequar, aliquem iubebo sententiam diuidere, fortasse et post omnes citatus nihil inprobabo ex iis quae priores decreuerint et dicam ‘hoc amplius censeo’. 3. Interim, quod inter omnis Stoicos conuenit, rerum naturae adsentior; ab illa non deerrare et ad illius legem exemplumque formari sapientia est.

Beata est ergo uita conueniens naturae suae, quae non aliter contingere potest quam si primum sana mens est et in perpetua possessione sanitatis suae, deinde fortis ac uehemens, tunc pulcherrime patiens, apta temporibus, corporis sui pertinentiumque ad id curiosa non anxie, tum aliarum rerum quae uitam instruunt diligens sine admiratione cuiusquam, usura fortunae muneribus, non seruitura. 4. Intellegis, etiam si non adiciam, sequi perpetuam tranquillitatem, libertatem, depulsis iis quae aut irritant nos aut terriant; nam uoluptatibus et * * * pro illis quae parua ac fragilia sunt et ~ipsis flagitiis noxia~ ingens gaudium subit, inconcussum et aequale, tum pax et concordia animi et magnitudo cum mansuetudine; omnis enim ex infirmitate feritas est.

IV.

1. Potest aliter quoque definiri bonum nostrum, id est eadem sententia non isdem comprehendi uerbis. Quemadmodum idem exercitus modo latius panditur modo in angustum coartatur et aut in cornua sinuata media parte curuatur aut recta fronte explicatur, uis illi, utcumque ordinatus est, eadem est et uoluntas pro eisdem partibus standi, ita finitio summi boni alias diffundi potest et exporrigi, alias colligi et in se cogi. 2. Idem itaque erit, si dixerō ‘summum bonum est animus fortuita despiciens, uirtute laetus’ aut ‘inuicta uis animi, perita rerum, placida in actu cum humanitate multa et conuersantium cura’. Licet et ita finire, ut beatum dicamus hominem eum cui nullum bonum malumque sit nisi bonus malusque animus, honesti cultorem, uirtute contentum, quem nec extollant fortuita nec frangant, qui nullum maius bonum eo quod sibi ipse dare potest nouerit, cui uera uoluptas erit uoluptatum contemptio. 3. Licet, si euagari uelis, idem in aliam atque aliam faciem salua et integra potestate transferre; quid enim prohibet nos beatam uitam dicere liberum animum et erectum et interritum ac stabilem, extra metum, extra cupiditatem positum, cui unum bonum sit honestas, unum malum turpitudine, cetera uilis turba rerum nec detrahens quicquam beatæ uitæ nec adiciens, sine auctu ac detrimento summi boni ueniens ac recedens? 4. Hunc ita fundatum necesse est, uelit nolit, sequatur hilaritas continua et lætitia alta atque ex alto ueniens, ut qui suis gaudeat nec maiora domesticis cupiat. Quidni ista bene penset cum minutis et friuolis et non perseuerantibus corpusculi motibus? Quo die infra uoluptatem fuerit, et infra dolorem erit; uides autem quam malam et noxiosam seruitutem seruiturus sit quem uoluptates doloresque, incertissima dominia inpotentissimaque, alternis possidebunt: ergo exeundum ad libertatem est. 5. Hanc non alia res tribuit quam fortunæ negligentia: tum illud orietur inæstimabile bonum, quies mentis in tuto conlocatæ et sublimitas expulsisque erroribus ex cognitione ueræ gaudium grande et inmotum comitasque et diffusio animi, quibus delectabitur non ut bonis sed ut ex bono suo ortis.

V.

1. Quoniam liberaliter agere coepi, potest beatus dici qui nec cupit nec timet beneficio rationis, quoniam et saxa timore et tristitia carent nec minus pecudes; non ideo tamen quisquam felicia dixerit quibus non est felicitatis intellectus. 2. Eodem loco pone homines quos in numerum pecorum et animalium redegit hebes natura et ignoratio sui. Nihil interest inter hos et illa, quoniam illis nulla ratio est, his praua et malo suo atque in peruersum sollers; beatus enim dici nemo potest extra ueritatem proiectus. 3. Beata ergo uita est in recto certoque iudicio stabilita et inmutabilis. Tunc enim pura mens est et soluta omnibus malis, quae non tantum lacerationes sed etiam uellicationes effugerit, statura semper ubi constitit ac sedem suam etiam irata et infestante fortuna uindicatura. 4. Nam quod ad uoluptatem pertinet, licet circumfundatur undique et per omnis uias influat animumque blandimentis suis leniat aliaque ex aliis admoueat quibus totos partesque nostri sollicitet, quis mortalium, cui ullum superest hominis uestigium, per diem noctemque titillari uelit et deserto animo corpori operam dare?

VI.

1. 'Sed animus quoque' inquit 'uoluptates habebit suas.' Habeat sane sedeatque luxuriae et uoluptatum arbiter; inpleat se eis omnibus quae oblectare sensus solent, deinde praeterita respiciat et exoletarum uoluptatum memor exultet prioribus futurisque iam immineat ac spes suas ordinet et, dum corpus in praesenti sagina iacet, cogitationes ad futura praemittat: hoc mihi uidebitur miserior, quoniam mala pro bonis legere dementia est. Nec sine sanitate quisquam beatus est nec sanus cui futura pro optimis adpetuntur. 2. Beatus ergo est iudicii rectus; beatus est praesentibus qualiacumque sunt contentus amicusque rebus suis; beatus est is cui omnem habitum rerum suarum ratio commendat.

VII.

1. Vident et in iliis qui summum bonum dixerunt quam turpi illud loco posuerint. Itaque negant posse uoluptatem a uirtute diduci et aiunt nec honeste quemquam uiuere ut non iucunde uiuat, nec iucunde ut non honeste quoque. Non uideo quomodo ista tam diuersa in eandem copulam coiciantur. Quid est, oro uos, cur separari uoluptas a uirtute non possit? uidelicet, quia omne bonis ex uirtute principium est, ex huius radicibus etiam ea quae uos et amatis et expetitis oriuntur? Sed si ista indiscreta essent, non uideremus quaedam iucunda sed inhonesta, quaedam uero honestissima sed aspera, per dolores exigenda. 2. Adice nunc quod uoluptas etiam ad uitam turpissimam uenit, at uirtus malam uitam non admittit, et infelices quidam non sine uoluptate, immo ob ipsam uoluptatem sunt; quod non eueniret si uirtuti se uoluptas inmiscuisset, qua uirtus saepe caret, numquam indiget. 3. Quid dissimilia, immo diuersa componitis? Altum quiddam est uirtus, excelsum et regale, inuictum infatigabile: uoluptas humile seruire, inbecillum caducum, cuius statio ac domicilium fornices et popinae sunt. Virtutem in templo conuenies, in foro in curia, pro muris stantem, puluerulentam coloratam, callosas habentem manus: uoluptatem latitantem saepius ac tenebras captantem circa balinea ac sudatoria ac loca aedilem metuentia, mollem eneruem, mero atque unguento madentem, pallidam aut fucatam et medicamentis pollinctam. 4. Summum bonum immortale est, nescit exire, nec satietatem habet nec paenitentiam; numquam enim recta mens uertitur nec sibi odio est nec quicquam ~mutauit~ optima. At uoluptas tunc cum maxime delectat extinguitur; non multum loci habet, itaque cito inplet et taedio est et post primum impetum marcet. Nec id umquam certum est cuius in motu natura est: ita ne potest quidem ulla eius esse substantia quod uenit transitque celerrime in ipso usu sui periturum; eo enim pertendit ubi desinat, et dum incipit spectat ad finem.

VIII.

1. Quid quod tam bonis quam malis uoluptas inest nec minus turpes dedecus suum quam honestos egregia delectant? Ideoque praeceperunt ueteres optimam sequi uitam, non iucundissimam, ut rectae ac bonae uoluntatis non dux sed comes sit uoluptas. Natura enim duce utendum est; hanc ratio obseruat, hanc consulit. 2. Idem est ergo beate uiuere et secundum naturam. Hoc quid sit iam aperiam: si corporis dotes et apta naturae conseruauimus diligenter et inpauide tamquam in diem data et fugacia, si non subierimus eorum seruitutem nec nos aliena possederint, si corpori grata et aduenticia eo nobis loco fuerint quo sunt in castris auxilia et armaturae leues — seruiant ista, non imperent — ita demum utilia sunt menti. 3. Incorruptus uir sit externis et insuperabilis miratorque tantum sui,

fidens animo atque in utrumque paratus,

artifex uitae; fiducia eius non sine scientia sit, scientia non sine constantia; maneant illi semel placita nec ulla in decretis eius litura sit. Intellegitur, etiam si non adiecero, compositum ordinatumque fore talem uirum et in iis quae aget cum comitate magnificum. ~erat uera. 4. Ratio uera~ sensibus inritata et capiens inde principia — nec enim habet aliud unde conetur aut unde ad uerum impetum capiat — in se reuertatur. Nam mundus quoque cuncta complectens rectorque uniuersi deus in exteriora quidem tendit, sed tamen introsum undique in se redit. Idem nostra mens faciat: cum secuta sensus suos per illos se ad externa porrexerit, et illorum et sui potens sit. 5. Hoc modo una efficietur uis ac potestas concors sibi et ratio illa certa nascetur, non dissidens nec haesitans in opinionibus comprehensionibusque nec in persuasionibus, quae cum se disposuit et partibus suis consensit et, ut ita dicam, concinuit, summum bonum tetigit. 6. Nihil enim prauum, nihil lubricum superest, nihil in quo arietet aut labet; omnia faciet ex imperio suo nihilque inopinatum accidet, sed quicquid agetur in bonum exibat facile et parate et sine tergiuersatione agentis; nam pigritia et haesitatio pugnam et inconstantiam ostendit. Quare audaciter licet profitearis summum bonum esse animi concordiam; uirtutes enim ibi esse debebunt ubi consensus atque unitas erit: dissident uitia.

IX.

1. ‘Sed tu quoque’ inquit ‘uirtutem non ob aliud colis quam quia aliquam ex illa speras uoluptatem.’ Primum non, si uoluptatem praestatura uirtus est, ideo propter hanc petitur; non enim hanc praestat, sed et hanc, nec huic laborat, sed labor eius, quamuis aliud petat, hoc quoque adsequetur. 2. Sicut in aruo quod segeti proscissum est aliqui flores internascuntur, non tamen huic herbulae, quamuis delectet oculos, tantum operis insumptum est — aliud fuit serenti propositum, hoc superuenit — sic uoluptas non est merces nec causa uirtutis sed accessio, nec quia delectat placet, sed, si placet, et delectat. 3. Summum bonum in ipso iudicio est et habitu optimae mentis, quae cum suum inpleuit et finibus se suis cinxit, consummatum est summum bonum nec quicquam amplius desiderat; nihil enim extra totum est, non magis quam ultra finem. 4. Itaque erras cum interrogas quid sit illud propter quod uirtutem petam; quaeris enim aliquid supra summum. Interrogas quid petam ex uirtute? ipsam. Nihil enim habet melius [enim], ipsa pretium sui. An hoc parum magnum est? Cum tibi dicam ‘summum bonum est infragilis animi rigor et prouidentia et sublimitas et sanitas et libertas et concordia et decor’, aliquid etiamnunc exis maius ad quod ista referantur? Quid mihi uoluptatem nominas? hominis bonum quaero, non uentris, qui pecudibus ac beluis laxior est.

X.

1. 'Dissimulas' inquit 'quid a me dicatur; ego enim nego quemquam posse iucunde uiuere nisi simul et honeste uiuit, quod non potest mutis contingere animalibus nec bonum suum cibo metientibus. Clare, inquam, ac palam testor hanc uitam quam ego iucundam uoco non nisi adiecta uirtute contingere.' 2. Atqui quis ignorat plenissimos esse uoluptatibus uestris stultissimos quosque et nequitiam abundare iucundis animumque ipsum genera uoluptatis praua et multa suggerere? — in primis insolentiam et nimiam aestimationem sui tumoremque elatum super ceteros et amorem rerum suarum caecum et inprouidum et ex minimis ac puerilibus causis exultationem, iam dicacitatem ac superbiam contumeliis gaudentem, desidiam dissolutionemque segnis animi, deliciis fluentis, indormientis sibi. 3. Haec omnia uirtus discutit et aurem peruellit et uoluptates aestimat antequam admittat nec quas probauit magni pendit ~utique enim~ admittit nec usu earum sed temperantia laeta est. Temperantia autem, cum uoluptates minuat, summi boni iniuria est. Tu uoluptatem complecteris, ego compesco; tu uoluptate frueris, ego utor; tu illam summum bonum putas, ego nec bonum; tu omnia uoluptatis causa facis, ego nihil.

XI.

1. Cum dico me nihil uoluptatis causa facere, de illo loquor sapiente, cui soli concedimus uoluptatem. Non uoco autem sapientem supra quem quicquam est, nedum uoluptas. Atqui ab hac occupatus quomodo resistet labori et periculo, egestati et tot humanam uitam circumstrepentibus minis? Quomodo conspectum mortis, quomodo dolores feret, quomodo mundi fragores et tantum acerrimorum hostium, a tam molli aduersario uictus? 'Quidquid uoluptas suaserit faciet.' Age, non uides quam multa suasura sit? 2. 'Nihil' inquit 'poterit turpiter suadere, quia adiuncta uirtuti est.' Non uides iterum quale sit summum bonum cui custode opus est ut bonum sit? Virtus autem quomodo uoluptatem reget, quam sequitur, cum sequi parentis sit, regere imperantis? a tergo ponis quod imperat? Egregium autem habet uirtus apud uos officium, uoluptates praegustare! 3. Sed uidebimus an apud quos tam contumeliose tractata uirtus est adhuc uirtus sit, quae habere nomen suum non potest, si loco cessit; interim, de quo agitur, multos ostendam uoluptatibus obsessos, in quos fortuna omnia munera sua effudit, quos fatearis necesse est malos. 4. Aspice Nomentanum et Apicium, terrarum ac maris, ut isti uocant, bona conquirentis et super mensam recognoscentis omnium gentium animalia; uide hos eosdem e suggestu rosae despectantis popinam suam, aures uocum sono, spectaculis oculos, saporibus palatum suum delectantis; mollibus lenibusque fomentis totum lacescitur eorum corpus et, ne nares interim cessent, odoribus uariis inficitur locus ipse in quo luxuriae parentatur. Hos esse in uoluptatibus dices, nec tamen illis bene erit, quia non bono gaudent.

XII.

1. 'Male' inquit 'illis erit, quia multa interuenient quae perturbent animum et opiniones inter se contrariae mentem inquietabunt.' Quod ita esse concedo; sed nihilominus illi ipsi stulti et inaequales et sub ictu paenitentiae positi magnas percipient uoluptates, ut fatendum sit tam longe tum illos ab omni molestia abesse quam a bona mente et, quod plerisque contingit, hilarem insaniam insanire ac per risum furere. 2. At contra sapientium remissae uoluptates et modestae ac paene languidae sunt compressaeque et uix notabiles, ut quae neque accersitae ueniant nec, quamuis per se accesserint, in honore sint neque ullo gaudio percipientium exceptae; miscent enim illas et interponunt uitae ut ludum iocumque inter seria.

3. Desinant ergo inconuenientia iungere et uirtuti uoluptatem implicare, per quod uitium pessimis quibusque adulantur. Ille effusus in uoluptates, ructabundus semper atque ebrius, quia scit se cum uoluptate uiuere, credit et cum uirtute (audit enim uoluptatem separari a uirtute non posse); deinde uitiiis suis sapientiam inscribit et abscondenda profitetur. 4. Itaque non ab Epicuro impulsus luxuriatur, sed uitiiis dediti luxuriam suam in philosophiae sinu abscondunt et eo concurrunt ubi audiant laudari uoluptatem. Nec aestimant uoluptas illa Epicuri — ita enim mehercules sentio - quam sobria ac sicca sit, sed ad nomen ipsum aduolant quaerentes libidinibus suis patrocinium aliquod ac uelamentum. 5. Itaque quod unum habebant in malis bonum perdunt, peccandi uerecundiam; laudant enim ea quibus erubescabant et uitio gloriuntur; ideoque ne resurgere quidem ~adulescentiae~ licet, cum honestus turpi desidiaie titulus accessit. Hoc est cur ista uoluptatis laudatio perniciosa sit, quia honesta praecepta intra latent, quod corrumpit apparet.

XIII.

1. In ea quidem ipse sententia sum — inuitis hoc nostris popularibus dicam — sancta Epicurum et recta praecipere et si propius accesseris tristia; uoluptas enim illa ad paruum et exile reuocatur et quam nos uirtuti legem dicimus, eam ille dicit uoluptati. Iubet illam parere naturae; parum est autem luxuriae quod naturae satis est. 2. Quid ergo est? Ille, quisquis desidiosum otium et gulae ac libidinis uices felicitatem uocat, bonum malae rei quaerit auctorem et, cum illo uenit blando nomine inductus, sequitur uoluptatem non quam audit sed quam attulit, et uitia sua cum coepit putare similia praeceptis, indulget illis non timide nec obscure, luxuriatur etiam inde aperto capite. Itaque non dicam quod plerique nostrorum, sectam Epicuri flagitiorum magistram esse, sed illud dico: male audit, infamis est. ‘At inmerito.’ 3. Hoc scire qui potest nisi interius admissus? frons eius ipsa dat locum fabulae et ad malam spem inritat. Hoc tale est quale uir fortis stolam indutus: constat tibi pudicitia, uiriliter salua est, nulli corpus tuum turpi patientiae uacat, sed in manu tympanum est. Titulus itaque honestus eligatur et inscriptio ipsa excitans animum: quae stat, inuenerunt uitia.

4. Quisquis ad uirtutem accessit, dedit generosae indolis specimen: qui uoluptatem sequitur uidetur eneruis, fractus, ~degenerans uiro~, peruenturus in turpia nisi aliquis distinxerit illi uoluptates, ut sciat quae ex eis intra naturale desiderium resistant, quae praeceptis ferantur infinitaeque sint et quo magis implentur eo magis inexplebiles. 5. Agedum, uirtus antecedit, tutum erit omne uestigium. Et uoluptas nocet nimia: in uirtute non est uerendum ne quid nimium sit, quia in ipsa est modus; non est bonum quod magnitudine laborat sua. Rationalem porro sortitis naturam quae melius res quam ratio proponitur? Et si placet ista iunctura, si hoc placet ad beatam uitam ire comitatu, uirtus antecedit, comitetur uoluptas et circa corpus ut umbra uersetur: uirtutem quidem, excelsissimam dominam, uoluptati tradere ancillam nihil magnum animo capientis est.

XIV.

1. Prima uirtus eat, haec ferat signa: habebimus nihilominus uoluptatem, sed domini eius et temperatores erimus; aliquid nos exorabit, nihil coget. At ei qui uoluptati tradidere principia utroque caruere; uirtutem enim amittunt, ceterum non ipsi uoluptatem, sed ipsos uoluptas habet, cuius aut inopia torquentur aut copia strangulantur, miseri si deseruntur ab illa, miseriores si obruuntur; sicut deprensi mari Syrtico modo in sicco relinquuntur, modo torrente unda fluctuantur. 2. Euenit autem hoc nimia intemperantia et amore caeco rei; nam mala pro bonis petenti periculosum est adsequi. Vt feras cum labore periculoque uenamur et captarum quoque illarum sollicita possessio est — saepe enim laniant dominos — ita habent se magnae uoluptates: in magnum malum euasere captaeque cepere; quae quo plures maioresque sunt, eo ille minor ac plurium seruus est quem felicem uulgi appellat. 3. Permanere libet in hac etiamnunc huius rei imagine. Quemadmodum qui bestiarum cubilia indagat et

laqueo captare feras

magno aestimat et

latos canibus circumdare saltus,

ut illarum uestigia premat, potiora deserit multisque officiis renuntiat, ita qui sectatur uoluptatem omnia postponit et primam libertatem negligit ac pro uentre dependit, nec uoluptates sibi emit sed se uoluptatibus uendit.

XV.

1. 'Quid tamen' inquit 'prohibet in unum uirtutem uoluptatemque confundi et ita effici summum bonum ut idem et honestum et iucundum sit?' Quia pars honesti non potest esse nisi honestum nec summum bonum habebit sinceritatem suam, si aliquid in se uiderit dissimile meliori. 2. Ne gaudium quidem quod ex uirtute oritur, quamuis bonum sit, absoluti tamen boni pars est, non magis quam laetitia et tranquillitas, quamuis ex pulcherrimis causis nascantur; sunt enim ista bona, sed consequentia summum bonum, non consummantia. 3. Qui uero uirtutis uoluptatisque societatem facit et ne ex aequo quidem, fragilitate alterius boni quidquid in altero uigoris est hebetat libertatemque illam, ita demum si nihil se pretiosius nouit inuictam, sub iugum mittit. Nam, quae maxima seruitus est, incipit illi opus esse fortuna; sequitur uita anxia, suspiciosa, trepida, casum pauens, temporum suspensa momentis. 4. Non das uirtuti fundamentum graue, immobile, sed iubes illam in loco uolubili stare; quid autem tam uolubile est quam fortuitorum expectatio et corporis rerumque corpus adficientium uarietas? Quomodo hic potest deo parere et quidquid euenit bono animo excipere nec de fato queri casuum suorum benignus interpretes, si ad uoluptatum dolorumque punctiunculas concutitur? Sed ne patriae quidem bonus tutor aut uindex est nec amicorum propugnator, si ad uoluptates uergit. 5. Illo ergo summum bonum escendat unde nulla ui detrahitur, quo neque dolori neque spei nec timori sit aditus nec ulli rei quae deterius summi boni ius faciat; escendere autem illo sola uirtus potest. Illius gradu cliuus iste frangendus est; illa fortiter stabit et quidquid euenerit feret non patiens tantum sed etiam uolens, omnemque temporum difficultatem sciet legem esse naturae et ut bonus miles feret uulnera, numerabit cicatrices, et transuerberatus telis moriens amabit eum pro quo cadet imperatorem; habebit illud in animo uetus praeceptum: deum sequere. 6. Quisquis autem queritur et plorat et gemit, imperata facere ui cogitur et inuitus rapitur ad iussa nihilominus. Quae autem dementia est potius trahi quam sequi! tam mehercules quam stultitia et ignoratio condicionis est suae dolere quod deest aliquid tibi aut incidit durius, aequè mirari aut

indigne ferre ea quae tam bonis accidunt quam malis, morbos dico, funera, debilitates et cetera ex transverso in uitam humanam incurrentia. 7. Quidquid ex uniuerſi constitutione patiendum est, magno suscipiatur animo: ad hoc sacramentum adacti sumus, ferre mortalia nec perturbari iis quae uitare non est nostrae potestatis. In regno nati sumus: deo parere libertas est.

XVI.

1. Ergo in uirtute posita est uera felicitas. Quid haec tibi uirtus suadebit? ne quid aut bonum aut malum existimes quod nec uirtute nec malitia continget; deinde ut sis immobilis et contra malum <et> ex bono, ut qua fas est deum effingas. 2. Quid tibi pro hac expeditione promittit? ingentia et aequa diuinis: nihil cogeris, nullo indigebis, liber eris, tutus indemnus; nihil frustra temptabis, nihil prohibeberis; omnia tibi ex sententia cedent, nihil aduersum accidet, nihil contra opinionem ac uoluntatem. 3. 'Quid ergo? uirtus ad beate uiuendum sufficit?' Perfecta illa et diuina quidni sufficiat, immo superfluat? Quid enim deesse potest extra desiderium omnium posito? Quid extrinsecus opus est ei qui omnia sua in se collegit? Sed ei qui ad uirtutem tendit, etiam si multum processit, opus est aliqua fortunae indulgentia adhuc inter humana luctanti, dum nodum illum exsoluit et omne uinculum mortale. Quid ergo interest? quod arte alligati sunt alii, adstricti [alii], districti quoque: hic qui ad superiora progressus est et se altius extulit laxam catenam trahit, nondum liber, iam tamen pro libero.

XVII.

1. Si quis itaque ex istis qui philosophiam conlatrant quod solent dixerit: 'quare ergo tu fortius loqueris quam uiuis? Quare et superiori uerba summittis et pecuniam necessarium tibi instrumentum existimas et damno moueris et lacrimas audita coniugis aut amici morte demittis et respicis famam et malignis sermonibus tangeris? 2. Quare cultius rus tibi est quam naturalis usus desiderat? Cur non ad praescriptum tuum cenas? Cur tibi nitidior supellex est? Cur apud te uinum aetate tua uetustius bibitur? Cur aurum disponitur? Cur arbores nihil praeter umbram daturae conseruntur? Quare uxor tua locupletis domus censum auribus gerit? Quare paedagogium pretiosa ueste succingitur? Quare ars est apud te ministrare nec temere et ut libet conlocatur argentum sed perite struitur et est aliquis scindendi obsonii magister?' Adice si uis: 'cur trans mare possides? Cur plura quam nosti? <Cur> turpiter aut tam neglegens es ut non noueris pauculos seruos aut tam luxuriosus ut plures habeas quam quorum notitiae memoria sufficiat?' 3. Adiuuabo postmodo conuicia et plura mihi quam putas obiciam, nunc hoc respondeo tibi: non sum sapiens et, ut maliuolentiam tuam pascam, nec ero. Exige itaque a me, non ut optimis par sim, sed ut malis melior: hoc mihi satis est, cotidie aliquid ex uitiiis meis demere et errores meos obiurgare. 4. Non perueni ad sanitatem, ne perueniam quidem; delenimenta magis quam remedia podagrae meae compono, contentus si rarius accedit et si minus uerminatur: uestris quidem pedibus comparatus, debiles, cursor sum. Haec non pro me loquor — ego enim in alto uitiorum omnium sum — sed pro illo cui aliquid acti est.

XVIII.

1. 'Aliter' inquis 'loqueris, aliter uiuis.' Hoc, malignissima capita et optimo cuique inimicissima, Platoni obiectum est, obiectum Epicuro, obiectum Zenoni; omnes enim isti dicebant non quemadmodum ipsi uiuerent, sed quemadmodum esset <et> ipsis uiuendum. De uirtute, non de me loquor, et cum uitiiis conuicium facio, in primis meis facio: cum potuero, uiuam quomodo oportet. 2. Nec malignitas me ista multo ueneno tincta deterrebit ab optimis; ne uirus quidem istud quo alios spargitis, quo uos necatis, me inpediet quominus perseuerem laudare uitam non quam ago sed quam agendam scio, quominus uirtutem adorem et ex interuallo ingenti reptabundus sequar. 3. Expectabo scilicet ut quicquam maliuolentiae inuiolatum sit, cui sacer nec Rutilius fuit nec Cato? Curet aliquis an istis nimis diues uideatur quibus Demetrius Cynicus parum pauper est? Virum acerrimum et contra omnia naturae desideria pugnantem, hoc pauperiorem quam ceteros Cynicos quod, cum sibi interdixerit habere, interdixit et poscere, negant satis egere. Vides enim: non uirtutis scientiam sed egestatis professus est.

XIX.

1. Diodorum, Epicureum philosophum, qui intra paucos dies finem uitae suae manu sua inposuit, negant ex decreto Epicuri fecisse quod sibi gulam praesequit: alii dementia uideri uolunt factum hoc eius, alii temeritatem. Ille interim beatus ac plenus bona conscientia reddidit sibi testimonium uita excedens laudauitque aetatis in portu et ad ancoram actae quietem et dixit quod uos inuiti audistis, quasi uobis quoque faciendum sit:

uixi et quem dederat cursum fortuna peregi.

2. De alterius uita, de alterius morte disputatis et ad nomen magnorum ob aliquam eximiam laudem uirorum, sicut ad occursum ignotorum hominum minuti canes, latratis; expedit enim uobis neminem uideri bonum, quasi aliena uirtus exprobratio delictorum ~omnium~ sit. Inuidi splendida cum sordibus uestris confertis nec intellegitis quanto id uestro detrimento audeatis. Nam si illi qui uirtutem sequuntur auari libidinosi ambitiosique sunt, quid uos estis quibus ipsum nomen uirtutis odio est? 3. Negatis quemquam praestare quae loquitur nec ad exemplar orationis suae uiuere: quid mirum, cum loquantur fortia ingentia, omnis humanas tempestates euadentia? Cum refigere se crucibus conentur — in quas unusquisque uestrum clauos suos ipse adigit — ad supplicium tamen acti stipitibus singulis pendent: hi qui in se ipsi animum aduertunt quot cupiditatibus tot crucibus distrahuntur. At maledici, in alienam contumeliam uenusti sunt. Crederem illis hoc uacare, nisi quidam ex patibulo suo spectatores conspuerent.

XX.

1. 'Non praestant philosophi quae loquuntur.' Multum tamen praestant quod loquuntur, quod honesta mente concipiunt. Vtinam quidem et paria dictis agerent: quid esset illis beatius? Interim non est quod contemnas bona uerba et bonis cogitationibus plena praecordia: studiorum salutarium etiam citra effectum laudanda tractatio est. 2. Quid mirum, si non escendunt in altum ardua adgressi? Sed si uir es, suspice, etiam si decidunt, magna conantis. Generosa res est respicientem non ad suas sed ad naturae suae uires conari alta temptare et mente maiora concipere quam quae etiam ingenti animo adornatis effici possunt. 3. Qui sibi hoc proposuit: 'ego mortem eodem uultu quo audiam uidebo. Ego laboribus, quanticumque illi erunt, parebo, animo fulciens corpus. Ego diuitias et praesentis et absentis aequae contemniam, nec si aliubi iacebunt tristior, nec si circa me fulgebunt animosior. Ego fortunam nec uenientem sentiam nec recedentem. Ego terras omnis tamquam meas uidebo, meas tamquam omnium. Ego sic uiuam quasi sciam aliis esse me natum et naturae rerum hoc nomine gratias agam: quo enim melius genere negotium meum agere potuit? unum me donauit omnibus, uni mihi omnis. 4. Quidquid habebō nec sordide custodiam nec prodige spargam; nihil magis possidere me credam quam bene donata. Non numero nec pondere beneficia nec ulla nisi accipientis aestimatione perpendam; numquam id mihi multum erit quod dignus accipiet. Nihil opinionis causa, omnia conscientiae faciam. Populo spectante fieri credam quidquid me conscio faciam. 5. Edendi mihi erit bibendique finis desideria naturae restringere, non implere aluum et exinanire. Ero amicis iucundus, inimicis mitis et facilis. Exorabor antequam roger, et honestis precibus occurram. Patriam meam esse mundum sciam et praesides deos, hos supra me circaque me stare factorum dictorumque censores. Quandoque aut natura spiritum repetet aut ratio dimittet, testatus exhibo bonam me conscientiam amasse, bona studia, nullius per me libertatem deminutam, minime meam' — qui haec facere proponet, uolet, temptabit, ad deos iter faciet, ne ille, etiam si non tenuerit, magnis tamen excidit ausis.

6. Vos quidem, quod uirtutem cultoremque eius odistis, nihil noui

facitis. Nam et solem lumina aegra formidant et auersantur diem
splendidum nocturna animalia, quae ad primum eius ortum stupent et
latibula sua passim petunt, abduntur in aliquas rimas timida lucis.
Gemite et infelicem linguam bonorum exercete conuicio, hiate
commordete: citius multo frangetis dentes quam inprimetis.

XXI.

1. ‘Quare ille philosophiae studiosus est et tam diues uitam agit? Quare opes contemnendas dicit et habet, uitam contemnendam putat et tamen uiuit, ualetudinem contemnendam, et tamen illam diligentissime tuetur atque optimam mauult? Et exilium uanum nomen putat et ait “quid enim est mali mutare regiones?” et tamen, si licet, senescit in patria? Et inter longius tempus et breuius nihil interesse iudicat, tamen, si nihil prohibet, extendit aetatem et in multa senectute placidus uiuet?’ 2. Ait ista debere contemni, non ne habeat, sed ne sollicitus habeat; non abigit illa a se, sed abeuntia securus prosequitur. Diuitias quidem ubi tutius fortuna deponet quam ibi unde sine querella reddentis receptura est? 3. M. Cato cum laudaret Curium et Coruncanium et illud saeculum in quo censorium crimen erat paucae argenti lamellae possidebat ipse quadragies sestertium, minus sine dubio quam Crassus, plus quam censorius Cato. Maiore spatio, si compararentur, proauum uicerat quam a Crasso uinceretur, et, si maiores illi obuenerent opes, non spreuisset. 4. Nec enim se sapiens indignum ullis muneribus fortuitis putat: non amat diuitias sed mauult; non in animum illas sed in domum recipit, nec respuit possessas sed continet, et maiorem uirtuti suae materiam subministrari uult.

XXII.

1. Quid autem dubii est quin haec maior materia sapienti uiro sit animum explicandi suum in diuitiis quam in paupertate, cum in hac unum genus uirtutis sit non inclinari nec deprimi, in diuitiis et temperantia et liberalitas et diligentia et dispositio et magnificentia campum habeat patentem? 2. Non contemnet se sapiens, etiam si fuerit minimae staturae, esse tamen se procerum uolet. Et exilis corpore aut amisso oculo ualebit, malet tamen sibi esse corporis robur, et hoc ita ut sciat esse aliud in se ualentius; malam ualitudinem tolerabit, bonam optabit. 3. Quaedam enim, etiam si in summam rei parua sunt [ait] et subduci sine ruina principalis boni possunt, adiciunt tamen aliquid ad perpetuam laetitiam et ex uirtute nascentem: sic illum adficiunt diuitiae et exhilarant ut nauigantem secundus et ferens uentus, ut dies bonus et in bruma ac frigore apricus locus. 4. Quis porro sapientium — nostrorum dico, quibus unum est bonum uirtus — negat etiam haec quae indifferentia uocamus habere aliquid in se pretii et alia aliis esse potiora? Quibusdam ex iis tribuitur aliquid honoris, quibusdam multum; ne erres itaque, inter potiora diuitiae sunt. 5. ‘Quid ergo’ inquis ‘me derides, cum eundem apud te locum habeant quem apud me?’ Vis scire quam non eundem habeant locum? mihi diuitiae si effluxerint, nihil auferent nisi semet ipsas, tu stupebis et uideberis tibi sine te relictus, si illae a te recesserint; apud me diuitiae aliquem locum habent, apud te summum; ad postremum diuitiae meae sunt, tu diuitiarum es.

XXIII.

1. Desine ergo philosophis pecunia interdicere: nemo sapientiam paupertate damnauit. Habebit philosophus amplas opes, sed nulli detractas nec alieno sanguine cruentas, sine cuiusquam iniuria partas, sine sordidis quaestibus, quarum tam honestus sit exitus quam introitus, quibus nemo ingemescat nisi malignus. In quantum uis exaggera illas: honestae sunt in quibus, cum multa sint quae sua quisque dici uelit, nihil est quod quisquam suum possit dicere. 2. Ille uero fortunae benignitatem a se non summouebit et patrimonio per honesta quaesito nec gloriabitur nec erubescet. Habebit tamen etiam quo gloriatur, si aperta domo et admissa in res suas ciuitate poterit dicere ‘quod quisque agnouerit tollat.’ O magnum uirum, <o> optime diuitem, si post hanc uocem tantundem habuerit! Ita dico: si tuto et securus scrutationem populo praebuerit, si nihil quisquam apud illum inuenerit quoui manus iniciat, audaciter et propalam erit diues. 3. Sapiens nullum denarium intra limen suum admittet male intransentem; idem magnas opes, munus fortunae fructumque uirtutis, non repudiabit nec excludet. Quid enim est quare illis bono loco inuideat? ueniant, hospitentur. Nec iactabit illas nec abscondet — alterum infruniti animi est, alterum timidi et pusilli, uelut magnum bonum intra sinum continentis — nec, ut dixi, eiciet illas e domo. 4. Quid enim dicet? utrumne ‘inutiles estis’ an ‘ego uti diuitiis nescio’? Quemadmodum etiam pedibus suis poterit iter conficere, escendere tamen uehiculum malet, sic pauper [si] poterit esse, diues uolet. Habebit itaque opes, sed tamquam leues et auolaturas, nec ulli alii eas nec sibi graues esse patietur. 5. Donabit — quid erexistis aures, quid expeditis sinum? — donabit aut bonis aut eis quos facere poterit bonos, donabit cum summo consilio dignissimos eligens, ut qui meminerit tam expensorum quam acceptorum rationem esse reddendam, donabit ex recta et probabili causa, nam inter turpes iacturas malum munus est; habebit sinum facilem, non perforatum, ex quo multa exeant et nihil excidat.

XXIV.

1. Errat si quis existimat facilem rem esse donare: plurimum ista res habet difficultatis, si modo consilio tribuitur, non casu et impetu spargitur. Hunc promereor, illi reddo; huic succurro, huius misereor; illum instruo dignum quem non deducat paupertas nec occupatum teneat; quibusdam non dabo quamuis desit, quia etiam si dedero erit defuturum; quibusdam offeram, quibusdam etiam inculcabo. Non possum in hac re esse negligens; numquam magis nomina facio quam cum dono. 2. 'Quid? tu' inquis 'recepturus donas?' Immo non perditurus: eo loco sit donatio unde repeti non debeat, reddi possit. Beneficium conlocetur quemadmodum thesaurus alte obrutus, quem non eruas nisi fuerit necesse. 3. Quid? domus ipsa diuitis uiri quantam habet bene faciendi materiam! Quis enim liberalitatem tantum ad togatos uocat? hominibus prodesse natura me iubet. Serui liberine sint hi, ingenui an libertini, iustae libertatis an inter amicos datae, quid refert? ubicumque homo est, ibi benefici locus est. Potest itaque pecunia etiam intra limen suum diffundi et liberalitatem exercere, quae non quia liberis debetur sed quia a libero animo proficiscitur ita nominata est. Haec apud sapientem nec umquam in turpes indignosque inpingitur nec umquam ita defetigata errat ut non, quotiens dignum inuenerit, quasi ex pleno fluat.

4. Non est ergo quod perperam exaudiat is quae honeste fortiter animose a studiosis sapientiae dicuntur. Et hoc primum adtendite: aliud est studiosus sapientiae, aliud iam adeptus sapientiam. Ille tibi dicit: 'optime loquor, sed adhuc inter mala uolutor plurima. Non est quod me ad formulam meam exigas: cum maxime facio me et formo et ad exemplar ingens attollo; si processero quantumcumque proposui, exige ut dictis facta respondeant.' Adsecutus uero humani boni summam aliter tecum aget et dicit: 'primum non est quod tibi permittas de melioribus ferre sententiam; mihi iam, quod argumentum est recti, contigit malis displicere. 5. Sed ut tibi rationem reddam qua nulli mortalium inuideo, audi quid promittam et quanti quaeque aestimem. Diuitias nego bonum esse; nam si essent, bonos facerent: nunc, quoniam quod apud malos deprenditur dici bonum non potest, hoc illis nomen nego. Ceterum et habendas

esse et utiles et magna commoda uitae adferentis fateor.

XXV.

1. Quid ergo sit quare illas non in bonis numerem, et quid praestem in illis aliud quam uos, quoniam inter utrosque conuenit habendas, audite. Pone in opulentissima me domo, pone <ubi> aurum argentumque in promiscuo usu sit: non suspiciam me ob ista quae, etiam si apud me, extra me tamen sunt. In Sublicium pontem me transfer et inter egentes abice: non ideo tamen me despiciam quod in illorum numero consedero qui manum ad stipem porrigunt. Quid enim ad rem an frustum panis desit cui non deest mori posse? Quid ergo est? domum illam splendidam malo quam pontem. 2. Pone <in> instrumentis splendentibus et delicato apparatu: nihilo me feliciorem credam quod mihi molle erit amiculum, quod purpura conuiuis meis substernetur. Muta stragula mea: nihilo miserius ero si lassa ceruix mea in maniculo faeni adquiescet, si super Circense tomentum per sarturas ueteris lintei effluens incubabo. Quid ergo est? malo quid mihi animi sit ostendere praetextatus et ~causatus~ quam nudis scapulis aut ~sententis~. 3. Omnes mihi ex uoto dies cedant, nouae gratulationes prioribus subtexantur: non ob hoc mihi placebo. Muta in contrarium hanc indulgentiam temporis, hinc illinc percutiatur animus damno luctu incursionibus uariis, nulla hora sine aliqua querella sit: non ideo me dicam inter miserrima miserum, non ideo aliquem execrabor diem; prouisum est enim a me ne quis mihi ater dies esset. Quid ergo est? malo gaudia temperare quam dolores compescere.'

4. Hoc tibi ille Socrates dicet: 'fac me uictorem uniuersarum gentium, delicatus ille Liberi currus triumphantem usque ad Thebas a solis ortu uehat, iura reges ~penatium~ petant: me hominem esse maxime cogitabo, cum deus undique consalutabor. Huic tam sublimi fastigio coniunge protinus praecipitem mutationem; in alienum inponar fericulum exornaturus uictoris superbi ac feri pompam: non humilior sub alieno curru agar quam in meo steteram. Quid ergo est? uincere tamen quam capi malo. 5. Totum fortunae regnum despiciam, sed ex illo, si dabitur electio, meliora sumam. Quidquid ad me uenerit bonum fiet, sed malo faciliora ac iucundiora ueniant et minus uexatura tractantem. Non est enim quod existimes ullam esse

sine labore uirtutem, sed quaedam uirtutes stimulis, quaedam frenis egent. 6. Quemadmodum corpus in procliui retineri debet, aduersus ardua inpelli, ita quaedam uirtutes in procliui sunt, quaedam cliuum subeunt. An dubium est quin escendat nitatur obluctetur patientia fortitudo perseuerantia et quaecumque alia duris opposita uirtus est et fortunam subigit? 7. Quid ergo? non aequè manifestum est per deum ire liberalitatem temperantiam mansuetudinem? In his continemus animum ne prolabatur, in illis exhortamur incitamusque acerrime. Ergo paupertati adhibebimus illas quae pugnare sciunt fortiores, diuitiis illas diligentiores quae suspensum gradum ponunt et pondus suum sustinent. 8. Cum hoc ita diuisum sit, malo has in usu mihi esse quae exercendae tranquillius sunt quam eas quarum experimentum sanguis et sudor est. Ergo non ego aliter' inquit sapiens 'uiuo quam loquor, sed uos aliter auditis; sonus tantummodo uerborum ad aures uestras peruenit: quid significet non quaeritis.'

XXVI.

1. 'Quid ergo inter me stultum et te sapientem interest, si uterque habere uolumus?' Plurimum: diuitiae enim apud sapientem uirum in seruitute sunt, apud stultum in imperio; sapiens diuitiis nihil permittit, uobis diuitiae omnia; uos, tamquam aliquis uobis aeternam possessionem earum promiserit, adsuescitis illis et cohaeretis, sapiens tunc maxime paupertatem meditatur cum in mediis diuitiis constitit. 2. Numquam imperator ita paci credit ut non se praeparet bello quod, etiam si non geritur, indictum est: uos domus formonsa, tamquam nec ardere nec ruere possit, insolentes, uos opes, tamquam periculum omne transcenderint maioresque sint uobis quam quibus consumendis satis uirum habeat fortuna, obstupefaciunt. 3. Otiosi diuitiis luditis nec prouidetis illarum periculum, sicut barbari plerumque inclusi et ignari machinarum segnes laborem obsidentium spectant nec quo illa pertineant quae ex longinquo struuntur intellegunt. Idem uobis euenit: marcetis in uestris rebus nec cogitatis quot casus undique immineant iam iamque pretiosa spolia laturi. Sapientis quisquis abstulerit diuitias, omnia illi sua relinquet; uiuit enim praesentibus laetus, futuri securus.

4. 'Nihil magis' inquit ille Socrates aut aliquis alius cui idem <adfectus> aduersus humana atque eadem potestas est 'persuasi mihi quam ne ad opiniones uestras actum uitae meae flecterem. Solita conferte undique uerba: non conuiciari uos putabo sed uagire uelut infantes miserrimos.' 5. Haec dicet ille cui sapientia contigit, quem animus uitiorum immunis increpare alios, non quia odit, sed in remedium iubet. Adiciet his illa: 'existimatio me uestra non meo nomine sed uestro mouet, quia ~clamitatis~ odisse et lacescere uirtutem bonae spei eiuratio est. Nullam mihi iniuriam facitis, sed ne dis quidem hi qui aras euertunt. Sed malum propositum apparet malumque consilium etiam ibi ubi nocere non potuit. 6. Sic uestras halucinationes fero quemadmodum Iuppiter optimus maximus ineptias poetarum, quorum alius illi alas inposuit, alius cornua, alius adulterum illum induxit et abnoctantem, alius saeuum in deos, alius iniquum in homines, alius raptorem ingenuorum et cognatorum quidem, alius parricidam et regni alieni paternique expugnatorem:

quibus nihil aliud actum est quam ut pudor hominibus peccandi demeretur, si tales deos credidissent. 7. Sed quamquam ista me nihil laedant, uestra tamen uos moneo causa: suspicite uirtutem, credite iis qui illam diu secuti magnum quiddam ipsos et quod in dies maius appareat sequi clamant, et ipsam ut deos ac professores eius ut antistites colite et, quotiens mentio sacrarum litterarum interuenerit, fauete linguis. Hoc uerbum non, ut plerique existimant, a fauore trahitur, sed imperat silentium ut rite peragi possit sacrum nulla uoce mala obstrepente; quod multo magis necessarium est imperari uobis, ut quotiens aliquid ex illo proferetur oraculo, intenti et compressa uoce audiatis. 8. Cum sistrum aliquis concutiens ex imperio mentitur, cum aliquis secandi lacertos suos artifex brachia atque umeros suspensa manu cruentat, cum aliqua genibus per uiam repens ululat laurumque linteatus senex et medio lucernam die praeferens conclamat iratum aliquem deorum, concurritis et auditis ac diuinum esse eum, inuicem mutuum alentes stuporem, adfirmatis.’

XXVII.

Ecce Socrates ex illo carcere quem intrando purgavit omnique honestiorem curia reddidit proclamat: ‘qui iste furor, quae ista inimica dis hominibusque natura est infamare uirtutes et malignis sermonibus sancta uiolare? Si potestis, bonos laudate, si minus, transite; quod si uobis exercere taetram istam licentiam placet, alter in alterum incursitate. Nam cum in caelum insanitis, non dico sacrilegium facitis sed operam perditis. 2. Praebui ego aliquando Aristophani materiam iocorum, tota illa comicorum poetarum manus in me uenenatos sales suos effudit: inlustrata est uirtus mea per ea ipsa per quae petebatur; produci enim illi et temptari expedit, nec ulli magis intellegunt quanta sit quam qui uires eius lacessendo senserunt: duritia silicis nullis magis quam ferientibus nota est. 3. Praebeo me non aliter quam rupes aliqua in uadoso mari destituta, quam fluctus non desinunt, undecumque moti sunt, uerberare, nec ideo aut loco eam mouent aut per tot aetates crebro incursu suo consumunt. Adsilite, facite impetum: ferendo uos uincam. In ea quae firma et inexsuperabilia sunt quidquid incurrit malo suo uim suam exercet: proinde quaerite aliquam mollem cedentemque materiam in qua tela uestra figantur.

4. Vobis autem uacat aliena scrutari mala et sententias ferre de quoquam? “Quare hic philosophus laxius habitat? quare hic lautius cenat?” Papulas obseruatis alienas, obsiti plurimis ulceribus? hoc tale est quale si quis pulcherrimorum corporum naeuos aut uerrucas derideat quem foeda scabies depascitur. 5. Obicite Platoni quod petierit pecuniam, Aristoteli quod acceperit, Democrito quod neglexerit, Epicuro quod consumpserit; mihi ipsi Alcibiaden et Phaedrum obiectate, ~o uos usu~ maxime felices, cum primum uobis imitari uitia nostra contigerit. 6. Quin potius mala uestra circumspicitis, quae uos ab omni parte confodiunt, alia grassantia extrinsecus, alia in uisceribus ipsis ardentia? Non eo loco res humanae sunt, etiam si statum uestrum parum nostis, ut uobis tantum otii supersit ut in probra meliorum agitare linguam uacet.

XXVIII.

1. Hoc uos non intellegitis et alienum fortunae uestrae uultum geritis, sicut plurimi quibus in circo aut theatro desidentibus iam funesta domus est nec adnuntiatur malum. At ego ex alto prospiciens uideo quae tempestates aut immineant uobis paulo tardius rupturae nimbum suum aut iam uicinae uos ac uestra rapturae propius accesserint. Quid porro? nonne nunc quoque, etiam si parum sentitis, turbo quidam animos uestros rotat et inuoluit fugientes petentesque eadem et nunc in sublime adleuatos nunc in infima adlisos cir * * * ?’

ON LEISURE — De Otio

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I.

1. * * * nobis magno consensu uitia commendant. Licet nihil aliud quod sit salutare temptemus, proderit tamen per se ipsum secedere: meliores erimus singuli. Quid quod secedere ad optimos uiros et aliquod exemplum eligere ad quod uitam derigamus licet? Quod <nisi> in otio non fit: tunc potest optineri quod semel placuit, ubi nemo interuenit qui iudicium adhuc inbecillum populo adiutore detorqueat; tunc potest uita aequali et uno tenore procedere, quam propositis diuersissimis scindimus. 2. Nam inter cetera mala illud pessimum est, quod uitia ipsa mutamus. Sic ne hoc quidem nobis contingit, permanere in malo iam familiari. Aliud ex alio placet uexatque nos hoc quoque, quod iudicia nostra non tantum praua sed etiam leuia sunt: fluctuamur aliudque ex alio comprehendimus, petita relinquimus, relictas repetimus, alternas inter cupiditatem nostram et paenitentiam uices sunt. 3. Pendemus enim toti ex alienis iudiciis et id optimum nobis uidetur quod petitores laudatoresque multos habet, non id quod laudandum petendumque est, nec uiam bonam ac malam per se aestimamus sed turba uestigiorum, in quibus nulla sunt redeuntium.

4. Dices mihi: 'quid ais, Seneca? deseris partes? Certe Stoici uestri dicunt: "usque ad ultimum uitae finem in actu erimus, non desinemus communi bono operam dare, adiuuare singulos, opem ferre etiam inimicis senili manu. Nos sumus qui nullis annis uacationem damus et, quod ait ille uir disertissimus,

canitiem galea premimus;

nos sumus apud quos usque eo nihil ante mortem otiosum est ut, si res patitur, non sit ipsa mors otiosa." Quid nobis Epicuri praecepta in ipsis Zenonis principiis loqueris? Quin tu bene gnauiter, si partium piget, transfugis potius quam prodis?' 5. Hoc tibi in praesentia respondebo: 'numquid uis amplius quam ut me similem ducibus meis praestem? Quid ergo est? non quo miserint me illi, sed quo duxerint ibo.'

II.

1. Nunc probabo tibi non desciscere me a praeceptis Stoicorum; nam ne ipsi quidem a suis descuerunt, et tamen excusatissimus essem, etiam si non praecepta illorum sequerer sed exempla. Hoc quod dico in duas diuidam partes: primum, ut possit aliquis uel a prima aetate contemplationi ueritatis totum se tradere, rationem uiuendi quaerere atque exercere secreto; 2. deinde, ut possit hoc aliquis emeritis stipendiis, profligatae aetatis, iure optimo facere et ~ad alios actus animos~ referre, uirginum Vestalium more, quae annis inter officia diuisis discunt facere sacra et cum didicerunt docent.

III.

1. Hoc Stoicis quoque placere ostendam, non quia mihi legem dixerim nihil contra dictum Zenonis Chrysippiae committere, sed quia res ipsa patitur me ire in illorum sententiam, quoniam si quis semper unius sequitur, non in curia sed in factione est. Vtinam quidem iam tenerentur omnia et in aperto et confesso ueritas esset nihilque ex decretis mutaremus! nunc ueritatem cum eis ipsis qui docent quaerimus.

2. Duae maxime et in hac re dissident sectae, Epicureorum et Stoicorum, sed utraque ad otium diuersa uia mittit. Epicurus ait: ‘non accedet ad rem publicam sapiens, nisi si quid interuenerit’; Zenon ait: ‘accedet ad rem publicam, nisi si quid impedierit.’ 3. Alter otium ex proposito petit, alter ex causa; causa autem illa late patet. Si res publica corruptior est quam <ut> adiuuari possit, si occupata est malis, non nitetur sapiens in superuacuum nec se nihil profuturus inpendet; si parum habebit auctoritatis aut uirium nec illum erit admissura res publica, si ualetudo illum impediet, quomodo nauem quassam non deduceret in mare, quomodo nomen in militiam non daret debilis, sic ad iter quod inhabile sciet non accedet. 4. Potest ergo et ille cui omnia adhuc in integro sunt, antequam ullas experiatur tempestates, in tuto subsistere et protinus commendare se bonis artibus et inlibatum otium exigere, uirtutum cultor, quae exerceri etiam quietissimis possunt. 5. Hoc nempe ab homine exigitur, ut prosit hominibus, si fieri potest, multis, si minus, paucis, si minus, proximis, si minus, sibi. Nam cum se utilem ceteris efficit, commune agit negotium. Quomodo qui se deteriorem facit non sibi tantummodo nocet sed etiam omnibus eis quibus melior factus prodesse potuisset, sic quisquis bene de se meretur hoc ipso aliis prodest quod illis profuturum parat.

IV.

1. Duas res publicas animo complectamur, alteram magnam et uere publicam qua di atque homines continentur, in qua non ad hunc angulum respicimus aut ad illum sed terminos ciuitatis nostrae cum sole metimur, alteram cui nos adscripsit condicio nascendi; haec aut Atheniensium erit aut Carthaginensium aut alterius alicuius urbis quae non ad omnis pertineat homines sed ad certos. Quidam eodem tempore utrique rei publicae dant operam, maiori minorique, quidam tantum minori, quidam tantum maiori. 2. Huic maiori rei publicae et in otio deseruire possumus, immo uero nescio an in otio melius, ut quaeramus quid sit uirtus, una pluresne sint, natura an ars bonos uiros faciat; unum sit hoc quod maria terrasque et mari ac terris inserta complectitur, an multa eiusmodi corpora deus sparserit; continua sit omnis et plena materia ex qua cuncta gignuntur, an diducta et solidis inane permixtum; quae sit dei sedes, opus suum spectet an tractet, utrumne extrinsecus illi circumfusus sit an toti inditus; immortalis sit mundus an inter caduca et ad tempus nata numerandus. Haec qui contemplatur, quid deo praestat? ne tanta eius opera sine teste sint.

V.

1. Solemus dicere summum bonum esse secundum naturam uiuere: natura nos ad utrumque genuit, et contemplationi rerum et actioni. Nunc id probemus quod prius diximus. Quid porro? hoc non erit probatum, si se unusquisque consuluerit quantam cupidinem habeat ignota noscendi, quam ad omnis fabulas excitetur? 2. Nauigant quidam et labores peregrinationis longissimae una mercede perpetiuntur cognoscendi aliquid abditum remotumque. Haec res ad spectacula populos contrahit, haec cogit praeclusa rimari, secretiora exquirere, antiquitates euoluere, mores barbararum audire gentium. 3. Curiosum nobis natura ingenium dedit et artis sibi ac pulchritudinis suae conscia spectatores nos tantis rerum spectaculis genuit, perditura fructum sui, si tam magna, tam clara, tam subtiliter ducta, tam nitida et non uno genere formosa solitudini ostenderet. 4. Vt scias illam spectari uoluisse, non tantum aspici, uide quem nobis locum dederit: in media nos sui parte constituit et circumspectum omnium nobis dedit; nec erexit tantummodo hominem, sed etiam habilem contemplationis factura, ut ab ortu sidera in occasum labentia prosequi posset et uultum suum circumferre cum toto, sublime fecit illi caput et collo flexili inposuit; deinde sena per diem, sena per noctem signa producens nullam non partem sui explicuit, ut per haec quae optulerat oculis eius cupiditatem faceret etiam ceterorum. 5. Nec enim omnia nec tanta uisimus quanta sunt, sed acies nostra aperit sibi inuestigandi uiam et fundamenta uero iacit, ut inquisitio transeat ex apertis in obscura et aliquid ipso mundo inueniat antiquius: unde ista sidera exierint; quis fuerit uniuersi status, antequam singula in partes discederent; quae ratio mersa et confusa diduxerit; quis loca rebus adsignauerit, suapte natura grauia descenderint, euolauerint leuia, an praeter nisum pondusque corporum altior aliqua uis legem singulis dixerit; an illud uerum sit quo maxime probatur homines diuini esse spiritus, partem ac ueluti scintillas quasdam astrorum in terram desiluisse atque alieno loco haesisse. 6. Cogitatio nostra caeli munimenta perrumpit nec contenta est id quod ostenditur scire: ‘illud’ inquit ‘scrutor quod ultra mundum iacet, utrumne profunda uastitas sit an et hoc ipsum

terminis suis cludatur; qualis sit habitus exclusis, informia et confusa sint, [an] in omnem partem tantundem loci optinentia, an et illa in aliquem cultum descripta sint; huic cohaereant mundo, an longe ab hoc secesserint et hic in uacuo uolutetur; indiuidua sint per quae struitur omne quod natum futurumque est, an continua eorum materia sit et per totum mutabilis; utrum contraria inter se elementa sint, an non pugnent sed per diuersa conspirent.’ 7. Ad haec quaerenda natus, aestima quam non multum acceperit temporis, etiam si illud totum sibi uindicat. Qui licet nihil facilitate eripi, nihil negligentia patiatur excidere, licet horas suas auarissime seruet et usque in ultimum aetatis humanae terminum procedat nec quicquam illi ex eo quod natura constituit fortuna concutiat, tamen homo ad immortalium cognitionem nimis mortalis est. 8. Ergo secundum naturam uiuo si totum me illi dedi, si illius admirator cultorque sum. Natura autem utrumque facere me uoluit, et agere et contemplationi uacare: utrumque facio, quoniam ne contemplatio quidem sine actione est.

VI.

1. 'Sed refert' inquis 'an ad illam uoluptatis causa accesseris, nihil aliud ex illa petens quam adsiduam contemplationem sine exitu; est enim dulcis et habet inlecebras suas.' Aduersus hoc tibi respondeo: aequè refert quo animo ciuilem agas uitam, an semper inquietus sis nec tibi umquam sumas ullum tempus quo ab humanis ad diuina respicias. 2. Quomodo res adpetere sine ullo uirtutum amore et sine cultu ingeni ac nudas edere operas minime probabile est (misceri enim ista inter se et conseri debent), sic imperfectum ac languidum bonum est in otium sine actu proiecta uirtus, numquam id quod didicit ostendens. 3. Quis negat illam debere profectus suos in opere temptare, nec tantum quid faciendum sit cogitare sed etiam aliquando manum exercere et ea quae meditata est ad uerum perducere? Quodsi per ipsum sapientem non est mora, si non actor deest sed agenda desunt, ecquid illi secum esse permittes? 4. Quo animo ad otium sapiens secedit? ut sciat se tum quoque ea acturum per quae posteris prosit. Nos certe sumus qui dicimus et Zenonem et Chrysippum maiora egisse quam si duxissent exercitus, gessissent honores, leges tulissent; quas non uni ciuitati, sed toti humano generi tulerunt. Quid est ergo quare tale otium non conueniat uiro bono, per quod futura saecula ordinet nec apud paucos contionetur sed apud omnis omnium gentium homines, quique sunt quique erunt? 5. Ad summam, quaero an ex praeceptis suis uixerint Cleanthes et Chrysippus et Zenon. <Non> dubie respondebis sic illos uixisse quemadmodum dixerant esse uiuendum: atqui nemo illorum rem publicam administrauit. 'Non fuit' inquis 'illis aut ea fortuna aut ea dignitas quae admitti ad publicarum rerum tractationem solet.' Sed idem nihilominus non segnem egere uitam: inuenerunt quemadmodum plus quies ipsorum hominibus prodesset quam aliorum discursus et sudor. Ergo nihilominus hi multum egisse uisi sunt, quamuis nihil publice agerent.

VII.

1. Praeterea tria genera sunt uitae, inter quae quod sit optimum quaeri solet: unum uoluptati uacat, alterum contemplationi, tertium actioni. Primum deposita contentione depositoque odio quod inplacabile diuersa sequentibus indiximus, uideamus ut haec omnia ad idem sub alio atque alio titulo perueniant: nec ille qui uoluptatem probat sine contemplatione est, nec ille qui contemplationi inseruit sine uoluptate est, nec ille cuius uita actionibus destinata est sine contemplatione est. 2. 'Plurimum' inquis 'discriminis est utrum aliqua res propositum sit an propositi alterius accessio.' Sit sane grande discrimen, tamen alterum sine altero non est: nec ille sine actione contemplatur, nec hic sine contemplatione agit, nec ille tertius, de quo male existimare consensimus, uoluptatem inertem probat sed eam quam ratione efficit firmam sibi; ita et haec ipsa uoluptaria secta in actu est. 3. Quidni in actu sit, cum ipse dicat Epicurus aliquando se recessurum a uoluptate, dolorem etiam adpetiturum, si aut uoluptati imminebit paenitentia aut dolor minor pro grauiore sumetur? 4. Quo pertinet haec dicere? ut appareat contemplationem placere omnibus; alii petunt illam, nobis haec statio, non portus est.

VIII.

1. Adice nunc [huc] quod e lege Chrysippi uiuere otioso licet: non dico ut otium patiat, sed ut eligat. Negant nostri sapientem ad quamlibet rem publicam accessurum; quid autem interest quomodo sapiens ad otium ueniat, utrum quia res publica illi deest an quia ipse rei publicae, si omnibus defutura res publica est? Semper autem deerit fastidiose quaerentibus. 2. Interrogo ad quam rem publicam sapiens sit accessurus. Ad Atheniensium, in qua Socrates damnatur, Aristoteles ne damnetur fugit? in qua opprimit inuidia uirtutes? Negabis mihi accessurum ad hanc rem publicam sapientem. Ad Carthaginiensium ergo rem publicam sapiens accedet, in qua adsidua seditio et optimo cuique infesta libertas est, summa aequi ac boni uilitas, aduersus hostes inhumana crudelitas, etiam aduersus suos hostilis? Et hanc fugiet. 3. Si percensere singulas uolueris, nullam inueniam quae sapientem aut quam sapiens pati possit. Quodsi non inuenitur illa res publica quam nobis fingimus, incipit omnibus esse otium necessarium, quia quod unum praeferri poterat otio nusquam est. 4. Si quis dicit optimum esse nauigare, deinde negat nauigandum in eo mari in quo naufragia fieri soleant et frequenter subitae tempestates sint quae rectorem in contrarium rapiant, puto hic me uetat nauem soluere, quamquam laudet nauigationem. * * *

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PRAEFATIO

[1] Quantum inter philosophiam interest, Lucili uirorum optime, et ceteras artes, tantum interesse existimo in ipsa philosophia, inter illam partem quae ad homines, et hanc quae ad deos, spectat. Altior est haec, et animosior: multum permisit sibi: non fuit oculis contenta. Maius esse quiddam suspicata est, ac pulchrius, quod extra conspectum natura posuisset.

[2] Denique tantum inter duas interest, quantum inter Deum et hominem. Altera docet, quid in terris agendum sit: altera, quid agatur in coelo. Altera errores nostros discutit, et lumen admouet, quo discernantur ambigua uitae: altera multo supra hanc caliginem in qua uolutamur excedit, et e tenebris ereptos illo perducit, unde lucet.

[3] Equidem tunc naturae rerum gratias ago, cum illam non ab hac parte uideo, quae publica est, sed cum secretiora eius intraui: cum disco, quae uniuersi materia sit, quis auctor sit aut custos; quid sit deus; totus in se intendat, an ad nos aliquando respiciat; faciat quotidie aliquid, an sernel fecerit; pars mundi sit an mundus; liceat: illi hodieque decernere, et ex lege factorum, aliquid derogare, an maiestatis deminutio sit et confessio erroris, mutanda fecisse: necesse est enim ei eadem placere, cui nisi optima placere non possunt; nec ob hoc minus liber et potens est: ipse enim est necessitas sua.

[4] Nisi ad haec admitterer, non fuerat nasci. Quid enim erat, cur in numero uiuentium me positum esse gauderem? an ut cibos et potiones percolarem? ut hoc corpus causarium ac fluidum, periturumque nisi subinde impleatur, sarcirem, et uiuerem aegri minister? ut mortem timerem, cui omnes nascimur? Detrahe hoc inaestimabile bonum, non est uita tanti, ut sudem, ut aestuem.

[5] O quam contempta res est homo, nisi supra humana surrexit! Quamdiu cum affectibus colluctamur, quid magnifici facimus? etiamsi superiores sumus, portenta uincimus? Quid est, cur suspiciamus nosmetipsos, quia dissimiles deterrimis sumus? non uideo quare sibi placeat, qui robustior est ualetudinario.

[6] Multum interest inter uires et bonam ualetudinem. Effugisti uitia animi: non est tibi frons ficta, nec in alienam uoluntatem sermo

compositus, nec cor inuolutum, nec auaritia, quae quidquid omnibus abstulit, sibi ipsi negat; nec luxuria pecuniam turpiter amittens, quam turpius reparet; nec ambitio, quae te ad dignitatem nisi per indigna non ducet. Nihil adhuc consecutus es; multa effugisti, te nondum! Virtus enim ista, quam affectamus, magnifica est non quia per se beatum est malo caruisse, sed quia animum laxat, ac praeparat ad cognitionem coelestium, dignumque efficit, qui in consortium Dei ueniat. [7] Tunc consummatum habet plenumque bonum sortis humanae, cum, calcato omni malo, petit altum, et in interiorem naturae sinum uenit. Tunc iuuat inter sidera ipsa uagantem, diuitum pauimenta ridere, et totam cum auro suo terram: non illo tantum, dico, quod egressit, et signandum monetae dedit, sed et illo, quod in occulto seruat posterorum auaritiae.

[8] Non potest ante contemnere porticus, et lacunaria ebore fulgentia, et tonsiles siluas, et deriuata in domos flumina, quam totum circumeat mundum, et terrarum orbem superne despiciens angustum, et magna ex parte opertum mari, etiam qua exstat, late squalidum, et aut ustum aut rigentem. Sibi ipse ait: Hoc est illud punctum quod inter tot gentes ferro et igni diuiditur?

[9] O quam ridiculi sunt mortalium termini! Ultra Istrum Dacus non exeat: Strymo Thracas includat: Parthis obstet Euphrates: Danubius Sarmatica ac Romana distermine: Rhenus Germaniae modum faciat: Pyrenaeus medium inter Gallias et Hispanias iugum extollat: inter Aegyptum et Aethiopias arenarum inculta uastitas iaceat!

[10] Si quis formicis det intellectum hominis, nonne et illae unam aream in multas prouincias diuident? Cum te in illa uere magna sustuleris; quoties uidebis exercitus subrectis ire uexillis et quasi magnum aliquid agatur, equitem modo ulteriora explorantem, modo a lateribus affusum, libebit dicere: "It nigrum campis agmen": formicarum iste discursus est, in angusto laborantium. Quid illis et nobis interest, nisi exigui mensura corpusculi?

[11] Punctum est istud in quo nauigatis, in quo bellatis, in quo regna disponitis: minima, etiam cum illis utrimque Oceanus occurrit. Sursum ingentia spatia sunt, in quorum possessionem animus admittitur: at ita si minimum secum ex corpore tulit, si sordidum omne deterisit, et expeditus levisque ac contentus modico emicuit.

[12] Cum illa tetigit, alitur, crescit, ac uelut uinculis liberatus, in originem redit; et hoc habet argumentum diuinitatis suae, quod illum diuina delectant: nec ut alienis interest, sed ut suis interest: secure spectat occasus siderum atque ortus, et tam diuersas concordantium uias. Obseruat, ubi quaeque stella primum terris lumen ostendat, ubi culmen eius summum, qua cursus sit, quousque descendat. Curiosus spectator excutit singula, et quaerit. Quidni quaerat? scit illa ad se pertinere.

[13] Tunc contemnit domicilii prioris angustias. Quantum enim est, quod ab ultimis littoribus Hispaniae usque ad Indos iacet? Paucissimorum dierum spatium, si nauem suus uentus impleuit. At illa regio coelestis per triginta annos uelocissimo sideri uiam praestat, nusquam resistenti, sed aequaliter cito. Illic demum discit, quod diu quaesiuit: illic incipit Deum nosse. Quid est Deus? Mens uniuersi. Quid est Deus? Quod uides totum, et quod non uides totum. Sic demum magnitudo sua illi redditur, qua nihil maius excogitari potest, sic solus est omnia, opus suum et extra et intra tenet. [14] Quid ergo interest inter naturam Dei et nostram? Nostri melior pars animus est: in illo nulla pars extra animum; totus ratio est. Cum interim tantus error mortalia teneat, ut hoc, quo neque formosius est quidquam, nec dispositius, nec in proposito constantius, existiment homines fortuitum et casu uolubile, ideoque tumultuosum inter fulmina, nubes, tempestates, et cetera quibus terrae ac terris uicina pulsantur.

[15] Nec haec intra uulgum dementia est, sapientiam quoque professas contigit. Sunt qui patent, sibi ipsis animum esse, et quidem prouidum ac dispensantem singula, et sua, et aliena: hoc autem uniuersum, in quo nos quoque sumus, expers esse consilii, et aut ferri temeritate quadam, aut natura nesciente quid faciat.

[16] Quanti aestimas ista cognoscere, et rebus terminos ponere? quantum Deus possit? materiam ipse sibi formet, an data utatur? utrum idea materiae prius superueniat, an materia ideae? deus quidquid uult efficiat, an in multis rebus illum tractanda destituant: et a magno artifice praeue formentur multa, non quia cessat ars, sed quia id in quo exercetur, saepe inobsequens arti est?

[17] Haec inspicere, haec discere, his incubare, nonne transilire est mortalitatem suam, et in meliorem transcribi sortem? Quid tibi,

inquis, ista proderunt? Si nihil aliud, hoc certe sciam, omnia angusta esse, mensus Deum. Sed haec deinde.

LIBER I

[1,1] Nunc, ut ad propositum opus ueniam, audi, quid de ignibus sentiam, quos aer transuersos agit. Magna illos ui excuti argumentum est, quod obliqui feruntur et praerapida celeritate: apparet illos non ire sed proici. Ignium multae uariaeque facies sunt.

[1,2] Aristoteles quoddam genus horum capram uocat: si me interrogaueris quare, prior mihi rationem reddas oportet, quare haedi uocentur; si autem, quod commodissimum est, conuenerit inter nos, ne alter alterum interroget, quod scit illum respondere non posse, satius erit de re ipsa quaerere quam mirari, quid ita Aristoteles globum ignis appellauerit capram. Talis enim fuit forma eius, qui bellum aduersus Persen Paulo gerente a lunari magnitudine apparuit.

[1,3] Vidimus nos quoque non semel flammam ingentis pilae specie, quae tamen in ipso cursu suo dissipata est. Vidimus circa diui Augusti excessum simile prodigium, uidimus eo tempore, quo de Seiano actum est; nec Germanici mors sine denuntiatione tali fuit.

[1,4] Dices mihi: ‘Ergo tu in tantis erroribus es, ut existimes deos mortium signa praemittere et quicquam in terris esse tain magnum, quod perire mundus sciat?». Erit aliud istius rei tempus: uidebimus an rerum omnium certus ordo ducatur et alia aliis ita implexa sint, ut quod antecedit aut causa sit sequentium aut signum; uidebimus an diis humana curae sint, an series ipsa, quid factura sit, certis rerum notis nuntiet.

[1,5] Interim illud existimo, eiusmodi ignes existere aere uehementius trito, cum inclinatio eius in alteram partem facta est et non cessit sed inter se pugnavit: ex hac uexatione nascuntur trabes et globi et faces et ardores. At cum leuius collisus et, ut ita dicam, frictus est, minora lumina excutiuntur, ‘crinemque uolantia sidera ducunt».

[1,6] Tunc ignes tenuissimi iter exile designant et caelo producant. Ideo nulla sine eiusmodi spectaculis nox est, non enim opus est ad efficienda ista magno aeris motu. Denique, ut breuiter dicam, eadem ratione fiunt ista, qua fulmina, sed ui minore: quemadmodum nubes collisae mediocriter fulgurationes efficient, maiore impetu impulsae fulmina, sic quanto illas minus presserit minor uis, tanto leuiores

fulmina emittent.

[1,7] Aristoteles rationem eiusmodi reddit: 'Varia et multa terrarum orbis expire, quaedam umida quaedam sicca, quaedam calentia quaedam concipiendis ignibus idonea». Nec mirum est, si terrae omnis generis et uaria euaporatio est, cum in caelo quoque non unus appareat color rerum, sed acrior sit Caniculae rubor, Martis remissior, Iouis nullus in lucem puram nitore perducto.

[1,8] Necessesse est ergo in magna copia corpusculorum, quae terrae eiectant et in superiorem agunt partem, aliqua in nubes peruenire alimenta ignium, quae non tantum collisa possint ardere sed etiam afflata radiis solis. Nam apud nos quoque ramenta sulphure aspersa ignem ex interuallo trahunt.

[1,9] Veri ergo simile est talem materiam inter nubes congregatam facile succendi et minores maioresue ignes existere, prout plus illis fuit aut minus uirium. Illud enim stultissimum, existimare aut decidere stellas aut transilire aut aliquid illis auferri et abradi:

[1,10] nam si hoc fuisset, etiam defuissent; nulla enim nox est, qua non plurimae ire et in diuersum uideantur abduci. Atqui quo solet quaeque inuenitur loto, <et> magnitudo sua singulis constat: sequitur ergo, ut infra illas ista nascantur et cito intercidant, quia sine fundamento et sede certa sunt.

[1,11] 'Quare ergo non etiam interdum transferuntur?». Quid, si dicas stellas interdum non esse, quia non apparent? Quemadmodum illae latent et solis fulgore obumbrantur, sic faces quoque transcurrunt et interdum, sed abscondit illas diurni luminis claritas. Si quando tamen tanta uis emicuit, ut etiam aduersus diem uindicare sibi fulgorem suum possint, apparent.

[1,12] Nostra certe aetas non semel uidit diurnas faces, alias ab oriente in occidentem uersas, alias ab occasu in ortum. Argumentum tempestatis nautae putant, cum multae transuolant stellae. Quod si uentorum signum est, ibi est, unde uenti sunt, id est in aere, qui medius inter lunam terrasque est.

[1,13] In magna tempestate apparere quasi stellae solent uelo insidentes; adiuuari se tunc periclitantes aestimant Pollucis et Castoris numine, causa autem melioris spei est, quod iam apparet frangi tempestatem et desinere uentos: alioquin ferrentur ignes, non sederent.

[1,14] Gylippo Syracusas petenti uisa est stella super ipsam lanceam constitisse. In Romanorum castris ardere uisa sunt pila, ignibus scilicet in illa delapsis, qui saepe fulminum modo ferire et animalia solent et arbusta”; sed si minore ui. utuntur, defluunt tantum et insidunt, non feriunt nec uulnerant. Alii autem inter nubes eliduntur, alii sereno, si aer ad exprimendos ignes aptus fuit:

[1,15] nam sereno quoque aliquando caelo tonat ex eadem causa qua nubilo, aere inter se colliso, qui, etiamsi est lucidior ac siccior, coire tamen et facere corpora quaedam similia nubibus potest, quae percussa reddant sonum. Quando ergo fiunt trabes, quando clipei et uastorum imagines ignibm? Ubi in talem materiam similis incidit causa sed maior.

[2,1] Videamus nunc, quemadmodum fiat is fulgor, qui sidera circumuenit. Memoriae proditum est, quo die urbem diuus Augustus’ Apollonia reuersus intrauit, circa solem uisum coloris uarii circulum, qualis esse in arcu solet. Hunc Graeci G-halo uocant, nos dicere coronam aptissime possumus. Quae quemadmodum fieri dicatur, exponam.

[2,2] Cum in piscinam lapis missus est, uidemus in multos orbes aquam discedere et fieri primum angustissimum orbem, deinde laxiorem ac deinde alios maiores, donec euanescat impetus et in planitiem immotarum aquarum soluatur; tale quiddam cogitemus fieri etiam in aere: cum spissior factus est, sentire plagam potest; lux solis aut lunae uel cuiuslibet sideris incurrens recedere illum in circulos cogito. Nam umor et aer et omne, quod ex ictu formam accipit, in talem habitum impellitur, qualis est eius, quod impellit; omne autem lumen rotundum est: ergo et aer in hunc modum lumine percussus exibat.

[2,3] Ob hoc tales splendores Graeci areas uocauerunt, quia fere terendis frugibus destinata loca rotunda sunt. Non est autem, quod existimemus istas, siue areae siue coronae sunt, in uicinia siderum fieri. Plurimum enim ab his abstint, quamuis cingere ea et coronare uideantur: non longe a terra fit talis effigies, quam uisus noster solita imbecillitate deceptus circa ipsum sidus putat positam.

[2,4] In uicinia autem stellarum et solis nihil tale fieri potest, quia illic tenuis aether est. Nam formae crassis demum spissisque corporibus imprimi solent, in subtilibus non habent, ubi consistant

aut haereant: in balneis quoque circa lucernam tale quiddam aspici solet ob aeris densi obscuritatem, frequentissime autem austro, cum caelum maxime graue et spissum est.

[2,5] Nonnumquam paulatim diluuntur et desinunt, nonnumquam ab aliqua parte rumpuntur et inde uentum nautici expectant, unde contextus coronae periit: si a septemtrione discessit, aquilo erit, si ab occidente, fauonius. Quod argumentum est intra eam partem caeli has fieri coronas, intra quam uenti quoque esse solent: superiora non habent coronas, quia ne uentos quidem.

[2,6] His argumentis et illud adice, numquam coronam colligi nisi stabili aere et pigro uento; aliter non solet aspici. Nam qui stat aer, impelli et diduci et in aliquam faciem fingi potest; is autem qui fluit ne feritur quidem lumine (non enim resistit nec formatur, quia prima quaeque pars eius dissipatur):

[2,7] numquam ergo ullum sidus talem sibi effigiem circumdabit, nisi cum aer erit densus atque immotus et ob hoc custodiens incidentem in se rotundi lineam luminis. Nec sine causa; repete enim exemplum, quod paulo ante' proposui: lapillus in piscinam aut lacum et alligatam aquam missus circulos facit innumerabiles; at hoc idem non faciet in flumine (quare? Quia omnem figuram fugiens aqua disturbat): idem ergo in aere euenit, ut ille, qui manet, possit figurari, at ille, qui rapitur et currit, non det sui potestatem et omnem ictum uenientemque formam ex eo turbet.

[2,8] Hae, de quibus dixi, coronae cum dilapsae sunt aequaliter et in semet ipsae euanuerunt, significatur quies aeris et otium et tranquillitas; cum ad unam partem cesserunt, illinc uentus est, unde finduntur; si ruptae pluribus locis surrūt, tempestas fit.

[2,9] Quare id accadat, ex his, quae iam exposui, intellegi potest. Nam si facies uniuersa subsedit, apparet temperatum esse aera, et sic placidum; si ab una parte intercisa est, apparet inde aera incumbere: et ideo illa regio uentum dabit. At cum undique lacerata et concerpta est, manifestum est a pluribus partibus in illam impetum fieri et inquietum aera hinc atque illinc assilire: itaque ex hac inconstantia caeli tam multa temptantis et undique laborantis apparet futura tempestas uentorum plurium.

[2,10] Hae coronae noctibus fere circa lunam et alias stellas notantur, interdiu raro, adeo ut quidam ex Graecis negauerint omnino

eas fieri, cum illos historiae coarguant. Causa autem raritatis haec est, quod solis fortius lumen est et aer ipse agitatus ab illo calefactusque solutor: lunae inertior uis est ideoque facilius a circumposito aere sustinetur;

[2,11] aequae cetera sidera infirma sunt nec perrumpere aera ui sua possunt: excipitur itaque illorum imago et in materia solidiore ac minus cedente seruatur. Debet enim aer nec tam spissus esse, ut excludat ac summoueat a se lumen immissum, nec tam tenuis aut solutus, ut nullam uenientibus radiis moram praebeat. Haec noctibus temperatura contingit, cum sidera circumiectum aera luce leni non pugnaciter nec aspere ferunt spissioremq̃ue, quam solet esse interdiu, inficiunt.

[3,1] At contra arcus nocte non fit aut admodum raro, quia luna non habet tantum uirum, ut nubes transeat et illis colorem suffundat, qualem accipiunt sole perstrictae. Sic enim formam arcus discoloris efficiunt: quia aliae partes in nubibus tumidiores sunt aliae summissiores, quaedam crassiores, quam ut solem transmittant, aliae imbecilliores, quam ut excludant, haec inaequalitas alternis lucem umbramque permiscet et exprimit illam mirabilem arcus uarietatem.

[3,2] Altera causa arcus eiusmodi redditur: uidemus, cum fistula aliquo loco rupta est, aquam per tenue foramen elidi, quae sparsa contra solem oblique positum faciem arcus repraesentat. Idem uidebis accidere, si quando uolueris obseruare fullonem: cum os aqua impleuit et uestimenta tendiculis diducta leuiter aspergit, apparet uarios edi colores in illo aere asperso, quales fulgere in arcu solent.

[3,3] Huius rei causam in umore esse ne dubitaueris (non fit enim umquam arcus nisi nubilo); sed quaeramus, quemadmodum fiat. Quidam aiunt esse aliqua stillicidia, quae solem transmittant, quaedam magis coacta, quam ut transluceant: itaque ab illis fulgorem reddi, ab his umbram, et sic utriusque intercurso effici arcum, in quo pars fulgeat, quae solem recipit, pars obscurior sit, quae exclusit et ex se umbram proximis fecit.

[3,4] Hoc ita esse quidam negant. Poterat enim uerum uideri, si arcus duos tantum haberet colores, si ex lumine umbraque constaret: sed nunc, <ut ait poeta,> “diuersi niteant cum mille colores, transitus ipse tamen spectantia lumina fallit: usque adeo quod tangit idem est, tamen ultima distant”. Videmus in eo aliquid flammei aliquid lutei

aliquid caerulei et alia in picturae modum subtilibus lineis ducta, [ut ait poeta,] an dissimiles colores sint, scire non possis, nisi cum primis extrema contuleris: nam commissura decipit, usque eo mira arte naturae; quod a simillimo coepit, in dissimillimo desinit. Quid ergo istic duo colores faciunt lucis atque umbrae, cum innumerabilium ratio reddenda sit?

[3,5] Quidam ita existimant arcum fieri: in ea parte, in qua iam pluit, singula stillicidia pluviae cadentis singula esse specula, a singulis ergo reddi imaginem solis; deinde multas imagines, immo innumerabiles, et deuexas et in praeceps euntes confundi: itaque arcum esse multarum solis imaginum confusionem.

[3,6] Hoc sic colligunt: pelues, inquit, mille sereno die porte, omnes habebunt imagines solis; in singulis foliis dispone guttas, singulae habebunt imaginem solis. At contra ingens stagnum non amplius habebit quam unam imaginem. Quare? Quia omnis circumscripta leuitas et circumdata suis finibus speculum est. Itaque piscinam ingentis magnitudinis insertis parietibus diuide, totidem illa habebit imagines solis, quot lacus habuerit; relinque illam sic ut est: diffusa semel tibi imaginem reddet. Nihil refert, quam exiguus sit umor aut lacus: si determinatus est, speculum est. Ergo stillicidia illa infinita, quae imber cadens defert, totidem specula sunt, totidem solis facies habent; hae contra intuenti perturbatae apparent, nec dispiciuntur interualla, quibus singulae distant, spatio prohibente discerni; unde pro singulis apparet una facies turbida ex omnibus.

[3,7] Aristoteles idem iudicat: Ab omni, inquit, leuitate acies radios suos replicat; nihil autem est leuius aqua et aere: ergo etiam ab aere spisso uisus noster in nos redit. Ubi uero acies hebes et infirma est, qualislibet aeris ictu deficiet. Quidam itaque hoc genere uoletudinis laborant, ut ipsi sibi uideantur occurrere, ut ubique imaginem suam cernant. Quare? Quia infirma uis oculorum non potest perrumpere ne sibi quidem proximum aera sed resilit.

[3,8] Itaque quod in aliis efficit densus aer, in his facit omnis; satis enim ualet qualiscumque ad imbecillam aciem repellendam. Longe autem magis uisum nobis nostrum remittit aqua, quia crassior est et peruinci non potest, sed radios luminum nostrorum moratur et eo, unde exierunt, reflectit. Ergo cum multa stillicidia sint, totidem specula sunt; sed quia parua sunt, solis colorem sine figura

exprimunt. Deinde cum in stillicidiis innumerabilibus et sine interuallo cadentibus reddatur idem color, incipit facies esse non multarum imaginum et intermissarum, sed unius longae atque continuae.

[3,9] “Quomodo”, inquis, “tu mihi multa milia imaginum istic esse dicis, ubi ego nullam uideo? Et quare, cum solis color unus sit, imaginum diuersus est?” Ut et haec, quae proposuisti, refellam et alia, quae non minus refellenda sunt, illud dicam oportet: nihil esse acie nostra fallacius non tantum in his, a quibus subtiliter peruidendis illam locorum diuersitas submouet, sed etiam in his quoque, quae ad manum cernit: remus tenui aqua tegitur et fracti speciem reddit; poma per uitrum aspicientibus multo maiora sunt; columnarum interualla porticus longior iungit.

[3,10] Ad ipsum solem reuertere: hunc, quem toto terrarum orbe maiorem probat ratio, acies nostra sic contraxit, ut sapientes uiri pedalem esse contenderent; quem uelocissimum omnium scimus, nemo nostrum moueri uidet, nec ire crederemus, nisi appareret isse. Mundum ipsum praecipiti uelocitate labentem et ortus occasusque intra momentum temporis reuoluentem nemo nostrum sentit procedere. Quid ergo miraris, si oculi nostri imbrium stillicidia non separant et ex ingenti spatio intuentibus minutarum imaginum discrimen interit?

[3,11] Illud dubium esse nulli potest, quin arcus imago solis sit roscida et caua nube concepta. Quod ex hoc tibi appareat: numquam non aduersa soli est, sublimis aut humilis, prout ille se submisit aut sustulit, in contrarium mota; illo enim descendente altior est, alto depressior. Saepe talis nubes a latere solis est nec arcum efficit, quia non ex recto imaginem trahit.

[3,12] Varietas autem non ob aliam causam fit, quam quia pars coloris sole est, pars a nube: in illa umor modo caeruleas lineas modo uirides modo purpurae similes et luteas aut igneas ducit, duobus coloribus hanc uarietatem efficientibus, remisso et intento. Sic enim et purpura eodem conchylio non in unum modum exit: interest, quamdiu macerata sit, crassius medicamentum an aquatius traxerit, saepius mersa sit et excocta an semel tincta.

[3,13] Non est ergo mirum si, cum duae res sint, sol et nubes, id est corpus et speculum, tam multa genera colorum exprimuntur, quam

multis generibus possunt ista incitari aut relanguescere: alius est enim color ex igneo lumine, alius ex obtunso et leniore.

[3,14] In aliis rebus uaga inquisitio est, ubi non habemus, quod manu tenere possimus, et late coniectura mittenda est; hic apparet duas causas esse arcus, solem nubemque, quia nec sereno umquam fit nec nubilo ita, ut sol lateat: ergo utique ex his est, quorum sine altero non est.

[4,1] iam nunc illud accedit, quod aequè manifestum est, speculi ratione imaginem reddi, quia numquam nisi e contrario redditur, id est nisi ex altera parte stetit quod appareret, ex altera quod ostenderet. Rationes, quae non persuadent sed cogunt, a geometris afferuntur, nec dubium cuiquam relinquitur, quin arcus imago solis sit male expressi ob uitium figuramque speculi: nos interim temptemus alias probationes, quae de plano legi possint.

[4,2] Inter argumenta sic nascentis arcus pono, quod celerrime nascitur. Ingens enim uariumque corpus intra momentum subtexitur caelo et aequè celeriter aboletur; nihil autem tam cito redditur quam a speculo imago; non enim facit quicquam sed ostendit.

[4,3] Parianus Artemidorus adicit etiam, quale genus nubis esse debeat, quod talem solis imaginem reddit: Si speculum, inquit, concauum feceris, quod sit sectae pilae pars, si extra medium constiteris, quicumque iuxta te steterint, inuersi tibi uidebuntur et propiores a te quam a speculo;

[4,4] idem, inquit, euenit, cum rotundam et cauam nubem intuemur <intimo> a latere, ut solis imago a nube discedat propiorque nobis sit et in nos magis conuersa. Color illi igneus a sole est, caeruleus a nube, ceteri utriusque mixturae.

[5,1] Contra haec illa dicuntur. De speculis duae opiniones sunt: alii enim in illis simulacra cerni putant, id est corporum nostrorum figuras a nostris corporibus emissas ac separatas; alii non aiunt imagines in speculo sed ipsa aspici corpora retorta oculorum acie et in se rursus reflexa. Nunc nihil ad rem pertinet, quomodo uideamus quodcumque uidemus;

[5,6] sed, quae modo <est> imago, similis reddi debet e speculo. Quid autem est tam dissimile quam sol et arcus, in quo neque figura solis neque color neque magnitudo apparet? Arcus longe amplior est longeque ea parte, qua fulget, rubicundior quam sol, ceteris uero

coloribus diuersus.

[5,3] Deinde cum uelis speculum inesse aeri, des oportet mihi eandem leuitatem corporis, eandem aequalitatem, eandem nitorem. Atqui nullae nubes habent similitudinem speculi: per medias saepe transimus nec in illis nos cernimus; qui montium summa conscendunt, despectant nubem nec tamen imaginem in illa suam aspiciunt.

[5,4] “Singula stillicidia singula specula sunt”. Concedo; sed illud nego, ex stillicidiis constare nubem. Habet enim quaedam, ex quibus fieri stillicidia possint, non ipsa; ne aquam quidem habent nubes sed materiam futurae aquae.

[5,5] Concedamus tibi et guttas innumerabiles nubibus inesse et illas faciem reddere: non tamen unam omnes reddunt, sed singulae singulas. Deinde inter se specula coniunge: in unam imaginem non coibunt, sed unumquodque in se similitudinem uisae rei claudet. Sunt quaedam specula ex multis minutisque composita, quibus si unum ostenderis hominem, populus apparet unaquaque particula faciem suam exprimente; haec cum sint coniuncta et simul collocata, nihilominus seducunt imagines suas et ex uno quidem turbam efficiunt, ceterum cateruam illam non confundunt sed diremptam in facies singulas distrahunt: arcus auteur uno circumscriptus est ductu, una totius est facies.

[5,6] Quid ergo?, inquit. Non et aqua rupta fistula sparsa et remo excussa habere quiddam simile his, quos uidemus in arcu, coloribus solet? Verum est, sed non ex hac causa, ex qua tu uideri uis, quia unaquaeque stilla recipiat imaginem solis. Citius enim cadunt stillae, quam ut concipere imagines possint: standum est, ut id, quod imitantur, excipiant. Quid ergo fit? Colorem, non imaginem ducunt. Alioquin, ut ait Nero Caesar disertissime, “colla Cytheriacae splendent agitata columbae” et uariis coloribus pauonum ceruix, quotiens aliquo deflectitur, nitet: numquid ergo dicemus specula eiusmodi plumas, quarum omnis inclinatio in colores nouos transit?

[5,7] Non minus nubes diuersam naturam speculis habent quam aues, quas rettuli, et chamaeleontes, et reliqua animalia, quorum color aut ex ipsis mutatur, cum ira uel cupidine incensa cutem suam uariant umore suffuso, aut positione lucis, quam prout rectam uel obliquam receperunt, ita colorantur.

[5,8] Quid enim simile speculis habent nubes, cum illa non perluceant, hae transmittant lucem, illa densa et coacta, hae rarae sint; illa eiusdem materiae tota, hae e diuersis temere compositae et ob hoc discordes nec diu cohaesurae? Praeterea uidemus ortu solis partem quandam caeli rubere, uidemus nubes aliquando ignei coloris: quid ergo prohibet, quomodo hunc unum colorem accipiunt solis occursu, sic multos ab illis trahi, quamuis non habeant speculi potentiam?

[5,9] Modo, inquit, inter argumenta ponebas semper arcum contra solem excitari, quia ne a speculo quidem imago redderetur nisi aduerso. Hoc, inquit, commune nobis est: nam quemadmodum opponendum est speculo id, cuius in se imaginem transferat, sic, ut nubes infici possint, ita sol ad hoc apte ponendus est; non enim idem facit, undecumque effulsit, et ad hoc opus est radiorum idoneus ictus.

[5,10] Haec dicuntur ab his, qui uideri uolunt nubem colorari. Posidoniu et hi, qui speculari ratione talem effici iudicant uisum, hoc respondent: "Si ullus esset in arcu color, permaneret et uiseretur eo manifestius, quo propius: nunc imago arcus, ex longinquo clara, interit, cum ex uicino uentum est."

[5,11] Huic contradictioni non consentio, cum ipsam sententiam probem. Quare? Dicam: quia coloratur quidem nubes, sed ita, ut color eius non undique appareat (nam ne ipsa quidem undique apparet; nubem enim nemo, qui in ipsa est, uidet): quid ergo mirum, si color eius non uidetur ab eo, a quo ipsa non uisitur? Atqui ipsa, quamuis non uideatur, est: ergo et color. Ita non est argumentum falsi coloris, quod apparere accedentibus desinit. Idem enim in ipsis euenit nubibus, nec ideo falsae sunt, quia non uidentur.

[5,12] "Praeterea, cum dicitur tibi nubem sole suffectam, non dicitur tibi colorem illum inustum esse uelut duro corpori et stabili ac manenti, sed ut fluido et uago et nihil amplius quam breuem speciem recipienti. Sunt etiam quidam colores, qui ex interuallo uim suam ostendunt: purpuram Tyriam, quo melior est saturiorque, eo altius oportet teneas, ut fulgorem suum intendat. Non tamen ideo non habet colorem illa, quia, quem optimum habet, non quomodocumque explicatur ostendit."

[5,13] In eadem sententia sum qua Posidonius, ut arcum iudicem fieri nube formata in modum concaui speculi et rotundi, cui forma sit

partis e pila secta. Hoc probari, nisi geometrae adiuuerint, non potest, qui argumentis nihil dubii relinquentibus docent solis illam esse effigiem non similem. Neque enim ommia ad uerum specula respondent.

[5,14] Sunt, quae uidere extimescas (tantam deformitatem corrupta facie uisentium reddunt, seruata similitudine in peius); sunt, quae cum uideris, placere tibi uires tuae possint (in tantum lacerti crescunt et totius corporis super humanam magnitudinem habitus augetur); sunt, quae dextras facies ostendant, sunt, quae sinistras, sunt, quae detorqueant et uertant: quid ergo mirum est eiusmodi speculum in nube quoque fieri, quo solis species uitiosa reddatur?

[6,1] Inter cetera argumenta et hoc erit, quod numquam maior arcus dimidio circulo apparet et quod eo minor est, quo altior sol...

[6,2] Quare tamen, si imago solis est arcus, longe ipso sole maior apparet? Quia est alicuius speculi natura talis, ut maiora multo, quae uidit, ostendat et in portentuosam magnitudinem augeat formas, alicuius inuicem talis, ut minuat.

[6,3] Illud mihi dic, quare in orbem eat facies, nisi orbi redditur? Dices enim fortasse, unde sit illi color uarius: unde talis figura sit, non dices, nisi aliquod exemplar, ad quod formetur, ostenderis. Nullum autem quam solis est, a quo cum tu quoque fatearis illi colorem dari, sequitur, ut et detur forma. Denique inter me teque conuenit colores illos, quibus caeli regio depingitur, a sole esse; illud unum inter nos non conuenit: tu dicis illum colorem esse, ego uideri; qui siue est, siue uidetur, a sole est. Tu non expadies, quare color ille subito desinat, cum omnes fulgores paulatim discutiantur.

[6,4] Pro me est et repentina eius facies et repentinus interitus: proprium enim hoc speculi est, in quo non per partes struitur quod apparet, sed statim totum fit; aequae cito omnis imago aboletur in illo quam ponitur. Nihil enim aliud ad ista efficienda uel remouenda opus est quam ostendi et abduci. Non est ergo propria in ista nube substantia, nec corpus est sed mendacium et sine re similitudo. Vis scire hoc ita esse? Desinet arcus, si obtexeris solem. Oppone, inquam, soli alteram nubem: huius uarietas interibit.

[6,5] At maior aliquanto est arcus quam sol. Dixi modo fieri specula, quae multiplicent omne corpus, quod imitantur. Illud adiciam, omnia per aquam uidentibus longe esse maiora: litterae

quamuis minutae et obscurae per uitream pilam aqua plenam maiores clarioresque cernuntur; poma formosiora quam sunt uidentur, si innatant uitro. Sidera ampliora per nubem aspicienti uidentur, quia acies nostra in umido labitur nec apprehendere quod uult fideliter potest. Quod manifestum fiet, si poculum impleueris aqua et in id conieceris anulum: nam cum in ipso fundo anulus iaceat, facies eius in summa aqua redditur.

[6,6] Quicquid uidetur per umorem, longe amplius uero est: quid mirum maiorem reddi imaginem solis, quae in nube umida uisitur, cum ex duabus causis hoc accadat? Quia in nube est aliquid uitro simile, quod potest per lucere, est aliquid et aquae, quam, etiamsi nondum habet, iam parat, id est similis eius natura est, in quam ex sua uertatur.

[7,1] ‘Quoniam’, inquit, ‘uitri fecisti mentionem, ex hoc ipso argumentum contra te sumam. Virgula solet fieri uitrea, striata uel pluribus angulis in modum clauae torosa: haec si in transuersum solem accipit, colorem talem, qualis in arcu uideri solet, reddit, ut scias non imaginem hic solis esse sed coloris imitationem ex percussu’.

[7,2] Primum in hoc argumento multa pro me sunt: quod apparet a sole fieri; quod apparet leue quiddam esse debere et simile speculo, quod solem percutiat; deinde quod apparet non fieri ullum colorem sed speciem falsi coloris, qualem, ut dixi, columbarum ceruix et sumit et ponit, utcumque deflectitur. Hoc autem et in speculo est, cui nullus inditur color, sed simulatio quaedam coloris alieni.

[7,3] Unum hoc tantum mihi soluendum est, quod non uisitur in ista uirgula solis imago; cuius bene exprimendae capax non est: ita conatur quidem reddere imaginem, quia leuis est materia et ad hoc habilis, sed non potest, quia enormiter facta est. Si apta fabricata foret, totidem redderet soles, quot habuisset in se toros. Quae quia discernuntur inter se nec satis in uicem speculi nitent, incohant tantum imagines nec exprimunt et ob ipsam uiciniam turbant et in speciem coloris unius adducunt.

[8,1] At quare arcus non implet orbem, sed pars dimidia eius uidetur, cum plurimum porrigitur incuruaturque? Quidam ita opinantur: “Sol, cum sit multo altior nubibus, a superiore illas tantum percutit parte; sequitur, ut inferior pars earum non tingatur lumine:

ergo cum ab una parte solem accipiant, unam eius partem imitantur, quae numquam dimidia maior est.”

[8,2] Hoc argumentum parum potens est. Quare? Quia, quamvis sol ex superiore parte sit, totam tamen percutit nubem, ergo et tingit. Quidni? cum radios transmittere soleat et omnem densitatem perrumpere. Deinde contrariam rem proposito suo dicunt. Nam si superior est sol et ideo superiori tantum parti nubium affunditur, numquam terra tenus descendet arcus: atqui usque in humum demittitur.

[8,3] Praeterea numquam non contra solem arcus est; nihil autem ad rem pertinet, supra infraue sit, quia totum quod contra est latus uerberatur. Deinde aliquando arcum et occidens facit; tum certe ex inferiore parte nubes ferit terris propinquus: atqui et tunc dimidia pars est, quamvis solem nubes ex humili et sordido accipiant.

[8,4] Nostri, qui sic in nube, quomodo in speculo, lumen uolunt reddi, nubem cauam faciunt et sectae pilae partem, quae non potest totum orbem reddere, quia ipsa pars orbis est. Proposito accedo, argumento non consentio. Nam si in concauo speculo tota facies oppositi orbis exprimitur, et in semiorbe nihil prohibet totam aspici pilam.

[8,5] Etiamnunc diximus circulos apparere soli lunaeque in similitudinem arcus circumdatos: quare ille circulus iungitur, in arcu numquam? Deinde quare semper concauae nubes solem accipiunt, non aliquando planae et tumentes?

[8,6] Aristoteles ait post autumnale aequinoctium qualibet hora diei arcum fieri, aestate non fieri nisi aut incipiente aut inclinato die. Cuius rei causa manifesta est: primum, quia media diei parte sol calidissimus nubes euincit nec potest imaginem suam ab his recipere quas scindit; at matutino tempore aut uergens in occasum minus habet uirium, ideo a nubibus sustineri et repercuti potest.

[8,7] Deinde cum arcum facere non soleat nisi aduersus his, in quibus facit nubibus, cum breuiores dies sunt, semper obliquus est: itaque qualibet diei parte, etiam cum altissimus est, habet aliquas nubes, quas ex aduerso ferire possit. At temporibus aestiuis super nostrum uerticem fertur: itaque medio die excelsissimus terras rectiore aspicit linea, quam ut ullis nubibus possit occurrere; omnes enim sub se tunc habet.

[8,8] Ut ait Vergilius noster: “et bibit ingens arcus”, cum adueniat imber; sed non easdem, undecumque apparuit, minas affert: a meridie ortus magnam uim aquarum uehet (uinci enim nubes non potuerunt ualentissimo sole, tantum illis est uirium); si circa occasum refulsit, rorabit et leuiter impluet; si ab ortu circaue surrexit, serena promittit.

[9,1] Nunc de uirgis dicendum est, quas non minus pictas uariasque aequae pluuiarum signa solemus accipere. In quibus non multum operae consumendum est, quia uirgae nihil aliud sunt quam imperfecti arcus. Nam facies illis est quidem picta, sed nihil curuati habens: in rectum iacent.

[9,2] Fiunt autem iuxta solem fere in nube umida et iam se spargente. Itaque idem est in illis qui in arcu color; tantum effigura mutatur, quia nubium quoque, in quibus extenduntur, alia est.

[10,1] Similis uarietas in coronis est; sed hoc differunt, quod coronae ubique fiunt, ubicumque sidus est, arcus non nisi contra solem, uirgae non nisi in uicinia solis. Possum et hoc modo differentiam omnium reddere: coronam si diuiseris, arcus erit; si direxeris, uirga. In omnibus color multiplex, ex caeruleo fuluoque uarius. Virgae soli tantum adiacent, arcus solares lunaresque sunt, coronae omnium siderum.

[11,1] Aliud quoque uirgarum genus apparet, cum radii per angusta foramina nubium tenues et intenti distantesque inter se diriguntur: et ipsi signa imbrium sunt.

[11,2] Quomodo nunc me hoc loco geram? Quid uocem imagines solis? Historici soles uocant et binos ternosque apparuisse memoriae tradunt; Graeci parhelia appellant, quia in propinquo fere a sole uisuntur aut quia accedunt ad aliquam similitudinem solis. Non enim totum imitantur sed magnitudinem eius figuramque: ceterum nihil habent ardoris hebetes et languidi. His quod nomen imponimus? An facio quod Vergilius, qui dubitauit de nomine, deinde id, de quo dubitauerat, posuit?

“Et quo te nomine dicam, Rhaetica? Nec cellis ideo contende Falernis.”

Nihil ergo prohibet illas parhelia uocari.

[11,3] Sunt autem imagines solis in nube spissa et incurua in modum speculi. Quidam parhelion ita definiunt: nubes rotunda et splendida similisque soli. Sequitur enim illum nec umquam longius

relinquitur, quam fuit, cum apparuit. Num quis nostrum miratur, si solis effigiem in aliquo fonte aut placido lacu uidit? Non, ut puto. Atqui tam in sublimi facies eius quam inter nos potest reddi, si modo idonea est materia, quae reddat.

[12,1] Quotiens defectionem solis uolumus deprehendere, ponimus pelues, quas aut oleo aut pice implemus, quia pinguis umor minus facile turbatur et ideo quas recipit imagines seruat; apparere autem imagines non possunt nisi in liquido et immoto. Tunc solemus notare, quemadmodum luna soli se opponat et illum tanto maiorem obiecto corpore abscondat, modo ex parte, si ita competit, ut in latus eius incurreret, modo totum; haec dicitur perfecta defectio, quae stellas quoque ostendit et intercipit lucem, tunc scilicet cum uterque orbis sub eodem libramento stetit.

[12,2] Quemadmodum ergo utriusque imago in terris aspici potest, ita in aere, cum sic coactus aer et limpidus constitit, ut faciem solis acciperet. Quam et aliae nubes accipiunt sed transmittunt, si aut mobiles sunt aut rariae aut sordidae: mobiles enim spargunt illam; rariae emittunt; sordidae turpesque non sentiunt, sicut apud nos imaginem maculosa non reddunt.

[13,1] Solent et bina fieri parhelia eadem ratione. Quid enim impedit, quomodo tot sint, quot nubes fuerint aptae ad exhibendam solis effigiem? Quidam in illa sententia sunt, quotiens duo simulacra talia existunt, ut iudicent in illis alteram solis imaginem esse, alteram imaginis. Nam apud nos quoque cum plura specula disposita sunt ita, ut alteri sit conspectus alterius, omnia implentur, et una imago a uero est, ceterae imaginem effigies sunt; nihil enim refert, quid sit quod speculo ostendatur: quicquid uidet, reddit. Ita illic quoque in sublimi, si sic nubes fors aliqua disposuit, ut inter se conspiciant, altera nubes solis imaginem, altera imaginis reddit.

[13,2] Debent autem hae nubes, quae hoc praestant, densae esse, leues, splendidae, planae, naturae solidae. Ob hoc omnia eiusmodi simulacra candida sunt, et similia lunaribus circulis, quia ex percussu oblique accepto sole resplendent: nam si infra solem nubes fuerit et propior, ab eo dissipatur; longe autem posita radios non remittet nec imaginem efficiet. <quare?> Quia apud nos quoque specula, cum procul a nobis abducta sunt, faciem non reddunt, quia acies nostra non habet usque ad nos recursum.

[13,3] Pluuiarum autem et hi soles (utar enim historica lingua) indicia sunt, utique si a parte austri constiterunt, unde maxime nubes ingrauescunt; cum utrimque solem cinxit talis effigies, tempestas, si Arato credimus, surgit.

[14,1] Tempus est alios quoque ignes percurrere, quorum diuersae figurae sunt. Aliquando emicat stella, aliquando ardores sunt, hi nonnumquam fixi et haerentes nonnumquam uolubiles. Horum plura genera conspiciuntur: sunt bothyni, cum uelut corona cingente introrsus ingens caeli recessus est similis effossae in orbem specus; sunt pithiae, cum magnitudo uasti rotundique ignis dolio similis uel fertur uel uno loco flagrat; sunt chasmata, cum aliquod spatium caeli desedit et flammam uelut dehiscens in abdito ostentat.

[14,2] Colores quoque horum omnium plurimi sunt: quidam ruboris acerrimi, quidam euanidae ac leuis flammae, quidam candidae lucis, quidam micantes, quidam aequaliter et sine eruptionibus aut radiis fului; uidemus ergo “stellarum longos a tergo albescere tractus”.

[14,3] Hae uelut stellae exiliunt et transuolant uidenturque longum ignem porrigere propter immensam celeritatem, cum acies nostra non discernat transitum eorum, sed, quacumque cucurrerunt, id totum igneum credat. Tanta est enim uelocitas motus, ut partes eius non dispiciantur, summa prendatur: intellegimus magis qua ierit stella quam qua eat.

[14,4] Itaque uelut igne continuo totum iter signat, quia uisus nostri tarditas non subsequitur momenta currentis, sed uidet simul et unde exiluerit et quo peruenerit. Quod fit in fulmine: longus nobis uidetur ignis eius, quia cito spatium suum transilit, et oculis nostris occurrit uniuersum per quod deiectus est; at ille non est extenti corporis per omne, qua uenit. Neque enim tam longa et extenuata in impetum ualent.

[14,5] Quomodo ergo prosiliunt? Attritu aeris ignis incensus uento praeceps impellitur; non semper tamen uento attritue fit, nonnumquam et aliqua opportunitate aeris nascitur: multa enim sunt in sublimi sicca calida terrena, inter quae oritur et pabulum suum subsequens defluit ideoque uelociter rapitur.

[14,6] At quale color diuersus est? Quia refert quale sit id, quod incenditur, quantum et quam uehemens, quo incenditur. Ventum autem significant eiusmodi lapsus et quidem ab ea parte, qua

erumpunt.

[15,1] ‘Fulgores’, inquis, ‘quomodo fiunt, quos Graeci G-sela appellant?’ Multis, ut aiunt, modis: potest illos uentorum uis edere, potest superioris caeli feruor (nam cum late fusus sit ignis, inferiora aliquando, si sunt idonea accendi, corripit); potest stellarum motus cursu suo excitare ignem et in subiecta transmittere. Quid porro? Non potest fieri, ut aer uim igneam usque in aethera elidat, ex qua fulgor ardorue sit uel stellae similis excursus?

[15,2] Ex his fulgoribus quaedam praeceps eunt similia prosilientibus stellis, quaedam certo loco permanent et tantum lucis emittunt, ut fugent tenebras ac diem repraesentent, donec consumpto alimento primum obscuriora sint, deinde flammae modo, quae in se cadit, per assiduam deminutionem redigantur ad nihilum. Ex his quaedam in nubibus apparent, quaedam supra nubes, cum aer spissus ignem, quem propior terris diu pauerat, usque in sidera expressit.

[15,3] Horum aliqua non patiuntur moram sed transcurrunt aut extinguuntur subinde, qua reluxerant: haec fulgura dicuntur, quia breuis illorum facies et caduca est nec sine iniuria decidens; saepe enim fulminum noxas ediderunt. Ab his tacta nos dicimus <fulgurita, id est fulgure> icta sine fulmine, quae G-asteroplekta Graeci uocant.

[15,4] At quibus longior mora est et ignis fortior motumque caeli sequens aut etiam proprios cursus agunt, cometas nostri putant, de quibus dictum est. Horum genera sunt pogoniae et cyparissiae et lampades et alia omnia, quorum ignis in exitu sparsus est; dubium, an inter hos ponantur trabes et pithiae raro uisi: multa enim conglobatione ignium indigent, cum ingens illorum orbis aliquantum matutini amplitudinem solis exuperet.

[15,5] Inter haec licet ponas et quod frequenter in historiis legimus caelum ardere uisum, cuius nonnumquam tam sublimis ardor est, ut inter sidera ipsa uideatur, nonnumquam tam humilis, ut speciem longinqui incendii praebeat. Sub Tiberio Caesare cohortes in auxilium Ostiensis coloniae cucurrerunt tamquam conflagrantis, cum caeli ardor fuisset per magnam partem noctis parum lucidus, <ut> crassi fumidique ignis.

[15,6] De his nemo dubitat, quin habeant flammam, quam ostendunt: certa illis substantia est. De prioribus quaeritur (de arcu dico et coronis), decipiant aciem et mendacio constent an in illis

quoque uerum sit, quod apparet.

[15,7] Nobis non placet in arcu aut corona subesse aliquid corporis certi, sed illam iudicamus speculi esse fallaciam alienum corpus nihil aliud quam mentientis. Non est enim quod in speculo ostenditur. Alioquin non exiret nec alia protinus imagine obduceretur, nec innumerabiles modo interirent modo exciperentur formae.

[15,8] Quid ergo? Simulacra ista sunt et inanis uerorum corporum imitatio, quae ipsa a quibusdam ita compositis, ut hoc possint, detorquentur in prauum. Nam, ut dixi, sunt specula, quae faciem prospicientium obliquent, sunt quae in infinitum augeant, ita ut humanum habitum modumque excedant nostrorum corporum.

[16,1] Hoc loco uolo tibi narrare fabellam, ut intellegas, quam nullum instrumentum irritandae uoluptatis libido contemnat et ingeniosa sit ad incitandum furorem suum. Hostius fuit Quadra, obscenitatis in scaenam usque productae. Hunc diuitem auarum, sestertii milies seruum, diuus Augustus indignum uindicta iudicauit, cum a seruis occisus esset, et tantum non pronuntiauit iure caesum uideri.

[16,2] Non erat ille ab uno tantummodo sexu impurus, sed tam uirorum quam feminarum auidus fuit, fecitque specula huius notae, cuius modo rettuli, imagines longe maiores reddentia, in quibus digitus brachii mensuram et crassitudinem excederet. Haec autem ita disponebat, ut cum uirum ipse pateretur, auersus omnes admissarii sui motus in speculo uideret ac deinde falsa magnitudine ipsius membri tamquam uera gaudebat.

[16,3] In omnibus quidem balneis agebat ille dilectum et aperta mensura legebat uiros, sed nihilominus mendaciis quoque insatiabile malum oblectabat. I nunc et dic speculum munditiarum causa repertum. Foeda dictu sunt, quae portentum illud ore suo lancinandum dixerit feceritque, cum illi specula ab omni parte opponerentur, ut ipse flagitiorum suorum spectator esset et, quae secreta quoque conscientiam premunt quaeque <qui facit> sibi quisque fecisse se negat, non in os tantum sed in oculos suos ingereret.

[16,4] At hercule scelera conspectum sui reformidant. In perditis quoque et ad omne dedecus expositis tenerrima est oculorum uerecundia. Ille, quasi parum esset inaudita et incognita pati, oculos

suos ad illa aduocauit nec quantum peccabat uidere contentus, specula sibi per quae flagitia sua diuideret disponderetque circumdedit; et quia non tam diligenter intueri poterat, cum caput merserat inguinibusque alienis obhaeserat, opus sibi suum per imagines offerebat.

[16,5] Spectabat illam libidinem oris sui, spectabat admissos sibi pariter in omnia uiros; nonnumquam inter marem et feminam distributus et toto corpore patientiae expositus spectabat nefanda: quidnam homo impurus reliquit, quod in tenebris faceret? Non pertimuit diem, sed illos concubitus portentuosos sibi ipse ostendit, sibi ipse approbavit: quem non putes in ipso habitu pingi noluisse?

[16,6] Est aliqua etiam prostituta modestia et illa corpora publico obiecta ludibrio aliquid, quo infelix patientia lateat obtendunt; adeo in quaedam lupanar quoque uerecundum est. At illud monstrum obscenitatem suam spectaculum fecerat et ea sibi ostentabat, quibus abscondendis nulla satis alta nox est.

[16,7] “Simul, inquit, et uirum et feminam patior; nihilominus illa quoque superuacua mihi parte alicuius contumelia marem exerceo; omnia membra stupris occupata sunt: oculi quoque in partem libidinis ueniant et testes eius exactoresque sint; etiam ea, quae a conspectu corporis nostri positio submouit, arte uisuntur, ne quis me putet nescire, quid faciam.

[16,8] Nil egit natura, quod humanae libidini ministeria tam maligna dedit, quod aliorum animalium concubitus melius instruxit: inueniam, quemadmodum morbo meo et imponam et satisfaciam. Quo nequitiam meam, si ad naturae modum pecco? Id genus speculorum circumponam mihi, quod incredibilem magnitudinem imaginum reddat.

[16,9] Si liceret mihi, ad uerum ista perducerem: quia non licet, mendacio pascar. Obscenitas mea plus quam capit uideat et patientiam suam ipsa miretur”. Facinus indignum! Hic fortasse cito et antequam uideret occisus est: ad speculum suum immolandum fuit.

[17,1] Derideantur nunc philosophi, quod de speculi natura disserant; quod inquirant, quid ita facies nostra nobis et quidem in nos obuersa reddatur; quid sibi rerum natura uoluerit, quae, cum uera corpora edidisset, etiam simulacra eorum aspici uoluit;

[17,2] quorsus pertinuerit hanc comparare materiam excipiendarum

imaginum potentem: non in hoc scilicet, ut ad speculum barbam uelleremus aut ut faciem uiri poliremus (in nulla re illa luxuriae negotium concessit); sed primum omnium, quia imbecilli oculi ad sustinendum comminus solem ignoraturi erant formam eius, hebetato illum lumine ostendit. Quamuis enim orientem occidentemque eum contemplari liceat, tamen habitum eius ipsum, qui uerus est, non rubentis sed candida luce fulgentis nesciremus, nisi in aliquo nobis umore lenior et aspici facilius occurreret.

[17,3] Praeterea duorum siderum occursum, quo interpolari dies solet, non uideremus nec scire possemus, quid esset, nisi liberius humi solis lunaeque imagines uideremus.

[17,4] Inuenta sunt specula, ut homo ipse se nosset, multa ex hoc consecuturus, primum sui notitiam, deinde ad quaedam consilium: formosus, ut uitaret infamiam; deformis, ut sciret redimendum esse uirtutibus quicquid corpori deesset; iuuenis, ut flore aetatis admoneretur illud tempus esse discendi et fortia audendi; senex, ut indecora canis deponeret, ut de morte aliquid cogitaret. Ad haec rerum natura facultatem nobis dedit nosmet ipsos uidendi

[17,5] Fons cuique perlucidus aut leue saxum imaginera reddit: “nuper me in litore uidi, cum placidum uentis staret mare.” Qualem fuisse cultum putas ad hoc se speculum comentium? Aetas illa simplicior et fortuitis contenta nondum in uitium beneficia detorquebat nec inuenta naturae in libidinem luxumque rapiebat.

[17,6] Primo faciem suam cuique casus ostendit. Deinde cum insitus sui mortalibus amor dulcem aspectum formae suae faceret, saepius ea despexere, in quibus effigies suas uiderant. Postquam deterior populus ipsas subiit terras effossurus obruenda, ferrum primum in usu fuit (et id impune homines eruerant, si solum eruissent), tunc deinde alia terre mala, quorum leuitas aliud agentibus speciem suam obtulit, quam hic in poculo ille in aere ad alios usus comparato uidit; et mox huic proprie ministerio praeparatus est orbis nondum argenti nitor sed fragilis uilisque materia.

[17,7] Tunc quoque, cum antiqui illi uiri incondite uiuerent, satis nitidi, si squalorem opere collectum aduerso flumine eluerant, cura comere capillum fuit ac prominentem barbam depectere, sed in hac re sibi quisque, non alteri in uicem, operam dabat. <ne> coniugum quidem manu crinis ille, quem effundere olim mos uiris fuit,

attrectabatur, sed illum sibi ipsi sine ullo artifice formosi quatiebant, non aliter quam iubam generosa animalia.

[17,8] Postea, iam rerum potiente luxuria, specula totis paria corporibus auro argentoque caelata sunt, gemmis deinde adornata; et pluris unum ex his feminae constitit, quam antiquarum dos fuit illa, quae publice dabatur imperatorum pauperum liberis. An tu existimas auro inditum habuisse Scipionis filias speculum, cum illis dos fuisset aes graue?

[17,9] O felix paupertas, quae tanto titulo locum fecit! Non dedisset illis dotem, si habuissent. At quisquis ille erat, cui soceri loco senatus fuit, intellexit accepisse se dotem, quam fas non esset reddere. Iam libertinorum uirgunculis in unum speculum non sufficit illa dos, quam dedit p<opulus> Ro<manus> animose.

[17,10] Processit enim paulatim in deterius opibus ipsis inritata luxuria, et incrementum ingens uitia ceperunt, adeoque omnia indiscreta sunt diuersissimis artibus, ut quicquid mundus muliebris uocabatur, sarcinae uiriles sint: omnes dico, etiam militares. Iam speculum ornatus tantum causa adhibetur? Nulli non uitio necessarium factum est.

LIBER II

[1,1] Omnis de uniuerso quaestio in caelestia, sublimia, et terreae diuiditur.

Prima pars naturam siderum scrutatur, et magnitudinem, et formam ignium, quibus mundus includitur : solidumne sit coelum, ac firmae concretaeque materiae, an ex subtili tenuique nexum; agatur, an agat; et infra se sidera habeat, an in contextu sui fixa; quemadmodum sol anni uices seruet; an retro flectat : cetera deinceps his similia.

[1,2] Secunda pars tractat inter coelum terramque uersantia. Haec sont nubila, imbres, niues, et « humanas motura tonitrua mentes; » quaecumque aer facit patiturue. Haec sublimia dicimus, quia editiora imis sunt. Tertia illa pars de agris, terris, arbustis, satis, quaerit, et, ut iurisconsultorum uerbo utar, de omnibus quae solo continentur.

[1,3] Quomodo, inquis, de terrarum motu quaestionem eo posuisti loco, quo de tonitruis fulgoribusque dicturus? Quia, cum motus terrae fiat spiritu, spiritus autem sit aer agitatus, etsi subeat terras, non ibi spectandus est : cogitetur in ea sede, in qua illum natura disposuit.

[1,4] Dicam, quod magis uidebitur mirum : inter coelestia et de terra dicendum erit. Quare? inquis; quia cum propria terrae excutimus suo loco, utrum lata sit, et inaequalis, et enormiter proiecta, an tota in formam pilae spectet, et in orbem partes suas cogat; alliget aquas, an aquis alligetur ipsa; animal sit, an iners corpus et sine sensu, plenum quidem spiritus, sed alieni; et cetera huiusmodi quoties in manus uenerint, terram sequentur, et in imis collocabuntur.

[1,5] At ubi quaeretur, quis terrae sit situs, qua parte mundi subsederit, quomodo aduersus sidera coelumque posita sit, haec quaestio cedit superioribus, et, ut ita dicam, meliorem conditionem sequitur.

[2,1] Quoniam dixi de partibus, in quas omnis rerum naturae materia diuiditur, quaedam in commune sunt dicenda, et hoc primum praesumendum, inter ea corpora, a quibus unitas est, aera esse.

[2,2] Quid sit hoc et quare praecipendum fuerit, scies si paulo

altius repetiero, et dixero aliquid esse continuum, aliquid commissum. Continuatio est partium inter se non intermissa coniunctio. Unitas est sine commissura continuatio, et duorum inter se coniunctorum corporum tactus.

[2,3] Numquid dubium est, quin ex his corporibus quae uidemus tractamusque, quae aut sentiuntur aut sentiunt, quaedam sint composita? Illa constant aut nexu, aut aceruatione: ut puta funis, frumentum, nauis. Rursus non composita: ut arbor lapis. Ergo concedas oportet ex his quoque quae sensum quidem effugiant, ceterum ratione prenduntur, esse in quibusdam unitatem corporum.

[2,4] Vide quomodo auribus tuis parcam. Expedire me poteram, si philosophorum lingua uti uoluisset, ut dicerem unita corpora. Hoc cum tibi remittam, tu inuicem mihi refer gratiam. Quare istud? si quando dixero unum, memineris me non ad numerum referre, sed ad naturam corporis, nulla ope externa, sed unitate sua cohaerentis. Ex hac nota corporum aer est.

[3,1] Omnia que in notitiam nostram cadunt uel cadere possunt, mundus complectitur. Ex bis quaedam sunt partes, quaedam materiae loco relictas; desiderat enim omnis natura materiam, sicut ars omnis quae manu constat.

[3,2] Quid sit hoc, apertius faciam. Pars est nostri oculus, manus, ossa, nerui. Materia sucus recentis cibi iturus in partes. Rursus quasi pars est sanguis nostri, qui et tamen est materia; praeparat enim is alia, et nihilominus in numero eorum est quibus totum corpus efficitur.

[4,1] Sic mundi pars est aer, et quidem necessaria. Hic est enim qui caelum terramque connectit, qui ima ac summa sic separat ut tamen iungat. Separat, quia medius interuenit; iungit quia utrique per hunc inter se consensus est; supra se dat quicquid accepit a terris, rursus uim siderum in terrena transfundit.

[4,2] Quasi partem mundi uoco ut animalia et arbusta. Nam genus animalium arbustorumque pars uniuersi est, quia in consummationem totius assumptum et quia non est sine hoc uniuersum. Vnum autem animal et una arbor quasi pars est, quia, quamuis perierit, tamen id ex quo perit, totum est. Aer autem, ut dicebam, et caelo et terris cohaeret; utrique innatus est. Habet autem unitatem quicquid alicuius rei natua pars est. Nihil enim nascitur

sine unitate.

[5,1] Terra et pars est mundi et materia. Pars quare sit, non puto te interrogaturum, aut aequè interroga quare caelum pars sit; quia scilicet non magis sine hoc quam sine illa uniuersum potest esse, quod cum his uniuersum est, ex quibus, id est, tam ex illo quam ex ista, alimenta omnibus animalibus, omnibus satis, omnibus stellis diuiduntur.

[5,2] Hinc quidquid est uirium singulis, hinc ipsi mundo tam multa poscenti subministrantur; hinc profertur quo sustineantur tot sidera tam exercita tam auida per diem noctemque ut in opere ita in pastu. Omnium quidem rerum natura, quantum in nutrimentum sui satis sit, apprehendit, mundus autem, quantum in aeternum desiderabat, inuasit. Pusillum tibi exemplar magnae rei ponam : oua tantum complectuntur humoris quantum ad effectum animalis exituri satis est.

[6,1] Aer continuus terrae est et sic appositus ut statim ibi futurus sit unde illa discesserit. Pars totius est mundi; sed tamen, quicquid terra in alimentum caelestium misit, recipit, ut scilicet materia, non pars, intellegi debeat; ex hoc omnis inconstantia eius tumultusque est.

[6,2] Hunc quidam ex distantibus corpusculis, ut puluerem, struunt plurimumque a uero recedunt. Numquam enim nisi contexti per unitatem corporis nisus est, cum partes consentire ad intentionem debeant et conferre uires. Aer autem, si in atomos inciditur, sparsus est; tendi uero disiecta non possunt.

[6,3] Intentionem aeris ostendent tibi inflata nec ad ictum cedentia; ostendent pondera per magnum spatium ablata gestante uento; ostendent uoces, quae remissae claraeque sunt prout aer se concitauit. Quid enim est uox nisi intentio aeris, ut audiatur, linguae formata percussu?

[6,4] Quid? cursus et motus omnis, nonne intenti spiritus opera sunt? Hic facit uim, neruis, uelocitatem currentibus; hic, cum uehementer concitatus ipse se torsit, arbusta siluasque, conuoluit et aedificia tota corripiens in altum frangit; hic mare per se languidum et iacens incitat.

[6,5] Ad minora ueniamus. Quis sine intentione spiritus cantus est? Cornua et tubae et quae aquarum pressura maiorem sonitum formant

quam qui ore reddi potest, nonne aeris intentione partes suas explicant? Consideremus quae ingentem uim per occultum agunt : paruula admodum semina et quorum exilitas in commissura lapidum locum inuenit in tantum conualescunt ut ingentia saxa deturbent et monumenta dissoluant; scopulos interim rupesque radices minutissimae ac tenuissimae findunt. Hoc quid est aliud quam intentio spiritus, sine qua nihil ualidum et contra quam nihil ualidum est?

[6,6] Esse autem unitatem in aere uel ex hoc intellegi potest quod corpora nostra inter se cohaerent. Quid enim est aliud quod teneat illa quam spiritus? Quid est aliud quo animus noster agitetur? Quis est illi motus nisi intentio? Quae intentio nisi ex unitate? Quae unitas, nisi haec esset in aere? Quid autem aliud producit fruges et segetem imbecillam ac uirentes exigit arbores aut distendit in ramos aut in altum erigit quam spiritus intentio et unitas?

[7,1] Quidam aera discernunt et in particulas diducunt ita ut illi inane permisceant. Argumentum autem existimant non pleni corporis sed multum uacui habentis quod auius in illo tamen facilis motus, quod maximis minimisque per illum transcursus est.

[7,2] Sed falluntur. Nam aquarum quoque similis facilitas est, nec de unitate illarum dubium est, quae sic corpora accipiunt ut semper in contrarium acceptis refluant; hanc nostri circumstantiam, Graeci g-antiperistasin appellant. Quae in aere quoque sicut in aqua fit; circumssistit enim omne corpus a quo impellitur. Nihil ergo opus erit admixto inani. Sed haec alias.

[8,1] Nunc autem esse quamdam in rerum natura uehementiam magni impetus est colligendum. Nihil enim non intentione uehementius est, tam mehercule quam nihil intendi ab alio poterit, nisi aliquid per semet fuerit intentum, - dicimus enim eodem modo non posse quicquam ab alio moueri, nisi aliquid fuerit mobile ex semet; - quid autem est quod magis credatur ex se ipso habere intentionem quam spiritus? Hunc intendi quis negabit, cum uiderit iactari terram cum montibus, tecta murosque, magnas cum populis urbes, cum totis maria litoribus?

[9,1] Ostendit intentionem spiritus uelocitas eius et diductio. Oculi statim per multa milia aciem suam mittunt; uox una totas urbes simul percutit; lumen non paulatim prorepat sed semel uniuersis rebus

infunditur.

[9,2] Aqua autem quemadmodum sine spiritu posset intendi? Numquid dubitas quin sparsio illa quae ex fundamentis mediae harenae crescens in summam usque amphitheatri altitudinem peruenit cum intentione aquae flat? Atqui nec manus nec ullum aliud tormentum aquam potest mittere aut agere quam spiritus; huic se commodat; hoc attollitur inserto et cogente; contra naturam suam multa conatur et ascendit, nata defluere.

[9,3] Quid? Nauigia sarcina depressa parum ostendunt non aquam sibi resistere, quo minus mergantur, sed spiritum? Aqua enim cederet nec posset pondera sustinere, nisi ipsa sustineretur. Discus ex loco superiore in piscinam missus non descendit, sed resilit; quemadmodum, nisi spiritu referente?

[9,4] Vox autem qua ratione per parietum munimenta transmittitur, nisi quod solido quoque aer inest, qui sonum extrinsecus missum et accipit et remittit, scilicet spiritu non aperta tantum intendens, sed etiam abdita et inclusa, quod illi facere expeditum est, quia nusquam diuisus est sed per illa ipsa quibus separari uidetur coit secum? Interponas licet muros et mediam altitudinem montium, per omnia ista prohibetur nobis esse peruius, non sibi. Id enim intercluditur tantum per quod illum nos sequi possumus.

[10,1] Ipse quidem per ipsum transit quo scinditur, et media non circumfundit tantum et utrimque cingit, sed permeat. Ab aethere lucidissimo aer in terram usque diffusus est, aggilior quidem tenuiorque et altior terris nec minus aquis, ceterum aethere spissior grauiorque, frigidus per se et obscurus. Lumen illi calorque aliunde sunt.

[10,2] Sed non per omne spatium sui similis est; mutatur a proximis. Summa pars eius siccissima calidissimaque et ob hoc etiam tenuissima est propter uiciniam aeternorum ignium et illos tot motus siderum assiduumque caeli circumactum; illa pars ima et uicina terris densa et caliginosa est, quia terrenas exhalationes receptat; media pars temperatior, si summis imisque conferas, quantum ad siccitatem tenuitatemque pertinet, ceterum utraque parte frigidior.

[10,3] Nam superiora eius calorem uicinarum siderum sentiunt. Inferiora quoque tepent; primum terrarum halitu, qui multum secum calidi affert; deinde quia radii solis replicantur et, quousque redire

potuerunt, id duplicato calore benignius fouent; deinde etiam illo spiritu qui omnibus animalibus arbustisque ac satis calidus est, nihil enim uiueret sine calore.

[10,4] Adice nunc ignes, non tantum manufactos et certos, sed opertos terris, quorum aliqui eruperunt, innumerabiles in obscuro et condito flagrant semper. Hae tot partes eius fertiles rerum habent quiddam teporis, quoniam quidem sterile frigus est, calor gignit. Media ergo pars aeris ab his summota in frigore suo manet; natura enim aeris gelida est.

[11,1] Qui cum sic diuisus sit, ima sui parte maxime uariis et inconstans ac mutabilis est. Circa terras plurimum audet, plurimum patitur, exagitat et exagitur; nec tamen eodem modo totus afficitur, sed aliter alibi et partibus inquietus ac turbidus est.

[11,2] Causas autem illi mutationis et inconstantiae alias terra praebet, cuius positiones hoc aut illo uersae magna ad aeris temperiem momenta sunt, alias siderum cursus, ex quibus soli plurimum imputes; illum sequitur annus, ad illius flexum hiemes aestatesque uertuntur. Lunae proximum ius est. Sed ceterae quoque stellae non minus terrena quam incumbentem terris spiritum afficiunt et cursu suo occursuue contrario modo frigora, modo imbres aliasque terris turbide iniurias mouent.

[11,3] Haec necessarium fuit prae loqui dicturo de tonitru fulminibusque ac fulgurationibus. Nam cum in aere fiant, naturam eius explicari oportebat, quo facilius appareret quid facere aut pati posset.

[12,1] Tria sunt quae accidunt, fulgurationes, fulmina, tonitrua, quae una facta serius audiuntur. Fulguratio ostendit ignem, fulminatio emittit. Illa, ut ita dicam, comminatio est et conatio sine ictu; ista iaculatio cum ictu.

[12,2] Quaedam sunt ex his de quibus inter omnes conuenit, quaedam in quibus diuersae sententiae sunt. Conuenit de illis, omnia ista in nubibus et e nubibus fieri. Etiam nunc conuenit et fulgurationes et fulminationes aut igneas esse aut ignea specie.

[12,3] Ad illa nunc transeamus in quibus lis est. Quidam putant ignem inesse nubibus; quidam ad tempus fieri nec prius esse quam mitti. Ne inter illos quidem qui praeparant ignem conuenit; alius enim illum aliunde colligit. Quidam aiunt radios solis intercurrentis

recurrentisque et saepius in se relatos ignem excitare. Anaxagoras ait illum ex aethere destillare et ex tanto ardore caeli multa decidere quae nubes diu inclusa custodiant.

[12,4] Aristoteles multo ante ignem colligi non putat, sed eodem momento exilire quo fiat. Cuius sententia talis est. Duae partes mundi in imo iacent, terra et aqua. Vtraque ex se reddit aliquid terrenus uapor siccus est et fumo similis, qui uentos, fulmina, tonitrua facit; aquarum halitus umidus est et in imbres et niues cedit.

[12,5] Sed siccus ille terrarum uapor, unde uentis origo est, cum coaceruatus est, coitu nubium uehementer a latere eliditur; deinde, ut latius, nubes proximas feriet. Haec plaga cum sono incutitur, qualis in nostris ignibus redditur, cum flamma uitio lignorum uirentium crepat. Et illic spiritus habens aliquid umidi secum conglobatusque rumpitur flamma; eodem modo spiritus ille, quem paulo ante exprimi collisis nubibus dixi, impactus aliis nec rumpi nec exilire silentio potest.

[12,6] Dissimilis autem crepitus fit ob dissimilitudinem nubium, quarum aliae maiorem. sinum habent, aliae minorem. Ceterum illa uis expressi spiritus ignis est qui fulgurationis nomen habet, leui impetu accensus et uanus. Ante autem uidemus fulgorem quam sonum audimus, quia oculorum uelocior sensus est et multum aures antecedit.

[13,1] Falsam autem opinionem esse eorum qui ignem in nubibus seruant, per multa colligi potest. Si de caelo cadit, quomodo non cotidie fit, cum tantumdem semper illic ardeat? Deinde nullam rationem reddiderunt quare ignis, quem natura sursum uocat, defluat. Alia enim condicio nostrorum ignium est, ex quibus fauillae cadunt, quae ponderis aliquid secum habent; ita non descendit ignis, sed praecipitatur et deducitur.

[13,2] Huic simile nihil accidit in illo igne purissimo, in quo nihil est quod deprimatur. Aut si ulla pars eius exciderit, in periculo totus est, quia totum. potest excidere quod potest carpi. Deinde illud quod cadit leue est an graue? Leue est? Non potest ruere quod cadere leuitas prohibet; si in abdito suo tenet graue, quomodo illic esse potuit unde caderet?

[13,3] Quid ergo? non aliqui ignes in inferiora ferri solent, sicut haec ipsa de quibus quaerimus fulmina? Fateor. Non eunt tamen, sed

feruntur; aliqua illos potentia deprimit. Quae non est in aethere; nihil enim illic iniuria cogitur, nihil rumpitur, nihil praeter solitum euenit.

[13,4] Ordo rerum est, et expurgatus ignis in custodia mundi summa sortitus oras operis pulcherrimi circumit. Hic descendere non potest, sed ne ab externo quidem deprimi, quia in aethere nulli incerto corpori locus est; certa et ordinata non pugnant.

[14,1] Vos, inquit, dicitis, cum causas stellarum transuolantium redditis, posse aliquas aeris partes ad se trahere ignem ex locis superioribus et hoc ardore accendi. Sed plurimum interest utrum aliquis dicat ignem ex aethere decidere, quod natura non patitur, an dicat ex ignea ui calorem in ea quae subiacent transilire. Non enim illinc ignis cadit, quod non potest fieri, sed hic nascitur.

[14,2] Videmus certe apud nos late incendio peruagante quasdam insulas quae diu concaluerunt ex se concipere flammam; itaque uerisimile est etiam in aere summo id quod ignis rapiendi naturam habet accendi calore aetheris superpositi. Necesse est enim ut et imus aether habeat aliquid aeri simile et summus aer non sit dissimilis imo aetheri, quia non fit statim in diuersum ex diuerso transitus; paulatim. ista in confinio uim suam miscent ita ut dubitare possis aer an hic iam aether sit.

[15,1] Quidam ex nostris existimant aera, cum in ignem et aquam mutabilis sit, non detrahare aliunde causas flammaram nouas; ipse enim se mouendo accendit et, cum. denses compactosque nubium. sinus dissipat, necessario uastum in tam magnorum corporum diruptione reddit sonum. Illa porro nubium difficulter cedentium pugna aliquid confert ad concitandum ignem sic quemadmodum ferro ad secandum aliquid manus confert, sed secare ferri est.

[16,1] Quid ergo inter fulgurationem et fulmen interest? Dicam. Fulguratio est late ignis explicitus, fulmen est coactus ignis et in impetum iactus. Solemus duabus manibus inter se iunctis aquam concipere et compressa utrimque palma in modum siponis exprimere. Simile quiddam et illic fieri puta : nubium inter se compressarum angustiae medium spiritum eiciunt et hoc ipso inflammant ac tormenti modo emittunt; nam ballistae quoque scorpionesque tela cum sono expellunt.

[17,1] Quidam existimant igneum spiritum per frigida atque umida meantem sonum reddere. Nam ne ferrum quidem ardens silentio,

tinguitur, sed, si in aquam feruens massa descendit, cum multo murmure extinguatur. Ita, ut Anaximenes ait, spiritus incidens nubibus tonitrua edit et, dum luctatur per obstantia atque interscissa uadere, ipsa ignem fuga accendit.

[18,1] Anaximandrus omnia ad spiritum rettulit. Tonitrua, inquit, sunt nubis ictae sonus. Quare inaequalia sunt? Quia et ipse ictus inaequalis est. Quare et sereno tonat? Quia tunc quoque per crassum et scissum aera spiritus prosilit. At quare aliquando non fulgurat et tonat? Quia spiritus infirmior non ualuit in flammam, in sonum ualuit. Quid est ergo ipsa fulguratio? Aeris diducentis se corruentisque iactatio languidum ignem nec exiturum pariens. Quid est fulmen? Acrioris densiorisque spiritus cursus.

[19,1] Anaxagoras ait omnia ista sic fieri ut ex aethere aliqua uis in inferiora descendat. Ita ignis impactus nubibus frigidis sonat; at, cum illas interscindit, fulget, et minor uis ignium fulgurationes facit, maior fulmina.

[20,1] Diogenes Apolloniates ait quaedam tonitrua igne, quaedam spiritu fieri; illa ignis facit quae ipse antecedit et nuntiat; illa spiritus quae sine splendore crepuerunt.

[20,2] Vtrumque sine altero esse aliquando concedo, ita tamen ut non discreta illis potestas sit, sed utrumque ab utroque effici possit. Quis enim negabit spiritum magno impetu latum, cum effecerit sonum, effecturum et ignem? Quis autem non et hoc concedet aliquando ignem quoque irrumpere posse nubes et non exilire, si plurimum aceruo nubium, cum paucas perscidisset, oppressus est? Ergo et ignis ibit in spiritum perdetque fulgorem, et spiritus, dum secta intra incendit.

[20,3] Adice nunc quod necesse est impetus fulminis et praemittat spiritus agatque ante se, et a tergo trahat uentum, cum tam uasto ictu aera inciderit. Itaque omnia, antequam feriantur, intremesculit uibrata uento quem ignis ante se pressit.

[21,1] Dimissis nunc praeceptoribus nostris incipiamus per nos moueri et a confessis transeamus ad dubia. Quid enim confessi est? Fulmen ignem esse, aquae fulgurationem, quae nihil aliud est quam flamma, futura fulmen, si plus uirium habuisset; non natura ista sed impetu distant.

[21,2] Esse illum ignem calor ostendit, qui non est nisi ex eo.

Ostendit effectus : magnorum enim saepe incendiorum causa fulmen fuit; siluae illo concrematae et urbium partes; etiam quae non percussa sunt, tamen adusta cernuntur; quaedam uero ueluti fuligine colorantur. Quid quod omnibus fulguratis odor sulphuris est?

[21,3] Ergo et utramque rem ignem esse constat et utramque rem inter se meando distare; fulguratio enim est non perlatum usque in terras fulmen, et rursus licet dicas fulmen esse fulgurationem usque in terras perductam.

[21,4] Non ad exercendum uerba diutius hoc idem tracto, sed ut cognata esse ista et eiusdem notae ac naturae probem. Fulmen est quiddam plus quam fulguratio. Vertamus istud: fulguratio est paene fulmen.

[22,1] Quoniam constat utramque rem ignem esse, uideamus quemadmodum ignis fieri soleat apud nos; eadem enim ratione et supra fit. Duobus modis, uno si excitatur sicut e lapide; altero si attritu inuenitur, sicut cum duo ligna inter se diutius trita sunt. Non omnis hoc tibi materia praestabit, sed idonea eliciendis ignibus: sicut laurus, hederæ et alia in hunc usum nota pastoribus.

[22,2] Potest ergo fieri ut nubes quoque ignem eodem modo uel percussae reddant uel attritae. Videamus quantis procellae uiribus ruant, quanto uertantur impetu turbines; id quod obuium, fuit, dissipatur et rapitur et longe a loco suo proicitur.

[22,3] Quid ergo mirum, si tanta uis ignem excutit uel aliunde uel sibi? Vides enim quantum feruorem sensura sint corpora horum transitu trita, nec hoc in his tantum debere credi, ac in ui siderum, quorum ingens et confessa potentia est.

[23,1] sed fortasse nubes quoque in nubes incitatae fremente uento et leuiter urgente ignem euocabunt qui explendescat nec exiliat; minore enim ni ad fulgurandum opus est quam ad fulminandum.

[23,2] Superioribus collegimus in quantum feruorem quaedam attrita perducerentur. Cum autem aer mutabilis in ignem maximis uiribus, id est suis, cum. in uentum conuersus est, atteratur, credibile est uerisimile, ignem excuti caducum et cito interiturum, quia non ex solida materia oritur nec in qua possit consistere. Transit itaque tantumque habet morae quantum itineris et cursus : sine alimento proiectus est.

[24,1] Quomodo, inquit, cum dicatis ignis hanc esse naturam ut

petat superiora, fulmen terram petit? Aut falsum est quod de igne dixistis; est enim illi aeque sursuin iter quam deorsum. Vtrumque uerum potest esse. Ignis enim natura in uerticem surgit et, si nihil illum prohibet, ascendit, sicut a qua natura defertur; si tamen aliqua uis accessit quae illam in contrarium circumageret, illo intenditur unde imbre deiecta est.

[24,2] Fulmen autem cadit eadem necessitate qua excutitur. Id his ignibus accidit quod arboribus quarum cacumina, si tenera sunt, ita deorsum trahi possunt ut etiam terram attingant, sed cum permiseris, in locum suum exilient. Itaque non est quod eum spectes cuiusque rei habitum qui illi non ex uoluntate est.

[24,3] Si ignem permittis ira quo uelit, caelum, id est leuissimi cuiusque sedem, repetet; ubi est aliquid quod eum ferat et ab impetu suo auertat, id non natura, sed seruitus eius fit.

[25,1] Dicis, inquit, nubes attritas edere ignem, cum sint umidae, immo udae; quomodo ergo possunt gignere ignem, quem non magis uerisimile est ex nube quam ex aqua generari?

[26,1] Ex nube nascitur. Primum in nubibus non [^]qua est, sed aer spissus, ad gignendam aquam praeparatus, nondum in illam mutatus, sed iam pronus et uergens. Non est quod existimes eam tum collig", tum effundi. Simul et fit et cadit.

[26,2] Deinde, si concessero umidam esse nubem conceptis aquis plenam, nihil tamen prohibet ignem ex umido quoque educi, immo ex ipso, quod magis mireris, umore. Quidam negauerunt in ignem quicquam posse mutari, priusquam mutatum esset in aquam. Potest ergo nubes, salua quam continet aqua, ignem parte aliqua sui reddere, ut saepe alia pars ligni ardet, alia sudat.

[26,3] Nec hoc dico non contraria inter se ista esse et alterum altero perimi; sed ubi ualentior ignis quam umor est, uincit; rursus, cum copia umoris exsuperat, tunc ignis sine effectum est; itaque non ardent uirentia. Refert ergo quantum aquae sit; exigua enim non resistet nec uim ignis impedit.

[26,4] Quidni? Maiorum nostrorum memoria, ut Posidonius tradidit, cum insula in Aegaeo mari surgeret, spumabat interdum mare et fumus ex alto ferebatur. Nox demum prodebat ignem, non continuum sed ex interuallis emicantem fulminum more, quotiens ardor infernus iacentis super undae pondus euicerat.

[26,5] Deinde saxa euoluta rupesque partim illaesae, quas spiritus, antequam urerentur, expulerat, partim exesae et in leuitatem pumicis uersae. Nouissime cacumen exusti montis emicuit. Postea altitudini adiectum et saxum illud in magnitudinem insulae creuit.

[26,6] Idem nostra memoria Valerio Asiatico consule iterum accidit. Quorsus haec rettuli? Vt appareret nec extinctum ignem mari superfuso, nec impetum eius grauitate ingentis undae prohibitum exire; ducentorum passuum fuisse altitudinem Asclepiodotus, auditor Posidonii, tradidit, per quam. diremptis aquis ignis emersit.

[26,7] Quod si immensa aquarum uis flammaram ex imo subeuntem uim non potuit opprimere, quanto minus impedire poterit ignem nubium tenuis umor et roscidus? Adeo res ista non affert ullam moram ut contra causa ignium sit; quos non uidemus emicare nisi impendente caelo; serenum sine fulmine est. Non lial-et istos metus dies purus, ne nox quidem nis” obscura nubibus.

[26,8] Quid ergo? non aliquando etiam apparentibus stellis et nocte tranquilla fulgurat? Sed scias licet, illic nubes esse unde splendor effertur, quas uideri a nobis terrarum tumor non sinit.

[26,9] Adice nunc quod fieri potest ut nubes summissae et humiles attritu suo ignem reddant; qui in superiora expressus, in parte caeli sincera puraque uisitur, sed fit in sordida.

[27,1] Tonitrua distinxere quidam ita ut dicerent unum esse genus cuius graue sit murmur, quale terrarum motum antecedit clauso uento et fremente. Hoc quomodo uideatur illis fieri dicam.

[27,2] Cum spiritum intra se clausere nubes, in concauis partibus earum uolutatus aer similem agit mugitibus sonum, raucum et aequalem et continuum, utique ubi etiam umida illa regio est et exitum claudit; ideo eiusmodi tonitrua uenturi praenuntia imbris sunt.

[27,3] Aliud genus est acre, quod acerbum magis dixerim quam sonorum, quale audire solemus, cum super caput alicuius dirupta uesica est; talia eduptur tonitrua, cum conglobata nubes dissoluitur et eum quo distenta fuerat spiritum emittit. Hic proprie fragor dicitur, subitus et uehemens. Quo edito concidunt homines et exanimantur; quidam uero uiui stupent et in totum sibi excidunt, quos uocamus attonitos, uni mentem sonus ille caelestis loco pepulit.

[27,4] Hic fieri illo quoque modo potest ut inclusus aer caua nube et motu ipso extenuatus diffundatur; deinde, dum. maiorem sibi locum

quaerit, a quibus inuolutus est, sonum patitur. Quid autem? non, quemadmodum illisae inter se manus plausum edunt, sic illisarum inter se nubium sonus potest esse, magnus quia magna concurrunt?

[28,1] Videmus, inquit, nubes impingi montibus nec sonum, fieri. Primum. omnium non quocumque modo illisae sunt sonant, sed si apte compo,sitae ad sonum edendum. Auersas inter se manus collide, non plaudent; sed palma cum palma collata plausum. facit; et plurimum interest utrum cauae concutiantur an planae et extentae. Deinde non tantum ire nubes oportet sed agi magna ui et procellosa.

[28,2] Etiamnunc mons non findit nubem, sed digerit et primain quamque partem eius soluit. Ne uesica quidem, quoeumque modo spiritum emisit, sonat : si ferro diuisa est, sine ullo aurium sensu exit; rumpi illam oportet, ut sonet, non secari. Idem de nubibus dico; nisi multo impetu dissolutae, non sonant. Adice nunc quod nubes in montem actae non franguntur, sed circumfunduntur et in aliquas partes montis, in arbores, rames, frutices, aspera saxa et eminentia; et ita discutiuntur, et, si quem habent spiritum, multifariam emittunt, qui, nisi uniuersus erumpit, nec crepat.

[28,3] Hoc ut scias, uentus qui circa arborem finditur sibilat, non tonat; lato, ut ita dicam, ictu et totum globum semel dissipante opus est, ut sonitus erumpat qualis auditur, cum tonat.

[29,1] Praeter haec natura aptus est aer ad uoces. Quidni, cum uox nihil aliud sit quam ictus aer? Debent ergo nubes utrimque conseri, et cauae et intentae. Vides enim quanto uocaliora sint uacua quam plena, quanto intenta quam remissa. Item tympana et cymbala sonant, quia illa repugnantem ex ulteriore parte spiritum pulsant, haec et ipso oere non nisi cauo tinniunt.

[30,1] Quidam, inter quos Asclepiodotus est, iudicant sic quorundam quoque corporum concursu tonitrum et fulmina excuti posse. Aetna aliquando multo igne abundauit, ingentem uim harenae urentis effudit,, inuolutus est dies puluere, populosque subita nox terruit. Aiunt tunc plurima fuisse fulmina et tonitrua quae concursu aridorum corporum facta sunt, non nubium, quas uerisimile est in tanto feruore aeris nullas fuisse.

[30,2] Aliquando Cambyses ad Ammonem misit exercitum, quem harena austro, mota et more niuis incidens textit, deinde obruit; tunc quoque uerisimile est fuisse tonitrum fulminaque attritu harenae sese

affricantis.

[30,3] Non repugnat proposito nostro ista opinio. Diximus enim utriusque naturae corpora efflare terras et sicci aliquid et umidi in toto acre uagari; itaque si quid tale interuenit, nubem fecit solidiorem et crassiorem quam si tantum simplici spiritu texeretur. Illa frangi potest et edere sonum.

[30,4] Ista quae dixi, sine incendiis uaporantibus aera repleuerunt, siue uentis terras uerrentibus, necesse est nubem faciant ante quam sonum. Nubem autem tam arida quam umida conserunt; est enim, ut diximus, nubes spissitudo aeris crassi.

[31,1] Ceterum lura fulminis, si intueri uelis, opera sunt nec quicquam dubii relinquentia quin diuina sit illius ac subtilis potentia. Loculis integris et illaesis conflatur argentum; manente uagina gladius ipse liquescit, et inuiolato ligno circa pila ferrum omne destillat; stat fracto dolio uinum nec ultra triduum ille rigor durat.

[31,2] Illud aequae inter adnotanda ponas licet quod et hominum et ceterorum animalium. quae icta sunt caput spectat ad exitum fulminis, quod omnium percussarum arborum contra fulmina astulae surgunt. Quid quod malarum serpentium et aliorum. animalium quibus mortifera uis inest, cum fulmine icta sunt, uenenum omne consumitur? - Unde, inquit, scis? - In uenenatis corporibus uermis non nascitur.; fulmine icta intra paucos dies uerminant.

[32,1] Quid quod futura portendunt, nec unius tantum aut alterius rei signa dant, sed saepe longum fatorum. sequentium ordinem nuntiant, et quidem notis euidentibus longaeque clarioribus quam si scriberentur?

[32,2] Hoc inter nos et Tuscos, quibus summa est fulgurum persequendorum scientia, interest: nos putamus, quia nubes collisae sunt, fulmina emitti; ipsi existimant nubes collidi ut fulmina emittantur; nam, cum omnia ad deum referant, in ea opinione sunt tamquam. non, quia facta sunt, significant, sed quia significatura sunt, fiant. Eadem tamen ratione fiunt, siue illis significare propositum, siue consequens est.

[32,3] Quomodo ergo significant, nisi “deo mittuntur? Quomodo aues non in hoc motae ut nobis occurrerent dextrum. auspicium sinistrumque fecerunt. Et illas, inquit, deus mouit. Nimis illum otiosum. et pusillae rei ministrum, facis, si aliis somnia, aliis exta

disponit.

[32,4] Ista nihilominus diuina ope geruntur, si non a deo pennae auium reguntur nec pecudum, uiscera sub ipsa securi formantur. Alia ratione factorum series explicatur indicia uenturi ubique praemittens, ex quibus quaedam nobis familiaria, quaedam ignota sunt. Quicquid fit, alicuius rei futurae signum est. Fortuita et sine ratione uaga diuinationem non recipiunt; cuius rei ordo est, etiam praedictio est.

[32,5] Cur ergo aquilae hic honor datus est ut magnarum rerum faceret auspicia, aut coruo et paucissimis auibus, ceterarum sine praesagio uox est? Quia quaedam!ondum in artem redacta sunt, quaedam uero ne redigi quidem possunt ob nin:iium remotam conuersationem; ceterum nullum. animal est quod non motu et occursu suo praedicat aliquid. Non omnia scilicet, sed quaedam notantur.

[32,6] Auspiciu obseruantis est; ad eum itaque pertinet qui in ea direxit animum. Ceterum fiunt et illa quae pereunt.

[32,7] Quinque stellarum potestates Chaldaeorum observatio excepit quid? tu tot illa milia siderum iudicas otiosa lucere? Quid est porro aliud quod errorem maximum incutiat peritis natalium quam, quod paucis nos sideribus assignant, cum omnia quae supra nos sunt partem nostri sibi uindicent? Summissiora forsitan propius in nos uim suam dirigunt et ea quae frequentius mota aliter nos aliterque prospiciunt. Ceterum et illa quae aut immota sunt aut propter uelocitatem uniuerso parem immotis similia non extra ius dominiumque nostri sunt. Alium aliud aspicit; distributis rem offliciis tractant; non magis autem facile est scire quid possint, quam dubitari debet an possint.

[33,1] Nunc ad fulmina reuertamur. Quorum ars in haec tria diuiditur : quemadmodum exploremus, quemadmodum interpretemur; quemadmodum expiemus. Prima pars ad formulam pertinet, secunda ad diuinationem, tertia ad propitiandos deos, quos bono fulmine rogare oportet, malo deprecari; rogare, ut promissa firment; deprecari, ut remittant minas.

[34,1] Summam esse uim fulminis iudicant, quia, quicquid alia portendunt, interuentus fulminis tollit; quicquid ab hoc portenditur, fixum est nec alterius ostenti significatione mutatur; quicquid exta, quicquid aues minabuntur, secundo fulmine abolebitur; quicquid

fulmine denuntiatur est, nec extis nec aue contraria refellitur.

[34,2] In quo mihi falli uidentur. Quare? Quia uero uerius nihil est. Si aues futura cecinerunt, non potest hoc auspicium fulmine irritum fieri, aut non futura cecinerunt. Non enim nunc aue comparo et fulmen, sed duo ueri signa, quae, si uerum significant, paria sunt. Itaque, quae fulminis interuentus submouet extorum uel augurii iudicia, male inspecta exta, male seruata auguria sunt. Non enim refert utrius rei species maior sit uel natura potentior; si utraque res ueri attulit signa, quantum ad hoc, par est.

[34,3] Si dicas flammae maiorem uim esse quam fumi, non mentieris; sed, ad indicandum ignem, idem ualet flamma quod fumus. Itaque si hoc dicunt : « Quotiens aliud exta significabunt, aliud fulmina, fulminum. erit auctoritas maior », fortasse consentiam. Si hoc dicunt : « Quamuis altera res uerum praedixisset, fulminis ictus priora deleuit et ad se fidem. traxit, » falsum est. Quare? Quia nihil interest quam multa auspicia sint. Fatum unum est; quod si bene primo auspicio intellectum est, secundo non interit: idem est.

[34,4] Ita dico, non refert idem an aliud sit per quod quidem quaerimus, quoniam de quo quaerimus, idem est.

[35,1] Fatum fulmine mutari non potest. Quidni? Nam fulmen ipsum fati pars est. Quid ergo? expiationes procurationesque quo pertinent, si immutabilia sunt fata? - Permitte mihi illam rigidam sectam tueri eorum, qui excipiunt ista et nihil uota esse aliud quam aegrae mentis solacia existimant.

[35,2] Fata aliter ius suum peragunt nec ulla commouentur prece. Non misericordia flectuntur non gratia. Seruant cursum irreuocabilem: ingressa ex destinato fluunt. Quemadmodum rapidorum aqua torrentium in se non recurrit, nec moratur quidem, quia priorem superueniens praecipitat, sic ordinem fati rerum aeterna series rotat, cuius haec prima lex est, stare decreto.

[36,1] Quid enim intellogis fatum? Existimo necessitatem rerum omnium actionumque, quam nulla uis rumpat. Hanc si sacrificiis aut capite niueae agnae exorari iudicas, diuina non nosti. Sapientis quoque uiri sententiam negatis posse mutari; quanto magis dei, cum sapiens quid sit optimum in praesentia sciat, illius diuinitati omne praesens sit?

[37,1] Agere nunc causam eorum uolo qui procuranda existimant

fulmina, et expiationes non dubitant prodesse aliquando ad summouenda pericula, aliquando ad leuanda, aliquando ad differenda.

[37,2] Quid sit quod sequatur, paulo post persequar; interim hoc habent commune nobiscum quod nos quoque existimamus uota proficere salua ui ac potestate factorum. Quaedam enim, a diis immortalibus ita suspensa relictas sunt ut in bonum uertant, si admotae diis preces fuerint, si uota suscepta; ita non est hoc contra fatum, sed ipsum quoque in fato est.

[37,3] Aut futurum, inquit, est aut non; si est futurum, etiamsi non susceperis uota, fiet. Si non est futurum, etiamsi non susceperis uota, fiet. Falsa est ista interrogatio, quia illam mediam inter ista exceptionem praeteris : futurum hoc est, sed si uota suscepta fuerint.

[38,1] Hoc quoque, inquit, ipsum necesse est fato comprehensum sit ut aut suscipias uota aut non. Puta me tibi manus dare et fateri hoc quoque fato esse comprehensum ut utique fiant uota; ideo fient.

[38,2] Fatum est ut hic disertus sit, sed si litteras didicerit; at eodera fato continetur ut litteras discat; ideo dependus est. Hic diues erit, sed si nauigauerit; at, in illo fati ordine quo patrimonium illi grande promittitur, hoc quoque protinus adfatum est ut etiam nauiget; ideo nauigabit. Idem tibi de expiationibus dico: effugiet pericula, si expiauerit praedictas diuinitus minas; at hoc : quoque in fato est, ut expiet; ideo expiabit.

[38,3] Ista nobis opponi solent ut probetur nihil uoluntati nostrae relictum et omne ius fato traditum. Cum de ista re agetur, dicam quemadmodum manente fato aliquid sit in hominis arbitrio; nunc uero id de quo agitur explicui, quomodo, si fati certus est ordo expiationes procurationesque prodigiorum pericula auertant, quia non cum fato pugnant, sed et ipsae in lege fati sunt.

[38,4] Quid ergo, inquis, aruspex mihi prodest? Utique enim expiare mihi etiam non suadente illo necesse est. - Hoc prodest quod fati minister est. Sic cum sanitas debeatur fato, debetur et medico, quia ad nos beneficium fati per huius manus uenit.

[39,1] Genera fulgurum tria esse ait Caecina, consiliarium, auctoritatis et quod status dicitur. Consiliarium ante rem fit sed post cogitationem, Oum aliquid in animo uersantibus aut suadetur fulminis ictu aut dissuadetur. Auctoritatis est ubi post rem factam

uenit, quam bono futuram maloue significat.

[39,2] Status est ubi quietis nec agentibus quicquam nec cogitantibus quidem fulmen interuenit et aut minatur aut promittit aut monet. Hoc monitorium uocat, sed nescio quare non idem sit quod consiliarium, nam et qui monet consilium dat.

[39,3] Sed habeat aliquam distinctionem et ob hoc separetur a consiliario, quia illud suadet dissuadetque, hoc solam euitationem impendentis periculi continet, ut cum timemus ignem, fraudem a proximis, insidias a seruis.

[39,4] Etiamnunc tamen aliam distinctionem utriusque uideo : consiliarium est quod cogitanti factum est, monitorium quod nihil cogitanti; habet autem utraque res suam proprietatem : suadetur deliberantibus; ultro monentur.

[40,1] Primo omnium non sunt fulminum genera sed significationum. Nam fulminum genera sunt illa, quod terebrat, quod discutit, quod urit. Quod terebrat subtile est et flammeum, oui per angustissimum fuga est ob sinceram et puram flammae tenuitatem.

[40,2] Quod dissipat conglobatum est et habet admixtam uim spiritus coacti ac procellosi. Itaque illud fulmen per id foramen quod ingressum. est redit et euad”t; huius late sparsa uis rumpit icta, non perforat.

[40,3] Tertium illud genus, quod urit, multum terreni habet et igneum magis est quam flammeum; itaque relinquit magnas ignium notas, quae percussis inhaereant. Nullum quidem sine igne fulmen uenit, sed tamen hoc proprie igneum. dicimus quod manifesta ardoris uestigia imprimit, quod aut urit aut fuscet.

[40,4] Tribus modis urit : aut afflat et leui iniuria laedit, aut comburit, aut accendit. Omnia ista urunt sed genere et modo differunt quodeumque combustum est, utique et ustum est at quod ustum est, non utique combustum est.

[40,5] Item quod accensum est, - potest enim illud ipso transitu ignis ussisse, - quis nescit uri quidem nec ardere, nihil autem ardere quod non et uratur? Vnum hoc adiciam : potest aliquid esse combustum nec accensum, potest accensum esse nec combustum.

[40,6] Nunc ad id transeo genus fulminis quo icta fuscantur; hoc aut decolorat aut colorat. Utrique distinctionem suam reddam : decoloratur id cuius color uitatur, non mutatur; coloratur id cuius

alia fit quam fuit facies, tamquam caerulea uel nigra uel pallida.

[41,1] Haec adhuc Etruscis philosophisque communia sunt. In illo, dissentiunt quod fulmina a Ioue dicunt mitti et tres illi manubias dant. Prima, ut aiunt, monet et placata est et ipsius Iouis consilio mittitur. Secundam mittit quidem Iupiter, sed ex consilii sententia, duodecim enim deos aduocat; hoc fulmen boni aliquid. aliquando facit, sed tunc quoque non aliter quam ut noceat; ne prodest quidem impune.

[41,2] Tertiam manubiam idem Iupiter mittit, sed adhibitis in consilium diis quos superiores et inuolutos uocant, quia uastat in quae incidit et utique mutat statum priuatum et publicum. quem inuenit; ignis enim nihil esse quod fuit patitur.

[42,1] In his prima specie, si intueri uelis, errat antiquitas. Quid enim tam imperitum est quam credere fulmina e nubibus Iouem mittere, columnas, arbores, nonnumquam statuas suas petere, uti, impunitis sacrilegis, percussis ouibus, incensis aris, pecudes innoxias feriat, et ad suum consilium a Ioue deos, quasi in ipso parum consilii sit aduocari? illa laeta esse et placata fulmina quae solus excutiat, perniciose quibus mittendis maior turba numinum intersit?

[42,2] Si a me quaeris quid sentiam, non existimo tam hebetes fuisse ut crederent Iouem iniquae uoluntatis aut certae minus peritiae. Vtrum enim tunc cum emisit ignes quibus innoxia capita percuteret, scelerata transiret, noluit iustius mittere an non successit?

[42,3] Quid ergo secuti sunt, cum haec dicerent? Ad coercendos imperitorum animos sapientissimi uiri iudicauerunt ineuitabilem. metum, ut aliquid supra nos timeremus. Vtile erat in tanta audacia scelerum esse aduersus quod nemo sibi satis potens uideretur; ad conterrendos itaque eos quibus innocentia nisi metu non placet posuerunt supra caput uindicem, et quidem armatum.

[43,1] Quare ergo id fulmen quod solus Iupiter mittit placabile est, perniciosum id de quo deliberauit et quod aliis quoque diis auctoribus misit? Quia Iouem, id est regem, prodesse etiam solum oportet, nocere non nisi cum pluribus uisum est.

[43,2] Discant hi, quicumque magnam inter homines adepti sunt potentiam, sine consilio ne fulmen quidem mitti; aduocent, considerent multorum, sententias, nociturum temperent, hoc sibi proponant, ubi aliquid percuti debet, ne Ioui quidem suum satis esse consillum.

[44,1] In hoc quoque tam imperiti non fuerunt ut Iouem existimarent tela mutare. Poeticam istud licentiam decet : Est aliud leuius fulmen, cui dextra Cyclopum Saeuitiae flammaeque minus, minus addidit irae. Tela secunda uocant superi.

[44,2] Illos uero altissimos uiros error iste non tenuit, ut existimarent louem modo leuioribus fulminibus et lusoriis telis uti. Sed uoluerunt admonere eos quibus aduersus peccata hominum fulminandum est non eodem modo omnia esse percutienda; quaedam. frangi debere, quaedam allidi ac destringi, quaedam admoueri.

[45,1] Ne hoc quidem crediderunt louem, qualem in Capitolio et in ceteris aedibus colimus, mittere manu sua fulmina, sed eundem quem nos louem intellegunt, rectorem custodemque uniuersi, animum ac spiritum mundi, operis huius dominum. et artificem, cui nomen omne conuenit.

[45,2] Vis illum fatum uocare, non errabis; hic est ex quo suspensa sunt omnia, causa causarum. Vis illum prouidentiam dicere, recto dices; est enim cuius consilio huic mundo prouidetur, ut inoffensus exeat et actus suos explicet. Vis illum, naturam. uocare, non peccabis; hic est ex quo nata sunt omnia, cuius spiritu uiuimus.

[45,3] Vis illum uocare mundum, non falleris; ipso enim est hoc quod uides totum, partibus suis inditus, et se sustinens et sua. Idem Etruscis quoque uisum est, et ideo fulmina mitti dixerunt a Ioue quia sine illo nihil geritur.

[46,1] At quare Iupiter aut ferienda transit aut innoxia ferit? In maiorem me quaestionem uocas, cui suus dies, suus locus dandus est. Interim. hoc dico fulmina non mitti a Ioue, sed sic omnia esse disposita ut etiam quae ab illo non fiunt tamen sine ratione non fiant, quae illius est. Nam etiamsi Iupiter illa nunc non facit, Iupiter fecit ut fierent. Singulis non adest ad omne, sed manum et uim et causam omnibus dedit.

[47,1] Huic illorum diuisioni non accedo. Aiunt aut perpetua esse fulmina, aut finita, aut prorogatiua. Perpetua, quorum significatio in totam pertinet uitam nec unam rom denuntiat sed contextum rerum per omnem deinceps aetatem futurarum complectitur; haec sunt fulmina quae prima accepto patrimonio et in nouo hominis aut urbis statu fiunt. Finita ad diem utique respondent. Prorogatiua sunt

quorum minae differri possunt, auerti tollique non possunt.

[48,1] Dicam quid sit quare huic diuisioni non consentiam. Nam et quod perpetuum uocant fulmen finitum est, - aequae enim ad diem respondet nec ideo minus finitum est quia multa significat -; et quod prorogatiuum uidetur finitum est; nam illorum quoque confessione certum est quousque impetretur dilatio; priuata enim fulgura negant ultra decimum annum, publica ultra tricesimum posse differri; hoc modo et ista finita sunt, quia ultra quod non prorogentur inclusum est. Omnium ergo fulminum. et omnis euentus dies stata sit; non potest enim ulla incerti esse comprehensio. [48,2] Quae inspicienda sint in fulgure, passim et uage dicunt, cum possint sic diuidere quemadmodum ab Attalo philosopho, qui se huic disciplinae dediderat, diuisa sunt, ut inspiciant ubi factum sit, quando, cui, in qua re, quale, quantum. Haec si digerere in partes suas uolueris, quid postea faciam? In immensa procedam.

[49,1] Nunc nomina fulgurum quae a Caecina ponuntur perstringam. et quid de eis sentiam exponam. Ait esse postulatoria, quibus sacrificia intermissa aut non rite facta repetuntur; monitoria, quibus docetur quid cauendum sit; pestifera, quae mortem exiliumque portendunt; fallacia, quae per speciem alicuius boni nocent, - dant consulatum malo futurum gerciitibus et hereditatem cuius compendium magno luendum sit incommodo -; dentanea, quae speciem periculi sine periculo afferunt;

[49,2] peremptalia, quibus tolluntur priorum fulminum minae; attestata, quae prioribus consentitint; atterranea, quae in eluso fiunt; obruta, quibus iam prius percussa nec procurata feriuntur; regalia, cum forum tangitur uel comitium uel principalia urbis liberae loca, quorum significatio regnum ciuitati minatur;

[49,3] inferna, cum e terra exiliuit ignis; hospitalia, quae sacrificiis ad nos louem arcessunt et, ut uerbo eorum molliore utar, inuitant, - sed non irasceretur inuitatus; mine uenire eum inagno inuitantium periculo affirmant -; auxiliaria, quae inuocata sed aduocantium bono ueniunt.

[50,1] Quanto simplicior diuisio est qua utebatur Attalus noster, uir egregius, qui Etruscorum disciplinam Graeca subtilitate miscuerat : ex fulminibus quaedam sunt quae significant id quod ad nos pertinet, quaedam aut nihil significant aut id cuius intellectus ad nos non

peruenit.

[50,2] Ex his quae significant quaedam sunt laeta, quaedam aduersa, quaedam nec aduersa nec laeta. Aduersorum hae species sunt : aut ineuitabilia mala portendunt, aut euitabilia, aut quae minui possunt, aut quae prorogari. Laeta aut mansura significant, aut caduca.

[50,3] Mixta aut partem habent boni, partem mali, aut mala in bonum, bona in malum uertunt. Nec aduersa nec laeta sunt quae aliquam nobis actionem significant qua nec terreri nec laetari debemus, ut peregrinationem in qua nec metus quicquam nec spei sit.

[51,1] Reuertor ad ea fulmina quae significant quidem aliquid sed quod ad nos non pertineat, tamquam iterum eodem anno idem futurum fulmen quod factum est. Nihil significant fulmina aut id cuius notitia nos effugit, ut illa quae in uastum mare sparguntur aut in desertas solitudines; quorum significatio uel nulla est uel perit.

[52,1] Pauca adhuc adiciam ad enarrandam uim fulm'nis. Quae non eodem modo omnem materiam uexat. Valentiora, quia resistunt, uehementius dissipat; cedentia nonnumquam sine iniuria transit : cum lapide ferroque et durissimis quibusque confligit, quia uiam necesse est per illa impetu quaerat, itaque facit qua effugiat; at teneris et rarioribus parcit, quamquam flammis opportuna uideantur, quia transitu patente minus saeuit. Loculis itaque integris, ut dixi, pecunia quae in his fuit conflata reperitur, quia ignis tenuissimus per foramina occulta transcurrit, quicquid autem in tigno solidum inuenit et contumax uincit.

[52,2] Non uno autem, ut dixi, modo saeuit, sed quid quaeque uis fecerit, ex ipso genere iniuriae intellegis et fulmen opere cognosces. Interdum in eadem materia multa diuersa eiusdem fulminis uis facit, sicut in arbore quod aridissimum urit, quod durissimum. et solidissimum est terebrat et frangit, summos cortices dissipat, interiores libros rumpit ac scindit, folia pertundit ac stringit. Vinum gelat, ferrum et aes fundit.

[53,1] Illud est mirum quod uinum fulmine gelatum, cum ad priorem habitum redit, potum aut exanimat aut dementes facit. Quare id accadat quaerenti m'hi illud occurrit. Inest uis fulmini pestifera; ex hoc aliquem remanere spiritum in eo umore quem coegit congelauitque simile ueri est; nec enim alligari potuisset, nisi aliquod illi esset additum uinculum.

[53,2] Praeterea olei quoque et omnis unguenti taeter post fulmen odor est; ex quo apparet inesse quandam subtifissimo igni et contra naturam suam acto pestilentem potentiam, qua non icta tantum cadunt sed et afflata. Praeterea quocumque decedit fulmen, ibi odorem esse sulphuris certum est, qui, quia natura grauis est, saepius haustus alienat.

[53,3] Sed ad haec uacui reuertemur. Fortasse enim libebit ostendere quantum omnia ista a philosophia parente artium fluxere. Illa primum et quaesiuit causas rerum et obseruauit effectus et, quod in fulminis inspectione longe melius est, initiis rerum exitus contulit.

[54,1] Nunc ad opinionem Posidonii reuortor. E terra terrenisque omnibus pars umida effiatur, pars sicca et fumida; haec fulminibus alimentum est, illa imbris. Quicquid in aera sicci fumosique peruenit, id includi se nubibus non fert sed rumpit claudentia; inde est sonus quem nos tonitrum, uocamus.

[54,2] In ipso quoque acre quicquid extenuatur, simul siccatur et calefit; hoc quoque, si inclusum est, aequae fugam quaerit et cum sono euadit, ac modo uniuersum eruptionem facit eoque uehementius intonat, modo per partes et minutatim.

[54,3] Ergo tonitrua hic spiritus exprimit, dum aut rumpit nubes, aut peruolat; uolutatio autem spiritus in nube conclusi ualentissimum est atterendi genus.

[55,1] Tonitrua nihil aliud sunt quam citi aeris sonitus, qui fieri, nisi dum aut terit aut rumpitur, non potest. - Etsi colliduntur inter se, inquit, nubes, tunc is quem desideras ictus. - Sed non uniuersus neque enim tota totis concurrunt, sed partibus partes nec sonant mollia, nisi illa duris sint, itaque non auditur fluctus, nisi impactus est.

[55,2] - Ignis, inquit, missus in aquam sonat, dum extinguitur. Puta ita esse, pro me est; non enim ignis tunc sonum efficit sed spiritus per extinguentia effugiens. Ut dem tibi et fieri ignem in nube et extingui, a spiritu nascitur et attritu.

[55,3] - Quid ergo, inquit, non potest aliqua ex his transcurrentibus stellis incidere, in nubem et extingui? - Existimemus posse aliquando et hoc fieri; nunc naturalem causam quaerimus et assiduam, non raram fortuitamque. Puta enim me confiteri uerum esse quod dicis, aliquando post tonitrua emicare ignes stellis transuersis et cadentibus similes, non ob hoc tonitrua facta sunt, sed, cum hoc fieret, tonitrua

facta sunt.

[55,4] Clidemos ait fulgurationem speciem inanem esse, non ignem; sic enim per noctem splendorem motu remorum uideri. Dissimile est exemplum. Illic enim splendor intra ipsam aquam apparet; hic, qui fit in aere, erumpit et exilit.

[56,1] Heraclitus existimat fulgurationem esse uelut apud nos incipientium ignium conatum et primam flammam incertam, modo intereuntem, modo resurgentem; haec antiqui fulgetra dicebant. Tonitrua nos pluraliter dicimus; antiqui autem tonitruum dixerunt aut tonum. Hoc apud Caecinam inuenio, facundum uirum et qui habuisset aliquando in eloquentia nomen, nisi illum Ciceronis umbra pressisset.

[56,2] Etiamnunc illo uerbo utebantur antiqui quo nos producta una syllaba utimur; dicimus enim, ut splendēre, sic fulgere; at illis ad significandum hanc e nubibus subitae lucis eruptionem mos erat correpta media syllaba uti, ut dicerent fulgēre.

[57,1] Quid ipse existimem quaeris; adhuc enim alienis opinionibus commodauī manum. Dicam. Fulgurat, cum repentinum late lumen emicuit; id euenit ubi in ignem aer extenuatis nubibus uertitur, nec uires quibus longius prosiliret inuenit.

[57,2] Non miraris, puto, si aera aut motus extenuat aut extenuatio incendit; sic liquescit excussa glans funda et attritu aeris uelut igne, destillat. Ideo plurima aestate sunt fulmina quia plurimum calidi est; facilius autem attritu calidorum ignis existit.

[57,3] Eodem autem modo fit fulgur, quod tantum splendet, et fulmen, quod mittitur. Sed illi leuior uis alimentique minus est et, ut breuiter dicam quod sentio, fulmen est fulgur intentum. Ergo ubi calidi fumidique natura emissa terris in nubes incidit et diu in illarum sinu uolutata est, nouissime erumpit et, quia uires non habet, splendor est;

[57,4] at ubi illa fulgura plus habuere materiae et malore impetu arserunt, non apparent tantum, sed decidunt.

[58,1] Quidam existimant utique fulmen reuerti, quidam subsidere ubi alimenta praegrauauerunt et fulmen ictu languidiore delatum est.

At quare fulmen subitum apparet nec continuatur assiduus ignis? Quia celere mirique motus simul et nubes rumpit et aera incendit, deinde desinit flamma motu quiescente, Non enim assiduus est

spiritus cursus, ut ignis possit extendi. Sed quotiens fortius ipsa iactatione se accendit, fugiendi impetum capit; deinde, cum euasit et pugna desinit, ex eadem causa modo usque ad terram profertur, modo ante dissoluitur, si minore ui pressus est.

[58,2] Quare oblique fertur? Quia spiritu constat, - spiritus autem obliquus est flexuosusque -, et quia natura ignem sursum uocat, iniuria deorsum premit; incipit autem obliquum. esse iter, dum neutra uis alteri cedit et ignis in superiora nititur, in inferiora deprimitur.

[58,3] Quare frequenter cacumina montium feriuntur? Quia opposita sunt nubibus et e caelo cadentibus per haec transeundum est.

[59,1] Intellego quid dudum desideres, quid efflagites. « Malo, inquis, fulmina non timere quam nosse; itaque alios doce quemadmodum fiant; ego mihi metum illorum excuti uolo, non naturam indicari. »

[59,2] Sequar quo uocas. Omnibus enim rebus omnibusque sermonibus aliquid salutare miscendum est. Cum imus per occulta naturae, cum diuina tractamus, uindicandus est a malis suis animus ac subinde firmandus, quod etiam eruditis et hoc unum agentibus necessarium est, non ut effugiamus ictus rerum, - undique enim in in nos tela iaciuntur, - sed ut fortiter constanterque patiamur.

[59,3] Inuicti esse possumus, inconcussi non possumus. Quamquam interim spes subit, inconcussos quoque esse nos posse. Quemadmodum? inquis. Contemne mortem, et omnia quae ad mortem ducunt contempta sunt, siue illa bella sunt, siue naufragia, seu morsus ferarum, seu ruinarum subito lapsu procidentium pondera.

[59,4] Numquid facere amplius possunt quam ut corpus ab animo resoluant? Haec nulla diligentia euitat, nulla felicitas donat, nulla potentia euincit. Alia uaria sorte disponuntur; mors omnes aequae uocat; iratis diis propitiisque moriendum est.

[59,5] Animus ex ipsa desperatione sumatur. Ignauissima animalia, quae natura ad fugam genuit, ubi exitus non patet, temptant pugnam corpore imbelli. Nullus perniciosior hostis est quam quem audacem angustiae faciunt, longeque uiolentius semper ex necessitate quam ex uirtute corrigitur, aut certe paria conantur animus magnus ac perditus.

[59,6] Cogitemus nos, quantum ad mortem, perditos esse. Et sumus.

Ita est, Lucili; omnes reseruamur ad mortem. Totum hunc quem uides populum, totumque quem usquam cogitas esse, cito natura reuocabit et condet, nec de re sed de die quaeritur; eodem citius tardiusue ueniendum est.

[59,7] Quid ergo? Non tibi timidissimus omnium uidetur et insipientissimus qui magno ambitu iogat moram mortis? Nonne contemneres eum qui, inter perituros constitutus, beneficii loco peteret ut ultimus ceruicem praeberet? Idem facimus; magno aestimamus mori tardius.

[59,8] In omnes constitutum est capitale supplicium, et quidem constitutione iustissima, quod maximum solet esse solacium extrema passuris; quorum enim causa, sors eadem est. Sequeremur traditi a iudice aut magistratu et carnifici nostro praestaremus obsequium; quid interest utrum ad mortem iussi eamus an ultronei?

[59,9] O te dementem et oblitum fragilitatis tuae, si tunc mortem times cum tonat! Itane? In hoc salus tua uertitur? Viues si fulmen effugeris? Petet te gladius, petet lapis, petet bilis; non maximum ex periculis tuis sed speciosissimum fulmen est.

[59,10] Male scilicet actum erit tecum, si sensum mortis tuae celeritas infinita praeueniet, si mors tua procuratur, si ne tunc quidem, cum expiras, superuacuis sed alicuius magnae rei signum es. Male scilicet tecum agitur, si cum fulmine conderis.

[59,11] Sed pauescis ad caeli fragorem et ad inane nubilum trepidas et, quotiens aliquid effulsit, expiras. Quid ergo? honestius putas deiectione perire quam fulmine? Eo itaque fortior aduersus caeli minas surge et, cum undique mundus exarserit, cogita nihil habere te tanta morte perdendum.

[59,12] Quodsi tibi parari credis illam caeli confusionem, illam tempestatum discordiam, si propter te ingestae illisaeque nubes strepunt, si in tuum exitium tanta uis ignium excutitur, at tu solacii loco numera tanti esse mortem tuam.

[59,13] Sed non erit huic cogitationi locus; casus iste donat metum. Est inter cetera hoc quoque commodum eius quod expectationem suam antecedit. Nemo umquam timuit fulmen, nisi qui effugit.

LIBER III

DE AQUIS <TERRESTRIBUS>

Praefatio

[1] Non praeterit me, Lucili uirorum optime, quam magnarum rerum fundamenta ponam senex, qui mundum circuire constitui et causas secretaque eius eruere atque aliis noscenda producere: quando tam multa consequar, tam sparsa colligam, tam occulta perspiciam?

[2] Premit a tergo senectus et obicit annos inter uana studia consumptos. Tanto magis urgeamus et damna aetatis male exemptae labor sarciat; nox ad diem accedat, occupationes recidantur, patrimonii longe a domino iacentis cura soluatur, sibi totus animus uacet et ad contemplationem sui saltem in ipso fine respiciat.

[3] Faciet ac sibi instabit et cotidie breuitatem temporis metietur; quicquid amissum est, id diligenti usu praesentis uitae recolliget: fidelissimus est ad honesta ex paenitentia transitus. Libet igitur mihi exclamare illum poetae incliti uersum : “tollimus ingentes animos et maxima paruo tempore molimur.” Hoc dicerem, si puer iuuenisque molirer (nullum enim non tam magnis rebus tempus angustum est): nunc uero ad rem seriam, grauem, immensam post meridianas horas accessimus.

[4] Faciamus quod in itinere fieri solet: qui tardius exierunt, uelocitate pensant moram. Festinemus et opus nescio an superabile, magnum certe, sine aetatis excusatione tractemus. Crescit animus, quotiens coepti magnitudinem attendit, et cogitat quantum proposito, non quantum sibi supersit.

[5] Consumpsere se quidam, dum acta regum externorum componunt quaeque passi inuicem ausique sunt populi. Quanto satius est sua mala extinguere quam aliena posteris tradere! Quanto potius deorum opera celebrare quam Philippi aut Alexandri latrocinia ceterorumque, qui exitio gentium clari non minores fuere pestes mortalium quam inundatio, qua planum omne perfusum est, quam conflagratio, qua magna pars animantium exarsit!

[6] Quemadmodum Hannibal Alpes superiecerit scribunt,

quemadmodum confirmatum Hispaniae cladibus bellum Italiae inopinatus intulerit fractisque rebus, etiam post Carthaginem pertinax, reges pererrauerit contra Romanos ducem promittens, exercitum petens; quemadmodum non desierit omnibus angulis bellum senex quaerere: adeo sine patria pati poterat, sine hoste non poterat!

[7] Quanto satius est quid faciendum sit quam quid factum quaerere, ac docere eos, qui sua permisere fortunae, nihil stabile ab illa datum esse, munus eius omne aura fluere mobilius! Nescit enim quiescere, gaudet laetis tristitia substituere, utique miscere; itaque secundis nemo confidat, aduersis nemo deficiat: alternae sunt uices rerum.

[8] Quid exultas? Ista, quibus eueheris in summum, nescis ubi te relictura sint: habebunt suum, non tuum finem. Quid iaces? Ad imum delatus es: nunc locus est resurgendi; in melius aduersa, in deterius optata flectuntur.

[9] Ita concipienda est animo uarietas non priuatarum tantum domuum, quas leuis casus impellit, sed publicarum. Regna ex infimo coorta supra imperantes constiterunt, uetera imperia in ipso flore ceciderunt; iniri non potest numerus, quam multa ab aliis fracta sint: nunc cum maxime deus extruit alia, alia summittit, nec molliter ponit sed ex fastigio suo nullas habitura reliquias iactat.

[10] Magna ista, quia parui sumus, credimus: multis rebus non ex natura sua sed ex humilitate nostra magnitudo est. Quid praecipuum in rebus humanis est? Non classibus maria compluisse nec in Rubri maris litore signa fixisse nec, deficiente ad iniurias terra, errasse in oceano ignota quaerentem, sed animo omne uidisse et, qua maior nulla uictoria est, uitia domuisse: innumerabiles sunt qui populos, qui urbes habuerunt in potestate, paucissimi qui se.

[11] Quid est praecipuum? Erigere animum supra minas et promissa fortunae; nihil dignum putare, quod speres. Quid enim habet, quod concupiscas? qui a diuinorum conuersatione quotiens ad humana recideris, non aliter caligabis quam quorum oculi in densam umbram ex claro sole redierunt.

[12] Quid est praecipuum? Posse laeto animo aduersa tolerare; quicquid acciderit, sic ferre, quasi tibi uolueris accidere (debuisses enim uelle, si scisses omnia ex decreto dei fieri: flere, queri et gemere

desciscere est).

[13] Quid est praecipuum? Animus contra calamitates fortis et contumax, luxuriae non auersus tantum sed infestus, nec auidus periculi nec fugax, qui sciat fortunam non expectare sed facere et aduersus utramque intrepidus inconfususque prodire, nec illius tumultu nec huius fulgore percussus.

[14] Quid est praecipuum? Non admittere in animo mala consilia, puras ad caelum manus tollere, nullum bonum petere quod, ut ad te transeat, aliquis dare debet aliquis amittere, optare quod sine aduersario optatur: bonam mentem; cetera magno aestimata mortalibus, etiamsi quis domum casus adtulerit, sic intueri quasi exitura qua uenerint.

[15] Quid est praecipuum? Altos supra fortuita spiritus tollere, hominis meminisse, ut, siue felix eris, scias hoc non futurum diu, siue infelix, scias hoc te non esse, si non putes.

[16] Quid est praecipuum? In primis labris animam habere: haec res efficit non e iure Quiritium liberum sed e iure naturae. Liber est autem, qui seruitutem suam effugit: haec est assidua et ineluctabilis et per diem ac noctem aequaliter premens, sine interuallo, sine com meatu.

[17] Sibi seruire grauissima est seruitus: quam discutere facile est, si desieris multa te poscere, si desieris tibi referre mercedem, si ante oculos et naturam tuam posueris et aetatem, licet prima sit, ac tibi ipse dixeris: “Quid insanio? quid anhelo? quid sudo? quid terram, quid forum uerso? Nec multo opus est nec diu.”

[18] Ad hoc proderit nobis inspicere rerum naturam: primo discedemus a sordidis; deinde animam ipsum, quo sano magnoque opus est, seducemus a corpore; deinde in occultis exercitata subtilitas non erit in aperta deterior. Nihil est autem apertius his salutaribus, quae contra nequitiam nostram furoremque discuntur, quae damnamus nec ponimus.

[1.1] Quaeramus ergo de terrestribus aquis et inuestigemus qua ratione fiant (siue, ut ait Ouidius, “fons erat illimis nitidis argenteus undis”, siue, ut ait Uergilius, “unde per ora nouem uasto cum murmure montis it mare praeruptum et pelago premit arua sonanti; siue, ut apud te, lunior carissime, inuenio, “Elius Siculis de fontibus exilit amnis”; si qua ratio aquas subministrat; quomodo tot flumina

ingentia per diem noctemque decurrant; quare alia hibernis aquis intumescant, alia in defectu ceterorum amnium crescant.

[1,2] Nilum interim seponemus a turba, propriae naturae ac singularis, et illi suum diem dabimus. Nunc uulgares aquas persequamur, tam frigidas quam calentes: in quibus [calentibus] quaerendum erit, utrum calidae nascentur an fiant. De ceteris quoque disseremus, quas insignes aut sapor aut aliqua reddit utilitas: quaedam enim oculos, quaedam neruos iuuant; quaedam inueterata et desperata a medicis uitia percurant; quaedam medentur ulceribus; quaedam interiora potu fouent et pulmonis ac uiscerum querelas leuant; quaedam supprimunt sanguinem: tam uarius singulis usus quam gustus est.

[2,1] Aut stant omnes aquae aut eunt aut colliguntur aut uarias habent uenas. Aliae dulces sunt, aliae uarie asperae; quippe interueniunt salsae amaraeque aut medicatae, ex quibus sulphuratas dicimus, ferratas, aluminosas: indicat uim sapor.

[2,2] Habent praeterea multa discrimina, primum tactus: frigidae calidaeque sunt; deinde ponderis: leues et graues sunt; deinde coloris: purae sunt, turbidae, caeruleae, luridae, deinde salubritatis: sunt enim utiles, sunt mortiferae, sunt quae cogantur in lapidem, quaedam tenues, quaedam pingues; quaedam alunt, quaedam sine ulla bibentis ope transeunt, quaedam haustae fecunditatem afferunt.

[1] Ut stet aqua aut fluat, loci positio efficit: in deuexo fluit, in plano et defosso continetur et stagnat. Aliquando in aduersum spiritu impellitur: tunc cogitur, non fluit. Colligitur ex imbribus, ex suo fonte natiua est. Nihil tamen prohibet eodem loco aquam colligi et nasci; quod in Fucino uidemus, in quem montes circumiecti, quicquid fudit pluuias, deriuant, sed et magnae in ipso latentesque uenae sunt: itaque etiam cum hiberni defluxere torrentes, faciem suam seruat.

[4,1] Primum ergo quaeramus quomodo ad continuandos fluminum cursus terra sufficiat, unde tantum aquarum exeat. Miramur, quod accessionem fluminum maria non sentiant; aequae mirandum est, quod detrimentum exeuntium terra non sentit. Quid est, quod illam aut sic impleuerit, ut praebere tantum ex recondito possit, aut subinde sic suppleat? Quamcumque rationem reddiderimus de flumine, eadem erit riuorum ac fontium.

[5,1] Quidam iudicant terram quicquid aquarum emisit rursus accipere et ob hoc maria non crescere, quia quod influxit, non in suum uertunt sed protinus reddunt. Occulto enim itinere subit terras et palam uenit, secreto reuertitur, colaturque in transitu mare, quod per multiplices terrarum anfractus euerberatum amaritudinem ponit et prauitatem: in tanta soli uarietate saporem exuit et in sinceram aquam transit.

[6,1] Quidam existimant, quicquid ex imbribus terra concepit, id illam rursus emittere et hoc argumenti loco ponunt, quod paucissima flumina in his sunt locis, quibus rarus est imber.

[6,2] Ideo siccas aiunt Aethiopiae solitudines esse paucosque inueniri in interiore Africa fontes, quia feruida natura caeli sit et paene semper aestiua; squalidae itaque sine arbore, sine cultore harenae iacent raris imbribus sparsae, quos statim combibunt. At contra constat Germaniam Galliamque et proxime ab illis Italiam abundare fluminibus et riuis, quia caelo umido utuntur et ne aestas quidem imbribus caret.

[7,1] Aduersus hoc multa posse dici uides. Primum ego tibi uinearum diligens fossor affirmo nullam pluuiam esse tam magnam, quae terram ultra decem in altitudinem pedes madefaciat; omnis umor intra primam crustam consumitur nec in inferiora descendit:

[7,2] quomodo ergo imber suggerere potest amnibus uires, qui summam humum tinguunt? Pars maior eius per fluminum alueos in mare aufertur; exiguum est quod sorbeat terra, nec id seruat: aut enim arida est et absumit in se quicquid infusum est, aut satiata, si quid supra desiderium cecidit, excludit, et ideo primis imbribus non augentur amnes, quia totos in se terra sitiens trahit.

[7,3] Quid, quod quaedam flumina erumpunt saxis et montibus? His quid conferent pluuias, quae per nudas rupes deferuntur nec habent terram, cui insidant? Adice quod siccissimis locis putei in altum acti ultra ducentorum aut trecentorum pedum spatium inueniunt aquarum uberes uenas in ea altitudine, in quam aqua non penetrat, ut scias illic non caelestem esse nec collecticium umorem, sed, quod dici solet, uiuam aquam.

[7,4] Illo quoque argumento haec opinio refellitur, quod quidam fontes in summo montis cacumine redundant: apparet illos sursum agi aut ibi concipi, cum omnis pluuialis aqua decurrat.

[8,1] Quidam existimant, quemadmodum in exteriori parte terrarum uastae paludes iacent magnique et nauigabiles lacus, quemadmodum ingenti spatio maria porrecta sunt infusa uallibus, sic interiora terrarum abundare aquis dulcibus nec minus illas late stagnare quam apud nos oceanum et sinus eius, immo eo latius, quo plus terra in altum patet. Ergo ex illa profunda copia isti amnes egeruntur: quos quid miraris, si terra detractos non sentit, cum adiectos maria non sentiant?

[9,1] Quibusdam haec placet causa: aiunt habere terram intra se recessus cauos et multum spiritus, qui necessario frigescit umbra graui pressus, deinde piger et immotus in aquam, cum se desiit ferre, conuertitur: quemadmodum supra nos mutatio aeris imbrem facit, ita infra terras flumen aut riuum;

[9,2] supra nos non potest stare segnis diu et grauis (aliquando enim sole tenuatur, aliquando uentis expanditur, itaque interualla magna imbris sunt), sub terra uero quicquid est, quod illum in aquam conuertat, idem semper est, umbra perpetua, frigus aeternum, inexercitata densitas; semper ergo praebebit fonti aut flumini causas.

[9,3] Placet nobis terram esse mutabilem. Haec quoque quicquid effluit, quia non libero aere concipitur, crassescit protinus et in umorem conuertitur: habes primam aquarum sub terra nascentium causam.

[10,1] Adicias etiam licet quod fiunt omnia ex omnibus, ex aqua aer, ex aere aqua, ignis ex aere, ex igne aer: quare ergo non ex terra fiat aqua? quae si in alia mutabilis, est etiam in aquam, immo maxime in hanc: utraque enim cognata res est, utraque grauis, utraque densa, utraque in extremum mundi compulsa. Ex aqua terra fit: cur non aqua fiat e terra?

[10,2] At magna flumina sunt. Cum uideris quanta sint, rursus ex quanto prodeant adspice. Miraris, cum labantur assidue, quaedam uero concitata rapiantur, quod praesto sit illis aqua semper noua: quid, si mireris, quod, cum uenti totum aera impellant, non deficit spiritus sed per dies noctesque aequaliter fluit, nec (ut flumina) certo alueo fertur sed per uastum caeli spatium lato impetu uadit? Quid, si ullam undam superesse mireris, quae superueniat tot fluctibus fractis?

[10,3] Nihil deficit quod in se redit: omnium elementorum alterni

recursus sunt; quicquid alteri perit, in alterum transit, et natura partes suas uelut in ponderibus constitutas examinat, ne portionum aequitate turbata mundus praeponderet.

[10,4] Omnia in omnibus sunt: non tantum aer in ignem transit sed numquam sine igne est (detrahe illi calorem: rigescet, stabit, durabitur); transit aer in umorem sed nihilominus non sine umore est; et aera et aquam facit terra sed non magis umquam sine aqua est quam sine aere. Et ideo facilius est inuicem transitus, quia illis, in quae transeundum est, iam mixta sunt.

[10,5] Habet ergo terra umorem, hunc exprimit; habet aera, hunc umbra hiberni frigoris densat, ut faciat umorem; ipsa quoque mutabilis est in umorem: natura sua utitur.

[11,1] Quid ergo?, inquit, si perpetuae sunt causae, quibus flumina oriuntur ac fontes, quare aliquando siccantur, aliquando quibus non fuerunt locis exeunt? Saepe motu terrarum itinera turbantur et ruina interscindit cursum aquis, quae retentae novos exitus quaerunt et aliquo impetum faciunt aut ipsius quassatione terrae aliunde alio transferuntur.

[11,2] Apud nos solet euenire, ut amisso canali suo flumina primum refundantur, deinde quia perdidierunt uiam faciant. Hoc ait accidisse Theophrastus in Coryco monte, in quo post terrarum tremorem noua uis fontium emersit.

[11,3] Sicut alias quoque causas interuenire opinatur, quae aliter euocent aquas aut cursu suo deiciant et auertant; fuit aliquando aquarum inops Haemus, sed cum Gallorum gens a Cassandro obsessa in illum se contulisset et suas cecidisset, ingens aquarum copia apparuit, quas uidelicet in alimentum suum nemora ducebant; quibus euersis umor, qui desiit in arbusta consumi, superfluitus est.

[11,4] Idem ait et circa Magnesiam accidisse. Sed pace Theophrasti dixisse liceat: non est hoc simile ueri, quia fere aquosissima sunt quaecumque umbrosissima; quod non eueniret, si aquas arbusta siccarent, quibus alimentum ex proximo est (fluminum uero uis ex intimo manat ultraque concipitur quam radicibus euagari licet). Deinde succisae arbores plus umoris desiderant: non enim tantum id, quo uiuant, sed quo crescant trahunt.

[11,5] Idem ait circa Arcadium, quae urbs in Creta insula fuit, fontes et riuos substitisse, quia desierit coli terra diruta urbe, postea uero

quam cultores receperit, aquas quoque recepisse. Causam siccitatis hanc ponit, quod obduruerit constricta tellus nec potuerit imbres inagitata transmittere. Quomodo ergo plurimos uidemus in locis desertissimis fontes?

[11,6] Plura denique inuenimus, quae propter aquas coli coeperunt quam quae aquas habere coeperint, quia colebantur. Non esse enim pluuialem hanc, quae uastissima flumina a fonte statim magnis apta nauigiis defert, ex hoc intellegas licet, quod per hiemem aestatemque par est a capite deiectus. Pluuia potest facere torrentem, non potest amnem aequali inter ripas suas tenore labentem, quem non faciunt imbres sed incitant.

[12,1] Paulo repetamus hoc altius, si uidetur, et scies te non habere quod quaeras, cum ad ueram annium originem accesseris. Flumen nempe facit copia cursusque aquae perennis. Ergo quaeris a me quomodo aqua fiat: interrogabo inuicem quomodo aer fiat aut terra.

[12,2] Sed si in rerum natura elementa sunt quattuor, non potes interrogare unde aqua sit: quarta enim pars naturae est. Quid ergo miraris, si rerum naturae tam magna portio potest aliquid ex se semper effundere?

[12,3] Quomodo aer, et ipse quarta pars mundi, uentos et auras mouet, sic aqua riuos et flumina: si uentus est fluens aer, et flumen est fluens aqua. Satis et multum illi uirium dedi, cum dixi: “elementum est”: intellegis quod ab illo proficiscitur non posse deficere.

[13,1] Adiciam, ut Thales ait, “ualentissimum elementum est.” Hoc fuisse primum putat, ex hoc surrexisse omnia. Sed nos quoque aut in eadem sententia aut in uicinia eius sumus: dicimus enim ignem esse qui occupet mundum et in se cuncta conuertat, hunc euanidum languentemque considerare et nihil relinqui aliud in rerum natura igne restincto quam umorem, in hoc futuri mundi spem latere:

[13,2] ita ignis exitus mundi est, umor primordium. Miraris ex hoc posse amnes semper exire, qui pro omnibus fuit et ex quo sunt omnia? Hic umor in diductione rerum ad quartas redactus est, sic positus, ut sufficere fluminibus edendis, ut riuus, ut fontibus posset.

[14,1] Quae sequitur Thaletis inepta sententia est. Ait enim terrarum orbem aqua sustineri et uehi more nauigii mobilitateque eius fluctuare tunc, cum dicitur tremere: non est ergo mirum, si abundat

umor ad flumina profundenda, cum mundus in umore sit totus.

[14,2] Hanc ueterem et rudem sententiam explode: nec est quod credas in hunc orbem aquam subire per rimas et facere sentinam. Aegyptii quattuor elementa fecerunt, deinde ex singulis bina paria: aera marem iudicant qua uentus est, feminam qua nebulosus et iners; aquam uirilem uocant mare, muliebrem omnem aliam; ignem uocant masculum, qua ardet flamma, et feminam, qua lucet innoxius tactu; terram fortiorem marem uocant, saxa cautesque, feminae nomen assignant huic tractabili et cultae.

[14,3] Mare unum est, ab initio scilicet ita constitutum; habet suas uenas, quibus impletur atque aestuat. Quomodo maris sic et huius aquae mitioris uasta in occulto uis est, quam nullius fluminis cursus exhauriet. Abdita est uirium ratio: tantum ex illa, quantum semper fluere <pos>sit, emittitur.

[15,1] Quaedam ex istis sunt, quibus assentire possumus. Sed hoc amplius censeo: placet natura regi terram et quidem ad nostrorum corporum exemplar, in quibus et uenae sunt et arteriae, illae sanguinis, hae spiritus receptacula. In terra quoque sunt alia itinera per quae aqua, alia per quae spiritus currit; adeoque ad similitudinem illa humanorum corporum natura formauit, ut maiores quoque nostri aquarum appellauerint uenas.

[15,2] Sed quemadmodum in nobis non tantum sanguis est sed multa genera umoris, alia necessarii, alia corrupti ac paulo pinguioris (in capite cerebrum, in ossibus medullae, muci salivaeque et lacrimae et quiddam additum articulis, per quod citius flectantur ex lubrico), sic in terra quoque sunt umoris genera complura, quaedam quae mature durantur,

[15,3] (hinc est omnis metallorum fructus, ex quibus petit aurum argentumque auaritia), et quae in lapidem ex liquore uertuntur; in quaedam uero terra umorque putrescunt, sicut bitumen et cetera huic similia. Haec est causa aquarum secundum legem naturae uoluntatemque nascentium.

[15,4] Ceterum, ut in nostris corporibus, ita in illa saepe umores uitia concipiunt: aut ictus aut quassatio aliqua aut loci senium aut frigus aut aestus corrumpere naturam; et sulphuratio contraxit umorem, qui modo diuturnus est, modo breuis.

[15,5] Ergo ut in corporibus nostris sanguis, cum percussa uena est,

tam diu manat donec omnis effluxit aut donec uenae scissura subsedit atque iter elusit, uel aliqua alia causa retro dedit sanguinem, ita in terra solutis ac patefactis uenis riuus aut flumen effunditur.

[15,6] Interest quanta aperta sit uena: quae modo consumpta aqua deficit, modo excaecatur aliquo impedimenta, modo coit uelut in cicatricem comprimitque quam perfecerat uiam; modo illa uis terrae, quam esse mutabilem diximus, desinit posse alimenta in umorem conuertere.

[15,7] Aliquando autem exhausta replentur modo per se uiribus recollectis, modo aliunde translatis: saepe enim inania apposita plenis umorem in se auocauerunt; saepe terra, si facilis est in tabem, ipsa soluitur et umescit; <saepe> idem euenit sub terra quod in nubibus, ut spissetur <aer> grauiorque, quam ut manere in natura sua possit, gignat umorem; saepe colligitur roris modo tenuis et dispersus liquor, qui ex multis in unum locis confluit (sudorem aquileges uocant, quia guttae quaedam uel pressura loci eliduntur uel aestu euocantur).

[15,8] Haec tenuis unda uix fonti sufficit: et ex magnis caueis magnisque conceptibus excidunt amnes, nonnumquam leuiter emissi, si aqua pondere suo se tantum detulit, nonnumquam uehementer et cum sono, si illam spiritus intermixtus eiecit.

[16,1] Sed quare quidam fontes senis horis pleni senisque sicci sunt? Superuacuum est nominare singula flumina, quae certis mensibus magna certis angusta sunt, et occasionem singulis quaerere, cum possim eandem causam omnibus reddere.

[16,2] Quemadmodum quartana ad horam uenit, quemadmodum ad tempus podagra respondet, quemadmodum purgatio, si nihil obstitit, statum diem seruat, quemadmodum praesto est ad mensem suum partus, sic aquae interualla habent, quibus se retrahant et quibus redeant. Quaedam autem interualla minora sunt et ideo notabilia, quaedam maiora nec minus certa.

[16,3] Ecquid hic mirum est, cum uideas ordinem rerum et naturam per constituta procedere? Hiems numquam aberrauit, aestas suo tempore incaluit, autumnus uerisque, unde solet, facta mutatio est; tam solstitium quam aequinoctium suos dies rettulit.

[16,4] Sunt et sub terra minus nota nobis iura naturae sed non minus certa: crede infra quicquid uides supra. Sunt et illic specus uasti

ingentesque recessus ac spatia suspensis hinc et inde montibus laxa; sunt abrupti in infinitum hiatus, qui saepe illapsas urbes receperunt et ingentem ruinam in alto condiderunt

[16,5] (haec spiritu plena sunt, nihil enim usquam inane est); et stagna obsessa tenebris et lacus ampli. Animalia quoque illis innascuntur, sed tarda et informia ut in aere caeco pinguique concepta et aquis torpentibus situ; pleraque ex his caeca ut talpae et subterranei mures, quibus deest lumen, quia superuacuum est; inde, ut Theophrastus affirmat, pisces quibusdam locis eruuntur.

[17,1] Multa hoc loco tibi in mentem ueniunt quibus urbane in re incredibili fabulae dicas, “non cum retibus aliquem nec cum hamis sed cum dolabra ire piscatum! Expecto ut aliquis in mari uenetur.” Quid est autem quare non pisces in terram transeant, si nos maria transimus? Permutabimus sedes!

[17,2] Hoc miraris accidere: quanto incredibiliora sunt opera luxuriae, quotiens naturam aut mentitur aut uincit? In cubili natant pisces, et sub ipsa mensa capitur qui statim transferatur in mensam: parum uidetur recens nullus, nisi qui in conuiuiae manu moritur; uitreis ollis inclusi afferuntur et obseruatur morientium color, quem in multas mutationes mors luctante spiritu uertit; alios necant in garo et condiunt uiuos.

[17,3] Hi sunt qui fabulas putant piscem uiuere posse sub terra et effodi, non capi! Quam incredibile illis uideretur, si audirent natare in garo piscem nec cenae causa occidi sed super cenam, cum multum in deliciis fuit et oculos ante quam gulam pauit?

[18,1] Permite mihi quaestione seposita castigare luxuriam. Nihil est, inquis, mullo expirante illis formosius: ipsa colluctatione animae deficientis rubor primum, deinde pallor subfunditur, squamaeque uariantur et <in> incertas facies inter uitam ac mortem coloris est uagatio. Languor somnulosae inertisque luxuriae quam<quam> sero expectatus circumscribi se et fraudari tanto bono sensit: hoc adhuc tam pulchro spectaculo piscatores fruebantur.

[18,2] “ Quo coctum piscem? quo exanimem? In ipso ferculo expiret.” Mirabamur tantum illis inesse fastidium, ut nollent attingere nisi eodem die captum, qui, ut aiunt, saperet ipsum mare: ideo cursu aduehebatur, ideo gerulis cum anhelitu et clamore properantibus dabatur uia.

[18,3] Quo peruenere deliciae? Iam pro putrido his est piscis occisus. “Hodie eductus est.” - “Nescio de re magna tibi credere: ipsi oportet me credere; huc afferatur, coram me animam agat.” Ad hunc fastum peruenit uenter delicatorem, ut gustare non possint, nisi quem in ipso conuiuio natantem palpitantemque uiderunt: tantum ad sollertiam luxuriae pereuntis accedit, tantoque subtilius cotidie et elegantius aliquid excogitat furor usitata contemnens!

[18,4] Illa audiebamus: “Nihil est melius saxatili mullo,” at nunc audimus: “Nihil est moriente formosius; da mihi in manus uitreum, in quo exsultet et trepidet.” Ubi multum diuque laudatus est, ex illo perlucido uiuario extrahitur.

[18,5] Tunc, ut quisque peritior est, monstrat: “Uide quomodo exarserit rubor omni acrior minio! uide quas per latera uenas agat! ecce sanguineum putes uentrem! quam lucidum quiddam caeruleumque sub ipso tempore effulsit! iam porrigitur et pallet et in unum colorem componitur.”

[18,6] Ex his nemo morienti amico assidet, nemo uidere mortem patris sui sustinet, quam optauit. Quotusquisque funus domesticum ad rogam prosequitur? Fratrum propinquorumque extrema hora deseritur; ad mortem nulli concurritur: “Nihil est enim illa formosius.”

[18,7] Non tempero mihi quin utar interdum temerarie uerbis et proprietatis modum excedam: non sunt ad popinam dentibus et uentre et ore contenti: oculis quoque gulosi sunt.

[19,1] Sed ut ad propositum reuertar, accipe argumentum, magnam uira aquarum in subterraneis oculi fertilem foedorum situ piscium: si quando erupit, effert secum immensam animalium turbam, horridam aspici et turpem ac noxiam gustu.

[19,2] Certe cum in Caria circa Idymum urbem talis exiluisset unda, perierunt quicumque illos ederant pisces, quos ignoto ante eam diem caelo nouus amnis ostendit. Nec id mirum: erant enim pingua et differta ut ex longo otio corpora, ceterum inexercitata et tenebris saginata et lucis expertia, ex qua salubritas ducitur.

[19,3] Nasci autem posse pisces in illo terrarum profundo sit indicium, quod anguillae latebrosis locis nascuntur, grauis et ipsae cibus ob ignauiam, utique si altitudo illas luti penitus abscondit.

[19,4] Habet ergo non tantum uenas aquarum terra, ex quibus

conriuatis flumina effici possint, sed amnes magnitudinis uastae, quorum aliis semper in occulto cursus est, donec aliquo sinu terrae deuorentur, alii sub aliquo lacu emergunt. Nam quis ignorat esse quaedam stagna sine fundo? Quorsus hoc pertinet? ut appareat hanc aquam magnis annibus aeternam esse materiam, cuius non tanguntur extrema sicut fluminum fontes.

[20,1] At quare aquis sapor uarius? Propter quattuor causas: ex solo prima est, per quod fertur; secunda ex eodem, si mutatione eius nascitur; tertia ex spiritu, qui in aquam transfiguratus est; quarta ex uitio, quod saepe concipiunt corruptae per iniuriam.

[20,2] Hae causae saporem dant aquis uarium, hae medicatam potentiam, hae grauera spiritum odoremque pestiferum, hae leuitatem grauitatemque, <hae> aut calorem aut nimium rigorem. Interest utrum loca sulphure an nitro an bitumine plena transierint; hac ratione corruptae cum uitae periculo bibuntur.

[20,3] Illinc illud, de quo Ouidius ait “flumen habent Cicones, quod potum saxea reddit uiscera, quod tactis inducit marmora rebus;” medicatum est et eius naturae habet limum, ut corpora adglutinet et obduret. Quemadmodum Puteolanus puluis, si aquam attigit, saxum est, sic e contrario haec aqua, si solidum tetigit, haeret et affigitur.

[20,4] Inde est quod res abiectae in Uelinum lacum lapideae subinde extrahuntur; quod in Italia quibusdam locis euenit: siue uirgam siue frondem demerseris, lapidem post paucos dies extrahis; circumfunditur enim corpori limus adliniturque paulatim. Hoc minus tibi uidebitur mirum, si notaueris Albulas et fere sulphuratam aquam circa canales suos riuosque durari.

[20,5] Aliam naturam habent [causam] illi lacus, “quos quisquis faucibus hausit”, ut idem poeta ait, “aut furit aut patitur mirum grauitate soporem;” similem habent uim mero, sed uehementiorem (nam quemadmodum ebrietas, donec exsiccet, dementia est et nimia grauitate defertur in somnum, sic huius aquae sulphurea uis habens quoddam acius ex aere noxio uirus mentem aut furore mouet aut sopore opprimit).

[20,6] Hoc habet mali “Lynceius amnis, quem quicumque parum moderato gutture traxit, haut aliter titubat, quam si mera uina bibisset.”

[21,1] In quosdam specus qui despexere, moriuntur; tam uelox

malum est, ut transuolantes aues deiciat: talis est aer, talis locus, ex quo letalis aqua destillat. Quod si remissior fuit aeris et loci pestis, ipsa quoque temperatior noxa nihil amplius quam temptat neruos uelut ebrietate torpentes.

[21,2] Nec miror, si locus atque aer aquas inficit similesque regionibus reddit, per quas et ex quibus ueniunt: pabuli sapor apparet in lacte, et uini uis existit in aceto. Nulla res est, quae non eius, quo nascitur, notas reddat.

[22,1] Aliud est aquarum genus, quod nobis placet coepisse cum mundo: siue ille aeternus est, haec quoque fuit semper, siue initium aliquod est illi, haec quoque cum toto disposita est. Quae sit haec quaeris? Oceanus et quodcumque ex illo mare terras interluit. Iudicant quidam flumina quoque, quorum inenarrabilis natura est, cum ipso mundo traxisse principia, ut Histrum, ut Nilum, uastos amnes magisque insignes, quam ut dici possit eandem illis originem quam ceteris esse.

[23,1] Haec est ergo aquarum diuisio, ut quibusdam uidetur: prosiliunt ex superioribus caelestes, quas nubila excutiant; ex terrenis aliae sunt ut ita dicam supernatantes, quae in summa humo repunt, aliae abditae, quarum reddita est ratio.

[24,1] Quare quaedam aquae caleant, quaedam etiam ferueant in tantum, ut non possint esse usui, nisi aut in aperto euauerunt aut mixtura frigidae intepuerunt, plures causae redduntur. Empedocles existimat ignibus, quos multis locis terra opertos tegit, aquam calescere, si subiecti sunt ei solo, per quod aquis transcursus est.

[24,2] Facere solemus dracones et miliaria et complures formas, in quibus aere tenui fistulas struimus per decliue circumdatas, ut saepe eundem ignem ambiens aqua per tantum fluat spatii, quantum efficiendo calori sat est: frigida itaque intrat, effluit calida.

[24,3] Idem sub terra Empedocles existimat fieri, quem non falli crede Baianis, quibus balnearia sine igne calefiunt: spiritus in illa feruens loco aestuante infunditur; hic per tubos lapsus non aliter quam igne subdito parietes et uasa balnei calefacit, omnis denique frigida transitu mutatur in calidam nec trahit saporem e uaporario, quia clausa praelabatur.

[24,4] Quidam existimant per loca sulphure plena uel nitro euntes aquas calorem beneficio materiae, per quam fluunt, trahere: quod

ipso odore gustuque testantur; reddunt enim qualitatem eius, qua caluere, materiae. Quod ne accidere mireris, uiuae calci aquam infunde: feruebit.

[25,1] Quaedam aquae mortiferae sunt nec odore notabiles nec sapore. Circa Nonacrin in Arcadia Styx appellata ab incolis aduenas fallit, quia non facie, non odore suspecta est: qualia sunt magnorum artificum uenena, quae deprehendi nisi morte non possunt. Haec autem, de qua paulo ante rettuli, aqua summa celeritate corrumpit, nec remedio locus est, quia protinus hausta duratur, nec aliter quam gypsum sub umore constringitur et alligat uiscera.

[25,2] Est aequae a noxia aqua in Thessalia circa Tempe, quam et fera et pecus omne deuitat; per ferrum et aes exit, tanta uis illi est etiam dura mordendi; nec arbusta quidem ulla alit et herbas necat.

[25,3] Quibusdam fluminibus uis inest mira: alia enim sunt, quae pota inficiunt greges ouium intraque certum tempus, quae fuere nigra, albam ferunt lanam, quae albae uenerant, nigrae abeunt. Hoc in Boeotia amnes duo efficiunt, quorum alteri ab effectu Melas nomen est: uterque ex eodem lacu exeunt diuersa facturi.

[25,4] In Macedonia quoque, ut ait Theophrastus, qui facere albas oues uolunt, <ad Haliacmonem> adducunt, quem ut diutius potauere, non aliter quam infectae mutantur; at si illis lana opus fuit pulla, paratus gratuitus infector est: ad Peneion eundem gregem appellant. Auctores bonos habeo esse in Galatia flumen, quod idem in omnibus efficiat, esse in Cappadocia quo potio equis nec ulli praeterea animali color mutetur et spargatur albo cutis.

[25,5] Quosdam lacus esse, qui nandi imperitos ferant, notum est: erat in Sicilia, est adhuc in Syria stagnum, in quo natant lateres et mergi proiecta non possunt, licet grauias sint. Huius rei palam causa est: quamcumque uis rem expende et contra aquam statue, dummodo utriusque par sit modus: si aqua grauior est, leuiorem rem, quam ipsa est, fert, et tanto supra se extollet quanto erit leuior; grauiora descendant. At si aquae et eius rei, quam contra pensabis, par pondus erit, nec pessum ibit nec extabit sed exaequabitur aquae et natabit quidem sed paene mersa ac nulla eminens parte.

[25,6] Hoc est cur quaedam tigna supra aquam paene tota efferantur, quaedam ad medium submissa sint, quaedam ad aequilibrium aquae descendant. Namque cum utriusque pondus par est, neutra res alteri

cedit, grauiora descendunt, leuiora gestantur. Graue autem et leue est non aestimatione nostra, sed comparatione eius, quo uehi debet.

[25,7] Itaque ubi aqua grauior est hominis corpore aut saxo, non sinit id, quo non uincitur, mergi: sic euenit, ut in quibusdam stagnis ne lapides quidem pessum eant. De solidis et duris loquor. Sunt enim multi pumicosi et leues, ex quibus quae constant insulae in Lydia, natant: Theophrastus est auctor.

[25,8] Ipse ad Cutilias natantem insulam uidi, et alia in Uadimonis lacu uehitur (lacus in Statoniensi est). Cutiliarum insula et arbores habet et herbas nutrit: tamen aqua sustinetur et in hanc atque illam partem non uento tantum sed aura compellitur, nec umquam illi per diem ac noctem uno loco statio est: adeo mouetur leui flatu.

[25,9] Huic duplex causa est: aquae grauitas medicatae et ob hoc ponderosae, et ipsius insulae materia uectabilis, quae non est corporis solidi, quamuis arbores alat. Fortasse enim leues truncos frondesque in lacu sparsas pinguis umor apprehendit ac uinxit.

[25,10] Itaque etiam si qua in illa saxa sunt, inuenies exesa et fistulosa, qualia sunt quae duratus umor eficit, utique circa medicatorum fontium <ripas> riuosque, ubi purgamenta aquarum coaluerunt et spuma solidatur: necessario leue est quod ex uentoso inanique concretum est.

[25,11] Quorundam causa non potest reddi: quare aqua Nilotica fecundiores feminas faciat, adeo ut quarundam uiscera longa sterilitate praeclusa ad conceptum relaxauerit; quare quaedam in Lycia aquae conceptum feminarum custodiant, quas solent petere, quibus parum tenax uulua est. Quod ad me attinet, pono ista inter temere uulgata. Creditum est quasdam aquas scabiem afferre corporibus, quasdam uitiliginem et foedam ex albo uarietatem, siue infusa siue pota sit: quod uitium dicunt habere aquam ex rore collectam.

[25,12] Quis non grauissimas esse aquas credat, quae in crystallum coeunt? Contra autem est: tenuissimis enim hoc euenit, quas frigus ob ipsam tenuitatem facillime gelat. Unde autem fiat eiusmodi lapis, apud Graecos ex ipso nomine apparet: G-krustallon enim appellant aequae hunc perlucidum lapidem quam illam glaciem, ex qua fieri lapis creditur. Aqua enim caelestis minimum in se terreni habens cum induruit, longioris frigoris pertinacia spissatur magis ac magis,

donec omni aere excluso in se tota compressa est, et umor qui fuerat, lapis effectus est.

[26,1] Aestate quaedam flumina augentur ut Nilus, cuius alias ratio reddetur. Theophrastus est auctor in Ponto quoque quosdam amnes crescere tempore aestiuo. Quattuor esse iudicant causas: aut quia tunc maxime in umorem mutabilis terra sit, aut quia maiores in remoto imbres sint, quorum aqua per secretos cuniculos reddita tacite suffunditur.

[26,2] Tertia, si crebrioribus uentis ostium caeditur et reuerberatus fluctu amnis resistit, qui crescere uidetur, quia non effunditur. Quarta siderum ratio est: haec enim quibusdam mensibus magis urgent et exhauriunt flumina; cum longius recesserunt, minus consumunt atque trahunt: ita quod impendio solebat, id incremento accidit.

[26,3] Quaedam flumina palam in aliquem specum decidunt et sic ex oculis auferuntur. Quaedam consumuntur paulatim et intercidunt; eadem ex interuallo reuertuntur recipiuntque et nomen et cursum. Causa manifesta est: sub terra uacat locus, omnis autem natura umor ad inferius et ad marie defertur. Illo itaque recepta flumina cursus egere secreto, sed cum primum aliquid solidi quod obstaret occurrit, perrupta parte, quae minus ad exitum repugnauit, repetiere cursum suum.

[26,4] “Sic ubi terreno Lycus est potatus hiatu, existit procul hinc alioque renascitur ore. Sic modo combibitur, tacito modo gurgite lapsus redditur Argolicis ingens Erasinus in undis.” Idem et in Oriente Tigris facit: absorbetur et desideratus diu tandem longe remoto loco, non tamen dubius an idem sit, emergit.

[26,5] Quidam fontes certo tempore purgamenta eiectione, ut Arethusa in Sicilia quinta quaque aestate per Olympia. Inde opinio est Alpheon ex Achaia eo usque penetrare et agere sub mare cursum nec ante quam in Syracusano litore emergere, ideoque his diebus, quibus Olympia sunt, uictimarum stercus secundo traditum flumini illic redundare.

[26,6] Hoc et a te creditum est, ut in prima parte <dixi>, Lucili carissime, et a Uergilio, qui alloquitur Arethusam: “sic tibi, cum fluctus subter labere Sicanos, Doris amara suas non intermisceat undas.” Est in Chersoneso Rhodiorum fons, qui post magnum interuallum temporis foeda quaedam turbidus ex intimo fundat,

donec liberatus eliquatusque est.

[26,7] Hoc quibusdam locis fontes faciunt, ut non tantum lutum sed folia testasque et quicquid putre iacuit expellant. Ubique autem facit mare, cui haec natura est, ut omne immundum stercorosumque litoribus impingat. Quaedam uero partes maris certis temporibus hoc faciunt, ut circa Messenen et Mylas fimo quiddam simile turbulenta uis maris profert feruetque et aestuat non sine colore foedo, unde illic stabulare Solis boues fabula est.

[26,8] Sed difficilis ratio est quorundam, utique ubi tempus eius rei, de qua quaeritur, inobseruatum incertum est. Itaque proxima quidem inueniri et uicina non potest causa; ceterum publica est illa: omnis aquarum stantium clausarumque natura se purgat. Nam in his, quibus cursus est, non possunt uitia consistere, quae secunda uis defert et exportat; illae, quae non emittunt quicquid insedit, magis minusue aestuant. Mare uero cadauera stramentaue et naufragorum reliqua similia ex intimo trahit, nec tantum tempestate fluctuque sed tranquillum quoque placidumque purgatur.

[27,1] Sed monet me locus, ut quaeram, cum fatalis dies diluuii uenerit, quemadmodum magna pars terrarum undis obruatur: utrum oceani uiribus fiat et externum in nos pelagus exurgat, an crebri sine intermissione imbres et elisa aestate hiems pertinax immensam uim aquarum ruptis nubibus deiciat, an flumina tellus largius fundat aperiatque fontes nouos, an non sit una tanto malo causa sed omnis ratio consentiat et simul imbres cadant, flumina increscant, maria sedibus suis excita procurrant et omnia uno agmine ad exitium humani generis incumbant.

[27,2] Ita est: nihil difficile naturae est, utique ubi in finem sui properat. Ad originem rerum parce utitur uiribus dispensatque se incrementis fallentibus; subito ad ruinam toto impetu uenit. Quam longo tempore opus est, ut conceptus ad puerperium perduret infans, quantis laboribus tener educatur, quam diligenti nutrimento obnoxium nouissime corpus adolescit! At quam nullo negotio soluitur! Urbes constituit aetas, hora dissoluit; momento fit cinis, diu silua; magna tutela stant ac uigent omnia, cito ac repente dissiliunt.

[27,3] Quicquid ex hoc statu rerum natura flexerit, in exitium mortalium satis est. Ergo cum affuerit illa necessitas temporis, multas simul fata causas mouent. Neque enim sine concussione mundi tanta

mutatio est, ut quidam putant, inter quos Fabianus est.

[27,4] Primo immodici cadunt imbres et sine ullis solibus triste nubilo caelum est nebulaque continua et ex umido spissa caligo numquam exiccantibus uentis. Inde uitium satis est, segetum sine fruge surgentium marcor. Tunc corruptis quae seruntur manu, palustris omnibus campis herba succrescit.

[27,5] Mox iniuriam et ualidiora sentire: solutis quippe radicibus arbusta procumbunt, et uitis atque omne uirgultum non tenetur solo, quod molle fluidumque est. Iam nec gramina aut pabula laeta aquis sustinet. Fame laboratur et manus ad antiqua alimenta porrigitur: qua ilex est et quercus excutitur et quaecumque in arduis arbor commissura astricta lapidum stetit.

[27,6] Labant ac madent tecta, et in imum usque receptis aquis fundamenta desidunt ac tota humus stagnat. Frustra titubantium fultura temptatur; omne enim firmamentum in lubrica figitur et lutosa humo; nihil stabile est.

[27,7] Postquam magis magisque ingruunt nimbi et congestae saeculis tabuerunt niues, deuolutus torrens altissimis montibus rapit siluas male haerentes et saxa resolutis remissa compagibus rotat, abluit uillas et intermixtos dominis greges deuehit, uulsisque minoribus tectis, quae in transitu abduxit, tandem in maiora uiolentus aberrat, urbes et implicitos trahit moenibus suis populos, ruinam an naufragium querantur incertos (adeo simul et quod opprimeret et quod mergeret uenit). Auctus deinde processu aliis quoque in se torrentibus raptis plana passim populatur; nouissime [in] materia magna gentium elatus onustusque diffunditur.

[27,8] Flumina uero suapte natura uasta et tempestatibus rapida alueos reliquerunt. Quid tu esse Rhodanum, qui putas Rhenum atque Danuim, quibus torrens etiam in canali suo cursus est, cum superfusi nouas sibi fecere ripas ac scissa humo simul excessere alueo?

[27,9] Quanta cum praecipitatione uoluuntur, ubi per campestria fluens Rhenus ne spatio quidem languit, sed latissimas uelut per angustum aquas impulit; cum Danuius non iam radices nec media montium stringit, sed iuga ipsa sollicitat ferens secum madefacta montium latera rupesque disiectas et magnarum promontoria regionum, quae fundamentis laborantibus a continenti recesserunt,

deinde non inueniens exitum (omnia enim ipse sibi praecluserat), in orbem redit, ingentemque terrarum ambitum atque urbium uno uertice inuoluit.

[27,10] Interim permanent imbres, fit caelum grauius ac sic diu malum ex malo colligit: quod olim fuerat nubilum, nox est et quidem horrida ac terribilis intercurso luminis diri. Crebra enim micant fulmina, procellaeque quatiunt mare tunc primum auctum fluminum accessu et sibi angustum: iam enim promouet litus nec continetur suis finibus; sed prohibent exire torrentes aguntque fluctum retro. Pars tamen maior ut maligno ostio retenta restagnat et agros in formam unius lacu redigit.

[27,11] Iam omnia, qua prospici potest, aquis obsidentur: omnis tumultus in profundo latet et immensa ubique altitudo est. Tantum in summis montium iugis uada sunt: in [ea] excelsissima cum liberis coniugibusque fugerunt actis ante se gregibus. Diremptum inter miseros commercium ac transitus, quoniam quicquid submissius erat, id unda compleuit.

[27,12] Editissimis quibusque adhaerebant reliquiae generis humani, quibus in extrema perductis hoc unum solacio fuit, quod transierat in stuporem metus. Non uacabat timere mirantibus, nec dolor quidem habebat locum, quippe uim suam perdit in eo, qui ultra sensum mali miser est.

[27,13] Ergo insularum modo eminent “montes et sparsas Cycladas augent,” ut ait ille poetarum ingeniosissimus egregie; sicut illud pro magnitudine rei dixit “omnia pontus erat, deerant quoque litora ponto,” ni tantum impetum ingenii et materiae ad pueriles ineptias reduxisset: “nat lupus inter oues, fuluos uehit unda leones.”

[27,14] Non est res satis sobria lasciuire deuorato orbe terrarum. Dixit ingentia et tantae confusionis imaginem cepit, cum dixit: “expatiata ruunt per apertos flumina campos, ... pressaeque labant sub gurgite turres.” Magnifice haec, si non curauerit quid oues et lupi faciant. Natari autem in diluuio et in illa rapina potest? aut non eodem impetu pecus omne, quo raptum erat, mersum est?

[27,15] Concepisti imaginem quantam debebas obrutis omnibus terris caelo ipso in terram ruente. Perfer: scies quid deceat, si cogitaueris orbem terrarum natum.

[28,1] Nunc ad propositum reuertamur. Sunt qui existiment

immodicis imbris uexari terras posse, non obrui; magne, impetu magna ferienda sunt; faciet pluuiæ segetes malas, fructum grande, decutiet, intumescunt riuis flumina, sed resident.

[28,2] Quibusdam placet moueri mare et illinc causam tantæ cladis accersere: non potest torrentium aut imbrium aut fluminum iniuria fieri tam grande naufragium. Ubi instat illa perniciēs mutarique humanum genus placuit, fluere assiduos imbres et non esse modum pluuiis concesserim, suppressis aquilonibus et flatu sicciore austris nubes et amnes abundare. Sed adhuc in damna profectum est: “sternuntur segetes et deplorata colonis uota iacent longique perit labor irritus anni.”

[28,3] Non lædi terræ debent sed abscondi. Itaque cum per ista prolusum est, crescunt maria, sed super solitum, et fluctum ultra extremum tempestatis maximæ uestigium mittunt. Deinde a tergo uentis surgentibus ingens æquor euoluunt, quod longe a conspectu ueteris litoris frangitur. Deinde ubi litus bis terque prolatum est et pelagus in alieno constitit, uelut admoto malo comminus procurrit aestus ex imo recessu maris.

[28,4] Nam ut aeris, ut ætheris, sic huius elementi larga materia est multoque in abdito plenior. Haec fati mota, non aestu (nam aestus fati ministerium est), attollit uaste, sinu fretum agitque ante se. Deinde in miram altitudinem erigitur et illis tutis hominum receptaculis superest. Nec id aquis arduum est, quoniam æquo terris fastigio ascendunt.

[28,5] Si quis excelsa perlibret, maria paria sunt: nam par undique sibi ipsa tellus est (caua eius et plana inferiora sunt, sed istis adeo in rotundum orbis æquatus est); in parte autem eius et maria sunt, quæ in unius æqualitatem pilæ coeunt. Sed quemadmodum campos intuentem quæ paulatim deuexa sunt fallunt, sic non intellegimus curuaturas maris et uidetur planum quicquid apparet. At illud æquale terris est ideoque, ut effluat, non magna mole se tollet, dum satis est illi, ut supra paria ueniat; leuiter exsurgere; nec a litore, ubi inferius est, sed a medio, ubi ille cumulus est, defluit.

[28,6] Ergo ut solet aestus æquinoctilis sub ipsum lunæ solisque coitum omnibus aliis maior undare, sic hic, qui ad occupandas terras emittitur, solitis maximisque uiolentior, plus aquarum trahit nec, antequam supra cacumina eorum, quos perfusurus est, montium

creuit, deuoluitur. Per centena milia quibusdam locis aestus excurrit innoxius et ordinem seruat (ad mensuram enim crescit iterumque decrescit):

[28,7] at illo tempore solutus legibus sine modo fertur. Qua ratione?, inquis: eadem qua conflagratio futura est. Utrumque fit, cum deo uisum ordiri meliora, uetera finire. Aqua et ignis terrenis dominantur; ex his ortus, ex his interitus est: ergo quandoque placuere res nouae mundo, sic in nos mare emittitur desuper, ut feruor ignisque, cum aliud genus exitii placuit.

[29,1] Quidam existimant terram quoque concuti et dirupto solo noua fluminum capita detegere, quae amplius ut e pleno profundant. Berosos, qui Belum interpretatus est, ait ista cursu siderum fieri; adeo quidem affirmat, ut conflagrationi atque diluuio tempus assignet: arsura enim terrena contendit, quandoque omnia sidera, quae nunc diuersos agunt cursus, in Cancrum conuenerint, sic sub eodem posita uestigio, ut recta linea exire per orbem omnium possit; inundationem futuram, cum eadem siderum turba in Capricornum conuenerit. Illic solstitium, hic bruma conficitur: magnae potentiae signa, quando in ipsa mutatione anni momenta sunt.

[29,2] Et istas ego receperim causas (neque enim ex uno est tanta perniciēs), et illam, quae in conflagratione nostris placet, hoc quoque transferendam puto: siue animal est mundus siue corpus natura gubernabile, ut arbores, ut sata, ab initio eius usque ad exitum quicquid facere quicquid pati debeat, inclusum est.

[29,3] Ut in semine omnis futuri hominis ratio comprehensa est et legem barbae canorumque nondum natus infans habet (totius enim corporis et sequentis auctus in paruo occultoque liniamenta sunt), sic origo mundi non minus solem et lunam et uices siderum et animalium ortus quam quibus mutarentur terrena continuit. In his fuit inundatio, quae non secus quam hiems, quam aestas, lege mundi uenit.

[29,4] Itaque non pluuias istud fiet sed pluuias quoque, non incursu maris maris quoque incursu, non terrae motu sed terrae quoque motu: omnia adiuuabunt naturam, ut naturae constituta peragantur. Maximam tamen causam ad se inundandam terra ipsa praestabit, quam diximus esse mutabilem et solui in uorem.

[29,5] Ergo quandoque erit terminus rebus humanis, cum partes eius

interire debuerint abolerique funditus totae, ut de integro totae rudes innoxiaeque generentur nec supersit in deteriora praeceptor, plus umoris quam semper fuit fiet. Nunc enim elementa ad id quod debetur pensa surit: aliquid oportet alteri accedat, ut quae libramento stant, inaequalitas turbet. Accedet umori; nunc enim habet quo ambiat terras, non quo obruat: quicquid illi adieceris, necesse est in alienum locum exundet.

[29,6] Uide ergo ne terra debeat minui, ut ualidiori infirma succumbat. Incipiet ergo putrescere, dehinc laxata ire in umorem et assidua tabe defluere. Tunc exilient sub montibus flumina ipsosque impetu quatient; inde aura tacta manabunt;

[29,7] solum omne aquas reddet, summi scaturient montes. Quemadmodum in morbum transeunt sana et ulceri uicina consentiunt, ut quaeque proxima terris fluentibus fuerint, ipsa eluentur stillabuntque, deinde current et, hiant pluribus locis saxo, [per] fretum saliet et maria inter se componet. Nihil erunt Adria, nihil Siculi aequoris fauces, nihil Charybdis, nihil Scylla: omnes nouum mare fabulas obruet et hic qui terras cingit oceanus extrema sortitus ueniet in medium.

[29,8] Quid ergo est? Nihilominus tenebit alienos menses hiems, aestas prohibebitur, et quodcumque terras sidus exsiccat, compresso ardore cessabit. Peribunt tot nomina, Caspium et Rubrum mare, Ambracii et Cretici sinus, Propontis et Pontus; peribit omne discrimen; confundetur quicquid in suas partes natura digessit. Non muri quemquam, non turre tuebuntur. Non proderunt templa supplicibus nec urbium summa, quippe fugientes unda praeueniet et ex ipsis arcibus deferet.

[29,9] Alia ab occasu, alia ab oriente concurrent. Unus humanum genus condet dies; quicquid tam longa fortunae indulgentia excoluit, quicquid supra ceteros extulit, nobilia pariter atque adornata magnarumque gentium regna pessundabit.

[30,1] Sunt omnia, ut dixi, facilia naturae, utique <quae> a primo facere constituit, ad quae non subito sed ex denuntiato uenit. Iam autem a primo die mundi, cum in hunc habitum ex informi unitate discederet, quando mergerentur terrena decretum est; et ne sit quandoque uelut in nouo opere dura molitio, olim ad hoc maria se exercent.

[30,2] Non uides ut fluctus in litora tamquam exiturus incurrat? Non uides ut aestus fines suos transeat et in possessionem terrarum mare inducat? Non uides ut illi perpetua cum claustris suis pugna sit? Quid porro? Istinc, unde tantum tumultum uides, metus est, e mari et magno spiritu erumpentibus fluuiis.

[30,3] Ubi non umorem natura disposuit, ut undique nos, cum uoluisset, aggredi posset? Mentior, nisi eruentibus terram umor occurrit et, quotiens nos aut auaritia defodit aut aliqua causa penetrare altius cogit, eruendi finis aliquando est. Adice quod immanes sunt in abdito lacus et multum maris conditi, multum fluminum per operta labentium.

[30,4] Undique ergo erit causa diluuio, cum aliae aquae subterfluant terras, aliae circumfluant, quae diu coercitae uincent et amnes amnibus iungent, paludibus stagna. Omnium tunc mare ora fontium im implebit et maiore hiatu soluet. Quemadmodum corpora nostra ad egestum uenter exhaurit, quemadmodum in sudorem eunt uires, ita tellus liquefiet et aliis causis quiescentibus intra se quo mergatur inueniet. Sed magis omnia coitura crediderim.

[30,5] Nec longa erit mora exitii: temptatur diuelliturque concordia. Cum semel aliquid ex hac idonea diligentia remiserit mundus, statim undique ex aperto et abdito, superne, ab infimo, aquarum fiet irruptio.

[30,6] Nihil est tam uiolentum, tam incontinens sui, tam contumax infestumque retinentibus quam magna uis undae: utetur libertate permissa et iubente natura, quae scindit circuitque complebit. Ut ignis diuersis locis ortus cito miscet incendium flammis coire properantibus, sic momento se redundantia pluribus locis maria committent.

[30,7] Nec ea semper licentia undis erit, sed peracto exitio generis humani extinctisque pariter feris, in quarum homines ingenia transierant, iterum aquas terra sorbebit, terra pelagus stare aut intra terminos suos furere coget, et reiectus e nostris sedibus in sua secreta pelletur oceanus et antiquus ordo reuocabitur.

[30,8] Omne ex integro animal generabitur dabiturque terris homo inscius scelerum et melioribus auspiciis natus. Sed illis quoque innocentia non durabit, nisi dum noui sunt; cito nequitia subrepat. Uirtus difficilis inuentu est, rectorem ducemque desiderat: etiam sine magistro uitia discuntur.

LIBER IV

DE NILI INCREMENTO

[1] Delectat te, quemadmodum scribis, Lucili uirorum optime, Sicilia et officium procurationis otiosae, delectabitque, si continere id intra fines suos uolueris nec efficere imperium quod est procuratio. Facturum hoc te non dubito; scio quam sis ambitioni alienus, quam familiaris otio et litteris. Turbam rerum hominumque desiderent qui se pati nesciunt: tibi tecum optime conuenit.

[2] Nec est mirum paucis istud contingere. Imperiosi nobis ipsi ac molesti sumus; modo amore nostri, modo taedio laboramus; infelicem animum nunc superbia inflammas, nunc cupiditate distendimus; alias uoluptate lassamus, alias sollicitudine exurimus; quod est miserrimum, numquam sumus singuli. Necesse est itaque assidua sit in tam magno uitiorum contubernio rixa.

[3] Fac ergo, mi Lucili, quod facere consuesti; a turba te, quantum potes, separa, ne adulatoribus latus praebeas. Artifices sunt ad captandos superiores: par illis, etiamsi bene caueris, non eris. Sed mihi crede: proditori, si capieris, ipse te trades.

[4] Habent hoc in se naturale blanditiae: etiam cum reiciuntur placent; saepe exclusae nouissime recipiuntur. Hoc enim ipsum imputant, quod repelluntur, et subigi ne contumelia quidem possunt. Incredibile est quod dicturus sum, sed tamen uerum: ea maxime quisque patet, qua petitur; fortasse enim ideo, quia patet, petitur.

[5] Sic ergo formare, ut scias non posse te consequi, ut sis impenetrabilis: cum omnia caueris, per ornamenta ferieris. Alius adulatione clam utetur, parce, alius ex aperto, palam, rusticitate simulata, quasi simplicitas illa, non ars sit. Plancus, artifex ante Vitellium maximus, aiebat non esse occulte nec ex dissimulato blandiendum: “Perit, inquit, procari, si latet.”

[6] Plurimum adulator, cum deprehensus est, proficit; plus etiam nunc, si obiurgatus est, si erubuit. Futuros multos in persona tua Plancos cogita et hoc non esse remedium tanti mali, nolle laudari. Crispus Passienus, quo ego nil cognoui subtilius in omnibus quidem rebus, maxime in distinguendis et curandis uitiis, saepe dicebat

adulationi nos non claudere ostium sed operire, et quidem sic, quemadmodum opponi amicae solet: quae, si impulit, grata est; gravior, si effregit.

[7] Demetrium egregium uirum memini dicere cuidam libertino potenti facilem sibi esse ad diuitias uiam, quo die paenituisset bonae mentis. “Nec inuidebo, inquit, uobis hac arte, sed docebo eos, quibus quaesito opus est, quemadmodum non dubiam fortunam maris, non emendi uendendique litem subeant, non incertam fidem ruris, incertiore fori temptent, quemadmodum non solum facili sed etiam hilari uia pecuniam faciant gaudentesque despolient.”

[8] “Te, inquit, longiorem Fido Annaeo iurabo et Apollonio pycete, quamuis staturam habeas pitheci cum Thraece compositi. Hominem quidem non esse ullum liberaliorem non mentiar, cum possis uideri omnibus donasse quicquid dereliquisti.”

[9] Ita est, mi Iunior: quo apertior est adulatio, quo improbior, quo magis frontem suam perfricuit, cecidit alienam, hoc citius expugnat. Eo enim iam dementiae uenimus, ut qui parce adulatur, pro maligno sit.

[10] Solebam tibi dicere Gallionem si, fratrem meum, quem nemo non parum amat, etiam qui amare plus non potest, alia uitia non nosse, hoc eum odisse. Ab omni illum parte temptasti: ingenium suspicere coepisti omnium maximum et dignissimum, quod consecrari mallet quam conteri: pedes abstulit; frugalitatem laudare coepisti, quae sic a nostris moribus resiliuit, ut illos nec habere nec damnare uideatur: prima statim uerba praecidit;

[11] coepisti mirari comitatem et in compositam suauitatem, quae illos quoque quos transit abducit, gratuitum etiam in obuios meritum (nemo enim mortalium uni tam dulcis est quam hic omnibus, cum interim - tanta naturalis boni uis est, ubi artem simulationemque non redolet - nemo non imputari sibi bonitatem publicam petitur): hoc quoque loco blanditiis tuis restitit, ut exclamares inuenisse te inexpugnabilem uirum aduersus insidias, quas nemo non in sinum recipit.

[12] Eo quidem magis hanc eius prudentiam et in euitando ineuitabili malo pertinaciam te suspicere confessus es, quia speraueras posse apertis auribus recipi, quamuis blanda diceres, quia uera dicebas. Sed eo magis intellexit obstandum: semper enim falsis

a uero petitur ueri <aucto>ritas. Nolo tamen displiceas tibi, quasi male egeris minium et quasi ille aliquid iocorum aut doli suspicatus sit: non deprehendit te sed reppulit.

[13] Ad hoc exemplar componere. Cum quis ad te adulator accesserit, dicito: “Vis tu ista uerba, quae iam ab alio magistratu ad alium cum lictoribus transeunt, ferre ad aliquem, qui paria facturus uult quicquid dixerit audire? Ego nec decipere uolo nec decipi possum: laudari me a uobis, nisi laudaretis etiam malos, uellem”. Quid autem necesse est in hoc descendere, ut te petere comminus possint? Longum inter uos interuallum sit.

[14] Cum cupieris bene laudari, quare hoc ulli debeas? Ipse te lauda, dic: Liberalibus me studiis tradidi. Quamquam paupertas alia suaderet et ingenium eo duceret ubi praesens studii pretium est, ad gratuita carmina deflexi me et ad salutare philosophiae contuli studium.

[15] Ostendi in omne pectus cadere uirtutem et, eluctatus natalium angustias nec sorte me sed animo mensus, par maximis steti. Non mihi in amicitia Gaetulici Gaius fidem eripuit; non in aliorum persona infeliciter amatorum Messallina et Narcissus, diu publici hostes antequam sui, propositum meum potuerunt euertere: ceruicem pro fide opposui; nullum uerbum mihi, quod non salua bona conscientia procederet, excussum est; pro amicis omnia timui, pro me nihil, nisi ne parum bonus amicus fuissem.

[16] Non mihi muliebres fluxere lacrimae; non e manibus ullius supplex pependi; nihil indecorum nec bono nec uiro feci. Periculis meis maior, paratus ire in ea quae minabantur, egi gratias fortunae, quod experiri uoluisset quanti aestimarem fidem (non debebat mihi paruo res tanta constare); ne examinaui quidem diu (neque enim paria pendebant), utrum satius esset me perire pro fide an fidem pro me;

[17] non praecipiti impetu in ultimum consilium, quo me eriperem furori potentium, misi. Uidebam apud Gaium tormenta, uidebam ignes, sciebam olim sub illo in eum statum res humanas decidisse, ut inter misericordiae exempla haberentur occisi: non tamen ferro incubui nec in mare aperto ore desilui, ne uiderer pro fide tantum mori posse.

[18] Adice inuictum muneribus animum et in tanto auaritiae

certamme numquam suppositam manum lucro; adice uictus parsimoniam, sermonis modestiam se, aduersus minores humanitatem, aduersus maiores reuerentiam. Post haec ipse te consule, uerane an falsa memoraueris: si uera surit, coram magno teste laudatus es; si falsa, sine teste derisus es.

[19] Possum et ipse nunc uideri te aut captare aut experiri: utrumlibet crede et omnes timere a me incipe. Vergilianum illud exaudi “nusquam tuta fides”, aut Ouidianum “qua terra patet, fera regnat Erinys: in facinus iurasse putes”, aut illud Menandri (quis enim non in hoc magnitudinem ingenii sui concitauit, detestatus consensum humani generis tendentis ad uitia?): omnes ait malos uiuere et in scaenam uelut rusticus poeta prosiluit; non senem excipit, non puerum, non feminam, non uirum, et adicit non singulos peccare nec paucos, sed iam scelus esse contextum.

[20] Fugiendum ergo et in se recedendum est; immo etiam a se recedendum. Hoc tibi, etsi diuidimur mari, praestare temptabo, ut subinde te iniecta manu ad meliora perducam, et, ne solitudinem sentias, hinc tecum miscebo sermones: erimus una, qua parte optimi sumus; dabimus inuicem consilia non ex uultu audientis pendentia;

[21] longe te ab ista prouincia abducam, ne forte magnam historiis esse fidem credas et placere tibi incipias, quotiens cogitaueris: “Hanc ego habeo sub meo iure prouinciam, quae maximarum urbium exercitus et sustinuit et fregit, cum inter Carthaginem et Romam ingentis belli pretium iacuit; quae quattuor Romanorum principum, id est totius imperii, uires contractas in unum locum uidit aluitque, Pompeii fortunam flexit, Caesaris fatigauit, Lepidi transtulit, omnium cepit;

[22] quae illi ingenti spectaculo interfuit, ex quo liquere mortalibus posset quam uelox foret ad inum lapsus e summo, quamque diuersa uia magnam potentiam fortuna destrueret: uno enim tempore uidit Pompeium Lepidumque ex maximo fastigio aliter ad extrema deiectos, cum Pompeius alienum exercitum fugeret, Lepidus suum”.

[1.1] Itaque, ut totum inde te abducam, quamuis multa habeat Sicilia in se circaque se mirabilia, omnes interim prouinciae tuae quaestiones praeteribo et in diuersum cogitationes tuas abstraham. Quaeram enim tecum id quod libro superiore distuli, quid ita Nilus aestiuus mensibus abundet. Cui Danuuuium similem habere naturam

philosophi tradiderunt, quod et fontis ignoti et aestate quam hieme maior sit.

[1,2] Utrumque apparuit falsum: nam et caput eius in Germania esse comperimus, et aestate quidem incipit crescere sed, adhuc manente intra mensuram suam Nilo, primis caloribus, cum sol uehementior intra extrema ueris niues molliat, quas ante consumit quam tumescere Nilus incipiat; reliquo uero aestatis minuitur et ad hibernam magnitudinem redit atque ex ea demittitur. At Nilus ante exortum Caniculae augetur mediis aestibus ultra aequinoctium.

[2,1] Hunc nobilissimum amnium natura extulit ante humani generis oculos et ita disposuit, ut eo tempore inundaret Aegyptum quo maxime usta feruoribus terra undas altius traheret, tantum usura quantum siccitati annuae sufficere possit. Nam in ea parte, quae in Aethiopiam uergit, aut nulli imbres sunt aut rari et qui insuetam aquis caelestibus terrain non adiuent.

[2,2] Unam, ut scis, Aegyptus in hoc spem suam habet: proinde aut sterilis annus aut fertilis est, prout ille magnus influxit aut parcior; “nemo aratorum respicit caelum”. Quare non cum poeta meo iocor et illi Ouidium a suum impingo, qui ait “nec Pluuio supplicat herba Ioui”?

[2,3] Unde crescere incipiat si comprehendi posset, causae quoque incrementi inuenirentur: nunc uero magnas solitudines peruagatus et in paludes diffusus <flexibusque in>gentibus sparsus circa Philas primum ex uago et errante colligitur. Philae insula est aspera et undique prearupta; duobus in unum coituris amnibus bus cingitur, qui Nilo mutantur et eius nomen ferunt; urbem totam complectitur.

[2,4] Ab hac Nilus magnus magis quam uiolentus egressus, Aethiopiam harenasque, per quas iter ad commercia Indici maris est, praelabatur. Excipiunt eum Cataractae, nobilis insigni spectaculo locus:

[2,5] ibi per arduas excisasque pluribus locis rupes Nilus insurgit et uires suas concitat. Frangitur enim occurrentibus saxis et per angusta eluctatus, ubicumque uincit aut uincitur, fluctuat et illic excitationis primum aquis, quas sine tumultu leni alueo duxerat, uiolentus et torrens per malignos transitus prosilit dissimilis sibi, quippe ad id lutosus et turbidus fluit; at ubi scopulos et acuta cautium uerberauit, spumat, et illi non ex natura sua sed ex iniuria loci color est,

tandemque eluctatus obstantia in uastam altitudinem subito destitutus cadit cum ingenti circumiacentium regionum strepitu. Quem perferre gens ibi a Persis collocata non potuit obtusis assiduo fragore auribus et ob hoc sedibus ad quietiora translatis.

[2,6] Inter miracula fluminis incredibilem incolarum audaciam accepi: bini paruula nauigia conscendunt, quorum alter nauem regit, alter exhaurit; deinde multum inter rapidam insaniam Nili et reciprocos fluctus uolutati tandem tenuissimos canales tenent, per quos angusta rupium effugiunt et, cum toto flumine effusi, nauigium ruens manu temperant magnoque spectantium metu in caput missi, cum iam adploraueris mersosque atque obrutos tanta mole credideris, longe ab eo, in quem cederunt, loco nauigant tormenti modo missi; nec mergit illos cadens unda sed planis aquis tradit.

[2,7] Primum incrementum Nili circa insulam, quam modo rettuli Philas uisitur: exiguo ab hac spatio petra diuiditur (Abaton Graeci uocant, nec illam ulli nisi antistites calcant); illa primum saxa auctum fluminis sentiunt. Post magnum deinde spatium duo eminent scopuli (Nili uenas uocant incolae) ex quibus magna uis funditur, non tamen quanta operire possit Aegyptum. In haec ora stipem sacerdotes et aurea dona praefecti, cum sollemne uenit sacrum, iaciunt.

[2,8] Hinc iam manifestus nouarum uirium Nilus alto ac profundo alueo fertur, ne in latitudinem excedat, obiectu montium pressus. Circa Memphim demum liber et per campestria uagus in plura scinditur flumina manuque canalibus factis, ut sit modus in deriuantium potestate, per totam discurrit Aegyptum. Initio diducitur, deinde continuatis aquis in faciem lati ac turbidi maris stagnat: cursum illi uiolentiamque eripit latitudo regionum in quas extenditur dextra laeuaque totam amplexus Aegyptum.

[2,9] Quantum creuit Nilus, tantum spei in annum est; nec computatio fallit agricolam, adeo ad mensuram fluminis terra respondet, quam fertilem facit Nilus. Is harenoso ac sitiendi solo et aquam inducit et terram: nam cum turbulentus fluat, omnem in siccis atque hiantibus locis faecem relinquit et, quicquid pingue secum tulit, arentibus locis allinit iuuatque agros duabus ex causis, et quod inundat et quod oblimat. Itaque quicquid non adiuit, sterile ac squalidum iacet; si creuit super debitum, nocuit.

[2,10] Mira itaque natura fluminis quod, cum ceteri amnes abluant

terras et euiscerent, Nilus, tanto ceteris maior, adeo nihil exedit nec abradit, ut contra adiciat uires minimumque in eo sit, quod solum temperat: illato enim limo harenas saturat ac iungit, debetque illi Aegyptus non tantum fertilitatem terrarum, sed ipsas.

[2,11] Illa facies pulcherrima est cum iam se in agros Nilus ingessit: latent campi opertaeque sunt ualles, oppida insularum modo exstant, nullum mediterraneis nisi per nauigia commercium est maiorque est laetitia gentibus quo minus terrarum suarum uident.

[2,12] Sic quoque, cum se ripis continet Nilus, per septena ostia in mare emittitur: quodcumque ex his elegeris, mare est. Multos nihilominus ignobiles ramos in aliud atque aliud litus porrigit. Ceterum beluas marinis uel magnitudine uel noxa pares educat, et ex eo quantus sit aestimari potest quod ingentia animalia et pabulo sufficienti et ad uagandum loco continet.

[2,13] Balbillus, uirorum optimus perfectusque in omni litterarum genere rarissime, auctor est, cum ipse praefectus obtineret Aegyptum, Heracleotico ostio Nili, quod est maximum, spectaculo sibi fuisse delphinorum a mari occurrentium et crocodillorum a flumine aduersum agmen agentium uelut pro partibus proelium; crocodillos ab animalibus placidis morsuque innoxiiis uictos.

[2,14] His superior pars corporis dura et impenetrabilis est etiam maiorum animalium dentibus, at inferior mollis ac tenera. Hanc delphini spinis, quas dorso eminentes gerunt, submersi uulnerabant et in aduersum enisi diuidebant; rescissis hoc modo pluribus ceteri uelut acie uersa refugerunt: fugax animal audaci, audacissimum timido!

[2,15] Nec illos Tentyritae generis aut sanguinis proprietate superant, sed contemptu et temeritate. Ultro enim insequuntur fugientesque iniecto trahunt laqueo: plerique pereunt, quibus minus praesens animus ad persequendum fuit.

[2,16] Nilum aliquando marinam aquam detulisse Theophrastus est auctor. Biennio continuo regnante Cleopatra non ascendisse, decimo regni anno et undecimo, constat. Significatam aiunt duobus rerum potentibus defectionem: Antonii enim Cleopatraeque defecit imperium. Per nouem annos non ascendisse Nilum superioribus saeculis Callimachus est auctor.

[2,17] Sed nunc ad inspiciendas causas, propter quas aestate Nilus

crescat, accedam et ab antiquissimis incipiam. Anaxagoras ait ex Aethiopiae iugis solutas niues ad Nilum usque decurrere. In eadem opinione omnis uetustas fuit: hoc Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides tradunt. Sed falsum esse argumentis pluribus patet.

[2,18] Primo Aethiopiam feruentissimam esse indicat hominum adustus color et Trogodytae, quibus subterraneae domus sunt. Saxa uelut igni feruescunt non tantum medio sed inclinato quoque die; ardens puluis nec humani uestigii patiens; argentum replumbatur; signorum coagmenta soluuntur; nullum materiae superadornatae manet operimentum. Auster quoque, qui ex illo tractu uenit, uentorum calidissimus est. Nullum ex his animalibus quae latent bruma umquam reconditur, etiam per hiemes in summo et aperto serpens est. Alexandriae quoque, quae longe ab immodicis caloribus posita est, niues non cadunt; superiora pluuiis carent.

[2,19] Quemadmodum ergo regio tantis subiecta feruoribus duraturas per totam aestatem niues recipit? Quas sane aliqui montes illic quoque excipiant: numquid magis quam Alpes, quam Thraciae iuga aut Caucasus? Atqui horum montium flumina uere et prima aestate intumescunt, deinde hibernis minora sunt: quippe uernis temporibus imbres niuem diluunt, reliquias eius primus calor dissipat.

[2,20] Nec Rhenus nec Rhodanus nec Hister nec Caystrus subiacens Tmolo aestate proueniunt: et illis altissimae, ut in septemtrionibus, iugiter sunt niues. Phasis quoque per idem tempus et Borysthenes crescerent, ut niues flumina possent contra aestatem magna producere.

[2,21] Praeterea si haec causa attolleret Nilum, aestate prima plenissimus flueret; tunc enim maxime integrae adhuc niues ex mollissimoque tabes est: Nilus autem per menses quattuor liquitur et illi aequalis accessio est.

[2,22] Si Thaleti credis, etesiae descendenti Nilo resistunt et cursum eius acto contra ostia mari sustinent: ita reuerberatus in se recurrit nec crescit, sed exitu prohibitus resistit et quacumque mox potuit ui congestus erumpit. Euthymenes Massiliensis testimonium dicit: "Nauigauit, inquit, Atlanticum mare: inde Nilus fluit, maior, quamdiu etesiae tempus obseruant; tunc enim eicitur mare instantibus uentis. Cum resederunt, et pelagus conquiescit minorque descendenti inde

uis Nilo est. Ceterum dulcis mari sapor est et similes Niloticis beluae”.

[2,23] Quare ergo, si Nilum etesiae prouocant, et ante illos incipit incrementum eius et post eos durat? Praeterea non fit maior quo illi flauere uehementius, nec remittitur incitaturque prout illis impetus fuit: quod fieret, si illorum uiribus cresceret. Quid, quod etesiae litus Aegyptium uerberant et contra illos Nilus descendit, inde uenturus unde illi, si origo ab illis esset? Praeterea ex mari purus et caeruleus efflueret, non ut nunc turbidus ueniret.

[2,24] Adice quod testimonium eius testium turba coarguitur. Tunc erat mendacio locus; cum ignota essent externa, licebat illis fabulas mittere; nunc uero tota exteri maris ora mercatorum nauibus stringitur, quorum nemo narrat initium Nili aut mare saporis alterius: quod natura credi uetat, quia dulcissimum quodque et leuissimum sol trahit.

[2,25] Praeterea quare hieme non crescit? Et tunc potest uentis concitari mare aliquanto quidem maioribus: nam etesiae temperati sunt. Quod si e mari ferretur Atlantico, semel oppleret Aegyptum: at nunc per gradus crescit.

[2,26] Oenopides Chius ait hieme calorem sub terris contineri: ideo et specus calidos esse et tepidiorem puteis aquam, itaque uenas interno calore siccari. Sed in aliis terris augeri imbribus flumina; Nilum, quia nullo imbre adiuuetur, tenuari; deinde crescere per aestatem, quo tempore fripent interiora terrarum et redit rigor fontibus.

[2,27] Quod si uerum esset, aestate flumina crescerent omnia, putei aestate abundarent. Deinde falsum est calorem hieme sub terris esse maiorem. At quare specus et putei tepent? Quia aera frigentem extrinsecus non recipiunt: ita non calorem habent, sed frigus excludunt. Ex eadem causa aestate refrigescunt, quia ad illos remotos seductosque calefactus non peruertit.

[2,28] Diogenes Apolloniates ait: “Sol umorem ad se rapit: hunc adsiccata tellus ex mari ducit, tum ex ceteris aquis. Fieri autem non potest, ut alia sicca sit tellus, alia abundet; sunt enim perforata omnia et inuicem peruia, et sicca ab umidis sumunt. Alioquin, nisi aliquid terra acciperet, exaruisset. Ergo undique sol trahit, sed ex his quae premit maxime; haec meridiana sunt.

[2,29] Terra cum exaruit, plus ad se umoris adducit: ut in lucernis oleum illo fluit ubi exurit, sic aqua illo incumbit quo uis caloris et terrae aestuantis arcessit. Unde ergo trahit? Ex illis scilicet partibus semper hibernis: septentrionales exundant. Ob hoc Pontus in infernum mare assidue fluit rapidus (non ut cetera maria alternatis ultro citro aestibus) in unam partem semper promus et torrens. Quod nisi facile his itineribus quod cuique deest redderetur, quod cuique superest emit, teretur, iam aut sicca essent omnia aut inundata”.

[2,30] Interrogare Diogenem libet quare, cum pertusa sint cuncta et inuicem commeant, non omnibus locis aestate maiora sint flumina. “Aegyptum sol magis percoquit: itaque Nilus magis crescit. Sed in ceteris quoque terris aliqua fluminibus fiat adiectio.” Deinde quare ulla pars terrae sine umore est, cum omnis ad se ex aliis regionibus trahat, eo quidem magis quo calidior est? Deinde quare Nilus dulcis est, si haec illi e mari unda est? Nec enim ulli flumini mini dulcior gustus...

[3,1] DE NUBIBUS

Grandinem hoc modo fieri si tibi affirmauero quo apud nos glacies fit, gelata nube tota, nimis audacem rem fecero. Itaque ex his me testibus numero secundae notae, qui uidisse quidem se negant; aut, quod historici faciunt, et ipse faciam: illi cum multa mentiti sunt ad arbitrium suum, unam aliquam rem nolunt spondere sed adiciunt: “Penes auctores fides erit”.

[3,2] Ergo si mihi parum credis, Posidonius tibi auctoritatem promittit tam in illo quod praeteriit, quam in hoc quod secuturum est: grandinem enim fieri ex nube aquosa iam et in umorem uersa sic affirmabit tamquam interfuerit.

[3,3] Quare autem rotunda sit grando, etiam sine magistro scire possis, cum adnotaueris stillicidium omne glomerari, quod et in speculis apparet, quae umorem halitu colligunt, et in poculis sparsis aliaque omni leuitate; non minus foliis si quae guttae adhaeserunt, in rotundum iacent.

[3,4] “Quid magis est saxo durum? Quid mollius unda? Dura tamen molli saxa cauantur aqua.” Aut, ut alius poeta ait: “stillicidi casus lapidem cauat.” Haec ipsa excauatio rotunda fit; ex quo apparet illud quoque huic simile esse quod cauat: locum enim sibi ad formam et habitum sui exsculpit.

[3,5] Praeterea potest, etiamsi non fuit grando talis, dum defertur, corrotundari et, totiens per spatium aeris densi deuoluta, aequabiliter atque in orbem teri. Quod nix pati non potest, quia non est tam solida, immo quia fusa est, et non per magnam altitudinem cadit sed circa terras initium eius est: ita non longus illi per aera sed ex proximo lapsus est.

[3,6] Quare non et ego mihi idem permittam quod Anaxagoras? Inter nullos magis quam inter philosophos esse debet aequa libertas: grando nihil aliud est quam suspensa glacies, nix [in] pruina pendens [congelatio]. Illud enim iam diximus, quod inter rorem et aquam interest, hoc inter pruinam et glaciem nec non inter niuem et grandinem interesse.

[4,1] Poteram me peracta quaestione dimittere sed bene mensum dabo et, quoniam coepi tibi molestus esse, quicquid in hoc loco quaeritur dicam; quaeritur autem quare hieme ningat, non grandinet, uere iam frigore infracto grando cadat. Nam, ut fallar tibi, uerum mihi quidem persuadetur, qui me usque ad mendacia haec leuiora, in quibus os percidi non oculi erui solent, credulum praesto:

[4,2] hieme aer riget et ideo nondum in aquam uertitur sed in niuem, cui aer propior est; cum uer coepit, maior inclinatio temporis sequitur et calidiore caelo maiora fiunt stillicidia. Ideo (ut ait Vergilius noster) “cum ruit imbriferum uer”, uehementior mutatio est aeris undique patefacti et soluentis se ipso tempore adiuuante: ob hoc nimbi graues magis uastique quam pertinaces deferuntur.

[4,3] Bruma lentas pluuias habet et tenues, quales saepe solent interuenire, cum pluuias rara et minuta niuem quoque admixtam habet; dicimus niualem diem, cum altum frigus et triste caelum est. Praeterea, aquilone flante aut suum caelum habente, minutae pluuias sunt; austro imber improbior est et guttae pleniores.

[5,1] Rem a nostris positam nec dicere audeo, quia infirma uidetur, nec praeterire: quid enim mali est aliquid et faciliori iudici scribere? Immo si omnia argumenta ad obrussam coeperimus exigere, silentium indicetur: pauca enim admodum sunt sine aduersario; cetera, etiamsi uincunt, litigant.

[5,2] Aiunt uere, quicquid circa Scythiam et Pontum et septemtrionalem plagam glaciatum et astrictum est, relaxari; tunc flumina gelata discedere, tunc obrutos montes niuem soluere.

Credibile est ergo frigidus spiritus inde fieri et uerno caelo remiseris.

[5,3] Illud quoque adiciunt, quod nec sum expertus nec experiri cogito (tu quoque, censeo, si uolueris uerum exquirere, niuem in Care experiaris): minus algere aiunt pedes eorum, qui fixam et duram niuem calcant quam eorum, qui teneram et labefactam.

[5,4] Ergo, si non mentiuritur, quicquid ex illis septemtrionalibus locis iam disturbata niue et glacie frangente se fertur, id meridianae partis tepentem iam umidumque aera alligat et praestringit: ita quae pluuias futura erat, grando fit iniuria frigoris.

[6,1] Non tempero mihi quominus omnes nostrorum ineptias proferam. Quosdam peritos obseruandarum nubium esse affirmant et praedicere cum grando uentura sit. Hoc intellegere usu ipso potuerunt, cum colorem nubium notassent, quem grando totiens insequabatur.

[6,2] Illud incredibile, Cleonis fuisse publice praepositos chalazophylacas, speculatores uenturae grandinis. Hi cum signum dedissent adesse iam grandinem, quid expectas? ut homines ad paenulas discurrerent aut ad scortearum? Immo pro se quisque alius agnum immolabat, alius pullum: protinus illae nubes alio declinabant, cum aliquid gustassent sanguinis.

[6,3] Hoc rides? Accipe quod magis rideas: si quis nec agnum nec pullum habebat, quod sine damno fieri poterat, manus sibi afferebat, et, ne tu auidas aut crudeles existimes nubes, digitum suum bene acuto graphio pungebat et hoc sanguine litabat; nec minus ab huius agello grando se uertebat quam ab illo, in quo maioribus hostiis exorata erat.

[7,1] Rationem huius rei quaerunt: alteri, ut homines sapientissimos decet, negant posse fieri ut cum grandine aliquis paciscatur et tempestates munusculis redimat, quamuis munera et deos uincant. Alteri suspicari ipsos aiunt esse in ipso sanguine uim quandam potentem auertendae nubis ac repellendae.

[7,2] Sed quomodo in tam exiguo sanguine potest esse uis tanta, ut in altum penetret et illam sentiant nubes? Quanto expeditius erat dicere: mendacium et fabula est. At Cleonaei iudicia reddebant in illos quibus delegata erat cura prouidendae tempestatis, quod neglegentia eorum uineae uapulassent aut segetes procidissent. Et

apud nos in XII tabulis cauetur “ne quis alienos fructus excantassit”.

[7,3] Rudis adhuc antiquitas credebat et attrahi cantibus imbres et repelli, quorum nihil posse fieri tam palam est, ut huius rei causa nullius philosophi schola intranda sit.

[8,1] Unam rem ad hoc adiciam et fauere te ac plaudere iuuabit. Aiunt niuem in ea parte aeris fieri quae prope terras est. Hanc enim plus habere caloris ex quattuor causis: una, quod omnis terrarum euaporatio, cum multum in se feruidi aridique habeat, hoc est calidior quo recentior; altera, quod radii solis a terra resiliunt et in se recurrunt: horum duplicatio proxima quaeque a terris calefacit, quae ideo plus habent teporis quia solem bis sentiunt; tertia causa est, quod magis superiora perflantur, at quaecumque depressa sunt minus uentis uerberantur.

[9,1] Accedit bis ratio Democriti: “Omne corpus, quo solidius est hoc calorem citius concipit, diutius seruat. Itaque si in sole posueris aeneum uas et uitreum [et argenteum], aeneo citius calor accedet, diutius haerebit.” Adicit deinde quare hoc existimet fieri.” His, inquit, corporibus, quae duriora et pressiora sunt, necesse est minora foramina esse et tenuiorem in singulis spiritum: sequitur ut, quemadmodum minora balnearia et minora miliaria citius calefiunt, sic haec foramina occulta et oculos effugientia et celerius feruorem sentiant et propter easdem angustias, quicquid receperunt, tardius reddant.”. Haec longe praeparata ad id perducunt, de quo nunc quaeritur.

[10,1] Omnis aer quo propior est terris, hoc crassior. Quemadmodum in aqua et in omni umore faex ima est, ita in aere spississima quaeque desidunt. Iam autem probatum est omnia, quo crassioris solidiorisque materiae sunt, hoc fidelius custodire calorem receptum. Editior aer, quo longius a terrarum colluie recessit, hoc sincerior puriorque est; itaque solem non retinet sed uelut per inane transmittit: ideo minus calefit.

[11,1] Contra quidam aiunt cacumina montium hoc calidiora esse debere, quo propiora soli sunt: qui mihi uidentur errare, quod Apenninum et Alpes et alios notos ob eximiam altitudinem montes in tantum putant crescere, ut illorum magnitudo sentire solis uiciniam possit:

[11,2] excelsa sunt ista, quamdiu nobis comparantur; at uero, ubi ad

uniuersum respexeris, manifesta est omnium humilitas. Inter se uincuntur et uincunt; ceterum in tantum nihil attollitur, ut in collatione totius ulla sit uel maximis portio: quod nisi esset, non diceremus totum orbem terrarum pilam esse.

[11,3] Pilae proprietas est cum aequalitate quadam rotunditas, aequalitatem autem hanc accipe quam uides in lusoria pila: non multum illi commissurae et rimae [earum] nocent quo minus par sibi ab omni parte dicatur. Quomodo in hac pila nihil illa interualla officiant ad speciem rotundi, sic ne in uniuerso quidem orbe terrarum editi montes, quorum altitudo totius mundi collatione consumitur.

[11,4] Qui dicit altiozem montem, quia solem propius excipiat, magis calere debere, idem dicere potest longiorem hominem citius quam pusillum debere calefieri et caput citius quam pedes: at quisquis mundum mensura sua aestimauerit et terrain cogitauerit tenere puncti locum, intellet nihil in illa posse ita eminere, ut caelestia magis sentiat, uelut in propinquum illis accesserit.

[11,5] Montes isti, quos suspicimus, et uertices aeterna niue obsessi nihilominus in imo sunt; et propius quidem est a sole mons quam campus aut uallis, sed sic quomodo est pilus pilo crassior. Isto enim modo et arbor alia magis quam alia dicetur uicina caelo. Quod est falsum, quia inter pusilla non potest magnum esse discrimen, nisi dum inter se comparantur. Ubi ad collationem immensi corporis uentum est, nihil interest quanto sit alterum altero malus, quia, etiamsi magno discrimine, tamen minima uincuntur.

[12,1] Sed ut ad propositum reuertar, propter has quas rettuli causas plerisque placuit in ea parte aeris niuem concipi quae uicina terris est, et ideo minus alligari quia minore rigore coit. Nam uicinus aer et plus habet frigoris quam ut in aquam imbremque transeat, et minus quam ut duretur in grandinem: hoc medio frigore non nimis intento niues fiunt coactis aquis.

[13,1] “Quid istas, inquis, ineptias, quibus litteratior est quisque, non melior, tam operose persequeris? Quomodo fiant niues dicis, cum multo magis ad nos dici a te pertineat quare emendae non sint niues.” Iubes me tandem cum luxuria litigare? Cotidianum istud et sine effectu iurgium est. Litigemus tamen, etiamsi superior futura est: pugnantes ac reluctantes uincat.

[13,2] Quid porro? Hanc ipsam inspectionem naturae nihil iudicas

ad id, quod uis, conferre? Cum quaeramus quomodo nix fiat et dicimus illam pruinae similem habere naturam, plus illi spiritus quam aquae inesse, non putas exprobrari illis, cum emere aquam turpe sit, si ne aquam quidem emunt?

[13,3] Nos uero quaeramus potius quomodo fiant niues quam quomodo seruentur, quoniam non contenti uina diffundere, ueteraria per sapes aetatesque disponere, inuenimus quomodo stiparemus niuem, ut ea aestatem euinceret et contra anni feruorem defenderetur loci frigore. Quid hac diligentia consecuti sumus? Nempe ut gratuitam mercemur aquam: nobis dolet quod spiritum, quod solem emere non possumus, quod hic aer etiam delicatis diuitibusque ex facili nec emptus uenit. O quam nobis male est, quod quicquam a rerum natura in medio relictum est!

[13,4] Hoc quod illa fluere et patere omnibus uoluit, cuius haustum uitae publicum fecit, hoc quod tam homini quam feris auibusque et inertissimis animalibus in usum large ac beate profudit, contra se ingeniosa luxuria redegit ad pretium: adeo nihil illi potest placere nisi carum. Unum hoc erat quod diuites in aequum turbae deduceret, quo non possent antecedere pauperrimum: illi, cui diuitiae molestae sunt, excogitatum est quemadmodum etiam caperet aqua luxuriam.

[13,5] Unde ad hoc peruentum sit ut nulla nobis aqua satis frigida uideretur quae flueret, dicam. Quamdiu sanus et salubris cibi capax stomachus est impleturque, non premitur, naturalibus fomentis contentus est: ubi cotidianis cruditatibus perustus non temporis aestus sed suos sentit, ubi ebrietas continua uisceribus insedit et praecordia bile, in quam uertitur, torret, aliquid necessario quaeritur, quo aestus ille frangatur, qui ipsis aquis incalescit: remediis incitatur uitium. Itaque non aestate tantum sed et media hieme niuem hac causa bibunt.

[13,6] Quae huius rei causa est nisi intestinum malum et luxu corrupta praecordia? Quibus nullum interuallum umquam, quo interquiescerent, datum est, sed prandia cenis usque in lucem perductis ingesta sunt et distentos copia ferculorum ac uarietate comessatio altius mersit; deinde numquam intermissa intemperantia quicquid animi decoxerat efferauit et in desiderium semper noui rigoris accendit.

[13,7] Itaque quamuis cenationem uelis ac specularibus muniant et

igne multo doment hiemem, nihilominus stomachus ille solutus et aestu suo languidus quaerit aliquid quo erigatur. Nam sicut animo relictos stupentesque frigida spargimus, ut ad sensum sui redeant, ita uiscera istorum uitiiis torpentia nihil sentiunt, nisi frigore illa uehementiore perusseris.

[13,8] Inde est, inquam, quod ne niue quidem contenti sunt, sed glaciem, uelut certior illi ex solido rigor sit, exquirunt ac saepe repetitis aquis diluunt: quae non e summo tollitur sed, ut uim maiorem habeat et pertinacius frigus, ex abdito effoditur. Itaque ne unum quidem eius est pretium, sed habet institores aqua et annonam (pro pudor!) uariam.

[13,9] Unguentarios Lacedaemonii urbe expulerunt et propere cedere finibus suis iusserunt, quia oleum disperderent: quid illi fecissent, si uidissent reponendae niuis officinas et tot iumenta portandae aquae deseruientia, cuius colorem saporemque paleis, quibus custodiunt, inquinant?

[13,10] At, dii boni, quam facile est extinguere sitim sanam! Sed quid sentire possunt emortuae fauces et occallatae cibis ardentibus? Quemadmodum nihil illis satis frigidum, sic nihil satis calidum est, sed ardentes boletos et raptim indumento suo mersatos demittunt paene fumantes, quos deinde restinguant niuatis potionibus. Videbis, inquam, quosdam graciles et palliolo focalique circumdatos, pallentes et aegros non sorbere solum niuem sed etiam esse et frustra eius in scyphos suos deicere, ne tepescant inter ipsam bibendi moram.

[13,11] Sitim istam esse putas? Febris est, et quidem eo acrior quod non tactu uenarum nec in cutem effuso calore deprehenditur sed cor ipsum excoquit. Luxuria inuictum malum et ex molli fluidoque durum atque patiens. Non intellegis omnia consuetudine uim suam perdere? Itaque nix ista, in qua iam etiam natatis, eo peruenit usu et cotidiana stomachi seruitute, ut aquae locum obtineat. Aliquid adhuc quaerite illa frigidius, quia pro nihilo est familiaris rigor.

LIBER V

DE VENTIS

[1,1] Uentus est fluens aer. Quidam ita definierunt: uentus est aer fluens in unam partem. Haec definitio uidetur diligentior, quia numquam aer tam immobilis est ut non in aliqua sit agitatione; sic tranquillum mare dicitur, cum leuiter commouetur nec in unam partem inclinatur: itaque si legeris “cum placidum uentis staret mare”, scito illud non stare sed succuti leuiter et dici tranquillum, quia nec hoc nec illo impetum capiat.

[1,2] Idem et de aere iudicandum est, non esse umquam immobilem, etiamsi quietus sit. Quod ex hoc intellegas licet: cum sol in aliquem clausum locum infusus est, uidemus corpuscula minima in aduersum ferri, alia sursum, alia deorsum uarie concursantia.

[1,3] Ergo ut parum diligenter comprehendet quod uult, qui dixerit: “fluctus est maris agitatio”, quia tranquillum quoque agitur, at ille abunde sibi cauerit, cuius definitio haec fuerit: “fluctus est maris in unam partem agitatio”; sic in hac quoque re, quam cum maxime quaerimus, non circumscribetur qui ita se gesserit ut dicat: “uentus est fluens in unam partem aer” aut “aer fluens impetu” aut “uis aeris in unam partem euntis” aut “cursus aeris aliquo concitior”.

[1,4] Scio quid responderi pro altera definitione possit: quid necesse est adicere te “in unam partem”? Utique enim quod fluit in unam partem fluit; nemo aquam fluere dicit, si tantum intra se mouetur, sed si aliquo fertur: potest ergo aliquid moueri et non fluere, et e contrario non potest fluere nisi in unam partem.

[1,5] Sed siue haec breuitas satis a calumnia tuta est, hac utamur; siue aliquis circumspector est, uerbo non parcat, cuius adiectio cauillationem omnem poterit excludere. Nunc ad ipsam rem accedamus, quoniam satis de formula disputatum est.

[2,1] Democritus ait, cum in angusto inani multa sint corpuscula, quae ille atomos uocat, sequi uentum; at contra quietum et placidum aeris statum esse, cum in multo inani pauca sint corpuscula. Nam quemadmodum in foro aut uico, quamdiu paucitas est, sine tumultu ambulatur, ubi turba in angustum concurrit, aliorum in alios

incidentium rixa fit: sic in hoc quo circumdati sumus spatio, cum exiguum locum multa corpora impleuerint, necesse est alia aliis incidant et impellant ac repellantur implicenturque et comprimantur, ex quibus nascitur uentus, cum illa quae colluctabantur incubuere et diu fluctuata ac dubia inclinauere se. At ubi in magna laxitate corpora pauca uersantur, nec arietare possunt nec impelli.

[3,1] Hoc falsum esse uel ex eo colligas licet quod tunc minime uentus est, cum aer nubilo grauis est: atqui tunc plurima corpora se in angustum contulerunt, et inde est spissarum nubium grauitas.

[3,2] Adice nunc quod circa flumina et lacus frequens nebula est artatis congestisque corporibus, nec tamen uentus est. Interdum uero tanta caligo effunditur ut conspectum in uicino stantium eripiat, quod non eueniret, nisi in paruum locum corpora se multa compellerent. Atqui nullum tempus magis quam nebulosum caret uento.

[3,3] Adice nunc quod e contrario euenit ut sol matutinum aera spissum et umidum ortu suo tenuet; tunc surgit aura, cum datum est laxamentum corporibus et stipatio illorum ac turba resoluta est.

[4,1] Quo modo ergo, inquis, uenti fiunt, quoniam hoc negas fieri? - Non uno modo: alias enim terra ipsa magnam uim aeris eicit et ex abdito spirat, alias, cum magna et continua ex imo euaporatio in altum egit quae emiserat, mutatio ipsa halitus mixti in uentum uertitur.

[4,2] Illud enim nec ut credam mihi persuaderi potest nec ut taceam: quomodo in nostris corporibus cibo fit inflatio (quae non sine magna narium iniuria emittitur et uentrem interdum cum sonos exonerat, interdum secretus), sic putant et hanc magnam rerum naturam alimenta mutantem emittere spiritum. Bene nobiscum agitur quod semper concoquit: alioquin immundius aliquid timeremus.

[4,3] Numquid ergo hoc uerius est dicere, multa ex omni parte terrarum et assidua ferri corpuscula? Quae cum coaceruata sunt, deinde extenuari sole coeperunt, quia omne quod in angusto dilatatur, spatium maius desiderat, uentus existit.

[5,1] Quid ergo? Hanc solam esse causam uenti existimo, aquarum terrarumque euaporationes; ex his grauitatem aeris fieri, deinde solui <solus> impetu, cum quae densa steterant, ut est necesse, extenuata nituntur in ampliorem locum? Ego uero et hanc iudico. Ceterum illa est longe ualentior ueriorque, habere aera naturalem uim mouendi se

nec aliunde concipere sed inesse illi, ut aliarum rerum, ita huius potentiam.

[5,2] An hoc existimas, nobis quidem datas uires quibus nos moueremus, aera autem relictum inertem et inagitabilem esse, cum aqua motum suum habeat etiam uentis quiescentibus? Nec enim aliter animalia ederet; muscum quoque innasci aquis et herbosa quaedam uidemus summo innatantia: est ergo aliquid in aqua uitale.

[6,1] De aqua dico? Ignis, qui omnia consumit, quaedam creat et, quod uideri non potest simile ueri, tamen uerum est, animalia igne generari. Habet ergo aliquam uim uitalem aer et ideo modo spissat se modo expandit et purgat et alias contrahit diducit ac differt. Hoc ergo interest inter aera et uentum quod inter lacum et flumen. Aliquando per se ipse sol causa uenti est fundens rigentem aera et ex denso coactoque explicans.

[7,1] In uniuersum de uentis diximus: nunc uiritim incipiamus illos excutere. Fortasse apparebit quemadmodum fiant, si apparuerit quando et unde procedant. Primum ergo antelucanos flatus inspiciamus, qui aut ex fluminibus aut ex conuallibus aut aliquo sinu feruntur.

[7,2] Nullus ex his pertinax est sed cadit fortiore iam sole nec fert ultra terrarum conspectum. Hoc uentorum genus incipit uere, non ultra aestatem durat et inde maxime uenit ubi aquarum plurimum et montium est. Plana, licet abundant aquis, carent aura; hac, dico, quae pro uento ualet.

[8,1] Quomodo ergo talis flatus concipitur quem Graeci Gegkolpian uocant? Quicquid ex se paludes et flumina remittunt (id autem et multum est et assiduum), per diem solis alimentum est, nocte non exhauritur et montibus inclusum in unam regionem colligitur; cum illam impleuit et iam se non capit, exprimitur aliquo et in unam partem procedit: hinc uentus est. Itaque eo incumbit quo liberior exitus inuitat et loci laxitas, in quam coaceruata decurrant.

[8,2] Huius rei argumentum est, quod prima noctis parte non spirat: incipit enim fieri illa collectio, quae circa lucem iam plena est; onerata quaerit quo defluat, et eo potissimum exit ubi plurimum uacui est et magna ac patens area. Adicit autem ei stimulos ortus solis feriens gelidum aera; nam etiam antequam appareat, lumine ipso ualet et nondum quidem radiis aera impellit, iam tamen lacessit

et irritat luce praemissa;

[8,3] nam cum ipse processit, alia superius rapiuntur, alia diffunduntur tepore: ideo non ultra matutinum illis datur fluere; omnis illorum uis conspectu solis extinguitur. Etiam si uiolentiores flauere, circa medium tamen diem relanguescunt, nec unquam usque in meridiem aura producit; alia autem imbecillior ac breuior est, prout ualentioribus minoribusue collecta causis est.

[9,1] Quare tamen tales uenti uere et aestate ualidiores sunt? - (leuissimi enim cetera parte anni nec qui uela impleant surgunt): quia uer aquosum est ex pluuiarum aquis, locisque ob umidam caeli naturam saturis et redundantibus maior euaporatio est.

[9,2] At quare aestate aequae profunditur? Quia post occasum solis remanet diurnus calor et magna noctis parte perdurat; qui euocat exeuntia ac uehementius trahit quicquid ex his sponte reddi solet, deinde non tantum habet uirium ut quod euocauit absumat: ob hoc diutius corpuscula emanare solita et efflari <e> terra, <aera> ex se atque umorem mittunt.

[9,3] Facit autem uentum ortus non calore tantum sed etiam ictu: lux enim, ut dixi, quae solem antecedit, nondum aera calefacit sed percutit tantum, percussus autem in latus cedit. Quamquam ego ne illud quidem concesserim, lucem ipsam sine calore esse, cum ex calore sit:

[9,4] non habet forsitan tantum teporis, quantum tactu appareat, opus tamen suum facit et densa diducit ac tenuat; propterea loca, quae aliqua iniquitate naturae ita clausa sunt ut solem accipere non possint, illa quoque nubila et tristi luce calefiunt et per diem minus quam noctibus rigent.

[9,5] Etiam nunc natura calor omnis abigit nebulas et a se repellit: ergo sol quoque idem facit, et ideo, ut quibusdam uidetur, inde flatus est unde sol.

[10,1] Hoc falsum esse ex eo apparet quod aura in omnem partem uehit et contra ortum plenis uelis nauigatur: quod non eueniret, si semper uentus ferretur a sole. Etesiae quoque, qui in argumentum a quibusdam aduocantur, non nimis propositum adiuuant.

[10,2] Dicam primum quid illis placeat, deinde cur displiceat mihi. Etesiae, inquiunt, hieme non sunt, quia breuissimis diebus sol desinit, priusquam frigus euincatur (itaque niues et ponuntur et durant):

aestate incipiunt flare, cum et longius extenditur dies et recti in nos radii diriguntur.

[10,3] Ueri ergo simile est concussas calore magno niues plus umidi efflare, item terras exoneratas niue repectasque spirare liberius: ita plura ex septemtrionali parte caeli corpora exire et in haec loca, quae sunt summissiora ac tepidiora, deferri; sic impetum etesias sumere.

[10,4] Et ob hoc a solstitio illis initium est (ultraque ortum Caniculae non ualent), quia iam multum e frigida caeli parte in hanc egestum est ac sol mutato cursu in nostram rector tendit et alteram partem aeris attrahit, alteram uero impellit. Sic ille etesiarum flatus aestatem frangit et a mensium feruentissimorum grauitate defendit.

[11,1] Nunc (quod promisi) dicendum est quare etesiae nos non adiuuent nec quicquam huic conferant causae. Diximus ante lucem auram incitari, eandem subsidere, cum illam sol attigit. Atqui etesiae ob hoc somnulosi a nautis et delicati uocantur quod, ut ait Gallio, “mane nesciunt surgere”: eo tempore fere incipiunt prodire quo ne pertinax quidem aura est. Quod non accideret, si ut auram ita illos comminueret sol.

[11,2] Adice nunc quod, si causa illis flatus esset spatium diei ac longitudo, et ante solstitium flarent, cum longissimi dies sunt et cum maxime niues tabescunt; Iulio enim mense iam despoliata sunt omnia aut certe admodum pauca iacent adhuc sub niue.

[12,1] Sunt quaedam genera uentorum quae ruptae nubes et in prouum solutae emittunt: hos Graeci uentos G-eknephias uocant. Qui hoc, ut puto, modo fiunt: cum magna inaequalitas ac dissimilitudo corporum, quae uapor terrenus emittit, in sublime eat et alia ex his corporibus sicca sint, alia umida, ex tanta discordia corporum inter se pugnantium, cum in unum conglobata sunt, uerisimile est quasdam cauas effici nubes et interualla inter illas relinqui fistulosa et in modum tibiae angusta.

[12,2] His interuallis tenuis includitur spiritus, qui maius desiderat spatium, cum euerberatus cursu parum libero incaluit et ob hoc amplior fit, scinditque cingentia et erumpit in uentum, qui fere procellosus est, quia superne demittitur, et in nos cadit uehemens et acer, quia non fusus nec per apertum uenit sed laborat et iter sibi ui ac pugna parat. Hic fere breuis flatus est, quia receptacula nubium, per quae ferebatur, ac munimenta perrumpit: ideo tumultuosus uenit,

aliquando non sine igne ac sono caeli.

[12,3] Hi uenti multo maiores diurnioresque sunt, si alios quoque flatus ex eadem causa ruentes in se abstulerunt et in unum confluxere plures; sicut torrentes modicae magnitudinis sunt, quamdiu separatis suis cursus est, cum uero plures in se aquas conuerterunt, fluminum iustorum ac perennium magnitudinem excedunt:

[12,4] idem credibile est fieri et in procellis, ut breues sint, quamdiu singulae sunt; ubi uero sociauerunt uires et ex pluribus caeli partibus elisus spiritus eodem se contulit, et impetus illis accedit et mora.

[12,5] Facit ergo uentum resoluta nubes, quae pluribus modis soluitur: nonnumquam conglobatio[nem] illam spiritus rumpit, nonnumquam inclusi et in exitum nitentis luctatio, nonnumquam calor, quem modo sol facit, modo ipsa arietatio uagorumque inter se corporum attritus.

[13,1] Hoc loco, si tibi uidetur, quaeri potest cur turbo fiat. Euenire in fluminibus solet ut, quamdiu sine impedimento feruntur, simplex et rectum illis iter sit; ubi incurrerunt in aliquod saxum ad latus ripae prominens, retorqueantur et in orbem aquas sine exitu flectant, ita ut circumlata in se sorbeantur et uerticem efficiant.

[13,2] Sic uentus, quamdiu nihil obstitit, uires suas effundit: ubi aliquo promontorio percussus est aut locorum coeuntium in canalem deuexum tenuemque collectus, saepius in se uolutatur similemque illis, quas diximus conuerti, aquis facit uerticem.

[13,3] Hic uentus circumactus et eundem ambiens locum ac se ipsa uertigine concitans turbo est. Qui si pugnacior est ac diutius uolutatus, inflammatur et efficit quod G-pretera Graeci uocant: hic est igneus turbo. Ac fere omnia pericula uenti erupti de nubibus produnt, quibus armamenta rapiantur et totae naues in sublime tollantur.

[13,4] Etiamnunc quidam uenti diuersos ex se generant et impulsum aera in alias quoque partes, quam in quas ipsi inclinauere, dispergunt. Illud quoque dicam quod mihi occurrit: quemadmodum stillicidia, quamuis iam inclinent se et labantur, nondum tamen efficere lapsum, sed ubi plura coiere et turba uires dedit, tunc fluere et ire dicuntur, sic, quamdiu leues sunt aeris motus agitati pluribus locis, nondum uentus est; tunc esse incipit; cum omnes illos miscuit et in unum impetum contulit. Spiritum a uento modus separat: uehementior enim

spiritus uentus est, inuicem spiritus leniter fluens aer.

[14,1] Repetam nunc quod in primo dixeram: edi e specu uentos recessuque interiore terrarum. Non tota solido contextu terra in imum usque fundatur, sed multis partibus caua et caecis suspensa latebris, <aliubi abundat aquas,> aliubi habet inania sine umore.

[14,2] Ibi etiamsi nulla lux discrimen aeris monstrat, dicam tamen nubes nebulasque in obscuro consistere. Nam ne haec quidem supra terras, quia uidentur, sunt, sed quia sunt, uidentur: illic quoque nihilo minus ob id sunt, quod non uidentur, flumina; illic scias licet nostris paria sublabi, alia leniter ducta, alia in confragosis locis praecipitando sonantia. Quid ergo? Non illud aequae dabis, esse aliquos et sub terra lacus et quasdam aquas sine exitu stagnare?

[14,3] Quae si ita sunt, necesse est et illud: aera onerari oneratumque incumbere et uentum propulsu suo concitare. Et ex illis ergo subterraneis nubibus sciemus nutriri inter obscura flatus, dum tantum uirium ceperint quanto aut terrae obstantiam auferant aut aliquod apertum ad hos efflatus iter occupent et per hanc cauernam in nostras sedes efferantur.

[14,4] Illud uero manifestum est, magnam esse sub terris uim sulphuris et aliorum non minus ignem alentium: per haec loca cum se exitum quaerens spiritus torsit, accendat flammam ipso affricu necesse est, deinde flammis latius fuis, etiam si quid ignauis aeris erat, extenuatum moueri et uiam cum fremitu uasto atque impetu quaerere. Sed haec diligentius persequar, cum quaeram de motibus terrae.

[15,1] Nunc mihi permittite narrare fabulam. Asclepiodotus auctor est demissos quam plurimos a Philippo in metallum antiquum olim destitutum, ut explorarent quae ubertas eius esset, quis status, an aliquid futuris reliquisset uetus auaritia; descendisse illos cum multo lumine et multos duraturo dies, deinde longa uia fatigatos uidisse flumina ingentia et conceptus aquarum inertium uastos, pares nostris nec compressos quidem terra supereminente sed liberae laxitatis, non sine horrore uisos.

[15,2] Cum magna hoc legi uoluptate; intellexi enim saeculum nostrum non nouis uitis sed iam inde antiquitus traditis laborare, nec nostra aetate primum auaritiam uenas terrarum lapidumque rimatam in tenebris male abstrusa quaesisse: illi maiores nostri, quos

celebramus laudibus, quibus dissimiles esse nos querimur, spe ducti montes ceciderunt et supra lucrum sub ruina steterunt.

[15,3] ante Philippum Macedonum<que> reges fuere qui pecuniam in altissimis usque latebris sequerentur et recto spiritu liberoque in illos se demitterent specus, in quos nullum noctium perueniret dierumque discrimen. A tergo lucem relinquere quae tanta spes fuit? Quae tanta necessitas hominem ad sidera erectum incuruauit et defodit et in fundum telluris intimae mersit, ut erueret aurum non minore periculo quaerendum quam possidendum?

[15,4] Propter hoc cuniculos egit et circa praedam lutulentam incertamque reptauit oblitus dierum, oblitus rerum naturae melioris, a qua se auertit. Ulli ergo mortuo terra tam grauis est quam istis, supra quos auaritia ingens terrarum pondus iniecit, quibus abstulit caelum, quos in imo, ubi illud malum uirus latitat, infodit? Illo descendere ausi sunt ubi nouam rerum positionem, terrarum pendentium habitus uentosque per caecum inanes experirentur et aquarum nulli fluentium horridos fontes et alteram perpetuamque noctem: deinde, cum ista fecerunt, inferos metuunt!

[16,1] Sed ut ad id, de quo agitur, reuertar: uenti quattuor sunt, in ortum, occasum, meridiem septemtrionemque diuisi; ceteri, quos uariis nominibus appellamus, his applicantur. “Eurus ad Auroram Nabataeaeque regna recessit Persidaeque et radiis iuga subdita matutinis. Uesper et occiduo quae litora sole tepescunt proxima sunt zephyris. Scythiam septemque triones horrifer inuasit boreas: contraria tellus nubibus assiduus pluuioque madescit ab austro.”

[16,2] Uel, si breuius illos complecti mauis, in unam tempestatem, quod fieri nullo modo potest, congregentur: “una Eurusque Notusque ruunt creberque procellis Africus” et, qui locum in illa rixa non habuit, Aquilo.

[16,3] Quidam illos duodecim faciunt: quattuor enim caeli partes in ternas diuidunt et singulis uentis binos subpraefectos dant. Hac arte Uarro, uir diligens, illos ordinat, nec sine causa. Non enim eodem semper loco sol oritur aut occidit, sed alius est ortus occasusque aequinoctialis (bis autem aequinoctium est), alius solstitialis, alius hibernus.

[16,4] Qui surgit ab oriente aequinoctiali, subsolanus apud nos dicitur, Graeci illum G-aphelioten uocant. Ab oriente hiberno eurus

exit, quem nostri uocauere uulturnum et Liuius hoc illum nomine appellat in illa pugna Romanis parum prospera, in qua Hannibal et contra solem orientera exercitum nostrum, et contra uentum constitutum uenti adiutorio ac fulgoris praestringentis oculos hostium uicit; Uarro quoque hoc nomen usurpat, sed et eurus iam ciuitate donatus est et nostro sermoni non tamquam alienus interuenit. Ab oriente solstitiali excitatum G-kaikian Graeci appellant, apud nos sine nomine est.

[16,5] Aequinoctialis occidens fauonium mittit, quem zephyrum esse dicent tibi etiam qui Graece nesciunt loqui. A solstitiali occidente corus uenit, qui apud quosdam argestes dicitur: mihi non uidetur, quia cori uiolenta uis est et in unam partem rapax, argestes fere mollis est et tam euntibus communis quam redeuntibus. Ab occidente hiberno africanus furibundus et ruens, apud Graecos G-lips dicitur.

[16,6] A septentrionali latere summus est aquilo, medius septentrio, imus G-thrascias: huic deest apud nos uocabulum. A meridiano axe G-euronotos est; deinde G-notos, Latine auster; deinde G-leukonotos, qui apud nos sine nomine est.

[17,1] Placet autem duodecim uentos esse, non quia ubique tot sunt (quosdam enim inclinatio terrarum excludit), sed quia plures nusquam sunt. Sic casus sex dicimus, non quia omne nomen men sex recipit, sed quia nullum plures quam sex.

[17,2] Qui duodecim uentos esse dixerunt, hoc secuti sunt, totidem uentorum esse quot caeli discrimina. Caelum autem diuiditur in circulos quinque, qui per mundi cardines eunt: est septentrionalis, est solstitialis, est aequinoctialis, est brumalis, est contrarius septentrionali. His sextus accedit, qui superiorem partem mundi ab inferiore secernit (ut scis enim, dimidia pars mundi semper supra, dimidia infra est):

[17,3] hanc lineam, quae inter aperta et occulta est, id est hunc circulum Graeci G-horizonta uocant, nostri finitorem esse dixerunt, alii finientem. Adiciendus est adhuc meridianus circulus, qui horizonta rectis angulis secat. Ex his quidam circuli in transuersa currunt et alios interuentu suo scindunt; necesse est autem tot aeris discrimina esse quot partes:

[17,4] ergo G-horizon, siue finiens circulus, quinque illos orbes

quos modo dixi finiens, efficit decem partes, quinque ab ortu, quinque ab occasu; meridianus circulus, qui in horizonta incurrit, regiones duas adicit: sic duodecim aer discrimina accipit et totidem facit uentos.

[17,5] Quidam sunt quorundam locorum proprii, qui non transmittunt sed in proximum ferunt; non est illis a latere uniuersi mundi impetus: atabulus Apuliam infestat, Calabriam iapyx, Athenas sciron, Pamphyliam crageus, Galliam circius (cui aedificia quassanti tamen incolae gratias agunt, tamquam salubritatem caeli sui debeant ei: diuus certe Augustus templum illi, cum in Gallia moraretur, et uouit et fecit). Infinitum est, si singulos uelim persequi; nulla enim propemodum regio est quae non habeat aliquem flatum ex se nascentem et circa se cadentem.

[18,1] Inter cetera itaque prouidentiae opera hoc quoque aliquis ut dignum admiratione suspexerit: non enim ex una causa uentos aut inuenit aut per diuersa disposuit, sed primum ut aera non sinerent pigrescere sed assidua uexatione utilem redderent uitalemque tracturis,

[18,2] deinde ut imbres terris subministrarent idemque nimios compescerent. Nam modo adducunt nubes, modo deducunt, ut per totum orbem pluuiæ diuidi possint: in Italiam auster impellit, aquilo in Africam reicit, etesiae non patiuntur apud nos nubes consistere; idem totam Indiam et Aethiopiam continuus per id tempus aquis irrigant.

[18,3] Quid, quod fruges percoqui non possent, nisi flatu superuacua inmixta seruandis uentilarentur, nisi esset quod segetem excitaret et latentem frugem ruptis uelamentis suis (folliculos agricolae uocant) adaperiret?

[18,4] Quid, quod omnibus inter se populis commercium dedit et gentes dissipatas locis miscuit? Ingens naturae beneficium, si illud in iniuriam suam non uertat hominum furor! Nunc quod de C. Mario uulgo dictatum est et a Tito Liuiο positum, in incerto esse utrum illum magis nasci an non nasci reipublicae profuerit, dici etiam de uentis potest; adeo quicquid ex illis utile et necessarium est non potest his repensari quae in perniciem suam generis humani dementia excogitat.

[18,5] Sed non ideo non sunt ista natura bona, si uitio male utentium

nocent: non in hoc prouidentia ac dispositor ille mundi deus aera uentis exercendum dedit et illos ab omni parte, ne quid esset situ squalidum, effudit, ut nos classes partem freti occupaturas compleremus milite armato et hostem in mari aut post mare quaereremus.

[18,6] Quae nos dementia exagitat et in mutuuum componit exitium? Uela uentis damus bellum petitori et periclitamur periculi causa, incertam fortunam experimur, uim tempestatum nulla ope humana superabilem et mortem sine spe sepulturae.

[18,7] Non erat tanti, si ad pacem per ista ueheremur: nunc cum euaserimus tot scopulos latentes et insidias uadosi maris, cum effugerimus procellosos desuper montes, per quos praeceps in nauigantes uentus impingitur, cum inuolutos nubilo dies et nimbis ac tonitribus horridas noctes, cum turbinibus diuulsa nauigia, quis erit huius laboris ac metus fructus, quis nos fessos tot malis portus excipiet? Bellum scilicet et obuius in litore hostis et trucidandae gentes tracturaeque magna ex parte uictorem et antiquarum urbium flamma.

[18,8] Quid in arma cogimus populos? Quid exercitus scribimus directuros aciem in mediis fluctibus? Quid maria inquietamus? Parum uidelicet ad mortes nostras terra late patet. Nimis delicate fortuna nos tractat, nimis dura dedit nobis corpora, felicem uoletudinem; non depopulatur nos casus incurrens, emetiri cuique annos suos ex commodo licet et ad senectutem decurrere: itaque eamus in pelagus et uocemus in nos fata cessantia.

[18,9] Miseri, quid quaeritis? mortem, quae ubique superest? Petet illa uos et ex lectulo, sed innocentes petat; occupabit uos in uestra domo, sed occupet nullum molientes malum. Hoc uero quid aliud quis dixerit quam insaniam, circumferre pericula et ruere in ignotos, iratum sine iniuria occurrentia deuastantem ac ferarum more occidere quem non oderis? Illis tamen in ultionem aut ex fame morsus est: nos sine ulla parsimonia nostri alienique sanguinis mouemus manum et nauigia deducimus, salutem committimus fluctibus, secundos optamus uentos, quorum felicitas est ad bella perferri.

[18,10] Quousque nos mala nostra rapuerunt? Parum est intra tra orbem suum furere: sic Persarum rex stolidissimus in Graeciam traiciet, quam exercitus non uincet, cum impleuerit. Sic Alexander

ulterior Bactris et Indis uolet quaeretque quid sit ultra magnum mare, et indignabitur esse aliquid ultimum sibi. Sic Crassum auaritia Parthis dabit, non horrebit reuocantis diras tribuni, non tempestates longissimi maris, non circa Euphratem praesaga fulmina et deos resistentes: per hominum et deorum iras ad aurum ibitur.

[18,11] Ergo non immerito quis dixerit rerum naturam melius acturam fuisse nobiscum, si uentos flare uetuisset et inhibito discursu furentium in sua quemque terra stare iussisset: si nihil aliud, certe suo quisque tantum ac suorum malo nasceretur; nunc parum mihi domestica, externis quoque laborandum est.

[18,12] Nulla terra tam longe remota est quae non emittere aliquod suum malum possit: unde scio an nunc aliquis magnae gentis in abdito dominus, fortunae indulgentia tumens, non contineat intra terminos arma, an paret classes ignota moliens? Unde scio hic mihi an ille uentus bellum inuehat? Magna pars erat pacis humanae maria praeccludi.

[18,13] Non tamen, ut paulo ante dicebam, queri possumus de auctore nostri deo, si beneficia eius corrumpimus et ut essent contraria effecimus. Dedit ille uentos ad custodiendam caeli terrarumque temperiem, ad euocandas suppressendasque aquas, ad alendos satorum atque arborum fructus, quos ad maturitatem cum aliis causis adducit ipsa iactatio attrahens cibum in summa et ne torpeant permouens.

[18,14] Dedit uentos ad ulteriora noscenda: fuisset enim imperitum animal et sine magna experientia rerum homo, si circumscriberetur natalis soli fine. Dedit uentos, ut commoda cuiusque regionis fierent communia, non ut legiones equitemque gestarent nec ut perniciose gentes arma transueherent.

[18,15] Si beneficia naturae utentium prauitate perpendimus, nihil non nostro malo accepimus: cui uidere expedit? cui loqui? cui non uita tormentum est? Nihil inuenies tam manifestae utilitatis quod non in contrarium transeat culpa. Sic uentos quoque natura bono futuros inuenerat: ipsi illos contrarios fecimus.

[18,16] Omnes in aliquod nos malum ducunt. Non eadem est his et illis causa soluendi, sed iusta nulli. Diuersis enim irritamentis ad temptandum mare impellimur, utique alicui uitio nauigatur. Egregie Plato dicit, qui nobis circa exitum iam testium loco dandus est,

minima esse quae homines emant uita. Immo, Lucili carissime, si bene illorum furorem aestimaueris, id est nostrum (in eadem enim turba uolutamur), magis ridebis, cum cogitaueris uitae parari in quae uita consumitur.

LIBER VI

DE TERRAE MOTU

[1,1] Pompeios, celebrem Campaniae urbem, in quam ab altera parte Surrentinum Stabianumque litus, ab altera Herculansense conueniunt et mare ex aperto reductum amoeno sinu cingunt, consedissee terrae motu uexatis quaecumque adiacebant regionibus, Lucili, uirorum optime, audiuius, et quidem hibernis diebus, quos uacare a tali periculo maiores nostri solebant promittere.

[1,2] Nonis Februariis hic fuit motus Regulo et Uerginio consulibus, qui Campaniam, numquam securam huius mali, indemnem tamen et totiens defunctam metu, magna strage uastauit: nam et Herculansenis oppidi pars ruit dubieque stant etiam quae relictas sunt, et Nucerinorum colonia ut sine clade ita non sine querela est; Neapolis quoque priuatim multa, publice nihil amisit leuiter ingenti malo perstricta: uillae uero prorutae, passim sine iniuria tremuere.

[1,3] Adiciuntur his illa: sexcentarum ouium gregem exanimatum et diuisas statuas, motae post hoc mentis aliquos atque impotentes sui errasse. Quorum ut causas excutiamus, et propositi operis contextus exigit et ipse in hoc tempus congruens casus.

[1,4] Quaerenda sunt trepidis solacia et demendus ingens timor. Quid enim cuiquam satis tutum uideri potest, si mundus ipse concutitur et partes eius solidissimae labant? Si quod unum immobile est in illo fixumque, ut cuncta in se intenta sustineat, fluctuatur; si quod proprium habet terra perdidit, stare: ubi tandem resident metus nostri? Quod corpora receptaculum inuenient, quo sollicita confugiant, si ab imo metus nascitur et funditus trahitur?

[1,5] Consternatio omnium est, ubi tecta crepuerunt et ruina signum dedit. Tunc praeceps quisque se proripit et penates suos deserit ac se publico credit: quam latebram prospicimus, quod auxilium, si orbis ipse ruinas agit, si hoc quod nos tuetur ac sustinet, supra quod urbes sitae sunt, quod fundamentum quidam mundi esse dixerunt, discedit ac titubat?

[1,6] Quid tibi esse non dico auxilii sed solacii potest, ubi timor

fugam perdidit? Quid est, inquam, satis munitum, quid ad tutelam alterius ac sui firmum? Hostem muro repellam, et praeruptae altitudinis castella uel magnos exercitus difficultate aditus morabuntur; a tempestate nos uindicat portus; nimborum uim effusam et sine fine cadentes aquas tecta propellunt; fugientes non sequitur incendium; aduersus tonitruum et minas caeli subterraneae domus et defossi in altum specus remedia sunt (ignis ille caelestis non transuerberat terram sed exiguo eius obiectu retunditur); in pestilentia mutare sedes licet: nullum malum sine effugio est.

[1,7] Numquam fulmina populos perusserunt; pestilens caelum exhaisit urbes, non abstulit: hoc malum latissime patet ineuitabile, auidum, publice noxium. Non enim domos solum aut familias aut urbes singulas haurit, gentes totas regionesque submergit et modo ruinis operit, modo in altam uoraginem condit ac ne id quidem relinquit ex quo appareat quod non est saltem fuisse, sed supra nobilissimas urbes sine ullo uestigio prioris habitus solum extenditur.

[1,8] Nec desunt qui hoc genus mortis magis timeant quo in abruptum cum sedibus suis eunt et e uiuorum numero uiui auferuntur, tamquam non omne fatum ad eundem terminum ueniat. Hoc habet inter cetera iustitiae suae natura praecipuum quod, cum ad exitum uentum est, omnes in aequo sumus.

[1,9] Nihil itaque interest utrum me lapis unus elidat, an monte toto premar; utrum supra me domus unius onus ueniat et sub exiguo eius cumulo ac puluere exspirem, an totus caput meum terrarum orbis abscondat; in luce hunc et in aperto spiritum reddam an in uasto terrarum dehiscentium sinu; solus in illud profundum an cum magno comitatu populorum concadentium ferar; nihil interest mea quantus circa mortem meam tumultus sit: ipsa ubique tantundem est.

[1,10] Proinde magnum sumamus animum aduersus istam cladem, quae nec euitari nec prouideri potest, desinamusque audire istos, qui Campaniae renuntiauerunt quique post hunc casum emigrauerunt negantque ipsos umquam in illam regionem accessuros: quis enim illis promittit melioribus fundamentis hoc aut illud solum stare?

[1,11] Omnia eiusdem sortis sunt et, si nondum mota, tamen mobilia: hunc fortasse in quo securius consistitis locum haec nox aut hic ante noctem dies scindet. Unde scis an <non> melior eorum locorum condicio sit in quibus iam uires suas fortuna consumpsit et

quae in futurum ruina sua fulta sunt?

[1,12] Erramus enim, si ullam terrarum partem exceptam immunemque ab hoc periculo credimus: omnes sub eadem iacent lege; nihil ita ut immobile esset natura concepit; alia temporibus aliis cadunt et, quemadmodum in urbibus magnis nunc haec domus nunc illa suspenditur, ita in hoc orbe terrarum nunc haec pars facit uitium nunc illa.

[1,13] Tyros aliquando infamis ruinis fuit, Asia duodecim urbes simul perdidit; anno priore in Achaïam et Macedoniam, quaecumque est ista uis mali quae incurrit, nunc Campaniam laesit: circumit fatum et, si quid diu praeteriit, repetit. Quaedam rarius sollicite, saepius quaedam: nihil immune esse et innoxium sinit.

[1,14] Non homines tantum, qui breuis et caduca res nascimur, urbes oraeque terrarum et litora et ipsum mare in seruitutem fati uenit. Nos tamen nobis permansura promittimus bona fortunae, et felicitatem, cuius ex omnibus rebus humanis uelocissima est leuitas, habituram in aliquo pondus ac moram credimus;

[1,15] et perpetua sibi omnia promittentibus in mentem non uenit id ipsum supra quod stamus stabile non esse. Neque enim Campaniae istud aut Achaïae sed omnis soli uitium est, male cohaerere et ex causis pluribus solui et summa manere, partibus ruere.

[2,1] Quid ago? Solacium aduersus pericula rara promiseram: ecce undique timenda denuntio, nego quicquam esse quietis aeternae, quod perire possit et perdere. Ego uero hoc ipsum solacii loco pono et quidem ualentissimi, quando quidem sine remedio timor stultis est: ratio terrorem prudentibus excutit; imperitis magna fit ex desperatione securitas.

[2,2] Hoc itaque generi humano dictum puta quod illis subita captiuitate inter ignes et hostem stupentibus dictum est: “una salus uictis nullam sperare salutem.”

[2,3] Si uultis nihil timere, cogitate omnia esse metuenda; circumspicite quam leuibus causis discutiamur: non cibus nobis, non umor, non uigilia, non somnus sine mensura quadam salubria sunt; iam intellegitis nugatoria esse nos et imbecilla corpuscula, fluida, non magna molitione perdenda. Sine dubio id unum periculi nobis est quod tremunt terrae, quod subito dissipantur ac superposita deducunt!

[2,4] Magni se aestimat qui fulmina et motus terrarum hiatusque formidat. Uult ille imbecillitatis sibi suae conscius timere pituitam? Ita uidelicet nati sumus, tam felicia sortiti membra, in hanc magnitudinem creuimus! Et ob hoc, nisi mundi partibus motis, nisi caelum intonuerit, nisi terra subsederit, perire non possumus!

[2,5] Unguiculi nos et ne totius quidem dolor sed aliqua ab latere eius scissura conficit! Et ego timeam terras trementes, quem crassior saliu suffocat? Ego extimescam emotum sedibus suis mare, et ne aestus maiore quam solet cursu plus aquarum trahens superueniat, cum quosdam strangulauerit potio male lapsa per fauces? Quam stultum est mare horrere, cum scias stillicidio perire te posse!

[2,6] Nullum maius solacium est mortis quam ipsa mortalitas, nullum autem omnium istorum quae extrinsecus terrent quam quod innumerabilia pericula in ipso sinu sunt. Quid enim dementius quam ad tonitrua succidere et sub terram correpere fulminum metu? Quid stultius quam timere nutationem terrae aut subitos montium lapsus et irruptiones maris extra litus eiecti, cum mors ubique praesto sit et undique occurrat nihilque sit tam exiguum quod non in perniciem generis humani satis ualeat?

[2,7] Adeo non debent nos ista confundere, tamquam plus in se mali habeant quam uulgaris mors, ut contra, cum sit necessarium e uita exire et aliquando emittere animam, maiore perire ratione iuuat. Necesse est mori ubicumque, quandoque: stet licet ista humus et se teneat suis finibus nec ulla iactetur iniuria, supra me quandoque erit. <Quid> interest, ego illam mihi an ipsa se mihi imponat?

[2,8] Diducitur et ingenti potentia nescio cuius mali rumpitur et me in immensam altitudinem abducit; quid porro? Mors leuior in plano est? Quid habeo quod querar, si rerum natura me non uult iacere ignobili leto, si mihi inicit sui partem?

[2,9] Egregie Uagellius meus in illo inclito carmine: “Si cadendum est”, inquit, “e caelo cecidisse uelim”. Idem licet dicere: si cadendum est, cadam orbe concusso, non quia fas est optare publicam cladem, sed quia ingens mortis solacium est terram quoque uidere mortalem.

[3,1] Illud quoque proderit praesumere animo, nihil horum deos facere, nec ira numinum aut caelum concuti aut terram: suas ista causas habent nec ex imperio saeuiunt sed quibusdam uitii ut corpora nostra turbantur et tunc, cum facere uidentur iniuriam,

accipiunt.

[3,2] Nobis autem ignorantibus uerum omnia terribiora sunt, utique quorum metum raritas auget: leuius accidunt familiaria, at ex insolito formido maior est. Quare autem quicquam nobis insolitum est? Quia naturam oculis, non ratione, comprehendimus nec cogitamus quid illa facere possit, sed tantum quid fecerit. Damus itaque huius neglegentiae poenas tamquam nouis territi, cum illa non sint noua sed insolita.

[3,3] Quid ergo? Non religionem incutit mentibus, et quidem publice, siue deficere sol uisus est, siue luna, cuius obscuratio frequentior, aut parte sui aut tota delituit? Longeque magis illa, actae in transuersum faces et caeli magna pars ardens et crinita sidera et plures solis orbes et stellae per diem uisae subitque transcursus ignium multam post se lucem trahentium? [3,4] Nihil horum sine timore miramur: et cum timendi sit causa nescire, non est tanti scire, ne timeas? Quanto satius est causas inquirere, et quidem toto in hoc intentum animo! Neque enim illo quicquam inueniri dignius potest, cui se non tantum commodet sed impendat.

[4,1] Quaeramus ergo quid sit quod terram ab infimo moueat, quod tanti molem ponderis pellat; quid sit illa ualentius quod tantum onus ui sua labefactet; cur modo tremat, modo laxata subsidat, nunc in partes diuisa discedat et alias interuallum ruinae suae diu seruet, alias cito comprimat; nunc amnes magnitudinis notae conuertat introrsum, nunc nouos exprimat; aperiat aliquando aquarum calentium uenas, aliquando refrigeret, ignesque nonnumquam per aliquod ignotum antea montis aut rupis foramen emittat, aliquando notos et per saecula nobiles comprimat. Mille miracula mouet faciemque mutat locis et defert montes, subrigit plana, ualles extuberat, nouas in profundo insulas erigit: haec ex quibus causis accidant, digna res excuti.

[4,2] Quod, inquis, erit pretium operae? Quo nullum maius est, nosse naturam. Neque enim quicquam habet in se huius materiae tractatio pulchrius, cum multa habeat futura usui, quam quod hominem magnificentia sui detinet nec mercede sed miraculo colitur. Inspiciamus ergo quid sit propter quod haec accidant: quorum adeo est mihi dulcis inspectio ut, quamuis aliquando de motu terrarum uolumen iuuenis ediderim, tamen temptare me uoluerim et experiri,

<si> aetas aliquid nobis aut ad scientiam aut certe ad diligentiam adiecerit.

[5,1] Causam qua terra concutitur alii in aqua esse, alii in ignibus, alii in ipsa terra, alii in spiritu putauerunt, alii in pluribus, alii in omnibus his; quidam liquere ipsis aliquam ex istis causam esse dixerunt, sed non liquere quae esset.

[5,2] Nunc singula persequar. Illud ante omnia mihi dicendum est, opiniones ueteres parum exactas esse et rudes: circa uerum adhuc errabatur; tur; noua omnia erant primo temptantibus; postea eadem illa limata sunt et, si quid inuentum est, illis nihilominus referri debet acceptum: magni animi res fuit rerum naturae latebras dimouere nec contentum exteriori eius aspectu introspicere et in deorum secreta descendere. Plurimum ad inueniendum contulit qui sperauit posse reperiri.

[5,3] Cum excusatione itaque ueteres audiendi sunt: nulla res consummata est, dum incipit; nec in hac tantum re omnium maxima atque inuolutissima (in qua, etiam cum multum acti erit, omnis tamen aetas quod agat inueniet) sed et in omni alio negotio longe semper a perfecto fuere principia.

[6,1] In aqua causam esse nec ab uno dictum est nec uno modo. Thales Milesius totam terram subiecto iudicat umore portari et innare, siue illud oceanum uocas, siue magnum mare, siue alterius naturae simplicem adhuc aquam et umidum elementum. Hac, inquit, unda sustinetur orbis uelut aliquod grande nauigium et graue his aquis quas premit.

[6,2] Superuacuum est reddere causas propter quas existimat grauissimam partem mundi non posse spiritu tam tenui fugacique gestari; non enim nunc de situ terrarum sed de motu agitur. Illud argumenti loco ponit aquas esse in causa quibus hic orbis agitur, quod in omni maiore motu erumpunt fere noui fontes (sicut in nauigiis quoque euenit ut, si inclinata sunt et abierunt in latus, aquam sorbeant, quae enormi eorum onere quae uehit, si immodice depressa sunt, aut superfunditur aut certe dextra sinistraque solito magis surgit).

[6,3] Hanc opinionem falsam esse non est diu colligendum: nam si terra aqua sustineretur, et ea aliquando concuteretur <et> semper moueretur, nec agitari illam miraremur sed manere; deinde tota

concuteretur, non ex parte (numquam enim navis dimidia iactatur); nunc uero terrarum non uniuersarum sed ex parte motus est: quomodo ergo fieri potest ut, quod totum uehitur, totum non agitetur, si eo quo uehitur agitatum est?

[6,4] “At quare aquae erumpunt?”. Primum omnium saepe tremuit terra et nihil umoris noui fluxit; deinde si ex hac causa unda prorumperet, a lateribus terrae circumfunderetur (sicut in fluminibus ac mari uidemus incidere, ut incrementum aquarum, quotiens nauigia desidunt, in lateribus maxime appareat); ad ultimum non tam exigua fieret quam tu dicis eruptio nec uelut per rimam sentina subreperet, sed fieret ingens inundatio ut ex infinito liquore et ferente uniuersa.

[7,1] Quidam motum terrarum aquae imputauerunt, sed non ex eadem causa. Per omnem, inquit, terram multa aquarum genera decurrunt: aliubi perpetui amnes, quorum nauigabilis etiam sine adiutorio imbrium magnitudo est: hinc Nilus, per aestatem ingentes aquas inuehit; hinc, qui medius inter pacata et hostilia fluit, Danuuus ac Rhenus, alter Sarmaticos impetus cohibens et Europam Asiamque distermians, alter Germanos, auidam belli gentem, repellens.

[7,2] Adice nunc patentissimos lacus et stagna populis inter se ignotis circumdata et ineluctabiles nauigio paludes, ne ipsis quidem inter se peruias quibus incoluntur; deinde tot fontes, tot capita fluminum subitos et ex occulto amnes uomentia, tot deinde ad tempus collectos torrentium impetus, quorum uires quam repentinae tam breues.

[7,3] Omnis aquarum et intra terram natura faciesque est: illic quoque aliae uasto cursu deferuntur et in praeceps uolutae cadunt, aliae languidiores in uadis refunduntur et leniter ac quiete fluunt; quis autem neget uastis illas receptaculis concipi et cessare multis inertes locis? Non est diu probandum ibi multas aquas esse, unde omnes sunt; neque enim sufficeret tellus ad tot flumina edenda, nisi ex reposito multoque funderet.

[7,4] Si hoc uerum est, necesse est aliquando illic amnis excrescat et relictis ripis uiolentus in obstantia incurrat: sic fiet motus alicuius partis in quam flumen impetum dedit et quam, donec decrescat, uerberabit. Potest fieri ut aliquam regionem riuus affluens exedat ac secum trahat aliquam molem, qua lapsa superposita quatiantur.

[7,5] Iam uero nimis oculis permittit nec ultra illos scit producere

animum, qui non credit esse in abdito terrae sinus maris uasti. Nec enim uideo quid prohibeat aut obstet quo minus habeat aliquod etiam in abdito litus et per occultos aditus receptum mare, quod illic quoque tantundem loci teneat aut fortassis hoc amplius quod superiora cum tot animalibus erant diuidenda: abstrusa enim et sine possessore deserta liberius undis uacant.

[7,6] Quas quid uetat illic fluctuare et uentis, quos omne interuallum terrarum et omnis aer creat, impelli? Potest ergo maior solito exorta tempestas aliquam partem terrarum impulsam uehementius commouere. Nam apud nos quoque multa quae procul a mari fuerant subito eius accessu uapulauerunt et uillas in prospectu collocatas fluctus qui longe audiebatur inuasit; illic quoque potest accedere ac recedere pelagus infernum: quorum neutrum fit sine motu superstantium.

[8,1] Non quidem existimo diu te haesitaturum an credas esse subterraneos amnes et mare absconditum: unde enim ista prorepunt, unde ad nos ueniunt, nisi quod origo umoris inclusa est?

[8,2] Age, cum uides interruptum Tigrin in medio itinere siccari et non uniuersum auerti, sed paulatim non apparentibus damnis minui primum, deinde consumi, quo illum putas abire nisi in obscura terrarum, utique cum uideas emergere iterum non minorem eo qui prius fluxerat? Quid, cum uides Alpheon, celebratum poetis, in Achaia mergi et in Sicilia rursus traiecto mari effundere amoenissimum fontem Arethusam?

[8,3] Nescis autem inter opiniones, quibus enarratur Nili aestiua inundatio, et hanc esse, a terra illum erumpere et augeri non supernis aquis sed ex intimo redditis? Ego quidem centuriones duos, quos Nero Caesar, ut aliarum uirtutum ita ueritatis in primis amantissimus, ad inuestigandum caput Nili miserat, audiui narrantes longum illos iter peregissee, cum a rege Aethiopiae instructi auxilio commendatique proximis regibus penetrassent ad ulteriorem.

[8,4] Inde, ut quidam aiebant, peruenimus ad immensas paludes, quarum exitum nec incolae nouerant nec sperare quisquam potest: ita implicatae aquis herbae sunt et aquae nec pediti eluctabiles nec nauigio, quod nisi paruum et unius capax limosa et obsita palus non fert. Ibi, inquit, uidimus duas petras, ex quibus ingens uis fluminis excidebat.

[8,5] Sed siue caput illa siue accessio est Nili, siue tunc nascitur siue in terras ex priore recepta cursu redit, nonne tu credis illam, quicquid est, ex magno terrarum lacu ascendere? Habeant enim oportet pluribus locis sparsum umorem et in uno coactum, ut eructare tanto impetu possint.

[9,1] Ignem causam motus quidam iudicant, imprimis Anaxagoras, qui existimat simili paene ex causa et aera concuti et terram: cum in inferiore parte spiritus crassum aera et in nubes coactum eadem ui qua apud nos quoque nubila frangi solent rupit et ignis ex hoc collisu nubium cursuque elisi aeris emicuit, hic ipse in obuia incurrit exitum quaerens ac diuellit repugnantia, donec per angustum aut nactus est uiam exeundi ad caelum aut ui et iniuria fecit.

[9,2] Alii in igne causam quidam esse, sed non ob hoc iudicant, sed quia pluribus obrutus locis ardeat et proxima quaeque consumat; quae si quando exesa ceciderint, tunc sequi motum earum partium quae subiectis adminiculis destitutae labant, donec corruerunt nullo occurrente quod onus exciperet; tunc chasmata, tunc hiatus uasti aperiuntur aut, cum diu dubitauerunt, super ea se quae supersunt stantque componunt.

[9,3] Hoc apud nos quoque uidemus accidere, quotiens incendio laborat pars ciuitatis: cum exustae trabes sunt aut corrupta quae superioribus firmamentum dabant, tunc diu agitata fastigia concidunt et tam diu deferuntur atque incerta sunt, donec in solido resederunt.

[10,1] Anaximenes ait terram ipsam sibi causam esse motus nec extrinsecus incurrere quod illam impellat, sed intra ipsam et ex ipsa: quasdam enim partes eius decidere, quas aut umor resoluerit aut ignis exederit aut spiritus uiolentia excusserit. Sed his quoque cessantibus non deesse propter quod aliquid abscedat aut reuellatur; nam primum omnia uetustate labuntur nec quicquam tutum a senectute est; haec solida quoque et magni roboris carpit.

[10,2] Itaque quemadmodum in aedificiis ueteribus quasdam non percussa tamen decidunt, cum plus ponderis habuere quam uirium, ita in hoc uniuerso terrae corpore euenit ut partes eius uetustate soluantur, solutae cadant et tremorem superioribus afferant: primum, dum abscedunt (nihil enim utique magnum sine motu eius cui haesit absciditur); deinde, cum deciderunt, solido exceptae resiliunt pilae more (quae, cum cecidit, exultat ac saepius pellitur, totiens a solo in

nouum impetum missa); si uero in stagnantibus aquis delatae sunt, hic ipse casus uicina concutit fluctu, quem subitum uastumque illisum ex alto pondus eiecit.

[11,1] Quidam ignibus quidem assignant hunc tremorem, sed aliter. Nam cum pluribus locis ferueant, necesse est ingentem uaporem sine exitu uoluant, qui ui sua spiritum intendit et, si acrius institit, opposita diffindit, si uero remissior fuit, nihil amplius quam mouet. Uidemus aquam spumare igne subiecto: quod in hac aqua facit inclusa et angusta, multo magis illum facere credamus, cum uiolentus ac uastus ingentes aquas excitat: tunc illa euaporatione fluctuantium undarum quicquid pulsauit, agitur.

[12,1] Spiritum esse qui moueat et plurimis et maximis auctoribus placet. Archelaus, uir quidem satis diligens, ait ita: Uenti in concaua terrarum deferuntur; deinde, ubi iam omnia spatia plena sunt et in quantum aer potuit densatus est, is qui superuertit spiritus priorem premit et elidit ac frequentibus plagis primo cogit, deinde proturbat;

[12,2] tunc ille quaerens locum omnes angustias dimouet et claustra sua conatur effringere: sic euenit ut terrae, spiritu luctante et fugam quaerente, moueantur. Itaque cum terrae motus futurus est, praecedit aeris tranquillitas et quies, uidelicet quia uis spiritus, quae concitare uentos solet, in inferna sede retinetur. Nunc quoque, cum hic motus in Campania fuit, quamuis hiberno tempore et inquieto, per superiores dies caelo aer stetit.

[12,3] Quid ergo? Numquam flante uento terra concussa est? Admodum raro; duo <si> simul flauere uenti fieri; tamen et potest et solet. Quod si recipimus et constat duos uentos rem simul gerere, quidni accidere possit ut alter superiorem aera agitet, alter infernum?

[13,1] In hac sententia licet portas Aristotelem et discipulum eius Theophrastum (non, ut Graecis uisum est, diuini, tamen et dulcis eloquii uirum et nitidi sine labore). Quid utrique placeat exponam. Semper aliqua euaporatio est e terra, quae modo arida est, modo umido mixta; haec ab infimo edita et in quantum potuit elata, cum ulteriorem locum in quem exeat non habet, retro fertur atque in se reuoluitur; deinde rixa spiritus reciprocantis iactat obstantia et, siue interclusus siue per angusta enisus est, motum ac tumultum ciet.

[13,2] Straton ex eadem schola est, qui hanc partem philosophiae maxime coluit et rerum naturae inquisitor fuit; huius tale decretum

est. Frigidum et calidum semper in contraria abeunt, una esse non possunt: eo frigidum confluit unde uis calidi discessit, et inuicem ibi calidum est unde frigus expulsum est. Hoc quod dico uerum esse et utrumque in contrarium agi ex hoc tibi appareat:

[13,3] hiberno tempore, cum supra terram frigus est, calent putei nec minus specus atque omnes sub terra recessus, quia illo se calor contulit superiora possidenti frigori cedens; qui, cum in inferiora peruenit et eo se quantum poterat ingessit, quo densior, hoc ualidior est. Frigori cal<idi> uis superuenit, cui necessario congregatus ille iam et in angustum pressus loco cedit.

[13,4] Idem contrario euenit: cum uis maior frigidi illata in cauernis est, quicquid illic calidi latet, frigori cedens abit in angustum et magno impetu agitur, quia non patitur utriusque natura concordiam nec in uno moram. Fugiens ergo et omni modo cupiens excedere proxima quaeque remolitur ac iactat.

[13,5] Ideoque antequam terra moueatur, solet mugitus s audiri uentis in abdito tumultuantibus. Nec enim aliter posset, ut ait noster Uergilius, “sub pedibus mugire solum et iuga celsa moueri”, nisi hoc esset uentorum opus. v [13,6] Uices deinde huius pugnae sunt eadem: fit calidi congregatio ac rursus eruptio; tunc frigida compescuntur et secedunt mox futura potentiora. Dum ergo alterna uis cursat et ultro citroque spiritus commeat, terra concutitur.

[14,1] Sunt qui existiment spiritu quidem et nulla alia ratione tremere terram, sed ex alia causa quam Aristoteli placuit. Quid sit quod ab his dicatur audi: corpus nostrum et sanguine irrigatur et spiritu, qui per sua itinera decurrit. Habemus autem quaedam angustiora receptacula animae per quae nihil amplius quam meat, quaedam patentiora in quibus colligitur et unde diuiditur in partes. Sic hoc totum terrarum omnium corpus et aquis, quae uicem sanguinis tenent, et uentis, quos nihil aliud quis quam animam uocauerit, peruium est. Haec duo aliubi currunt, aliubi consistunt.

[14,2] Sed quemadmodum in corpore nostro, dum bona ualetudo est, uenarum quoque imperturbata mobilitas modum seruat; ubi aliquid aduersi est, micat crebrius et suspiria atque anhelitus laborantis ac fessi signa sunt: ita terrae quoque, dum illis positio naturalis est, inconcussae manent; cum aliquid peccatur, tunc uelut aegri corporis motus est, spiritu illo qui modestius perfluebat icto

uehementius et quassante uenas suas. Nec, ut illi paulo ante dicebant, quibus animal placet esse terram. Nisi hoc est, quemadmodum animal totum uexationem sentiet; neque enim in nobis febris alias partes moratus, alias citius impellit, sed per omnes pari aequalitate discurrit.

[14,3] Uide ergo num quid intret in illam spiritus ex circumfuso aere. Qui, quamdiu habet exitum, sine iniuria labitur; si offendit aliquid et incidit quod uiam clauderet, tunc oneratur primo infundente se a tergo aere, deinde per aliquam rimam maligne fugit et hoc acrius fertur, quo angustius. Id sine pugna non potest fieri, nec pugna sine motu.

[14,4] At si ne rimam quidem per quam efflueret inuenit, conglobatus illic furit et hoc atque illo circumagitur aliaque deicit, alia intercidit, cum tenuissimus idemque fortissimus et irrepit quamuis in obstructa et quicquid intrauit ui sua diducat ac dissipet. Tunc terra iactatur: aut enim datura uento locum discedit, aut, cum dedit, in ipsam qua illum emisit cauernam fundamento spoliata considit.

[15,1] Quidam ita existimant: terra multis locis perforata est nec tantum primos illos aditus habet quos uelut spiramenta ab initio sui recepit, sed multos illi casus imposuit. Aliubi deduxit quicquid superne terreni erat aqua, alia torrentes cecidere, alia aestibus magnis disrupta patuerunt. Per haec interualla intrat spiritus: quem si inclusit mare et altius adegit nec fluctus retro abire permisit, tunc ille exitu simul redituque praecluso uolutatur et, quia in rectum non potest tendere, quod illi naturale est, in sublime se intendit et terram prementem diuerberat.

[16,1] Etiamnunc dicendum est quod plerisque auctoribus placet et in quod fortasse fiet discessio. Non esse terram sine spiritu palam est, non tantum illo dico quo se tenet ac partes sui iungit, qui inest etiam saxis mortuisque corporibus, sed illo dico uitali et uegeto et alente omnia. Hunc nisi haberet, quomodo tot arbustis spiritum infunderet non aliunde uiuentibus et tot satis? Quemadmodum tam diuersas radices aliter atque aliter in se mersas foueret, quasdam summa receptas parte, quasdam altius tractas, nisi multum haberet animae tam multa tam uaria generantis et haustu atque alimento sui educantis?

[16,2] Leuibus adhuc argumentis ago: totum hoc caelum, quod igneus aether, mundi summa pars, claudit, omnes hae stellae, quarum iniri non potest numerus, omnis hic caelestium coetus et, ut alia praeteream, hic tam prope a nobis agens cursum sol, omni terrarum ambitu non semel maior, alimentum ex terreno trahunt et inter se partiuntur nec ullo alio scilicet quam halitu terrarum sustentur: hoc illis alimentum, hic pastus est.

[16,3] Non posset autem tam multa tantoque se ipsa maiora nutrire, nisi plena esset animae, quam per diem ac noctem ab omnibus partibus sui fundit; fieri enim non potest ut non multum illi supersit, ex qua tantum petitur ac sumitur. Et ad tempus quidem quod exeat nascitur (nec enim esset perennis illi copia suffecturi in tot caelestia spiritus, nisi inuicem elementa recurrerent et in aliud alia soluerentur), sed tamen necesse est abundet ac plena sit et ex condito proferat:

[16,4] non est ergo dubium quin multum spiritus intus lateat et caeca sub terra spatia aer latus obtineat. Quod si uerum est, necesse est id saepe moueatur quod re mobilissima plenum est: numquid enim dubium esse cuiquam potest quin nihil sit tam inquietum quam aer, tam uersabile et agitatione gaudens?

[17,1] Sequitur ergo ut naturam suam exerceat et quod semper moueri uult, aliquando et alia moueat. Id quando fit? Quando illi cursus interdictus est. Nam quamdiu non impeditur, ita placide; cum offenditur et retinetur, insanit et moras suas abripit, non aliter quam ille “pontem indignatus Araxes”:

[17,2] quamdiu illi facilis et liber est alueus, primas quasque aquas explicat; ubi saxa manu uel casu illata repressere uenientem, tunc impetum mora quaerit et, quo plura opposita sunt, plus inuenit uirium: omnis enim illa unda, quae a tergo superuenit et in se crescit, cum onus suum sustinere non potuit, uim ruina parat et prona cum ipsis quae obiacebant fugit. Idem spiritu fit, qui quo ualentior agiliorque est, citius eripitur et uehementius saeptum omne disturbat: ex quo motus fit, scilicet eius partis sub qua pugnatum est.

[17,3] Quod dicitur uerum esse et illo probatur: saepe, cum terrae motus fuit, si modo pars eius aliqua disrupta est, inde uentus per multos dies fluxit, ut traditur factum eo motu quo Chalcis laborauit: quod apud Asclepiodotum inuenies, auditorem Posidonii, in his ipsis

quaestionum naturalium causis. Inuenies et apud alios auctores hiasse uno loto terram et inde non exiguo tempore spirasse uentum, qui scilicet illud iter ipse sibi fecerat per quod ferebatur.

[18,1] Maxima ergo causa est propter quam terra moueatur spiritus natura citus et locum e loto mutans. Hic quamdiu non impellitur et in uacanti spatio latet, iacet innoxius nec circum ictis molestus est;

[18,2] ubi illum extrinsecus superueniens causa sollicite compellitque et in artum agit, si licet adhuc, cedit tantum et uagatur: ubi erepta discedendi facultas est et undique obsistitur, tunc “magno cum murmure montis circum claustra” fremit, quae diu pulsata conuellit ac iactat, eo acrior quo cum mora ualentiore luctatus est.

[18,3] Deinde cum circa perlustrauit omne quo tenebatur, nec potuit euadere, inde, quo maxime impactus est, resilit et aut per occulta diuiditur ipso terrae motu raritate facta, aut per nouum uulnus emicuit: ita eius non potest uis tanta cohiberi nec uentum tenet ulla compages. Soluit enim quodcumque uinculum et onus omne fert secum infususque per minima laxamentum sibi parat et indomita naturae potentia liberat se, utique cum concitatus sibi ius suum uindicat.

[18,4] Spiritus ueto inuicta res est: nihil erit quod “luctantes uentos tempestatesque sonoras imperio premat ac uinclis et carcere frenet.”

[18,5] Sine dubio poetae hunc uoluerunt uideri carcerem in quo sub terra clausi laterent, sed hoc non intellexerunt, nec id quod clausum est esse adhuc uentum nec id quod uentus est posse iam claudi. Nam quod in clauso est quiescit et aeris statio est; omnis in fuga uentus est.

[18,6] Etiamnunc et illud accedit his argumentis per quod appareat motum effici spiritu, quod corpora quoque nostra non aliter tremunt quam si spiritum aliqua causa perturbat, cum timore contractus est, cum senectute languescit et uenis torpentibus marcet, cum frigore inhibetur aut sub accessionem cursu suo deicitur.

[18,7] Nam quamdiu sine iniuria perfluit et ex more procedit, nullus est tremor corpori: cum aliquid occurrit quod inhibeat eius officium, tunc parum potens in perferendis his quae integer tulerat, deficiens concutit quicquid suo uigore tendebat.

[19,1] Metrodorum Chium, quia necesse est, audiamus, quod uult sententiae loco dicentem. Non enim permitto mihi ne eas quidem

opiniones praeterire quas improbo, cum satius sit omnium copiam fieri et quae improbamus damnare potius quam praeterire.

[19,2] Quid ergo dicit? Quomodo, cum in dolio cantatur, uox illa per totum cum quadam discussione percurrit ac resonat et tam leuiter mota tamen circumit non sine tactu eius tumultuque quo inclusa est, sic speluncarum sub terra pendentium uastitas habet aera suum, quem, simul alius superne incidens percussit, agit, non aliter quam illa, de quibus paulo ante rettuli, inania indito clamore sonuerunt.

[20,1] Ueniamus nunc ad eos qui omnia ista quae rettuli in causa esse dixerunt aut ex his plura. Democritus plura putat. Ait enim motum aliquando spiritu fieri, aliquando aqua, aliquando utroque, et id hoc modo prosequitur. Aliqua pars terrae concaua est; in hanc aquae magna uis confluit. Ex hac est aliquid tenue et ceteris liquidius. Hoc, cum superueniente grauitate reiectum est, illiditur terris et illas mouet, nec enim fluctuari potest sine motu eius in quod impingitur.

[20,2] Etiam nunc quomodo de spiritu dicebamus, de aqua quoque dicendum est. Ubi in unum locum congesta est et capere se desiit, aliquo incumbit et primo uiam pondere aperit, deinde impetu; nec enim exire nisi per deuexum potest diu inclusa nec in directum cadere moderate aut sine concussione eorum per quae uel in quae cadit.

[20,3] Si uero, cum iam rapi coepit, aliquo loco substitit et illa uis fluminis in se reuoluta est, in continentem terram repellitur et illam, qua parte maxime pendet, exagitat. Praeterea aliquando madefacta tellus liquore penitus accepto altius sedit et fundus ipse uitatur: tunc ea pars premitur in quam maxime aquarum uergentium pondus inclinatur.

[20,4] Spiritus uero nonnumquam impellit undas et, si uehementius institit, eam scilicet partem terrae mouet in quam coactas aquas intulit; nonnumquam in terrena itinera coniectus et exitum quaerens mouet omnia. Terra autem tem penetrabilis uentis est et spiritus subtilior est quam ut possit excludi, uehementior quam ut sustineri concitatus ac rapidus.

[20,5] Omnes istas esse posse causas Epicurus ait pluresque alias temptat et illos qui aliquid unum ex istis esse affirmauerunt corripit, cum sit arduum de his quae coniectura assequenda sunt aliquid certi

promittere.

[20,6] Ergo, ut ait, potest terram mouere aqua, si partes aliquas eluit et adrosit, quibus desiit posse extenuatis sustineri quod integris ferebatur. Potest terram mouere impressio spiritus: fortasse enim aer extrinsecus alio intrante aere agitur, fortasse aliqua parte subito decidente percutitur et inde motum capit. Fortasse aliqua pars terrae uelut columnis quibusdam ac pilis sustinetur, quibus uitatis ac recedentibus tremit pondus impositum.

[20,7] Fortasse calida uis spiritus in ignem uersa et fulmini similis cum magna strage obstantium fertur. Fortasse palustres et iacentes aquas aliquis flatus impellit et inde aut ictus terram quatit aut spiritus agitatio ipso motu crescens et se incitans ab imo in summa usque perfertur. Nullam tamen illi placet causam motus esse maiorem quam spiritum.

[21,1] Nobis quoque placet hunc spiritum esse qui possit tanta conari, quo nihil est in rerum natura potentius, nihil acrius, sine quo ne illa quidem quae uehementissima sunt ualent: ignem spiritus concitat; aquae, si uentum detrahas, inertes sunt: tunc demum impetum sumunt, cum illas agit flatus. Et potest dissipare magna terrarum spatia et novos montes subiectus extollere et insulas non ante uisas in medio mari ponere: Theren et Therasiam et hanc nostrae aetatis insulam, spectantibus nobis in Aegaeo mari natam, quis dubitat quin in lucem spiritus uexerit?

[21,2] Duo genera sunt, ut Posidonio placet, quibus mouetur terra. Utrique nomen est proprium: altera succussio est, cum terra quatitur et sursum ac deorsum mouetur, altera inclinatio, qua in latera nutat alternis nauigii more. Ego et tertium illud existimo quod nostro uocabulo signatum est; non enim sine causa tremorem terrae dixere maiores, qui utrique dissimilis est; nam nec succutiuntur tunc omnia nec inclinantur sed uibrantur, res minime in eiusmodi casu noxia; sicut longe perniciosior est inclinatio concussione: nam nisi celeriter ex altera parte properabit motus qui inclinata restituat, ruina necessario sequitur.

[22,1] Cum dissimiles hi motus inter se sint, causae quoque eorum diuersae sunt. Prius ergo de motu quatiente dicamus. Si quando magna onera per uices uehiculorum plurium tracta sunt et rotae maiore nisu in salebras inciderunt, terram concuti senties.

[22,2] Asclepiodotus tradit: cum petra e latere montis abrupta cecidisset, aedificia uicina tremore collapsa sunt. Idem sub terris fieri potest, ut ex his quae impendent rupibus aliqua resoluta magno pondere ac sono in subiacentem cauernam cadat, eo uehementius quo aut plus ponderis uenit aut altius: et sic commouetur omne tectum cauatae uallis.

[22,3] Nec tantum pondere suo abscindi saxa credibile est sed cum flumina supra ferantur, assiduus umor commissuras lapidis extenuat et cotidie aliquid his ad quae religatus est aufert et illam, ut ita dicam, glutem, qua continetur, abradit. Deinde longa per aeuum deminutio usque eo infirmat illa quae cotidie attriuit, ut desinant esse oneri ferendo:

[22,4] tunc saxa uasti ponderis decidunt; tunc illa praecipitata rupes quicquid ab imo repercutit non passura consistere “<cum> sonitu uenit, et ruere omnia uisa repente”, ut ait Uergilius noster.

[23,1] Huius motus succutientis terras haec erit causa: ad alteram transeo. Rara terrae natura est multumque habens uacui: per has raritates spiritus fertur, qui, ubi maior influxit nec emittitur, concutit terram.

[23,2] Haec placet et aliis, ut paulo ante rettuli, causa, si quid apud te profectura testium turba est: hanc etiam Callisthenes probat, non contemptus uir: fuit enim illi nobile ingenium et furibundi regis impatiens. Hic est Alexandri crimen aeternum, quod nulla uirtus, nulla bellorum felicitas redimet;

[23,3] nam quotiens quis dixerit: “Occidit Persarum multa milia”, opponetur ei “et Callisthenen”; quotiens dictum erit: “Occidit Darium, penes quem tum maximum regnum erat”, opponetur ei “et Callisthenen”; quotiens dictum erit: “Omnia oceano tenus uicit, ipsum quoque temptauit nouis classibus et imperium ex angulo Thraciae usque ad Orientis terminos protulit”, dicitur: “Sed Callisthenen occidit”: omnia licet antiqua ducum regumque exempla transierit, ex his quae fecit nihil tam magnum erit quam scelus.

[23,4] Hic Callisthenes in libris quibus describit quemadmodum Helice Burisque mersae sint, quis illas casus in mare uel in illas mare immiserit, dicit id quod in priore parte dictum est: Spiritus intrat terram per occulta foramina, quemadmodum ubique, ita et sub mari; deinde, cum obstructus ille est trames per quem descenderat, reditum

autem illi a tergo resistens aqua abstulit, huc et illuc refertur et sibi ipse occurrens terram labefactat. Ideo frequentissime mari apposita uexantur et inde Neptuno haec assignata est terras mouendi potentia. Quisquis primas litteras didicit, scit illum apud Homerum Genosichthona uocari.

[24,1] Spiritum esse huius mali causam et ipse consentio. De illo disputabo: quomodo intret hic spiritus, utrum per tenuia foramina nec oculis comprehensibilia an per maiora ac patentiora, et utrum ab imo an etiam per summa terrarum.

[24,2] Hoc incredibile est. Nam in nostris quoque corporibus cutis spiritum respuit nec est illi introitus nisi per quae trahitur, nec consistere quidem a nobis receptus potest nisi in laxiore corporis parte: non enim inter neruos pulpasue sed in uisceribus et patulo interioris partis recessu commoratur.

[24,3] Idem de terra suspicari licet uel ex hoc quod motus non in summa terra circae summam est sed subter et ab imo. Huius indicium est quod altitudinis profundae maria iactantur, motis scilicet his supra quae fusa sunt: ergo uerisimile est terram ex alto moueri et illic spiritum in cauernis ingentibus concipi.

[24,4] “Immo”, inquit, “ceum, cum frigore inhorruimus, tremor sequitur, sic terras quoque spiritus extrinsecus accidens quassat”. Quod nullo modo potest fieri. Algere enim debet, ut idem illi accidat quod nobis, quos externa causa in horrorem agit. Accidere autem terrae simile quiddam nostrae affectioni, sed non ex simili causa concesserim. Illam interior et altior iniuria debet impellere:

[24,5] cuius rei argumentum uel maximum hoc potest esse quod, cum uehementi motu adaperit ingenti ruina solum est, totas nonnumquam urbes et recipit hiatus ille et abscondit.

[24,6] Thucydides ait circa Peloponnesiaci belli tempus Atalanten insulam aut totam aut certe maxima ex parte suppressam. Idem Sidone accidisse Posidonio crede. Nec ad hoc testibus opus est: meminimus enim terris interno motu diuulsis loca disiecta et campos interisse. Quod iam dicam quemadmodum existimem fieri.

[25,1] Cum spiritus magna ui uacuum terrarum locum penitus oppleuit coepitque rixari et de exitu cogitare, latera ipsa inter quae latet saepius percutit, supra quae urbes interdum sitae sunt. Haec nonnumquam adeo concutiuntur ut aedificia superposita procumbant,

nonnumquam in tantum ut parietes quibus fertur omne tegimen caui, decidant in illum subteruacantem locum totaeque urbes in immensam altitudinem uergant.

[25,2] Si uelis credere, aiunt aliquando Ossam Olympo cohaesisse, deinde terrarum motu recessisse et fissam unius magnitudinem montis in duas partes. Tunc effluxisse Peneon, qui paludes quibus laborabat Thessalia siccauit, abductis in se quae sine exitu stagnauerant aquis. Ladon flumen inter Elin et Megalenpolin medius est, quem terrarum motus effudit.

[25,3] Per haec quid probo? In laxos specus (quid enim aliud appellem loca uacua?) sub terras spiritum conuenire; quod nisi esset, magna terrarum spatia commouerentur et una multa titubarent: nunc exiguae partes laborant nec umquam per ducenta milia motus extenditur. Ecce hic, qui impleuit fabulis orbem, non transcendit Campaniam.

[25,4] Quid dicam; cum Chalcis tremuit, Thebas stetisse? cum laborauit Aegium, tam propinquas illi Patras de motu audisse? Illa uasta concussio quae duas suppressit urbes, Helicen et Burin, circa Aegium constitit. Apparet ergo in tantum spatium motum pertendere quantum illa sub terris uacantis loci inanitas pateat.

[26,1] Poteram ad hoc probandum abuti auctoritate magnorum uirorum, qui Aegyptum numquam tremuisse tradunt. Rationem autem huius rei hanc reddunt, quod ex limo tota concreuerit. Tantum enim, si Homero fides est, aberat a continenti Pharos quantum nauis diurno cursu metiri plenis lata uelis potest; sed continenti ammota est: turbidus enim defluens Nilus multumque secum caeni trahens et id subinde apponens prioribus terris Aegyptum annuo incremento semper ultra tulit. Inde pinguis et limosi soli est nec ulla interualla in se habet sed creuit in solidum arescente limo; cuius pressa erat et sedens structura, cum partes glutinarentur, nec quicquam inane interuenire poterat, cum solido liquidum ac molle semper accederet.

[26,2] Sed mouetur et Aegyptus et Delos, quam Uergilius stare iussit: “immotamque coli dedit et contemnere uentos”; hanc philosophi quoque, credula natio, dixerunt non moueri auctore Pindaro. Thucydides ait antea quidem immotam fuisse sed circa Peloponnesiacum bellum tremuisse;

[26,3] Callisthenes et alio tempore ait hoc accidisse: “Inter multa”,

inquit, “prodigia, quibus denuntiata est duarum urbium, Helices et Buris, euersio, fuere maxime notabilia columna ignis immensi et Delos agitata”; quam ideo stabilem uideri uult, quia mari imposita sit habeatque concauas rupes et saxa peruia, quae dent deprehenso aeri reditum: ob hoc et insulas esse certioris soli urbesque eo tutiores quo propius ad mare accesserint.

[26,4] Falsa haec esse Pompei et Herculaneum sensere. Adice nunc quod omnis ora maris obnoxia est motibus: sic Paphos non semel corrui; sic mobilis et huic iam familiaris malo Nicopolis; Cyprum ambit altum mare et agitur; Tyros et ipsa tam mouetur quam diluitur. Hae fere causae redduntur propter quas tremat terra.

[27,1] Quaedam tamen propria in hoc Campano motu accidisse narrantur, quorum ratio reddenda est. Diximus sexcentarum ouium gregem exanimatum in Pompeiana regione. Non est quare hoc putes ouibus illis timore accidisse.

[27,2] Aiuni enim solere post magnos terrarum motus pestilentiam fieri, nec id mirum est. Multa enim mortifera in alto latent: aer ipse, qui uel terrarum culpa uel pigritia et aeterna nocte torpescit, grauis haurientibus est, uel corruptus interiorum ignium uitio, cum e longo situ emissus est, purum hunc liquidumque maculat ac polluit insuetumque ducentibus spiritum affert noua genera morborum.

[27,3] Quid, quod aquae quoque inutiles pestilentesque in abdito latent, ut quas numquam usus exerceat, numquam aura liberior euerberet? Crassae itaque et graui caligine sempiternaque tectae nihil nisi pestiferum in se et corporibus nostris contrarium habent. Aer quoque, qui mixtus est illis quique inter illas paludes iacet, cum emersit, late uitium suum spargit et haurientes necat.

[27,4] Facilius autem pecora sentiunt, in quae primum pestilentia incurrere solet, quo audiora sunt: aperto caelo plurimum utuntur et aquis, quarum maxima in pestilentia culpa est. Oues uero mollioris naturae, quo propiora terris ferunt capita, correptas esse non miror, cum afflatus aeris diri circa ipsam humum exceperint. Nocuisset ille et hominibus, si maior exisset; sed illum sinceri aeris copia extinxit, antequam ut ab homine posset trahi surgeret.

[28,1] Multa autem terras habere mortifera uel ex hoc intellege, quod tot uenena nascuntur non manu sparsa sed sponte, solo scilicet habente ut boni ita mali semina. Quid, quod pluribus Italiae locis per

quaedam foramina pestilens exhalatur uapor, quem non homini ducere, non ferae tutum est? Aues quoque si in illum inciderunt, antequam caelo meliore leniatur, in ipso uolatu cadunt liuentque corpora et non aliter quam per uim elisae fauces tument.

[28,2] Hic spiritus, quamdiu terra se continet, tenui foramine fluens non plus potentiae habet quam ut despectantia et ultro sibi illata conficiat; ubi per saecula conditus tenebris ac tristitia loci creuit in uitium, ipsa ingrauescit mora, peior quo segnior: cum exitum nactus est, aeternum illud umbrosi frigoris malum et infernam noctem euomit ac regionis nostrae aera infuscat; uincuntur enim meliora peioribus.

[28,3] Tunc etiam ille spiritus purior transit in noxium: inde subitae continuaeque mortes et monstruosa genera morborum, ut ex nouis orta causis. Breuis autem aut longa clades est, prout uitia ualuere, nec prius pestilentia desinit quam spiritum illum grauem exercuit laxitas caeli uentorumque iactatio.

[29,1] Nam aliquos insanis attonitisque similes discurrere fecit metus, qui excutit mentes, ubi priuatus ac modicus est: quid? ubi publice terret, ubi cadunt urbes, populi opprimuntur, terra concutitur, quid mirum est animos inter dolorem et metum destitutos aberrasse?

[29,2] Non est facile inter magna mala consipere. Itaque leuissima fere ingenia in tantum uenere formidinis ut sibi exciderent. Nemo quidem sine aliqua iactura sanitatis expauit, similisque est furentis quisquis timet: sed alios cito timor sibi reddit, alios uehementius perturbat et in dementia transfert.

[29,3] Inde inter bella errauere lymphatici, nec usquam plura exempla uaticinantium inuenies quam ubi formido mentes religione mixta percussit.

[30,1] Statuam diuisam non miror, cum dixerim montes a montibus recessisse et ipsum disruptum esse ab imo solum. “Haec loca ui quondam et uasta conuulsa ruina (tantum aeui longinqua ualet mutare uetustas) dissiluisse ferunt, cum protinus utraque tellus una foret. Uenit ingenti ui pontus et ingens Hesperium Siculo latus absceidit aruaque et urbes aequore diductas angusto interluit aestu.”

[30,2] Uides totas regiones a suis sedibus reuelli et trans mare iacere quod in confinio fuerat; uides et urbium fieri gentiumque discidium, cum pars naturae concita est dehiscens et aliquo mare, ignem,

spiritum impegit; quorum mira ut ex toto uis est: quamuis enim parte saeuat, mundi tamen uiribus saeuat.

[30,3] Sic et Hispanias a contextu Africae mare eripuit, sic per hanc inundationem, quam poetarum maximi celebrant, ab Italia Sicilia reiecta est. Aliquanto autem plus impetus habent quae ex infimo ueniunt: acriora enim sunt quibus nisus est per angusta.

[30,4] Quantas res hi terrarum tremores quamque mira spectacula ediderint, satis dictum est: cur ergo aliquis ad hoc stupet quod aes unius statuae, ne solidum quidem sed concuum ac tenue, disruptum est, cum fortasse in illud se spiritus quaerens fugam incluserit? Illud uero quis nescit? Diductis aedificia angulis uidimus moueri iterumque componi. Quaedam uero parum aptata positu suo et a fabris neglegentius solutiusque composita terrae motus saepius agitata compegit.

[30,5] Quod si totos parietes et totas findit domos et latera magnarum turrium, quamuis solida sint, scindit et pilas operibus subditas dissipat, quid est quare quisquam dignum adnotari putet sectam esse aequaliter ab imo ad caput in partes duas statuum?

[31,1] Quare tamen per plures dies motus fuit? Non desiit enim assidue tremere Campania, clementius quidem sed cum ingenti damno, quia quassa quatiebat, quibus ad cadendum male stantibus <opus> non erat impelli sed agitari: nondum uidelicet spiritus omnis exierat, sed adhuc, emissa sui parte maiore, oberrabat. Inter argumenta quibus probatur spiritu ista fieri, non est quod dubites et hoc ponere:

[31,2] cum maximus editus tremor est, quo in urbes terrasque saeuatum est, non potest par illi subsequi alius, sed post maximum lenes motus sunt, quia iam uehementior uis exitum uentis luctantibus fecit; reliquiae deinde residui spiritus non idem possunt, nec illis pugna opus est, cum iam uiam inuenerint sequanturque ea qua prima uis ac maxima euasit.

[31,3] Hoc quoque dignum memoria iudico ab eruditissimo et grauissimo uiro cognitum (forte enim, cum hoc euenit, lauabatur): uidisse se affirmat in balneo tessellas quibus solum erat stratum alteram ab altera separari iterumque committi et aquam modo recipi in commissuras pauimento recedente, modo compresso bullire et elidi. Eundem audiui narrantem uidisse se macerias mollius

crebriusque tremere quam natura duri sinit.

[32,1] Haec, Lucili, uirorum optime, quantum ad ipsas causas: illa nunc quae ad confirmationem animorum pertinent. Quos magis refert nostra fortiores fieri quam doctiores; sed alterum sine altero non fit: non enim aliunde animo uenit robur quam a bonis artibus, quam a contemplatione naturae.

[32,2] Quem enim non hic ipse casus aduersus omnes firmauerit, erexerit? Quid est enim cur ego hominem aut feram, quid est cur sagittam aut lanceam tremam? Maiora me pericula expectant: fulminibus et terris et magnis naturae partibus petimur.

[32,3] Ingenti itaque animo mors prouocanda est, siue nos aequo uastoque impetu aggreditur, siue cotidiano et uulgari exitu. Nihil refert quam minax ueniat quantumque sit quod in nos trahat; quod a nobis petit minimum est: hoc senectus a nobis ablatura est, hoc auriculae dolor, hoc umoris in nobis corrupti abundantia, hoc cibus parum obsequens stomacho, hoc pes leuiter offensus.

[32,4] Pusilla res est hominis anima, sed ingens res contemptus animae: hanc qui contempsit securus uidebit maria turbari, etiamsi illa omnes excitauerunt uenti, etiamsi aestus aliqua perturbatione mundi totum in terras uertet oceanum; securus aspiciet fulminantis caeli trucem atque horridam faciem, frangatur licet caelum et ignes suos in exitium omnium, in primis suum, misceat; securus aspiciet ruptis compagibus dehiscens solum, illa licet inferorum regna retegantur. Stabit super illam uoraginem intrepidus et fortasse quo debebit cadere desiliet.

[32,5] Quid ad me quam magna sint quibus pereo? Ipsum perire non magnum est. Proinde si uolumus esse felices, si nec hominum nec deorum nec rerum timore uersari, si despiciere fortunam superuacua promittentem, leuia minitantem, si uolumus tranquille degere et ipsis diis de felicitate controuersiam agere, anima in expedito est habenda: siue illam insidiae siue morbi petent siue hostium gladii siue insularum cadentium fragor siue ipsarum ruina terrarum siue uasta uis ignium urbes agrosque pari clade complexa, qui uolet illam accipiat.

[32,6] Quid aliud debeo quam exeuntem hortari et cum bonis ominibus emittere? “Uade fortiter, uade feliciter! Nihil dubitaueris: redderis. Non de re sed de tempore est quaestio, facis quod

quandoque faciendum est. Nec rogaueris nec timueris nec te uelut in aliquod malum exiturum tuleris retro: rerum natura te, quae genuit, expectat et locus melior ac tutior.

[32,7] Illic non tremunt terrae nec inter se uenti cum magno nubium fragore concurrunt, non incendia regiones urbesque uastant, non naufragiorum totas classes sorbentium metus est, non arma contrariis disposita uexillis et in mutuam perniciem multorum milium par furor, non pestilentia et ardentes promiscue communes populis cadentibus rogi”. Istud leue est: quid timemus? graue est: potius semel incidat quam semper impendeat.

[32,8] Ego autem perire timeam, cum terra ante me pereat, cum ista quatiuntur quae quatiunt et in iniuriam nostram non sine sua ueniant? Helicen Burinque totas mare accepit: ego de uno corpusculo timeam? Supra oppida duo nauigatur (duo autem quae nouimus, quae in nostram notitiam memoria litteris seruata perduxit: quam multa alia aliis locis mersa sunt, quot populos aut terra aut infra se mare inclusit!): ego recusem mei finem, cum sciam me sine fine non esse? Immo cum sciam omnia esse finita, ego ultimum suspirium timeam?

[32,9] Quantum potes itaque, ipse te cohortare, Lucili, contra metum mortis: hic est qui nos humiles facit; hic est qui uitam ipsam, cui parcit, inquietat ac perdit; hic omnia ista dilatat, terrarum motus et fulmina. Quae omnia feres constanter, si cogitaueris nihil interesse inter exiguum tempus et longum.

[32,10] Horae sunt quas perdimus; puta dies esse, puta menses, puta annos: perdimus illos nempe perituros. Quid, oro te, refert num perueniam ad illos? Fluit tempus et audissimos sui deserit; nec quod futurum est meum est nec quod fuit: in puncto fugientis temporis pendeo, et magni est modicum fuisse.

[32,11] Eleganter ille Laelius sapiens dicenti cuidam “Sexaginta annos habeo”, “Hos”, inquit, “dicis sexaginta quos non habes”. Ne ex hoc quidem intellegimus incomprehensibilis uitae condicionem et sortem temporis semper alieni, quod annos numeramus amissos?

[32,12] Hoc affigamus animo, hoc nobis subinde dicamus: moriendum est. Quando? Quid tua? Mors naturae lex est, mors tributum officiumque mortalium malorumque omnium remedium est: optauit illam quisquis timet. Omnibus omissis, hoc unum, Lucili, meditare, ne mortis nomen reformides; effice illam tibi cogitatione

multa familiarem, ut, si ita tulerit, possis illi et obuiam exire.

LIBER VII

DE COMETIS

[1,1] Nemo usque eo tardus et hebes et demissus in terram est ut ad diuina non erigatur ac tota mente consurgat, utique ubi nouum aliquod e caelo miraculum fulsit. Nam quamdiu solita decurrunt, magnitudinem rerum consuetudo subducit: ita enim compositi sumus ut nos cotidiana, etiamsi admiratione digna sunt, transeant, contra minimarum quoque rerum, si insolitae prodierunt, spectaculum dulce fiat.

[1,2] Hic itaque coetus astrorum, quibus immensi corporis pulchritudo distinguitur, populum non conuocat: at cum aliquid ex more mutatum est, omnium uultus in caelo est. Sol spectatorem, nisi deficit, non habet; nemo obseruat lunam nisi laborantem: tunc urbes conclamant, tunc pro se quisque superstitione uana strepit.

[1,3] At quanto illa maiora sunt, quod sol totidem, ut ita dicam, gradus quot dies habet et annum circuitu suo claudit, quod a solstitio ad minuendos dies uertitur, quod ab aequinoctio statim inclinatur et dat noctibus spatium, quod sidera abscondit, quod terras, cum tanto maior sit illis, non urit sed calorem suum intensionibus ac remissionibus temperando fouet, quod lunam numquam implet nisi aduersam sibi nec obscurat <nisi uicinam>?

[1,4] Haec tamen non adnotamus, quamdiu ordo seruatur; si quid turbatum est aut praeter consuetudinem emicuit, spectamus interrogamus ostendimus: adeo naturale est magis noua quam magna mirari.

[1,5] Idem in cometis fit: si rarus et insolitae figurae ignis apparuit, nemo non scire quid sit cupit et, oblitus aliorum, de aduenticio quaerit, ignarus utrum debeat mirari an timere. Non enim desunt qui terreant, qui significationes eius graues praedicunt. Sciscitantur itaque et cognoscere uolunt prodigium sit an sidus.

[1,6] At mehercules non aliud quis aut magnificentius quaesierit aut didicerit utilius quam de stellarum siderumque natura, utrum flamma contracta, quod et uisus noster affirmat et ipsum ab illis fluens lumen et calor inde descendens, an non sint flammei orbes, sed solida

quaedam terrenaque corpora, quae per igneos tractus labentia inde splendorem trahant caloremque, non de suo clara.

[1,7] In qua opinione magni fuere uiri, qui sidera crediderunt ex duro concreta et ignem alienum pascentia. Nam per se, inquit, flamma diffugeret, nisi aliquid haberet quod teneret et a quo teneretur, conglobatamque nec stabili inditam corpori profecto iam mundus turbine suo dissipasset.

[2,1] Ad haec inuestiganda proderit quaerere num cometae condicionis sint cuius superiora. Videntur enim cura illis quaedam habere communia: ortus et occasus, ipsam quoque, quam uis spargatur et longius exeat, faciem (aeque enim ignei splendidique sunt).

[2,2] Itaque si omnia terrena sidera sunt, his quoque eadem sors erit; si uero nihil aliud sunt quam purus ignis manensque mensibus senis nec illos conuersio mundi soluit et uelocitas, illa quoque possunt et tenui constare materia nec ob hoc discuti assiduo caeli circumactu.

[2,3] Illo quoque pertinebit haec excussisse ut sciamus utrum mundus terra stante circumeat an mundo stante terra uertatur. Fuerunt enim qui dicerent nos esse quos rerum natura nescientes ferat, nec caeli motu fieri ortus et occasus, nos ipsos oriri et occidere: digna res contemplatione, ut sciamus in quo rerum statu simus, pigerrimam sortiti an uelocissimam sedem, circa nos deus omnia an nos agat.

[3,1] Necessarium est autem ueteres ortus cometarum habere collectos. Deprehendi enim propter raritatem eorum cursus adhuc non potest, nec explorari an uices seruent et illos ad suum diem certus ordo producat. Noua haec caelestium obseruatio est et nuper in Graeciam inuenta.

[3,2] Democritus quoque, subtilissimus antiquorum omnium, suspicari se ait plures stellas esse quae currant, sed nec numerum illarum posuit nec nomina, nondum comprehensis quinque siderum cursibus. Eudoxus primus ab Aegypto hos motus in Graeciam transtulit; hic tamen de cometis nihil dicit: ex quo apparet ne apud Aegyptios quidem, quibus maior caeli cura fuit, hanc partem elaboratam.

[3,3] Canon postea, diligens et ipse inquisitor, defectiones quidem

solis seruatas ab Aegyptiis collegit, nullam autem mentionem fecit cometarum, non praetermissurus, si quid explorati apud illos comperisset.

[4.1] Duo certe, qui apud Chaldaeos studuisse se dicunt, Epigenes et Apollonius Myndius, peritissimus inspicendorum natalium, inter se dissident. Hic enim ait cometas in numero stellarum errantium poni a Chaldaeis tenerique cursus eorum. Epigenes contra ait Chaldaeos nihil de cometis habere comprehensi, sed uideri illos accendi turbine quodam aeris concitati et intorti.

[4.2] Primum ergo, si tibi uidetur, opiniones huius ponamus ac refellamus. Huic uidetur plurimum uirium habere ad omnes sublimium motus stella Saturni. Haec, cum proxima signa Marti premit aut in lunae uiciniam transit aut in solis incidit radios, natura uentosa et frigida contrahit pluribus locis aera conglobatque; deinde si radios solis assumpsit, tonat fulguratque; si Martem quoque consentientem habet, fulminat.

[4.3] Praeterea, inquit, aliam materiam habent fulmina, aliam fulgurationes: aquarum enim et omnis umidi euaporatio splendores tantum caeli citra ictum minaces mouet, illa autem calidior sicciorque terrarum exhalatio fulmina extundit. Trabes uero et faces, quae nullo alio inter se quam magnitudine distant, hoc modo fiunt:

[4.4] cum umida terrenaque in se globus aliquis aeris clausit, quem turbinem dicimus, quacumque fertur, praebet speciem ignis extenti, quae tam diu durat quam diu mansit aeris illa complexio umidi intra se terrenique multum uehens.

[5.1] Ut a proximis mendaciis incipiam, falsum est faces et trabes exprimi turbine: turbo enim circa terras concipitur ac fertur ideoque arbusta radicitus uellit et, quacumque incubuit, solum nudat, siluas interim et tecta corripuens, inferior fere nubibus, utique numquam altior; at contra trabes editior caeli pars ostentat: itaque numquam nubibus obstiterunt.

[5.2] Praeterea turbo omni nube uelocius rapitur et in orbem uertitur; super ista uelociter desinit et ipse se ui sua rumpit. Trabes autem non transcurrunt nec praeteruolant ut faces sed commorantur et in eadem caeli parte collucent.

[5.3] Charmander quoque, in eo libro quem de cometis a composuit, ait Anaxagorae uisum grande insolitumque caelo lumen

magnitudine amplae trabis, et id per multos dies fulsisse. Talem effigiem ignis longi fuisse Callisthenes tradit, antequam Burin et Helicen mare absconderet.

[5,4] Aristoteles ait non trabem illam sed cometen fuisse; ceterum ob nimium ardorem non apparuisse sparsum ignem, sed procedente tempore, cum iam minus flagraret, redditam suam cometis faciem. In quo igne multa quidem fuerunt digna quae notarentur, nihil tamen magis quam quod, ut ille fulsit in caelo, statim supra Burin et Helicen mare fuit.

[5,5] Numquid ergo Aristoteles non illam tantum sed omnes trabes cometas esse credebat hanc habentes differentiam quod his continuus ignis est, ceteris sparsus? Trabes enim flammam aequalem habent nec ullo loco intermissam aut languidam, in ultimis uero partibus coactam, qualem fuisse in illa de qua modo rettuli Callisthenes tradit.

[6,1] Duo, inquit Epigenes, cometarum genera sunt: alii ardorem undique effundunt nec locum mutant, alii in unam partem ignem uagum in modum comae porrigunt et stellas praetermeant (quales duo aetate nostra uisi sunt). Illi priores criniti undique et immoti humiles fere sunt et isdem causis quibus trabes facesque conflantur ex intemperie aeris turbidi multa secum arida umidaque terris exhalata uersantis.

[6,2] Potest enim spiritus per angusta elisus accendere supra se positum aera plenum alimentis idoneis igni, deinde propellere et niti, donec ex aliqua causa refluat rursus ac remittatur, deinde iterum proximo die ac sequentibus consurgere et eundem locum inflammare: uidemus enim uentos per complures dies ad constitutum redire; pluuiiae quoque et alia tempestatum genera ad praescriptum reuertuntur.

[6,3] Ut breuiter autem uoluntatem eius exprimam, eadem fieri ratione hos cometas existimat qua fiunt ignes turbine eiekti; hoc unum interest, quod illi turbines ex superiore parte in terras deprimuntur, hi de terra in superiora eluctantur.

[7,1] Aduersus haec multa dicuntur. Primum si uentus in causa esset, numquam cometes sine uento appareret: nunc autem et quietissimo aere apparet. Deinde si uento fieret, cum uento caderet; et si uento inciperet, cresceret uento eoque esset ardentior quo ille incitator. His accedit illud quoque quod uentus multas aeris partes

impellit, cometes uno loco apparet; et uentus in sublime non peruenit, cometae autem uisuntur supra quam ire uentis licet.

[7,2] Transit deinde ad illos quos ait certiore habere stellarum speciem, qui et procedunt et signa praetereunt. Hos ait ex isdem causis fieri quibus illos quos dixit humiliores; hoc tamen interesse, quod terrarum exhalationes multa secum arida ferentes celsiorem petant partem et in editiora caeli aquilone pellantur.

[7,3] <at> si illos aquilo propelleret, ad meridiem semper agerentur, quo uentus hic nititur: atqui uarie cucurrerunt, alii in ortum, alii in occasum, omnes in flexum; quod iter non daret uentus. Deinde si aquilonis illos impetus a terris in altum leuaret, aliis uentis non orirentur cometae: atqui oriuntur.

[8,1] Illam nunc rationem eius (utraque enim utitur) refellamus: Quicquid umidi aridique terra eflauit, cum in unum coit, ipsa discordia corporum spiritum uersat in turbinem; tunc illa uis uenti circumeuntis quicquid intra se comprehendit cursu suo accendit et leuat in altum, ac tam diu manet splendor ignis expressi quamdiu alimenta sufficiunt; quibus desinentibus et ipse subsidit.

[8,2] Qui hoc dicit, non notat qualis sit turbinum cursus et qualis cometarum: illorum rapidus ac uiolentus et ipsis uentis citior est, cometarum lenis et qui per diem noctemque quantum transierit abscondat. Deinde turbinum motus uagus est et disiectus et, ut Salustii uerbis utar, uerticosus, cometarum autem compositus et destinatum iter carpens.

[8,3] Num quis nostrum crederet lunam aut quinque sidera rapi uento aut turbine rotari? Non, ut puto. Quare? Quia non est illis perturbatus et impotens cursus. Ad cometas idem transferamus: non confuse nec tumultuose eunt, ut aliquis credat illos causis turbulentis et inconstantibus pelli.

[8,4] Deinde, etiamsi uertices isti comprehendere terrena umidaque et ex humili in altum exprimere possent, non tamen supra lunam efferrent: omnis illis usque in nubilum uis est; cometas autem immixtos stellis uidemus per superiora labentes. Ergo ueri simile non est in tantum spatium perseuerare turbinem, qui quo maior est maturius corrumpitur.

[9,1] Utrumlibet itaque eligat: aut lenis uis tam alte peruenire non poterit, aut magna et concitata citius ipsa se franget. Praeterea

humiliores illi cometae ob hoc (ut putat) non exeunt altius quia plus terreni habent (grauitas illos sua in proximo tenet): atqui necesse est in his cometis diuturnioribus celsioribusque plenior materia sit; neque enim diutius apparerent, nisi maioribus nutrimentis sustinerentur.

[9,2] Dicebam modo non posse diu uerticem permanere nec supra lunam aut usque in stellarum locum crescere. Nempe efficit turbinem plurium uentorum inter ipsos luctatio. Haec diu non potest esse: nam cum uagus et incertus spiritus conuolutatus est, nouissime uni uis omnium cedit;

[9,3] nulla autem tempestas magna perdurat (procellae, quanto plus habent uirium, tanto minus temporis; uenti, cum ad summum uenerunt, remittuntur; omnia uiolenta necesse est ipsa concitatione in exitum sui tendant). Nemo itaque turbinem toto die uidit, ne hora quidem: mira uelocitas eius et mira breuitas est. Praeterea uiolentius celeriusque in terra circaque terram uoluitur; quo excelsior, eo solutior laxiorque est et ob hoc diffunditur.

[9,4] Adice nunc quod, etiamsi in summum pertenderet, ubi sideribus iter est, utique ab eo motu qui uniuersum trahit solueretur: quid enim est illa conuersione mundi citatius? Hac omnium uentorum in unum congesta uis dissiparetur et terrae solida fortisque compages, nedum particula aeris torti.

[10,1] Praeterea manere in alto non potest ignis turbine illatus, nisi ipse quoque permanet turbo. Quid porro tam incredibile est quam in turbine longior mora, utique ubi motus motu contrario uincitur? (Habet enim suam locus ille uertiginem, quae rapit caelum "sideraque alta trahit celerique uolumine torquet"). Et ut des ei aliquam aduocationem, quod fieri nullo modo potest, quid de his cometis dicetur qui senis mensibus apparuerunt?

[10,2] Deinde duo debent esse motus eodem loco, alter ille diuinus et assiduus, suum sine intermissione peragens opus, alter nouus et recens et turbine illatus; necesse est ergo alter alteri impedimentum sit. Atqui <quia> lunaris illa orbita ceterorumque supra lunam meantium motus irreuocabilis est nec haesitat usquam nec resistit nec dat ullam nobis suspicionem obiectae sibi morae, fidem non habet turbinem, uiolentissimum et perturbatissimum tempestatis genus, in medios siderum ordines peruenire et inter disposita ac tranquilla

uersari.

[10,3] Credamus ignem circumacto turbine accendi et hunc expulsum in sublime praeberere nobis opinionem speciemque sideris longi: puto, talis esse debet quale est id quod ignem efficit; turbine autem rotunda facies est (in eodem enim uestigio uersatur et columnae modo circumagentis se uoluitur): ergo ignem quoque qui inclusus est similem esse illi oportet, atqui longus est et disiectus minimeque similis in orbem coacto.

[11,1] Epigenem relinquamus et aliorum opiniones persequamur. Quas antequam exponere incipiam, illud imprimis praesumendum est, cometas non in una parte caeli aspici nec in signifero tantum orbe sed tam in ortu quam in occasu, frequentissime tamen circa septentrionem.

[11,2] Forma eis, <ut> nomen, est una: quamuis enim Graeci discrimina fecerint eorum quibus in morem barbae flamma dependet, et eorum qui undique circa se uelut comam spargunt, et eorum quibus fusus quidem est ignis sed in uerticem tendens, tamen omnes isti eiusdem notae sunt cometaeque recte dicuntur.

[11,3] Quorum cum post longum tempus appareant formae, inter se eos comparare difficile est: illo ipso tempore quo apparent, inter spectantes de habitu illorum non conuenit sed, prout cuique acrior acies aut hebetior est, ita ait aut lucidiorem esse aut rubicundiorem et crines aut in interiora reductos aut in latera demissos. Sed siue sunt aliquae differentiae illorum siue non sunt, eadem fiant ratione necesse est cometae; illud unum constare debet: praeter solitum aspici nouam sideris faciem circa se dissipatum ignem trahentis.

[12,1] Quibusdam antiquorum haec placet ratio: cum ex stellis errantibus altera se alteri applicuit, confuso in unum duarum lumine facies longioris sideris redditur; nec hoc tunc tantum euenit, cum stella stellam attigit, sed etiam cum appropinquauit: interuallum enim quod inter duas est illustratur ab utraque inflammaturque et longum ignem efficit.

[12,2] His illud respondebimus: certum esse numerum stellarum mobilium, solere autem eodem tempore et has apparere et cometen, ex quo manifestum fit non illarum coitu fieri cometen sed proprium esse et sui iuris.

[12,3] Etiamnunc frequenter stella sub altioris stellae uestigium

uenit: et Saturnus aliquando supra Iouem est et Mars Uenerem aut Mercurium recta linea despicit, nec tamen propter hunc illorum concursum, cum alter alterum subit, cometes fit; alioquin annis omnibus fieret (omnibus enim aliquae stellae in eodem signo simul sunt).

[12,4] Si cometen faceret stella stellae superueniens, momento esse desineret. Summa enim uelocitas transeuntium est, ideoque omnis defectio siderum brevis est, quia cito illa idem cursus qui admouerat abstrahit; uidemus solem et lunam intra exiguum tempus, cum obscurari coeperunt, liberari: quanto celerior debet fieri in stellis digressio tanto minoribus? Atqui cometae senis mensibus manent, quod non accideret, si duarum stellarum conuentu gignerentur: illae enim diu cohaerere non possunt et necesse est illas lex celeritatis suae separet.

[12,5] Praeterea ista nobis uicina uidentur, ceterum interuallis ingentibus dissident: quomodo ergo potest altera stella usque ad alteram stellam ignem mittere, ita ut utraque iuncta uideatur, cum sint ingenti regione diductae?

[12,6] Stellarum, inquit, duarum lumen miscetur et praebet unius speciem, nempe sic quemadmodum rubicunda fit nubes solis incursu, quemadmodum uespertina aut matutina flaescent, quemadmodum arcus alterue sol uisitur.

[12,7] Haec omnia primum magna ui efficiuntur; sol enim est qui ista succendit: stellarum non est eadem potentia. Deinde nihil horum nisi infra lunam in terrarum uicinia nascitur; superiora pura et sincera sunt et coloris sui semper.

[12,8] Praeterea si quid tale accideret, non haberet moram sed extingueretur cito, sicut coronae quae solem lunamue cingunt intra breuissimum spatium exolescent; ne arcus quidem diu perseuerat: si quid esset tale quo medium inter duas stellas spatium confunderetur, aequo cito dilaberetur; utique non in tantum maneret quantum morari cometae solent. Stellis intra signiferum cursus est, hunc premunt gyrum. At cometae ubique cernuntur: non magis certum est illis tempus quo appareant, quam locus ullus ultra quem non exeant.

[13,1] Aduersus haec ab Artemidoro illa dicuntur: non has tantum stellas quinque discurrere, sed has solas obseruatas esse; ceterum innumerabiles ferri per occultum aut propter obscuritatem luminis

nobis ignotas aut propter circulorum positionem talem ut tunc demum, cum ad extrema eorum uenere, uisuntur. Ergo intercurrent quaedam stellae, ut ait, nobis nouae, quae lumen suum constantibus misceant et maiorem quam stellis mos est porrigant ignem.

[13,2] Hoc ex his quae mentitur leuissimum est: tota eius enarratio mundi mendacium impudens est. Nam si illi credimus, summa caeli ora solidissima est, in modum tecti durata et alti crassique corporis, quod atomi congestae coaceruataeque fecerunt.

[13,3] Huic proxima superficies ignea est, ita compacta ut solui uitarique non possit; habet tamen spiramenta quaedam et quasi fenestras per quas ex parte exteriori mundi influant ignes, non tam magni ut interiora conturbent, rursus<que> ex mundo in exteriora labantur: itaque haec quae praeter consuetudinem apparent, influxerunt ex illa ultra mundum iacente materia.

[14,1] Soluere ista quid aliud est quam manum exercere et in uentum iactare brachia? Velim tamen mihi dicat iste, qui mundo tam ferma lacunaria imposuit, quid sit quare credamus illi tantam esse crassitudinem caeli. Quid fuit quod illo tam solida corpora adduceret et ibi detineret?

[14,2] Deinde quod tantae crassitudinis est, necesse est et magni ponderis sit: quomodo ergo in summo manent grauia? Quomodo illa moles non descendit et se onere suo frangit? Fieri enim non potest ut tanta uis ponderis, quantam ille sustinuit, pendeat et leuibz innixa sit.

[14,3] Ne illud quidem potest dici: extrinsecus esse aliqua retinacula quibus cadere prohibeatur, nec rursus de medio aliquid esse oppositi quod imminens corpus excipiat ac fulciat. Illud etiamnunc nemo dicere audebit, mundum ferri per immensum et cadere quidem, sed non apparere an cadat, quia praecipitatio eius aeterna est, nihil habens nouissimum in quod incurrat.

[14,4] Hoc quidam de terra dixerunt, cum rationem nullam inuenirent propter quam pondus in aere staret: Fertur, inquiunt, semper, sed non apparet an cadat, quia infinitum est in quod cadit. Quid est deinde quo probes non quinque tantum stellas moueri sed multas esse et in multis mundi regionibus? Aut si hoc sine ullo probabili argumento licet, respondere: quid est quare non aliquis aut omnes stellas moueri aut nullam dicat? Praeterea nihil te adiuuat ista

stellarum passim euntium turba: nam quo plures fuerint, saepius in aliquas incident; rari autem cometae et ob hoc mirabiles sunt.

[15,1] Quid, quod testimonium dicet contra te omnis aetas, quae talium stellarum exortus et adnotauit et posteris tradidit? Post mortem Demetrii Syriae regis, cuius Demetrius et Antiochus liberi fuere, paulo ante Achaicum bellum cometes effulsit non minor sole: primo igneus ac rubicundus orbis fuit clarumque lumen emittens, quanto uinceret noctem; deinde paulatim magnitudo eius districta est et euanuit claritas; nouissime totus intercidit. Quoi ergo coire stellas oportet, ut tantum corpus efficiant? Mille in unum licet congreges, numquam hunc habitum solis aequabunt.

[15,2] Attalo regnante initio cometes modicus apparuit, deinde sustulit se diffuditque et usque in aequinoctialem circulum uenit, ita ut illam plagam caeli, cui lactea nomen est, in immensum extentus aequaret. Quid ergo? <Quot>> conuenisse debent erralicae, ut tam longum caeli tractum occuparent igne continuo?

[16,1] Contra argumenta dictum est, contra testes dicendum est. Nec magna molitione detrahenda est auctoritas Ephoro: historicus est. Quidam incredibilium relatu commendationem parant et lectorem, aliud acturum, si per cotidiana duceretur, miraculo excitant; quidam creduli, quidam negligentes sunt; quibusdam mendacium obrepit, quibusdam placet; illi non euitant, hi appetunt.

[16,2] Haec in commune de tota natione, quae approbari opus suum et fieri populare non putat posse, nisi illud mendacio aspersit. Ephorus uero non est religiosissimae fidei: saepe decipitur, saepius decipit, sicut hunc cometen, qui omnium mortalium oculis custoditus est, quia ingentis rei traxit euentum, cum Helicen et Burin ortu suo merserit, ait illum discessisse in duas stellas, quod praeter illum nemo tradidit.

[16,3] Quis enim posset obseruare illud momentum quo cometes solutus et in duas partes redactus est? Quomodo autem, si est qui uiderit cometen in duas dirimi, nemo uidit fieri ex duabus? Quare autem non adiecit in quas stellas diuisus sit, cum aliqua ex quinque stellis esse debuerit?

[17,1] Apollonius Myndius in diuersa opinione est: ait enim cometen non unum ex multis erraticis effici sed multos cometas erraticos esse. Non est, inquit, species falsa nec duarum stellarum

confinio ignis extentus, sed proprium sidus cometae est, sicut solis ac lunae. Talis illi forma est, non in rotundum restricta sed procerior et in longum producta.

[17,2] Ceterum non est illi palam cursus: altiora mundi secatur et tunc demum apparet cum in imum cursus sui uenit. Nec est quod putemus eundem uisum esse sub Claudio quem sub Augusto uidimus, nec hunc qui sub Nerone Caesare apparuit et cometis detraxit infamiam illi similem fuisse qui post excessum diui Iulii ludis Ueneris Genetricis circa undecimam horam diei emersit.

[17,3] Multi uariique sunt, dispares magnitudine, dissimiles colore: aliis rubor est sine ulla luce, aliis candor et purum liquidumque lumen, aliis flamma et haec non sincera nec tenuis sed multum circa se uoluens fumidi ardoris; cruenti quidam minaces<que>, qui<a> omen post se futuri sanguinis ferunt. Hi minuunt augentque lumen suum quemadmodum alia sidera, quae clariora cum descendere sunt maioraque, quia ex loco propiore uisuntur, minora cum redeunt et obscuriora, quia abducunt se longius.

[18,1] Aduersus haec protinus respondetur non idem accidere in cometis quod in ceteris. Cometae enim quo primum die apparuerunt, maximi sunt; atqui deberent crescere, quo propius accederent: nunc autem manet illis prima facies, donec incipiant extinguere. Deinde quod aduersus priores, etiam aduersus hunc dicitur: si erraret cometes essetque sidus, intra signiferi terminos moueretur, intra quos omne sidus cursus suos colligit.

[18,2] Numquam apparet stella per stellam; acies nostra non potest per medium sidus exire, ut per illud superiora perspiciat; per cometen autem non aliter quam per nubem ulteriora cernuntur: ex quo apparet illum non esse sidus sed leuem ignem ac tumultuarium.

[19,1] Zenon noster in illa sententia est: congruere iudicat stellas et radios inter se committere; hac societate luminis existere imaginem stellae longioris. Ergo quidam nullos esse cometas existimant sed speciem illorum per repercussionem uicinarum siderum aut per coniunctionem cohaerentium reddi;

[19,2] quidam aiunt esse quidem sed habere cursus suos et post certa lustra in conspectum mortalium exire; quidam esse quidem sed non quibus siderum nomen imponas, quia dilabuntur nec diu durant et exigui temporis mora dissipantur.

[20,1] In hac sententia sunt plerique nostrorum nec id putant ueritati repugnare. Videmus enim in sublimi uaria ignium concipi genera et modo caelum ardere, modo “longos a tergo flammarm albescere tractus,” modo faces cum igne uasto rapi. Iam ipsa fulmina, etiamsi uelocitate mira simul et praestringunt aciem et relinquunt, ignes sunt aeris triti et impetu inter se maiore collisi: ideo ne resistunt quidem sed expressi fluunt et protinus pereunt.

[20,2] Alii uero ignes diu manent nec ante discedunt quam consumptum est omne quo pascebantur alimentum. Hoc loco sunt illa a Posidonio scripta miracula, columnae clipeique flagrant aliaeque insigni nouitate flammae, quae non aduerterent animos, si ex consuetudine et lege decurrerent: ad haec stupent omnes, quae repentinum ex alto ignem efferunt, siue emicuit aliquid et fugit siue compresso aere et in ardorem coacto loco miraculi stetit.

[20,3] Quid ergo? Non aliquando lacuna secedentis retro aeris patuit et uastum in concauo lumen? Exclamare posses: “quid hoc est? Medium uideo discedere caelum palantesque polo stellas”, quae aliquando non expectata nocte fulserunt et per medium eruperunt diem. Sed alia huius rei ratio est, quare alieno tempore appareant in aere, quas esse, etiam cum latent, constat.

[20,4] Multos cometas non uidemus, quia obscurantur radiis solis: quo deficiente quondam cometen apparuisse, quem sol uicinus obtexerat, Posidonius tradit; saepe autem cum occidit sol, sparsi ignes non procul ab eo uidentur: uidelicet ipsa stella sole perfunditur et ideo aspici non potest, comae autem radios solis effugiunt.

[21,1] Placet ergo nostris cometas, sicut faces, sicut tubas trabesque et alia ostenta caeli, denso aere creari. Ideo circa septentrionem a frequentissime apparent, quia illic plurimum est aeris pigri.

[21,2] Quare ergo non stat cometes sed procedit? Dicam: ignium modo alimentum suum sequitur; quamuis enim illi ad superiora nisus sit, tamen deficiente materia retro iens ipse descendit. In aere quoque non dextram laeuamque premit partem (nulla est enim illi uia), sed, qua illum uena pabuli sui duxit, illa repit nec ut stella procedit sed ut ignis pascitur.

[21,3] Quare ergo per longum tempus apparet et non cito extinguitur? Sex enim mensibus hic quem nos Neronis principatu laetissimo uidimus spectandum se praebuit, in diuersum illi

Claudiano circumactus: ille enim a septentrione in uerticem surgens orientem petiit semper obscurior, hic ab eadem parte coepit sed in occidentem tendens ad meridiem flexit et ibi se subduxit oculis.

[21,4] Videlicet ille fumidiora habuit et aptiora ignibus, quae persecutus est; huic rursus uberius fuit et plenior regio, huc itaque descendit inuitante materia, non itinere. Quod apparet duobus quos spectauimus fuisse diuersum, cum hic in dextrum motus sit, ille in sinistrum; omnibus autem stellis in eandem partem cursus est, id est contrarius mundo (hic enim ab ortu uoluitur in occasum, illae ab occasu in ortum eunt), et ob hoc duplex his motus est: ille quo eunt, et hic quo auferuntur.

[22,1] Ego nostris non assentior: non enim existimo cometen subitaneum ignem sed inter aeterna opera naturae. Primum, quaecumque aer creat, breuia sunt: nascuntur enim in re fugaci et mutabili. Quomodo potest aliquid in aere idem diu permanere, cum ipse aer numquam idem diu maneat? Fluit semper, et breuis illi quies est; intra exiguum momentum in alium quam in quo fuerat statum uertitur, nunc pluuius, nunc serenus, nunc inter utrumque uarius. Nubes, quae illi familiarissimae sunt, in quas coit et ex quibus soluitur, modo congregantur, modo digeruntur, numquam immotae iacent. Fieri non potest ut ignis certus in corpore uago sedeat et tam pertinaciter haereat quam quem natura, ne umquam excuteretur, aptauit.

[22,2] Deinde, si alimento suc, haereret, semper descenderet (eo enim crassior est aer quo terris propior): numquam cometes in inum usque demittitur neque appropinquat solo.

[23,1] Etiamnunc ignis aut it quo illum natura sua ducit, id est sursum, aut eo quo trahit materia cui adhaesit et quam depascitur: nullis ignibus ordinariis et caelestibus iter flexum est; sideris proprium est ducere orbem: atqui hoc an cometae alii fecerint nescio, duo nostra aetate fecerunt.

[23,2] Deinde omne quod causa temporalis accendit cito intercidit: sic faces ardent, dum transeunt, sic fulmina in unum ualent ictum, sic quae transuersae dicuntur stellae et cadentes praeteruolant et secant aera: nullis ignibus nisi in suo mora est, illis dico diuinis quos habet mundus aeternos, quia partes eius sunt et opera. Hi autem agunt aliquid et uadunt et tenorem suum seruant paresque sunt. Non

alternis diebus maiores minoresue fierent, si ignis esset collecticius et ex aliqua causa repentinus? Minor enim esset ac maior, prout plenius aleretur aut malignius.

[23,3] Dicebam modo nihil diuturnum esse quod exarsit aeris uitio; nunc amplius adicio: morari ac stare nullo modo potest; nam et fax et fulmen et stella transcurrentes et quisquis alius est ignis aere expressus in fuga est nec apparet, nisi dum cadit: cometes habet suam sedem et ideo non cito expellitur sed emetitur spatium suum, nec extinguitur sed excedit.

[24,1] Si erratica, inquit, stella esset, in signifero esset. Quis unum stellis limitem ponit? Quis in angustum diuina compellit? Nempe haec ipsa sidera quae sola moueri creditis, alios et alios circulos habent; quare ergo non aliqua sint quae in proprium iter et ab istis remotum secesserint? Quid est quare in aliqua parte caeli peruium non sit?

[24,2] Quod si iudicas non posse ullam stellam, nisi signiferum attingit, uadere, cometes potest sic alium habere circulum ut in hunc tamen parte aliqua sui incidat, quod fieri non est necessarium sed potest. Vide ne hoc magis deceat magnitudinem mundi, ut in multa itinera diuisus circumeat nec unam deterat semitam, ceteris partibus torpeat.

[24,3] Credis autem in hoc maximo et pulcherrimo corpore, inter innumerabiles stellas quae noctem decore uario distinguunt, quae minime uacuam et inertem esse patiuntur, quinque solas esse quibus exercere se liceat, ceteras stare fixum et immobilem populum?

[25,1] Si quis hoc loco me interrogauerit: Quare ergo non, quemadmodum quinque stellarum, ita harum obseruatus est cursus?, huic ego respondebo: multa sunt quae esse concedimus, qualia sint ignoramus.

[25,2] Habere nos animum, cuius imperio et impellimur et reuocamur, omnes fatebuntur; quid tamen sit animus ille rector dominusque nostri, non magis tibi quisquam expediet quam ubi sit: alius illum dicet spiritum esse, alius concentum quendam, alius uim diuinam et dei partem, alius tenuissimum animae, alius incorporalem potentiam; non deerit qui sanguinem dicat, qui calorem: adeo anime, non potest liquere de ceteris rebus ut adhuc ipse se quaerat.

[25,3] Quid ergo miramur cometas, tam rarum mundi spectaculum,

nondum teneri legibus certis nec initia illorum finesque notescere, quorum ex ingentibus interuallis recursus est? Nondum sunt anni mille quingenti, ex quo Graecia “stellis numeros et nomina fecit”, multaeque hodie sunt gentes quae facie tantum nouerunt caelum, quae nondum sciunt cur luna deficiat, quare obumbretur: haec apud nos quoque nuper ratio ad certum perduxit.

[25,4] Veniet tempus quo ista quae nunc latent in lucem dies extrahat et longioris aevi diligentia; ad inquisitionem tantorum aetas una non sufficit, ut tota caelo uacet: quid, quod tam paucos annos inter studia ac uitia non aequa portione diuidimus? Itaque per successiones ista longas explicabuntur.

[25,5] Veniet tempus quo posterī nostri tam aperta nos nescisse mirentur. Harum quinque stellarum, quae se ingerunt nobis, quae alio atque alio occurrentes loco curiosos nos esse cogunt, qui matutini uespertinique ortus sint, quae stationes, quando in rectum ferantur, quare agantur retro, modo coepimus scire; utrum mergeretur Iupiter an occideret an retrogradus esset (nam hoc illi nomen imposuere cedenti), ante paucos annos didicimus.

[25,6] Inuenti sunt qui nobis dicerent: “Erratis, quod ullam stellam aut suppressere cursum iudicatis aut uertere. Non licet stare caelestibus nec auerti; prodeunt omnia: ut semel missa sunt, uadunt; idem erit illis cursus qui sui finis. Opus hoc aeternum irreuocabiles habet motus: qui si quando constiterint, alia aliis incident, quae nunc tenor et aequalitas seruat”.

[25,7] Quid est ergo cur aliqua redire uideantur? Solis occursus speciem illis tarditatis imponit et natura uiarum circulatorumque sic positorum ut certo tempore intuentes fallant: sic naues, quamuis plenis uelis eant, uidentur tamen stare. Erit qui demonstret aliquando in quibus cometae partibus currant, cur tam seducti a ceteris errent, quanti qualesque sint. Contenti simus inuentis: aliquid ueritati et posterī conferant.

[26,1] Per stellas, inquit, ulteriora non cernimus, per cometas aciem transmittimus. Primum si fit istud, non in ea parte fit qua sidus ipsum est spissi ignis ac solidi, sed qua rarus splendor excurrit et in crimes dispergitur: per interualla ignium, non per ipsos uides.

[26,2] Stellae, inquit, omnes rotundae sunt, cometae porrecti, ex quo apparet stellas non esse. Quis enim tibi concedit cometas longos

esse? Quorum natura quidem, ut ceterorum siderum, globus est, ceterum fulgor extenditur. Quemadmodum sol radios suos longe lateque dimittit, ceterum ipsi alia est forma, alia ei quod ex ipso fluit lumini, sic cometarum corpus ipsum corrotundatur, splendor autem longior quam ceterorum siderum apparet.

[27,1] Quare? inquis. Dic tu mihi prius quare luna dissimillimum soli lumen accipiat, cum accipiat a sole; quare modo rubeat, modo palleat; quare liuidus illi et ater color sit, cum conspectu solis excluditur.

[27,2] Dic mihi quare omnes stellae inter se dissimilem habeant aliquatenus faciem, diuersissimam soli. Quomodo nihil prohibet ista sidera esse, quamuis similia non sint, sic nihil prohibet cometas aeternos esse et sortis eiusdem cuius cetera, etiamsi faciem illis non habent similem.

[27,3] Quid porro? Mundus ipse, si consideres illum, nonne ex diuersis compositus est? Quid est quare in Leone sol semper ardeat et terras aestibus torreat, in Aquario astringat hiemem, flumina gelu claudat? Et hoc tamen et illud sidus eiusdem condicionis est, cum effectum et natura dissimile sit. Intra breuissimum tempus Aries extollitur, Libra tardissime emergit: et hoc tamen sidus et illud eiusdem naturae est, cum illud exiguo tempore ascendat, illud diu proferatur.

[27,4] Non uides quam contraria inter se elementa sint? Grauius et leuia sunt, frigida et calida, umida et sicca; tota haec mundi concordia ex discordiis constat: negas cometen stellam esse, quia forma eius non respondeat ad exemplar nec sit ceteris similis? Vides enim: simillima est illa quae tricesimo anno reuertitur ad locum suum huic quae intra annum reuolit sedem suam.

[27,5] Non ad unam naturam formam opus suum praestat sed ipsa uarietate se iactat: alia maiora, alia uelociora aliis fecit, alia ualidiora, alia temperatiora, quaedam eduxit a turba, ut singula et conspicua procederent, quaedam in gregem misit. Ignorat naturae potentiam qui illi non putat aliquando licere, nisi quod saepius fecit:

[27,6] cometas non frequenter ostendit, attribuit illis alium locum, alia tempora, dissimiles ceteris motus; uoluit et his magnitudinem operis sui colere. Quorum formosior facies est quam ut fortuitam putes, siue amplitudinem eorum consideres siue fulgorem, qui maior

est ardentiorque quam ceteris; facies uero habet insigne quiddam et singulare, non in angustum coniecta et artata sed dimissa liberius et multarum stellarum amplexa regionem.

[28,1] Aristoteles ait cometas significare tempestatem et uentorum intemperantiam atque imbrum. Quid ergo? Non iudicas sidus esse quod futura denuntiat? Non enim sic hoc tempestatis signum est quomodo futurae pluuiæ “scintillare oleum et putres concreescere fungos,” aut quomodo indicium est saeuiri maris, si “marinae in sicco ludunt fulicae notasque paludes deserit atque altam supra uolat ardea nubem,” sed sic quomodo aequinoctium in calorem frigusque flectentis anni, quomodo illa quæ Chaldaei a canunt, quid stella nascentibus triste laetumue constituat.

[28,2] Hoc ut scias ita esse, non statim cometas ortus uentos et pluuias minatur, ut Aristoteles ait, sed annum totum suspectum facit; ex quo apparet illum non ex proximo quæ in proximum daret signa traxisse, sed habere reposita et comprehensa legibus mundi.

[28,3] Fecit hic cometes, qui Paterculo et Vopisco consulibus apparuit, quæ ab Aristotele Theophrastoque sunt prædicta; fuerunt enim maximæ et continuæ tempestates ubique, at in Achaia Macedoniaque urbes terrarum motibus prorutæ sunt.

[29,1] Tarditas, inquit, illorum argumentum est grauioribus esse multumque in se habere terreni. Ipse præterea cursus: fere enim compelluntur in cardines. Utrumque falsum est. De priore dicam prius: Omnia quæ tardius feruntur grauiora sunt. Quid ergo? Stella Saturni, quæ ex omnibus iter suum lentissime efficit, grauis est? Atqui leuitatis argumentum habet quod supra ceteras est.

[29,2] Sed maiore, inquis, ambitu circuit nec tardius it quam ceteræ sed longius. Succurrat tibi idem me de cometis posse dicere, etiamsi segnior illis cursus sit. Sed mendacium est ire eos tardius: nam intra sextum mensem dimidiam partem caeli transcurrit hic proximus, prior intra pauciores menses recepit se.

[29,3] Sed quia graues sunt, inferius deferuntur. Primum non deferitur quod circumfertur. Deinde hic proximus a septentrione motus sui initium facit et per occidentem in meridiana peruertit erigensque cursum suum obliuit, alter ille Claudianus, a septentrione primum uisus, non desiit in rectum assidue celsior ferri, donec excessit. Haec sunt quæ aut alios mouere ad cometas pertinentia aut

me: quae an uera sint, dii sciunt, quibus est scientia ueri; nobis rimari illa et coniectura ire in occulta tantum licet, nec cum fiducia inueniendi nec sine spe.

[30,1] Egregie Aristoteles ait numquam nos uerecundiores esse debere quam cum de diis agitur. Si intramus templa compositi, si ad sacrificium accessuri uultum submittimus, togam adducimus, si in omne argumentum modestiae fingimur, quanto hoc magis facere debemus, cum de sideribus de stellis de deorum natura disputamus, ne quid temere, ne quid impudenter aut ignorantes afirmemus aut scientes mentiamur!

[30,2] Nec miremur tam tarde erui quae tam alte iacent. Panaetio et his qui uideri uolunt cometen non esse ordinarium sidus sed falsam sideris faciem, diligenter tractandum est an aequae omnis pars anni edendis cometis satis apta sit, an omnis caeli regio idonea in qua creentur, an quacumque ire ibi etiam concipi possint, et cetera: quae uniuersa tolluntur, cum dico illos non fortuitos esse ignes, sed intextos mundo, quos non frequenter educit sed in occulto mouet.

[30,3] Quam multa praeter hos per secretum eunt numquam humanis oculis orientia! Neque enim omnia deus homini fecit. Quota pars operis tanti nobis committitur? Ipse, qui ista tractat, qui condidit, qui totum hoc fundauit deditque circa se, maiorque est pars sui operis ac melior, effugit oculos:

[30,4] cogitatione uisendus est. Multa praeterea cognata numini summo et uicinam sortita potentiam obscura sunt aut fortasse, quod magis mireris, oculos nostros et implent et effugiunt, siue illis tanta subtilitas est quantam consequi acies humana non possit, siue in sanctiore secessu maiestas tanta delituit et regnum suum, id est se, regit nec ulli dat aditum nisi animo. Quid sit hoc sine quo nihil est, scire non possumus: et miramur si quos igniculos parum nouimus, cum maxima pars mundi, deus, lateat!

[30,5] Quam multa animalia hoc primum cognouimus saeculo, quam multa negotia ne hoc quidem! Multa uenientis aevi populus ignota nobis sciet; multa saeculis tunc futuris, cum memoria nostri exoleuerit, reseruantur: pusilla res mundus est, nisi in illo quod quaerat omnis mundus habeat.

[30,6] Non semel quaedam sacra traduntur: Eleusin seruat quod ostendat reuisentibus. Rerum natura sacra sua non semel tradit;

initiatos nos credimus: in uestibulo eius haeremus; illa arcana non promiscue nec omnibus patent: reducta et interiore sacrario clausa sunt, ex quibus aliud haec aetas, aliud quae post nos subibit aspiciet.

[31,1] Quando ergo ista in notitiam nostram perducentur? Tarde magna proueniunt, utique si labor cessat. Id quod unum toto agimus animo, nondum perfecimus, ut pessimi essemus: adhuc in processu uitia sunt; inuenit luxuria aliquid noui, in quod insaniat, inuertit impudicitia nouam contumeliam sibi, inuertit deliciarum dissolutio et tabes aliquid adhuc tenerius molliusque, quo pereat.

[31,2] Nondum satis robur omne proiecimus: adhuc quicquid est boni moris extinguiamus. Leuitate et politura corporum muliebres munditias antecessimus, colores meretricios matronis quidem non induendos uiri sumimus, tenero et molli ingressu suspendimus gradum (non ambulamus sed incedimus, exornamus anulis digitos, in omni articulo gemma disponitur;

[31,3] cotidie comminiscimur per quae uiriliter fiat iniuria, ut traducatur, quia non potest exui: alius genitalia excidit, alius in obscenam ludi partem fugit et locatus ad mortem infame armaturae genus, in quo morbum suum exerceat, legit.

[32,1] Miraris si nondum sapientia omne opus suum impleuit? Nondum tota se nequitia protulit: adhuc nascitur, et huic omnes operam damus, huic oculi nostri, huic manus seruiunt. Ad sapientiam quis accedit? Quis dignam iudicat nisi quam in transitu nouerit? Quis philosophum aut ullum liberale respicit studium, nisi cum ludi intercalantur, cum aliquis pluuius interuenit dies quem perdere libet?

[32,2] Itaque tot familiae philosophorum sine successore deficiunt: Academici et ueteres et minores nullum antistitem reliquerunt; quis est qui tradat praecepta Pyrrhonis? Pythagorica illa inuidiosa turbae schola praeceptorem non inuenit; Sextiorum noua et Romani roboris secta inter initia sua, cum magno impetu coepisset, extincta est.

[32,3] At quanta cura laboratur, ne cuius pantomimi nomen interdicat! Stat per successores Pyladis et Bathylli domus, harum artium multi discipuli sunt multique doctores; priuatum urbe tota sonat pulpitum; in hoc mares, in hoc feminae tripudiant: mares inter se uxoresque contendunt uter det latus mollius. Deinde sub persona cum diu trita frons est, transitur ad galeam.

[32,4] Philosophiae nulla cura est. Itaque adeo nihil inuenitur ex his

que parum inuestigata antiqui reliquerunt, ut multa quae inuenta erant oblitterentur. At mehercule, si hoc totis membris premeremus, si in hoc iuuentus sobria incumberet, hoc maiores docerent, hoc minores addiscerent, uix ad fundum ueniretur, in quo ueritas posita est, quam nunc in summa terra et leui manu quaerimus.

ON BENEFITS — De Beneficiis

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LIBER I

[1] Inter multos ac uarios errores temere inconsulteque uiuentium nihil propemodum, uir optime Liberalis, dixerim, [quam] quod beneficia nec dare scimus nec accipere. Sequitur enim, ut male conlocata male debeantur; de quibus non redditis sero querimur; ista enim perierunt, cum darentur. Nec mirum est inter plurima maximaque uitia nullum esse frequentius quam ingrati animi. Id euenire ex causis pluribus uideo. Prima illa est, quod non eligimus dignos, quibus tribuamus. Sed nomina facturi diligenter in patrimonium et uitam debitoris inquirimus, semina in solum effetum et sterile non spargimus: beneficia sine ullo dilectu magis proicimus quam damus. Nec facile dixerim, utrum turpius sit infitiari an repetere beneficium; id enim genus huius crediti est, ex quo tantum recipiendum sit, quantum ultro refertur; decoquere uero foedissimum ob hoc ipsum, quia non opus est ad liberandam fidem facultatibus sed animo; reddit enim beneficium, qui debet. Sed cum sit in ipsis crimen, qui ne confessione quidem grati sunt, in nobis quoque est. Multos experimur ingratos, plures facimus, quia alias graues exprobratores exactoresque sumus, alias leues et quos paulo post muneris sui paeniteat, alias queruli et minima momenta calumniantes; gratiam omnem corrumpimus non tantum postquam dedimus beneficia, sed dum damus. Quis nostrum contentus fuit aut leuiter rogari aut semel? quis non, cum aliquid a se peti suspicatus est, frontem adduxit, uultum auertit, occupationes simulauit, longis sermonibus et de industria non inuenientibus exitum occasionem petendi abstulit et uariis artibus necessitates properantes elusit, in angusto uero conpressus aut distulit, id est timide negauit, aut promisit, sed difficulter, sed subductis superciliis, sed malignis et uix exeuntibus uerbis? Nemo autem libenter debet, quod non accepit, sed expressit. Gratus aduersus eum esse quisquam potest, qui beneficium aut superbe abiecit aut iratus inpegit aut fatigatus, ut molestia careret, dedit? Errat, si quis sperat responsurum sibi, quem dilatione lassauit, expectatione torsit. Eodem animo beneficium debetur, quo datur, et ideo non est negligenter dandum — sibi enim quisque debet, quod a nesciente accepit — ; ne tarde quidem, quia, cum omni in officio

magni aestimetur dantis uoluntas, qui tarde fecit, diu noluit; utique non contumeliose: nam cum ita natura comparatum sit, ut altius iniuriae quam merita descendant et illa cito defluant, has tenax memoria custodiat, quid expectat, qui offendit, dum obligat? Satis aduersus illum gratus est, si quis beneficio eius ignoscit. Non est autem, quod tardiores faciat ad bene merendum turba ingratorum. Nam primum, ut dixi, nos illam augemus; deinde ne deos quidem immortales ab hac tam effusa nec cess<ante benign>itate sacrilegi neclegentesque eorum deterrent: utuntur natura sua et cuncta interque illa ipsos munerum suorum malos interpretes iuuant. Hos sequamur duces, quantum humana inbecillitas patitur; demus beneficia, non feneremus. Dignus est decipi, qui de recipiendo cogitauit, cum daret. ‘At male cessit.’ Et liberi et coniuges spem fefellerunt, tamen et educamus et ducimus, adeoque aduersus experimenta pertinaces sumus, ut bella uicti et naufragi maria repetamus. Quanto magis permanere in dandis beneficiis decet! quae si quis non dat, quia non recepit, dedit, ut reciperet, bonamque ingratorum facit causam, quibus turpe est non reddere, si licet. Quam multi indigni luce sunt! tamen dies oritur. Quam multi, quod nati sunt, queruntur! tamen natura subolem nouam gignit ipsosque, qui non fuisse mallent, esse patitur. Hoc et magni animi et boni proprium est, non fructum beneficiorum sequi, sed ipsa et post malos quoque bonum quaerere. Quid magnifici erat multis prodesse, si nemo deciperet? nunc est uirtus dare beneficia non utique reditura, quorum a uiro egregio statim fructus perceptus est. Adeo quidem ista res fugare nos et pigriores ad rem pulcherrimam facere non debet, ut, si spes mihi praecidatur gratum hominem reperiendi, malim non recipere beneficia quam non dare, quia, qui non dat, uitium ingrati antecedit. Dicam, quod sentio: qui beneficium non reddit, magis peccat; qui non dat, citius.

- [2] Beneficia in uolgu cum largiri institueris,
Perdenda sunt multa, ut semel ponas bene.

In priore uersu utrumque reprehendas; nam nec in uolgum effundenda sunt, et nullius rei, minime beneficiorum, honesta largitio est; quibus si detraxeris iudicium, desinunt esse beneficia, in aliud

quodlibet incident nomen. Sequens sensus mirificus est, qui uno bene posito beneficio multorum amissorum damna solatur. Vide, oro te, ne hoc et uerius sit et magnitudini bene facientis aptius, ut illum hortemur ad danda, etiam si nullum bene positurus est. Illud enim falsum est 'perdenda sunt multa'; nullum perit, quia, qui perdit, computauerat. Beneficiorum simplex ratio est: tantum erogatur; si redit aliquid, lucrum est, si non redit, damnum non est. Ego illud dedi, ut darem. Nemo beneficia in calendario scribit nec auarus exactor ad horam et diem appellat. Numquam illa uir bonus cogitat nisi admonitus a reddente; alioqui in formam crediti transeunt. Turpis feneratio est beneficium expensum ferre. Qualiscumque priorum euentus est, perseuera in alios conferre; melius apud ingratos iacebunt, quos aut pudor aut occasio aut imitatio aliquando gratos poterit efficere. Ne cessaueris, opus tuum perage et partes boni uiri exequere. Alium re, alium fide, alium gratia, alium consilio, alium praeceptis salubribus adiuua. Officia etiam ferae sentiunt, nec ullum tam inmansuetum animal est, quod non cura mitiget et in amorem sui uertat. Leonum ora a magistris inpune tractantur, elephantorum feritatem usque in seruile obsequium demeretur cibus; adeo etiam, quae extra intellectum atque aestimationem beneficii posita sunt, adsiduitas tamen meriti pertinacis euincit. Ingratus est aduersus unum beneficium? aduersus alterum non erit; duorum oblitus est? tertium etiam in eorum, quae exciderunt, memoriam reducet.

[3] Is perdet beneficia, qui cito se perdidisse credit; at qui instat et onerat priora sequentibus, etiam ex duro et inmemori pectore gratiam extundit. Non audebit aduersus multa oculos adtollere; quocumque se conuertit memoriam suam fugiens, ibi te uideat: beneficiis illum tuis cinge. Quorum quae uis quaeue proprietas sit, dicam, si prius illa, quae ad rem non pertinent, transilire mihi permiseris, quare tres Gratiae et quare sorores sint, et quare manibus inplexis, et quare ridentes <et iuuenes> et uirgines solutaeque ac perlucida ueste. Alii quidem uideri uolunt unam esse, quae det beneficium, alteram, quae accipiat, tertiam, quae reddat; alii tria beneficiorum esse genera, promerentium, reddentium, simul accipientium reddentiumque. Sed utrumlibet ex istis iudica uerum: quid ista nos scientia iuuat? Quid ille consertis manibus in se redeuntium chorus? Ob hoc, quia ordo

beneficii per manus transeuntis nihilo minus ad dantem reuertitur et totius speciem perdit, si usquam interruptus est, pulcherrimus, si cohaeret et uices seruat. In eo est aliqua tamen maioris dignatio, sicut promerentium. Voltus hilari sunt, quales solent esse, qui dant uel accipiunt beneficia; iuuenes, quia non debet beneficiorum memoria senescere; uirgines, quia incorrupta sunt et sincera et omnibus sancta; in quibus nihil esse adligati decet nec adstricti: solutis itaque tunicis utuntur; perlucidis autem, quia beneficia conspici uolunt. Sit aliquis usque eo Graecis emancipatus, ut haec dicat necessaria; nemo tamen erit, qui etiam illud ad rem iudicet pertinere, quae nomina illis Hesiodus inposuerit. Aglaien maximam natu adpellauit, mediam Euphrosynen, tertiam Thaliā. Horum nominum interpretationem, prout cuique uisum est, deflectit et ad rationem aliquam conatur perducere, cum Hesiodus puellis suis, quod uoluit, nomen inposuerit. Itaque Homerus uni mutauit, Pasithea adpellauit et in matrimonium promisit, ut scias non esse illas uirgines Vestales. Inueniam alium poetam, apud quem praecingantur et spissis aut Phryxianis prodeant. Ergo et Mercurius una stat, non quia beneficia ratio commendat uel oratio, sed quia pictori ita uisum est. Chrysippus quoque, penes quem subtile illud acumen est et in imam penetrans ueritatem, qui rei agenda causa loquitur et uerbis non ultra, quam ad intellectum satis est, utitur, totum librum suum his ineptiis replet, ita ut de ipso officio dandi, accipiendi, reddendi beneficii pauca admodum dicat; nec his fabulas, sed haec fabulis inserit. Nam praeter ista, quae Hecaton transcribit, tres Chrysippus Gratias ait Iouis et Eurynomes filias esse, aetate autem minores quam Horas, sed meliuscula facie et ideo Veneri datas comites. Matris quoque nomen ad rem iudicat pertinere: Eurynomen enim dictam, quia late patentis patrimonii sit beneficia diuidere; tamquam matri post filias soleat nomen inponi aut poetae uera nomina reddant. Quemadmodum nomenclatori memoriae loco audacia est et, cuicumque nomen non potest reddere, inponit, ita poetae non putant ad rem pertinere uerum dicere, sed aut necessitate coacti aut decore corrupti id quemque uocari iubent, quod belle facit ad uersum. Nec illis fraudi est, si aliud in censum detulerunt; proximus enim poeta suum illas ferre nomen iubet. Hoc ut scias ita esse, ecce Thalia, de qua cum maxime agitur, apud Hesiodum Charis est, apud Homerum Musa.

[4] Sed ne faciam, quod reprehendo, omnia ista, quae ita extra rem sunt, ut ne circa rem quidem sint, relinquam. Tu modo nos tuere, si quis mihi obiciet, quod Chrysippum in ordinem coegerim, magnum mehercules uirum, sed tamen Graecum, cuius acumen nimis tenue retunditur et in se saepe replicatur; etiam cum agere aliquid uidetur, pungit, non perforat. Hic uero quod acumen est? De beneficiis dicendum est et ordinanda res, quae maxime humanam societatem adligat; danda lex uitae, ne sub specie benignitatis inconsulta facilitas placeat, ne liberalitatem, quam nec deesse oportet nec superfluere, haec ipsa obseruatio restringat, dum temperat; docendi sunt <libenter dare>, libenter accipere, libenter reddere et magnum ipsis certamen proponere, eos, quibus obligati sunt, re animoque non tantum aequare sed uincere, quia, qui referre gratiam debet, numquam consequitur, nisi praecessit; hi docendi sunt nihil inputare, illi plus debere. Ad hanc honestissimam contentionem beneficiis beneficia uincendi sic nos adhortatur Chrysippus, ut dicat uerendum esse, ne, quia Charites Iouis filiae sunt, parum se grate gerere sacrilegium sit et tam bellis puellis fiat iniuria. Tu me aliquid eorum doce, per quae beneficentior graviorque aduersus bene merentes fiam, per quae obligantium obligatorumque animi certent, ut, qui praestiterunt, obliuiscantur, pertinax sit memoria debentium. Ista uero ineptiae poetis relinquuntur, quibus aures oblectare propositum est et dulcem fabulam nectere. At qui ingenia sanare et fidem in rebus humanis retinere, memoriam officiorum ingerere animis uolunt, serio loquantur et magnis uiribus agant; nisi forte existimas leui ac fabuloso sermone et anilibus argumentis prohiberi posse rem perniciosissimam, beneficiorum nouas tabulas.

[5] Sed quemadmodum superuacua transcurram, ita exponam necesse est hoc primum nobis esse discendum, quid accepto beneficio debeamus. Debere enim se <ait> alius pecuniam, quam accepit, alius consulatum, alius sacerdotium, alius prouinciam. Ista autem sunt meritorum signa, non merita. Non potest beneficium manu tangi: res animo geritur. Multum interest inter materiam beneficii et beneficium; itaque nec aurum nec argentum nec quicquam eorum, quae pro maximis accipiuntur, beneficium est, sed ipsa tribuentis uoluntas. Inperiti autem id, quod oculis incurrit et quod traditur possideturque, solum notant, cum contra illud, quod in

re carum atque pretiosum <est, parui pendunt>. Haec, quae tenemus, quae aspicimus, in quibus cupiditas nostra haeret, caduca sunt, auferre nobis et fortuna et iniuria potest; beneficium etiam amisso eo, per quod datum est, durat; est enim recte factum, quod inritum nulla uis efficit. Amicum a piratis redemi, hunc alius hostis excepit et in carcerem condidit: non beneficium, sed usum beneficii mei sustulit. Ex naufragio alicui raptos uel ex incendio liberos reddidi, hos uel morbus uel aliqua fortuita iniuria eripuit: manet etiam sine illis, quod in illis datum est. Omnia itaque, quae falsum beneficii nomen usurpant, ministeria sunt, per quae se uoluntas amica explicat. Hoc in aliis quoque rebus euenit, ut aliubi sit species rei, aliubi ipsa res. Imperator aliquem torquibus, murali et ciuica donat: quid habet per se corona pretiosum? quid praetexta? quid fasces? quid tribunal et currus? Nihil horum honor est, sed honoris insigne. Sic non est beneficium id, quod sub oculos uenit, sed beneficii uestigium et nota.

[6] Quid est ergo beneficium? Beneuola actio tribuens gaudium capiensque tribuendo in id, quod facit, prona et sponte sua parata. Itaque non, quid fiat aut quid detur, refert, sed qua mente, quia beneficium non in eo, quod fit aut datur, consistit, sed in ipso dantis aut facientis animo. Magnum autem esse inter ista discrimen uel ex hoc intellegas licet, quod beneficium utique bonum est, id autem, quod fit aut datur, nec bonum nec malum est. Animus est, qui parua extollit, sordida inlustrat, magna et in pretio habita dehonestat; ipsa, quae adpetuntur, neutram naturam habent, nec boni nec mali: refert, quo illa rector inpellat, a quo forma rebus datur. Non est beneficium ipsum, quod numeratur aut traditur, sicut ne in uictimis quidem, licet opimae sint auroque praefulgeant, deorum est honor sed <in> recta ac pia uoluntate uenerantium. Itaque boni etiam farre ac fitilla religiosi sunt; mali rursus non effugiunt impietatem, quamuis aras sanguine multo cruentauerint.

[7] Si beneficia in rebus, non in ipsa bene faciendi uoluntate consistenter, eo maiora essent, quo maiora sunt, quae accipimus. Id autem falsum est; non numquam enim magis nos obligat, qui dedit parua magnifice, qui 'regum aequauit opes animo', qui exiguum tribuit sed libenter, qui paupertatis suae oblitus est, dum meam respicit, qui non uoluntatem tantum iuuandi habuit sed cupiditatem, qui accipere se putauit beneficium, cum daret, qui dedit tamquam

<non> recepturus, recepit, tamquam non dedisset, qui occasionem, qua prodesset, et occupauit et quaesiit. Contra ingrata sunt, ut dixi, licet re ac specie magna uideantur, quae danti aut extorquentur aut excidunt, multoque gratius uenit, quod facili quam quod plena manu datur. Exiguum est, quod in me contulit, sed amplius non potuit; at hic quod dedit, magnum est, sed dubitauit, sed distulit, sed, cum daret, gemuit, sed superbe dedit, sed circumtulit et placere non ei, cui praestabat, uoluit; ambitioni dedit, non mihi.

[8] Socrati cum multa pro suis quisque facultatibus offerrent, Aeschines, pauper auditor: 'Nihil' inquit 'dignum te, quod dare tibi possim, inuenio et hoc uno modo pauperem esse me sentio. Itaque dono tibi, quod unum habeo, me ipsum. Hoc munus rogo, qualecumque est, boni consulas cogitesque alios, cum multum tibi darent, plus sibi reliquisse.' Cui Socrates: 'Quidni tu' inquit 'magnum munus mihi dederis, nisi forte te paruo aestimas? Habebo itaque curae, ut te meliorem tibi reddam, quam accepi.' Vicit Aeschines hoc munere Alcibiadis parem diuitiis animum et omnem iuuenum opulentorum munificentiam.

[9] Vides, quomodo animus inueniat liberalitatis materiam etiam inter angustias? Videtur mihi dixisse: 'Nihil egisti, fortuna, quod me pauperem esse uoluisti; expediam dignum nihilo minus huic uiro munus, et quia de tuo non possum, de meo dabo.' Neque est, quod existimes illum uilem sibi fuisse: pretium se sui fecit. Ingeniosus adulescens inuenit, quemadmodum Socraten sibi daret. Non quanta quaeque sint, sed a quali profecta, prospiciendum. Callidus non difficilem aditum praebuit inmodica cupientibus spesque inprobas nihil re adiuturus uerbis fouit; at peior opinio, si lingua asper, uultu grauis cum inuidia fortunam suam explicuit. Colunt enim detestanturque felicem et, si potuerint, eadem facturi odere facientem. Coniugibus alienis ne clam quidem sed aperte ludibrio habitis suas aliis permisere. Rusticus, inhumanus ac mali moris et inter matronas abominandus conuicio est, si quis coniugem suam in sella prostare uetuit et uulgo admissis inspectoribus uehi perspicuam undique. Si quis nulla se amica fecit insignem nec alienae uxori annum praestat, hunc matronae humilem et sordidae libidinis et ancillariolum uocant. Inde decentissimum sponsaliorum genus est adulterium et in consensu uiduitas caelibatusque: nemo uxorem

duxit, nisi qui abduxit. Iam rapta spargere, sparsa fera et acri auaritia recolligere certant, nihil pensi habere, paupertatem alienam contemnere, suam <magis> quam ullum aliud uereri malum, pacem iniuriis perturbare, inbecilliores ui ac metu premere. Nam prouincias spoliari et nummarium tribunal audita utrimque licitatione alteri addici non mirum, quoniam, quae emeris, uendere gentium ius est.

[10] Sed longius nos inpetus euehit prouocante materia; itaque sic finiamus, ne in nostro saeculo culpa subsidat. Hoc maiores nostri questi sunt, hoc nos querimur, hoc posterius nostri querentur, euersos mores, regnare nequitiam, in deterius res humanas et omne nefas labi; at ista eodem stant loco stabuntque, paulum dumtaxat ultro aut citro mota, ut fluctus, quos aestus accedens longius extulit, recedens interiore litorum uestigio tenuit. Nunc in adulteria magis quam in alia peccabitur, abrumpetque frenos pudicitia; nunc conuiuiorum uigebit furor et foedissimum patrimoniorum exitium, culina; nunc cultus corporum nimius et formae cura prae se ferens animi deformitatem; nunc in petulantiam et audaciam erumpet male dispensata libertas; nunc in crudelitatem priuatam ac publicam ibitur bellorumque ciuiliū insaniam, qua omne sanctum ac sacrum profanetur; habebitur aliquando ebrietati honor, et plurimum meri cepisse uirtus erit. Non expectant uno loco uitia, sed mobilia et inter se dissidentia tumultuantur, pellunt in uicem fuganturque; ceterum idem semper de nobis pronuntiare debemus, malos esse nos, malos fuisse, - inuitus adiciam, et futuros esse. Erunt homicidae, tyranni, fures, adulteri, raptores, sacrilegi, proditores; infra omnia ista ingratus est, nisi quod omnia ista ab ingrato sunt, sine quo uix ullum magnum facinus adcreuit. Hoc tu caue tamquam maximum crimen ne admittas, ignosce tamquam leuissimo, si admissum est. Haec est enim iniuriae summa: beneficium perdidisti. Saluum est enim tibi ex illo, quod est optimum: dedisti. Quemadmodum autem curandum est, ut in eos potissimum beneficia conferamus, qui grate responsuri erunt, ita quaedam, etiam si male de illis sperabitur, faciemus tribuimusque, non solum si iudicabimus ingratos fore, sed si sciemus fuisse. Tamquam si filios alicui restituere potero magno periculo liberatos sine ullo meo, non dubitabo. Dignum etiam impendio sanguinis mei tuebor et in partem discriminis ueniam; indignum si eripere latronibus potero clamore sublato, salutarem uocem homini non

pigebit emittere.

[11] Sequitur, ut dicamus, quae beneficia danda sint et quemadmodum. Primum demus necessaria, deinde utilia, deinde iocunda, utique mansura. Incipiendum est autem a necessariis; aliter enim ad animum peruenit, quod uitam continet, aliter, quod exornat aut instruit. Potest in eo aliquis fastidiosus esse aestimator, quo facile cariturus est, de quo dicere licet: 'Recipe, non desidero; meo contentus sum.' Interim non reddere tantum libet, quod acceperis, sed abicere. Ex his, quae necessaria sunt, quaedam primum optinent locum, sine quibus non possumus uiuere, quaedam secundum, sine quibus non debemus, quaedam tertium, sine quibus nolumus. Prima huius notae sunt: hostium manibus eripi et tyrannicae irae et proscriptioni et aliis periculis, quae uaria et incerta humanam uitam obsident. Quidquid horum discusserimus, quo maius ac terribilius erit, hoc maiorem inibimus gratiam; subit enim cogitatio, quantis sint liberati malis, et lenocinium est muneris antecedens metus. Nec tamen ideo debemus tardius quemquam seruare, quam possumus, ut muneri nostro timor inponat pondus. Proxima ab his sunt, sine quibus possumus quidem uiuere, sed ut mors potior sit, tamquam libertas et pudicitia et mens bona. Post haec habebimus coniunctione ac sanguine usuque et consuetudine longa cara, ut liberos, coniuges, penates, cetera, quae usque eo animus sibi adplicuit, ut ab illis quam uita diuelli grauius existimet. Subsecuntur utilia, quorum uaria et lata materia est; hic erit pecunia non superfluens sed ad sanum modum habendi parata; hic erit honor et processus ad altiora tendentium; nec enim utilius quicquam est quam sibi utilem fieri. Iam cetera ex abundanti ueniunt delicatos factura; in his sequemur, ut opportunitate grata sint, ut non uolgaria, quaeque aut pauci habuerint aut pauci intra hanc aetatem aut hoc modo, quae, etiam si natura pretiosa non sunt, tempore aut loco fiant. Videamus, quid oblatum maxime uoluptati futurum sit, quid frequenter occurrurum habenti, ut totiens nobiscum quotiens cum illo sit; utique cauebimus, ne munera superuacua mittamus, ut feminae aut seni arma uenatoria, ut rustico libros, ut studiis ac litteris dedito retia. Aequae ex contrario circumspeciemus, ne, dum grata mittere uolumus, suum cuique morbum exprobratura mittamus, sicut ebrioso uina et uoletudinario medicamenta. Maledictum enim incipit esse, non munus, in quo

uitium accipientis adgnoscutur.

[12] Si arbitrium dandi penes nos est, praecipue mansura quaeremus, ut quam minime mortale munus sit. Pauci enim sunt tam grati, ut, quid acceperint, etiam si non uident, cogitent. Ingratos quoque memoria cum ipso munere incurrit, ubi ante oculos est et obliuisci sui non sinit, sed auctorem suum ingerit et inculcat. Eo quidem magis duratura quaeramus, quia numquam admonere debemus; ipsa res euanescentem memoriam excitet. Libentius donabo argentum factum quam signatum; libentius statuas quam uestem et quod usus breuis deterat. Apud paucos post rem manet gratia; plures sunt, apud quos non diutius in animo sunt donata, quam in usu. Ego, si fieri potest, consumi munus meum nolo; extet, haereat amico meo, conuiuat. Nemo tam stultus est, ut monendus sit, ne cui gladiatores aut uenationem iam munere edito mittat et uestimenta aestiua bruma, hiberna solstitio. Sit in beneficio sensus communis; tempus, locum obseruet, personas, quia momentis quaedam grata et ingrata sunt. Quanto acceptius est, si id damus, quod quis non habet, quam cuius copia abundat? quod diu quaerit nec inuenit, quam quod ubique uisurus est? Munera non tam pretiosa quam rara et exquisita sint, quae etiam apud diuitem sibi locum faciant, sicut gregalia quoque poma et post paucos dies itura in fastidium delectant, si prouenere maturius. Illa quoque non erunt sine honore, quae aut nemo illis alius dedit aut nos nulli alii.

[13] Alexandro Macedoni, cum uictor Orientis animos supra humana tolleret, Corinthii per legatos gratulati sunt et ciuitate illum sua donauerunt. Cum risisset hoc Alexander officii genus, unus ex legatis: 'Nulli' inquit 'ciuitatem umquam dedimus alii quam tibi et Herculi.' Libens accepti non dilutum honorem et legatos inuitatione aliaque humanitate prosecutus cogitauit, non qui sibi ciuitatem darent, sed cui dedissent; et homo gloriae deditus, cuius nec naturam nec modum nouerat, Herculis Liberique uestigia sequens ac ne ibi quidem resistens, ubi illa defecerant, ad socium honoris sui respexit a dantibus, tamquam caelum, quod mente uanissima complectebatur, teneret, quia Herculi aequabatur. Quid enim illi simile habebat uesanus adulescens, cui pro uirtute erat felix temeritas? Hercules nihil sibi uicit; orbem terrarum transiuit non concupiscendo, sed iudicando, quid uinceret, malorum hostis, bonorum uindex, terrarum

marisque pacator; at hic a pueritia latro gentiumque uastator, tam hostium pernicies quam amicorum, qui summum bonum duceret terrori esse cunctis mortalibus, oblitus non ferocissima tantum, sed ignauissima quoque animalia timeri ob malum uirus.

[14] Ad propositum nunc reuertamur. Beneficium qui quibuslibet dat, nulli gratum dat; nemo se stabularii aut cauponis hospitem iudicat nec conuiuium dantis epulum, ubi dici potest: 'Quid enim in me contulit? Nempe hoc, quod et in illum uix bene notum sibi et in illum etiam inimicum ac turpissimum hominem. Numquid enim me dignum iudicauit? morbo suo morem gessit.' Quod uoles gratum esse, rarum effice: quis patitur sibi inputari <uolgaria>? Nemo haec ita interpretetur, tamquam reducam liberalitatem et frenis artioribus reprimam; illa uero, in quantum libet, exeat, sed eat, non erret. Licet ita largiri, ut unusquisque, etiam si cum multis accepit, in populo se esse non putet. Nemo non habeat aliquam familiarem notam, per quam speret se propius admissum; dicat: 'Accepi idem, quod ille, sed ultro. Accepi, quod ille, sed ego intra breue tempus, cum ille diu meruisset. Sunt, qui idem habeant, sed non eisdem uerbis datum, non eadem comitate tribuentis. Ille accepit, cum rogasset; ego non rogaram. Ille accepit, sed facile redditurus, sed cuius senectus et libera orbitas magna promittebat; mihi plus dedit, quamuis idem dederit, quia sine spe recipiendi dedit.' Quemadmodum meretrix ita inter multos se diuidet, ut nemo non aliquod signum familiaris animi ferat, ita, qui beneficia sua amabilia esse uult, excogitet, quomodo et multi obligentur et tamen singuli habeant aliquid, quo se ceteris praeferant.

[15] Ego uero beneficiis non obicio moras; quo plura maioraque fuerint, plus adferent laudis. At sit iudicium; neque enim cordi esse cuiquam possunt forte ac temere data. Quare si quis existimat nos, cum ista praecipimus, benignitatis fines introrsus referre et illi minus laxum limitem aperire, ne perperam monitiones nostras exaudit. Quam enim uirtutem magis ueneramur? cui magis stimulos addimus? quibusue tam conuenit haec adhortatio quam nobis societatem generis humani sancientibus? Quid ergo est? Cum sit nulla honesta uis animi, etiam si a recta uoluntate incepit, nisi quam uirtutem modus fecit, ueto liberalitatem nepotari. Tunc iuuat accepisse beneficium et supinis quidem manibus, ubi illud ratio ad dignos

perducit, non quolibet casus et consilii indigens inpetus defert; quod ostentare libet et inscribere sibi. Beneficia tu uocas, quorum auctorem fateri pudet? At illa quanto gratiora sunt quantoque in partem interiorem animi numquam exitura descendunt, cum delectant cogitantem magis a quo, quam quid acceperis? Crispus Passienus solebat dicere quorundam se iudicium malle quam beneficium, quorundam beneficium malle quam iudicium, et subiciebat exempla: ‘Malo’ aiebat ‘diui Augusti iudicium, malo Claudii beneficium.’ Ego uero nullius puto expetendum esse beneficium, cuius uile iudicium est. Quid ergo? non erat accipiendum a Claudio, quod dabatur? Erat, sed sicut a fortuna, quam scires posse statim malam fieri. Quid ista inter se mixta diuidimus? Non est beneficium, cui deest pars optima, datum esse iudicio; alioqui pecunia ingens, si non ratione nec recta uoluntate donata est, non magis beneficium est quam thesaurus. Multa sunt autem, quae oportet accipere nec debere.

LIBER II

[1] Inspiciamus, Liberalis uirorum optime, id quod ex priori parte adhuc superest, quemadmodum dandum sit beneficium; cuius rei expeditissimam uideor monstraturus uiam: sic demus, quomodo uellemus accipere. Ante omnia libenter, cito, sine ulla dubitatione; ingratum est beneficium, quod diu inter dantis manus haesit, quod quis aegre dimittere uisus est et sic dare, tamquam sibi eriperet. Etiam si quid interuenit morae, euitemus omni modo, ne deliberasse uideamur; proximus est a negante, qui dubitauit, nullamque iniit gratiam. Nam cum in beneficio iucundissima sit tribuentis uoluntas, quia nolentem se tribuisse ipsa cunctatione testatus est, non dedit sed aduersus ducentem male retinuit; multi autem sunt, quos liberales facit frontis infirmitas. Gratissima sunt beneficia parata, facilia, occurrentia, ubi nulla mora fuit nisi in accipientis uerecundia. Optimum est antecedere desiderium cuiusque, proximum sequi; illud melius, occupare ante quam rogemur, quia, cum homini probo ad rogandum os concurrat et subfundatur rubor, qui hoc tormentum remittit, multiplicat munus suum. Non tulit gratis, qui, cum rogasset, accepit, quoniam quidem, ut maioribus nostris grauissimis uiris uisum est, nulla res carius constat, quam quae precibus empti est. Vota homines parcius facerent, si palam facienda essent; adeo etiam deos, quibus honestissime supplicamus, tacite malumus et intra nosmet ipsos precari.

[2] Molestum uerbum est, onerosum, demisso uultu dicendum, rogo. Huius facienda est gratia amico et quemcumque amicum sis promerendo facturus; properet licet, sero beneficium dedit, qui roganti dedit. Ideo diuinanda cuiusque uoluntas et, cum intellecta est, necessitate grauissima rogandi liberanda est; illud beneficium iucundum uicturum in animo scias, quod obuiam uenit. Si non contigit praeuenire, plura rogantis uerba intercidamus; ne rogati uideamur sed certiores facti, statim promittamus facturosque nos, etiam ante quam interpellemur, ipsa festinatione adprobemus. Quemadmodum in aegris opportunitas cibi salutaris est et aqua tempestiue data remedii locum optinuit, ita, quamuis leue et uolgare beneficium est, si praesto fuit, si proximam quamque horam non

perdidit, multum sibi adicit gratiamque pretiosi sed lenti et diu cogitati muneris uincit. Qui tam parate facit, non est dubium, quin libenter faciat; itaque laetus facit et induit sibi animi sui uultum.

[3] Ingentia quorundam beneficia silentium aut loquendi tarditas imitata grauitatem et tristitiam corrumpit, cum promitterent uultu negantium; quanto melius adicere bona uerba rebus bonis et praedicatione humana benignaque commendare, quae praestes! Vt ille se castiget, quod tardior in rogando fuit, adicias licet familiarem querellam: 'Irascor tibi, quod, cum aliquid desiderasses, non olim scire me uoluisti, quod tam diligenter rogasti, quod quemquam adhibuisti. Ego uero gratulor mihi, quod experiri animum meum libuit; postea, quidquid desiderabis, tuo iure exiges; semel rusticitati tuae ignoscitur.' Sic efficies, ut animum tuum pluris aestimet quam illud, quidquid est, ad quod petendum uenerat. Tunc est summa uirtus tribuentis, tunc benignitas, ubi ille, qui discessit, dicet sibi: 'Magnum hodie lucrum feci; malo, quod illum talem inueni, quam si multiplicatum hoc ad me, de quo loquebar, alia uia peruenisset; huic eius animo numquam parem gratiam referam.'

[4] At plerique sunt, qui beneficia asperitate uerborum et supercilio in odium adducunt eo sermone usi, ea superbia, ut inpetrasse paeniteat. Aliae deinde post rem promissam secuntur morae; nihil autem est acerbius, quam ubi quoque, <quod> inpetrastisti, rogandum est. Repraesentanda sunt beneficia, quae a quibusdam accipere difficilius est quam inpetrare. Hic rogandus est, ut admoneat, ille, ut consummet; sic unum munus per multorum manus teritur, ex quo gratiae minimum apud promittentem remanet, quia auctori detrahit, quisquis post illum rogandus est. Hoc itaque curae hebebis, si grate aestimari, quae praestabis, uoles, ut beneficia tua inlibata, ut integra ad eos, quibus promissa sunt, perueniant, sine ulla, quod aiunt, deductione. Nemo illa intercipiat, nemo detineat; nemo in eo, quod daturus es, gratiam suam facere potest, ut non tuam minuat.

[5] Nihil aequae amarum quam diu pendere; aequiore quidam animo ferunt praecidi spem suam quam trahi. Plerisque autem hoc uitium est ambitione praua differendi promissa, ne minor sit rogantium turba, quales regiae potentiae ministri sunt, quos delectat superbiae suae longum spectaculum, minusque se iudicant posse, nisi diu multumque singulis, quid possint, ostenderint. Nihil confestim, nihil

semel faciunt; iniuriae illorum praecipites, lenta beneficia sunt. Quare uerissimum existima, quod ille comicus dixit:

Quid? tu non intellegis
tantum te gratiae demere, quantum morae adicis?

Inde illae uoces, quas ingenuus dolor exprimit: 'Fac, si quid facis' et: 'Nihil tanti est; malo mihi iam neges.' Vbi in taedium adductus animus incipit beneficium odisse, dum expectat, potest ob id gratus esse? Quemadmodum acerbissima crudelitas est, quae trahit poenam, et misericordiae genus est cito occidere, quia tormentum ultimum finem sui secum adfert, quod antecedit tempus, maxima uenturi supplicii pars est, ita maior est muneris gratia, quo minus diu pependit. Est enim etiam bonarum rerum sollicita expectatio, et cum plurima beneficia remedium alicuius rei adferant, qui aut diutius torqueri patitur, quem protinus potest liberare, aut tardius gaudere, beneficio suo manus adfert. Omnis benignitas properat, et proprium est libenter facientis cito facere; qui tarde et diem de die extrahens profuit, non ex animo fecit. Ita duas res maximas perdidit, et tempus et argumentum amicae uoluntatis; tarde uelle nolentis est.

[6] In omni negotio, Liberalis, non minima portio est, quomodo quidque aut dicatur aut fiat. Multum celeritas adiecit, multum abstulit mora. Sicut in telis eadem ferri uis est, sed infinitum interest, utrum excusso lacerto torqueantur an remissa manu effluant, gladius idem et stringit et transforat, quam presso articulo uenerit, refert, <ita> idem est, quod datur, sed interest, quomodo detur. Quam dulce, quam pretiosum est, si gratias sibi agi non est passus, qui dedit, si dedisse, dum dat, oblitus est! Nam corripere eum, cui cum maxime aliquid praestes, dementia est et inserere contumeliam meritis. Itaque non sunt exasperanda beneficia nec quicquam illis triste miscendum. Etiam si quid erit, de quo uelis admonere, aliud tempus eligito.

[7] Fabius Verrucosus beneficium ab homine duro aspere datum panem lapidosum uocabat, quem esurienti accipere necessarium sit, esse acerbum. Ti. Caesar rogatus a Nepote Mario praetorio, ut aeri alieno eius succurreret, edere illum sibi nomina creditorum iussit; hoc non est donare sed creditores conuocare. Cum edita essent, scripsit Nepoti iussisse se pecuniam solui adiecta contumeliosa

admonitione; effecit, ut Nepos nec aes alienum haberet nec beneficium: liberauit illum a creditoribus, sibi non obligauit. Aliquid Tiberius secutus est; puto, noluit plures esse, qui idem rogaturi concurrerent. Ista fortasse efficax ratio fuerit ad hominum improbas cupiditates pudore reprimendas, beneficium uero danti tota alia sequenda est uia. Omni genere, quod des, quo sit acceptatius, adornandum est; hoc uero non est beneficium dare, deprehendere est.

[8] Et ut in transitu de hac quoque parte dicam, quid sentiam, ne principi quidem satis decorum est donare ignominiae causa. 'Tamen' inquit 'effugere Tiberius ne hoc quidem modo, quod uitabat, potuit; nam aliquot postea, qui idem rogarent, inuenti sunt, quos omnes iussit reddere in senatu aeris alieni causas, et ita illis certas summas dedit.' Non est illud liberalitas, censura est; auxilium est, principale tributum est: beneficium non est, cuius sine rubore meminisse non possum. Ad iudicem missus sum; ut inpetrarem, causam dixi.

[9] Praecipiant itaque omnes auctores sapientiae quaedam beneficia palam danda, quaedam secreto: palam, quae consequi gloriosum, ut militaria dona, ut honores et quidquid aliud notitia pulchrius fit; rursus, quae non producant nec honestiorem faciunt, sed succurrunt infirmitati, egestati, ignominiae, tacite danda sunt, ut nota sint solis, quibus prosunt.

[10] Interdum etiam ipse, qui iuuatur, fallendus est, ut habeat nec, a quo acceperit, sciat. Arcesilan aiunt amico pauperi et paupertatem suam dissimulanti, aegro autem et ne hoc quidem confitenti deesse sibi in sumptum ad necessarios usus, clam succurrendum iudicasse; puluino eius ignorantis sacculum subiecit, ut homo inutiliter uerecundus, quod desiderabat, inueniret potius quam acciperet. 'Quid ergo? ille nesciet, a quo acceperit?' Primum nesciat, si hoc ipsum beneficii pars est; deinde multa alia faciam, multa tribuam, per quae intellegat et illius auctorem; denique ille nesciet accepisse se, ego sciam me dedisse. 'Parum est' inquis. Parum, si fenerare cogitas; sed si dare, quo genere accipienti maxime profuturum erit, dabis. Contentus eris te teste; alioqui non bene facere delectat sed uideri bene fecisse. 'Volo utique sciat.' Debitorem quaeris. 'Volo utique sciat.' Quid? si illi utilius est nescire, si honestius, si gratius, non in aliam partem abibis? 'Volo sciat.' Ita tu hominem non seruabis in tenebris? Non nego, quotiens patitur res, respiciendum gaudium ex

accipientis uoluntate; sin adiuuari illum et oportet et pudet, si, quod praestamus, offendit, nisi absconditur, beneficium in acta non mitto. Quidni? ego illi non sum indicaturus me dedisse, cum inter prima praecepta ac maxime necessaria sit, ne umquam exprobrem, immo ne admoneam quidem. Haec enim beneficii inter duos lex est: alter statim obliuisci debet dati, alter accepti numquam.

[11] Lacerat animum et premit frequens meritorum conmemoratio. Libet exclamare, quod ille triumphali proscriptione seruatus a quodam Caesaris amico exclamauit, cum superbiam eius ferre non posset: ‘Redde me Caesari!’ Quousque dices: ‘Ego te seruauit, ego eripui morti’? istud, si meo arbitrio memini, uita est, si tuo, mors est; nihil tibi debeo, si me seruasti, ut haberes, quem ostenderes. Quousque me circumducis? quousque obliuisci fortunae meae non sinis? semel in triumpho ductus essem. Non est dicendum, quid tribuerimus: qui admonet, repetit; non est instandum, non est memoria renouanda, nisi ut aliud dando prioris admoneas. Ne aliis quidem narrare debemus; qui dedit beneficium, taceat, narret, qui accepit. Dicitur enim, quod illi ubique iactanti beneficium suum: ‘Non negabis’ inquit ‘te recepisse’; et cum respondisset: ‘Quando?’ ‘Saepe quidem’ inquit ‘et multis locis, id est, quotiens et ubicumque narrasti.’ Quid opus est eloqui, quid alienum occupare officium? est, qui istud facere honestius possit, quo narrante et hoc laudabitur, quod ipse non narras. Ingratum me iudicas, si istud te tacente nemo sciturus est. Quod adeo non est conmittendum, ut etiam, si quis coram nobis narrabit, respondendum sit: ‘Dignissimus quidem ille est maioribus beneficiis, sed ego magis uelle me scio omnia illi praestare quam adhuc praestitisse’; et haec ipsa non uerniliter nec ea figura, qua quidam reiciunt, quae magis ad se uolunt adtrahere. Deinde adicienda omnis humanitas. Perdet agricola, quod sparsit, si labores suos destituit in semine; multa cura sata perducuntur ad segetem; nihil in fructum peruenit, quod non a primo usque ad extremum aequalis cultura prosequitur. Eadem beneficiorum condicio est. Numquid ulla maiora possunt esse, quam quae in liberos patres conferunt? haec tamen inrita sunt, si in infantia deserantur, nisi longa pietas munus suum nutrit. Eadem ceterorum beneficiorum condicio est: nisi illa adiuueris, perdes; parum est dedisse, fouenda sunt. Si gratos uis habere, quos obligas, non tantum

des oportet beneficia, sed ames. Praecipue, ut dixi, parcamus auribus; admonitio taedium facit, exprobratio odium. Nihil aequè in beneficio dando uitandum est quam superbia. Quid opus adrogantia uultus, quid tumore uerborum? ipsa res te extollit. Detrahenda est inanis iactatio; res loquentur nobis tacentibus. Non tantum ingratum, sed inuisum est beneficium superbe datum.

[12] C. Caesar dedit uitam Pompeio Penno, si dat, qui non aufert; deinde absoluto et agenti gratias porrexit osculandum sinistrum pedem. Qui excusant et negant id insolentiae causa factum, aiunt socculum auratum, immo aureum, margaritis distinctum ostendere eum uoluisse. Ita prorsus: quid hic contumeliosum est, si uir consularis aurum et margaritas osculatus est alioquin nullam partem in corpore eius electurus, quam purius oscularetur? Homo natus in hoc, ut mores liberae ciuitatis Persica seruitute mutaret, parum iudicauit, si senator, senex, summis usus honoribus in conspectu principum supplex sibi eo more iacuisset, quo hostes uicti hostibus iacueret; inuenit aliquid infra genua, quo libertatem detruderet. Non hoc est rem publicam calcare, et quidem, licet id aliquis non putet ad rem pertinere, sinistro pede? Parum enim foede furioseque insolens fuerat, qui de capite consularis uiri soccatus audiebat, nisi in os senatoris ingessisset imperator epigros suos.

[13] O superbia, magnae fortunae stultissimum malum! ut a te nihil accipere iuuat! ut omne beneficium in iniuriam conuertis! ut te omnia dedecent! quoque altius te subleuasti, hoc depressior es ostendisque tibi non datum adgnosce ista bona, quibus tantum inflaris; quidquid das, corrumpis. Libet itaque interrogare, quid se tanto opere resupinet, quid uultum habitumque oris peruertat, ut malit personam habere quam faciem? Iucunda sunt, quae humana fronte, certe leni placidaeque tribuuntur, quae cum daret mihi superior, non exultauit supra me, sed quam potuit benignissimus fuit descenditque in aequum et detraxit muneri suo pompam, si obseruauit idoneum tempus, ut in occasione potius quam in necessitate succurreret. Vno modo istis persuadebimus, ne beneficia sua insolentia perdant, si ostenderimus non ideo uideri maiora, quod tumultuosius data sunt; ne ipsos quidem ob id cuiquam posse maiores uideri; uanam esse superbiae magnitudinem et quae in odium etiam amanda perducant.

[14] Sunt quaedam nocitura inpetrantibus, quae non dare sed

negare beneficium est; aestimabimus itaque utilitatem potius quam uoluntatem petentium. Saepe enim noxia concupiscimus, nec dispicere, quam perniciosa sint, licet, quia iudicium interpellat adfectus; sed cum subsedit cupiditas, cum inpetus ille flagrantis animi, qui consilium fugat, cecidit, detestamur perniciosos malorum munerum auctores. Vt frigidam aegris negamus et lugentibus ac sibi iratis ferrum, ut amentibus, quidquid contra se usurus ardor petit, sic omnium, quae nocitura sunt, inpense ac submisce, non numquam etiam miserabiliter rogantibus perseuerabimus non dare. Cum initia beneficiorum suorum spectare tum etiam exitus decet et ea dare, quae non tantum accipere, sed etiam accepisse delectet. Multi sunt, qui dicant: 'Scio hoc illi non profuturum, sed quid faciam?' rogat, resistere precibus eius non possum; uiderit: de se, non de me queretur.' Falsum est: immo de te et merito quidem; cum ad mentem bonam redierit, cum accessio illa, quae animum inflammabat, remiserit, quidni eum oderit, a quo in damnum ac periculum suum adiutus est? Exorari in perniciem rogantium saeua bonitas est. Quemadmodum pulcherrimum opus est etiam inuitos nolentesque seruare, ita rogantibus pestifera largiri blandum et adfabile odium est. Beneficium demus, quod in usu magis ac magis placeat, quod numquam in malum uertat. Pecuniam non dabo, quam numeraturum adulterae sciam, nec in societate turpis facti aut consilii inueniar; si potero, reuocabo, si minus, non adiuuabo scelus. Siue illum ira, quo non debeat, inpellet, siue ambitionis calor abducet a tutis, in nullum malum uires a <me> sumere ipsas patiar nec conmittam, ut possit quandoque dicere: 'Ille amando me occidit.' Saepe nihil interest inter amicorum munera et hostium uota; quidquid illi accidere optant, in id horum intempestiua indulgentia inpellit atque instruit. Quid autem turpius quam quod euenit frequentissime, ut nihil intersit inter odium et beneficium?

[15] Numquam in turpitudinem nostram reditura tribuamus. Cum summa amicitiae sit amicum sibi aequare, utrique simul consulendum est: dabo egenti, sed ut ipse non egeam; succurram perituro, sed ut ipse non peream, nisi si futurus ero magni hominis aut magnae rei merces. Nullum beneficium dabo, quod turpiter peterem. Nec exiguum dilatabo nec magna pro paruis accipi patiar; nam ut qui, quod <dedit>, inputat, gratiam destruit, ita qui, quantum

det, ostendit, munus suum commendat, non exprobrat. Respiciendae sunt cuique facultates suae uiresque, ne aut plus praestemus, quam possumus, aut minus. Aestimanda est eius persona, cui damus; quaedam enim minora sunt, quam ut exire a magnis uiris debeant, quaedam accipiente maiora sunt. Vtriusque itaque personam confer et ipsum inter illas, quod donabis, examina, numquid aut danti graue sit aut parum, numquid rursus, qui accepturus est, aut fastidiat aut non capiat.

[16] Urbem cuidam Alexander donabat, uesanus et qui nihil animo nisi grande conciperet. Cum ille, cui donabatur, se ipse mensus tanti muneris inuidiam refugisset dicens non conuenire fortunae suae: ‘Non quaero’ inquit, ‘quid te accipere deceat, sed quid me dare.’ Animosa uox uidetur et regia, cum sit stultissima. Nihil enim per se quemquam decet; refert, qui det, cui, quando, quare, ubi, et cetera, sine quibus facti ratio non constabit. Tumidissimum animal! si illum accipere hoc non decet, nec te dare; habetur personarum ac dignitatum portio et, cum sit ubique uirtus modus, aequè peccat, quod excedit, quam quod deficit. Liceat istud sane tibi et te in tantum fortuna sustulerit, ut congiaria tua urbes sint (quas quanto maioris animi fuit non capere quam spargere!): est tamen aliquis minor, quam <ut> in sinu eius condenda sit ciuitas.

[17] Ab Antigono Cynicus petit talentum: respondit plus esse, quam quod Cynicus petere deberet; repulsus petit denarium: respondit minus esse, quam quod regem deceret dare. ‘Turpissima eiusmodi cauillatio est: inuenit, quomodo neutrum daret. In denario regem, in talento Cynicum respexit, cum posset et denarium tamquam Cynico dare et talentum tamquam rex. Vt sit aliquid maius, quam quod Cynicus accipiat, nihil tam exiguum est, quod non honeste regis humanitas tribuat.’ Si me interrogas, probò; est enim intolerabilis res poscere nummos et contemnere. Indixisti pecuniae odium; hoc professus es, hanc personam induisti: agenda est. Iniquissimum est te pecuniam sub gloria egestatis adquirere. Adspicienda ergo non minus sua cuique persona est quam eius, de quo iuuando quis cogitat. Volo Chrysippi nostri uti similitudine de pilae lusu, quam cadere non est dubium aut mittentis uitio aut excipientis; tum cursum suum seruat, ubi inter manus utriusque apte ab utroque et iactata et excepta uersatur. Necesse est autem lusor

bonus aliter illam conlusori longo, aliter breui mittat. Eadem beneficii ratio est: nisi utrique personae, dantis et accipientis, aptatur, nec ab hoc exhibit nec ad illum perueniet, ut debet. Si cum exercitato et docto negotium est, audacius pilam mittemus; utcumque enim uenerit, manus illam expedita et agilis repercutiet; si cum tirone et indocto, non tam rigide nec tam excusse sed languidius et in ipsam eius derigentes manum remisse occurremus. Idem faciendum est in beneficiis: quosdam doceamus et satis iudicemus, si conantur, si audent, si uolunt. Facimus autem plerumque ingratos et, ut sint, fauemus, tamquam ita demum magna sint beneficia nostra, si gratia illis referri non potuit; ut malignis lusoribus propositum est conlusorem traducere, cum damno scilicet ipsius lusus, qui non potest, nisi consentitur, extendi. Multi sunt tam prauae naturae, ut malint perdere, quae praestiterunt, quam uideri recepissee, superbi et inputatores; quanto melius quantoque humanius id agere, ut illis quoque partes suae constent, et fauere, ut gratia sibi referri possit, benigne omnia interpretari, gratias agentem non aliter, quam si referat, audire, praebere se facilem ad hoc, ut, quem obligauit, etiam exolui uelit! Male audire solet fenerator, si acerbe exigit, aequae, si in recipiendo tardus ac difficilis moras quaerit. Beneficium tam recipiendum est quam non exigendum. Optimus ille, qui facile dedit, numquam exegit, reddi gauisus est, bona fide, quid praestitisset, oblitus, qui accipientis animo recepit.

[18] Quidam non tantum dant beneficia superbe, sed etiam accipiunt, quod non est committendum; iam enim transeamus ad alteram partem tractaturi, quomodo se gerere homines in accipiendis beneficiis debeant. Quodcumque ex duobus constat officium, tantundem ab utroque exigit: qualis pater esse debeat, cum inspexeris, scies non minus operis illic superesse, ut dispicias, qualem esse oporteat filium; sunt aliquae partes mariti, sed non minores uxoris. In uicem ista, quantum exigunt, praestant et parem desiderant regulam, quae, ut ait Hecaton, difficilis est; omne enim honestum in arduo est, etiam quod uicinum honesto est; non enim tantum fieri debet, sed ratione fieri. Hac duce per totam uitam eundum est, minima maximaque ex huius consilio gerenda; quomodo haec suaserit, dandum. Haec autem hoc primum censebit non ab omnibus accipiendum. A quibus ergo accipiemus? Vt breuiter tibi

respondeam: ab his, quibus dedissemus. Videamus, num etiam maiore dilectu quaerendus sit, cui debeamus, quam cui praestemus. Nam ut non sequantur ulla incommoda (secuntur autem plurima), graue tamen tormentum est debere, cui nolis; contra iucundissimum ab eo accepisse beneficium, quem amare etiam post iniuriam possis, ubi amicitiam alioqui iucundam causa fecit et iustam. Illud uero homini uerecundo et probro miserrimum est, si eum amare oportet, quem non iuuat. Totiens admoneam necesse est non loqui me de sapientibus, quos, quidquid oportet, et iuuat, qui animum in potestate habent et legem sibi, quam uolunt, dicunt, quam dixerunt, seruant, sed de imperfectis hominibus honestam uiam sequi uolentibus, quorum adfectus saepe contumaciter parent. Itaque eligendum est, a quo beneficium accipiam; et quidem diligentius quaerendus beneficii quam pecuniae creditor. Huic enim reddendum est, quantum accepi, et, si reddidi, solutus sum ac liber; at illi et plus soluendum est, et nihilo minus etiam relata gratia cohaeremus; debeo enim, cum reddidi, rursus incipere, manetque amicitia; <et ut in amicitiam> non reciperem indignum, sic ne in beneficiorum quidem sacratissimum ius, ex quo amicitia oritur. ‘Non semper’ inquit ‘mihi licet dicere: nolo; aliquando beneficium accipiendum est et inuito. Dat tyrannus crudelis et iracundus, qui munus suum fastidire te iniuriam iudicaturus est: non accipiam? eodem loco latronem pone, piratam, regem animum latronis ac piratae habentem. Quid faciam? parum dignus est, cui debeam?’ Cum eligendum dico, cui debeas, uim maiorem et metum excipio, quibus adhibitis electio perit. Si liberum est tibi, si arbitrii tui est, utrum uelis an non, id apud te ipse perpendes; si necessitas tollit arbitrium, scies te non accipere, sed parere. Nemo id accipiendo obligatur, quod illi repudiare non licuit; si uis scire, an uelim, effice, ut possim nolle. ‘Vitam tamen tibi dedit.’ Non refert, quid sit, quod datur, nisi a uolente, nisi uolenti datur; si seruasti me, non ideo seruator es. Venenum aliquando pro remedio fuit; non ideo numeratur inter salubria. Quaedam prosunt nec obligant: tuber quidam tyranni gladio diuisit, qui ad occidendum eum uenerat; non ideo illi tyrannus gratias egit, quod rem, quam medicorum manus reformidauerant nocendo sanauit.

[19] Vides non esse magnum in ipsa re momentum, quoniam non uidetur dedisse beneficium, qui a malo animo profuit; casus enim

beneficium est, hominis iniuria. Leonem in amphitheatro spectauimus, qui unum e bestiariis agnitum, cum quondam eius fuisset magister, protexit ab insetu bestiarum; num ergo beneficium est ferae auxilium? minime, quia nec uoluit facere nec faciendi animo fecit. Quo loco feram posui, tyrannum pone: et hic uitam dedit et illa, nec hic nec illa beneficium. Quia non est beneficium accipere cogi, non est beneficium debere, cui nolis. Ante des oportet mihi arbitrium mei, deinde beneficium.

[20] Disputari de M. Bruto solet, an debuerit accipere ab diuo Iulio uitam, cum occidendum eum iudicaret. Quam rationem in occidendo secutus sit, alias tractabimus; mihi enim, cum uir magnus in aliis fuerit, in hac re uidetur uehementer errasse nec ex institutione Stoica se egisse; qui aut regis nomen extimuit, cum optimus ciuitatis status sub rege iusto sit, aut ibi sperauit libertatem futuram, ubi tam magnum praemium erat et imperandi et seruiendi, aut existimauit ciuitatem in priorem formam posse reuocari amissis pristinis moribus futuramque ibi aequalitatem ciuilis iuris et staturas suo loco leges, ubi uiderat tot milia hominum pugnancia, non an seruirent, sed utri. Quanta uero illum aut rerum naturae aut urbis suae tenuit obliuio, qui uno interempto defuturum credidit alium, qui idem uellet, cum Tarquinius esset inuentus post tot reges ferro ac fulminibus occisos! Sed uitam accipere debuit, ob hoc tamen <non> habere illum parentis loco, quia in ius dandi beneficii iniuria uenerat; non enim seruauit is, qui non interfecit, nec beneficium dedit, sed missionem.

[21] Illud magis uenire in aliquam disputationem potest, quid faciendum sit captiuo, cui redemptionis pretium homo prostituti corporis et infamis ore promittit. Patiar me ab impuro seruari? seruatus deinde quam illi gratiam referam? uiuam cum obsceno? non uiuam cum redemptore? Quid ergo placeat, dicam: etiam a tali accipiam pecuniam, quam pro capite dependam, accipiam autem tamquam creditum, non tamquam beneficium; soluam illi pecuniam et, si occasio fuerit seruandi periclitantem, seruabo; in amicitiam, quae similes iungit, non descendam, nec seruatoris illum loco numerabo sed feneratoris, cui sciam reddendum, quod accepi. Est aliquis dignus, a quo beneficium accipiam, sed danti nociturum est; ideo non accipiam, quia ille paratus est mihi cum incommodo aut etiam periculo suo prodesse. Defensurus est me reum, sed illo

patrocinio regem sibi facturus inimicum; inimicus sum, si, cum ille pro me periclitari uelit, ego, quod facilius est, non facio, ut sine illo periclitem. Ineptum et friuolum hoc Hecaton ponit exemplum Arcesilai, quem ait a filio familiae adlatam pecuniam non accepisse, ne ille patrem sordidum offenderet; quid fecit laude dignum, quod furtum non recepit, quod maluit non accipere quam reddere? Quae est enim alienam rem non accipere moderatio? Si exemplo magni animi opus est, utamur Graecini Iulii, uiri egregii, quem C. Caesar occidit ob hoc unum, quod melior uir erat, quam esse quemquam tyranno expedit. Is cum ab amicis conferentibus ad inpensam ludorum pecunias acciperet, magnam pecuniam a Fabio Persico missam non accepit et obiurgantibus iis, qui non aestimant mittentes, sed missa, quod repudiasset: 'Ego' inquit 'ab eo beneficium accipiam, a quo propinationem accepturus non sum?' Cum illi Rebilus consularis, homo eiusdem infamiae, maiorem summam misisset instaretque, ut accipi iuberet: 'Rogo' inquit 'ignoscas; et a Persico non accepi.' Vtrum hoc munera accipere est an senatum legere?

[22] Cum accipiendum iudicauerimus, hilares accipiamus profitentes gaudium, et id danti manifestum sit, ut fructum praesentem capiat; iusta enim causa laetitiae est laetum amicum uidere, iustior fecisse; quam grate ad nos peruenisse indicemus effusis adfectibus, quos non ipso tantum audiente sed ubique testemur. Qui grate beneficium accipit, primam eius pensionem soluit.

[23] Sunt quidam, qui nolint nisi secreto accipere; testem beneficii et conscium uitant; quos scias licet male cogitare. Quomodo danti in tantum producenda notitia est muneris sui, in quantum delectatura est, cui datur, ita accipienti adhibenda contio est; quod pudet debere, ne acceperis. Quidam furtive gratias agunt et in angulo et ad aurem; non est ista uerecundia, sed infitiandi genus; ingratus est, qui remotis arbitris agit gratias. Quidam nolunt nomina secum fieri nec interponi pararios nec signatores aduocari, <uix> chirographum dare; idem faciunt, qui dant operam, ut beneficium in ipsos conlatum quam ignotissimum sit. Verentur palam ferre, ut sua potius uirtute quam alieno adiutorio consecuti dicantur; rariores in eorum officiis sunt, quibus uitam aut dignitatem debent, et, dum opinionem clientium

timent, grauiorem subeunt ingratorum.

[24] Alii pessime locuntur de optime meritis. Tutius est quosdam offendere quam demeruisse; argumentum enim nihil debentium odio quaerunt; atqui nihil magis praestandum est, quam ut memoria nobis meritorum haereat, quae subinde reficienda est, quia nec referre potest gratiam, nisi qui meminit, <et>, qui meminit,> eam refert. Nec delicate accipiendum est nec submisce et humiliter; nam qui negligens est in accipiendo, cum omne beneficium recens pateat, quid faciat, cum prima eius uoluptas refrixit? Alius accipit fastidiose, tamquam qui dicat: 'Non quidem mihi opus est, sed quia tam ualde uis, faciam tibi mei potestatem'; alius supine, ut dubium praestanti relinquat, an senserit; alius uix labra diduxit et ingrator, quam si tacuisset, fuit. Loquendum est pro magnitudine rei inpensius et illa adicienda: 'Plures, quam putas, obligasti' (nemo enim non gaudet beneficium suum latius patere); 'nescis, quid mihi praestiteris, sed scire te oportet, quanto plus sit, quam existimas' (statim gratus est, qui se onerat); 'numquam tibi referre gratiam potero; illud certe non desinam ubique confiteri me referre non posse.'

[25] Nullo magis Caesarem Augustum demeruit et ad alia inpetranda facilem sibi reddidit Furnius, quam quod, cum patri Antonianas partes secuto ueniam inpetrasset, dixit: 'Hanc unam, Caesar, habeo iniuriam tuam: effecisti, ut et uiuerem et morerer ingratus.' Quid est tam grati animi, quam nullo modo sibi satisfacere, quam ne ad spem quidem exaequandi umquam beneficii accedere? His atque eiusmodi uocibus id agamus, ut uoluntas nostra non lateat, sed aperiatur et luceat. Verba cessent licet: si, quemadmodum debemus, adfecti sumus, conscientia eminebit in uultu. Qui gratus futurus est, statim, dum accipit, de reddendo cogitet. Chrysippus quidem ait illum uelut in certamen cursus conpositum et carceribus inclusum opperiri debere tempus suum, ad quod uelut dato signo prosiliat; et quidem magna illi contentione opus est, magna celeritate, ut consequatur antecedentem.

[26] Videndum est nunc, quid maxime faciat ingratos. Facit aut nimius sui suspectus et insitum mortalitati uitium se suaue mirandi aut auiditas aut inuidia. Incipiamus a primo. Nemo non benignus est sui iudex; inde est, ut omnia meruisse se existimet et in solutum accipiat nec satis suo pretio se aestimatum putet. 'Hoc mihi dedit,

sed quam sero, sed post quot labores? quanto consequi plura potuissem, si illum aut illum ita me colere maluissem? non hoc speraueram; in turbam coniectus sum; tam exiguo dignum

[27] me iudicauit? honestius praeteriri fuit.' Cn. Lentulus augur, diuitiarum maximum exemplum, ante quam illum libertini pauperem facerent, hic, qui quater miliens sestertium suum uidit (proprie dixi; nihil enim amplius quam uidit), ingenii fuit sterilis, tam pusilli quam animi. Cum esset auarissimus, nummos citius emittebat quam uerba: tanta illi inopia erat sermonis. Hic cum omnia incrementa sua diuo Augusto deberet, ad quem adtulerat paupertatem sub onere nobilitatis laborantem, princeps iam ciuitatis et pecunia et gratia subinde <de> Augusto solebat queri dicens a studiis se abductum; nihil tantum in se congestum esse, quantum perdidisset relicta eloquentia. At illi inter alia hoc quoque diuus Augustus praestiterat, quod illum derisu et labore inrito liberauerat. Non patitur auditas quemquam esse gratum; numquam enim improbae spei, quod datur, satis est, et maiora cupimus, quo maiora uenerunt, multoque concitator est auaritia in magnarum opum congestu conlocata, ut flammae infinito acrior uis est, quo ex maiore incendio emicuit. Aeque ambitio non patitur quemquam in ea mensura honorum conquiescere, quae quondam eius fuit inprudens uotum: nemo agit de tribunatu gratias, sed queritur, quod non est ad praeturam usque perductus; nec haec grata est, si deest consulatus; ne hic quidem satiat, si unus est. Ultra se cupiditas porrigit et felicitatem suam non intellegit, quia non, unde uenerit, respicit, sed quo tendat.

[28] Omnibus his uehementius et inportunius malum est inuidia, quae nos inquietat, dum conparat: 'Hoc mihi praestitit, sed illi plus, sed illi maturius'; et deinde nullius causam agit, contra omnes sibi fauet. Quanto est simplicius, quanto prudentius beneficium acceptum augere, scire neminem tanti ab alio, quanti a se ipso aestimari! 'Plus accipere debui, sed illi facile non fuit plus dare; in multos diuidenda liberalitas erat; hoc initium est, boni consulamus et animum eius grate excipiendo euocemus; parum fecit, sed saepius faciet; illum mihi praetulit, et me multis; ille non est mihi par uirtutibus nec officiis, sed habuit suam Venerem; querendo non efficiam, ut maioribus dignus sim, sed ut datis indignus. Plura illis hominibus turpissimis data sunt; quid ad rem? quam raro fortuna iudicat?

Cottidie querimur malos esse felices; saepe, quae agellos pessimi cuiusque transierat, optimorum uirorum segetem grando percussit; fert sortem suam quisque ut in ceteris rebus ita in amicitiiis.' Nullum est tam plenum beneficium, quod non uellicare malignitas possit, nullum tam angustum, quod non bonus interpretes extendat. Numquam deerunt causae querendi, si beneficia a deteriore parte spectaueris.

[29] Vide, quam iniqui sint diuinorum munerum aestimatores et quidem professi sapientiam: queruntur, quod non magnitudine corporum aequemus elephantos, uelocitate ceruos, leuitate aues, inpetu tauros, quod solida sit cutis beluis, decentior dammis, densior ursis, mollior fibris, quod sagacitate nos narium canes uincant, quod acie luminum aquilae, spatio aetatis corui, multa animalia nandi facilitate. Et cum quaedam ne coire quidem in idem natura patiatur, ut uelocitatem corporum et uires, ex diuersis ac dissidentibus bonis hominem non esse compositum iniuriam uocant et negligentes nostri deos, quod non bona ualetudo etiam uitiiis inexpugnabilis data sit, quod non futuri scientia. Vix sibi temperant, quin eo usque inpudentiae prouehantur, ut naturam oderint, quod infra deos sumus, quod non in aequo illis stetimus. Quanto satius est ad contemplationem tot tantorumque beneficiorum reuerti et agere gratias, quod nos in hoc pulcherrimo domicilio uoluerunt secundas sortiri, quod terrenis praefecerunt! Aliquis ea animalia comparat nobis, quorum potestas penes nos est? Quidquid nobis negatum est, dari non potuit. Proinde, quisquis es iniquus aestimator sortis humanae, cogita, quanta nobis tribuerit parens noster, quanto ualentiora animalia sub iugum miserimus, quanto uelociora consequamur, quam nihil sit mortale non sub ictu nostro positum. Tot uirtutes accepimus, tot artes, animum denique, cui nihil non eodem, quo intendit, momento peruium est, sideribus uelociorem, quorum post multa saecula futuros cursus antecedit; tantum deinde frugum, tantum opum, tantum rerum aliarum super alias aceruatarum. Circumeas licet cuncta et, quia nihil totum inuenies, quod esse te malles, ex omnibus singula excerpas, quae tibi dari uelles: bene aestimata naturae indulgentia confitearis necesse est in deliciis te illi fuisse. Ita est: carissimos nos habuerunt di immortales habentque, et, qui maximus tribui honos potuit, ab ipsis proximos conlocauerunt. Magna accepimus, maiora non cepimus.

[30] Haec, mi Liberalis, necessaria credidi, et quia loquendum aliquid de maximis beneficiis erat, cum de minutis loqueremur, et quia inde manat etiam in cetera huius detestabilis uitii audacia. Cui enim respondebit grate, quod munus existimabit aut magnum aut reddendum, qui summa beneficia spernit? cui salutem, cui spiritum debebit, qui uitam accepisse se a dis negat, quam cottidie ab illis petit? Quicumque ergo gratos esse docet, et hominum causam agit et deorum, quibus nullius rei indigentibus, positis extra desiderium, referre nihilo minus gratiam possumus. Non est, quod quisquam excusationem mentis ingratae ab infirmitate atque inopia petat et dicat: 'Quid enim faciam et quomodo? quando superioribus dominisque rerum omnium gratiam referam?' Referre facile est, si auarus es, sine inpendio, si iners, <sine> opera. Eodem quidem momento, quo obligatus es, si uis, cum quolibet paria fecisti, quoniam, qui libenter beneficium accipit, reddidit.

[31] Hoc ex paradoxis Stoicae sectae minime mirabile, ut mea fert opinio, aut incredibile est eum, qui libenter accipit, beneficium reddidisse. Nam cum omnia ad animum referamus, fecit quisque, quantum uoluit; et cum pietas, fides, iustitia, omnis denique uirtus intra se perfecta sit, etiam si illi manum exerere non licuit, gratus quoque homo esse potest uoluntate. Quotiens, quod proposuit, quisque consequitur, capit operis sui fructum. Qui beneficium dat, quid proponit? prodesse ei, cui dat, et uoluptati esse. Si, quod uoluit, effecit peruenitque ad me animus eius ac mutuo gaudio adfecit, tulit, quod petit. Non enim in uicem aliquid sibi reddi uoluit; aut non fuit beneficium, sed negotiatio. Bene nauigauit, qui quem destinauit portum tenuit; teli iactus certae manus peregit officium, si petita percussit; beneficium qui dat, uult excipi grate: habet, quod uoluit, si bene acceptum est. Sed sperauit emolumentum aliquid: non fuit hoc beneficium, cuius proprium est nihil de reditu cogitare. Quod accipiebam, eo animo accepi, quo dabatur: reddidi. Alioqui pessima optimae rei condicio est: ut gratus sim, ad fortunam mittor. Si illa inuita respondere non possum, sufficit animus animo. 'Quid ergo? non, quidquid potuero, et faciam, ut reddam, et temporum rerumque occasionem sequear et implere eius sinum cupiam, a quo aliquid accepi?' Sed malo loco beneficium est, nisi et excussis manibus esse grato licet.

[32] 'Qui accepit' inquit 'beneficium, licet animo benignissimo acceperit, nondum consummauit officium suum; restat enim pars reddendi; sicut in lusu est aliquid pilam scite ac diligenter excipere, sed non dicitur bonus lusor, nisi qui apte et expedite remisit, quam acceperat.' Exemplum hoc dissimile est; quare? quia huius rei laus in corporis motu est et in agilitate, non in animo; explicari itaque totum debet, de quo oculis iudicatur. Nec tamen ideo non bonum lusorem dicam, qui pilam, ut oportebat, excepit, si per ipsum mora, quo minus remitteret, non fuit. 'Sed quamuis' inquit 'arti ludentis nihil desit, quia partem quidem fecit, sed partem, quam non fecit, potest facere, lusus ipse imperfectus est, qui consummatur uicibus mittendi ac remittendi.' Nolo diutius hoc refellere; existimemus ita esse, desit aliquid lusui, non lusori; sic et in hoc, de quo disputamus, deest aliquid rei datae, cui par alia debetur, non animo, qui animum parem sibi nactus est et, quantum in illo est, quod uoluit, effecit.

[33] Beneficium mihi dedit, accepi non aliter, quam ipse accipi uoluit: iam habet, quod petit, et quod unum petit, ergo gratus sum. Post hoc usus mei restat et aliquod ex homine grato commodum; hoc non imperfecti officii reliqua pars est, sed perfecti accessio. Facit Phidias statuam; alius est fructus artis, alius artificii: artis est fecisse, quod uoluit, artificii fecisse cum fructu; perfecit opus suum Phidias, etiam si non uendidit. Triplex illi fructus est operis sui: unus conscientiae; hunc absoluto opere percipit; alter famae; tertius utilitatis, quem adlatura est aut gratia aut uenditio aut aliqua commoditas. Sic beneficii fructus primus ille est conscientiae: hunc percipit, qui, quo uoluit, munus suum pertulit; secundus <et tertius> est et famae et eorum, quae praestari in uicem possunt. Itaque cum benigne acceptum est beneficium, qui dedit, gratiam quidem iam recepit, mercedem nondum; debeo itaque, quod extra beneficium est, ipsum quidem bene accipiendo persolui.

[34] 'Quid ergo?' inquit 'rettulit gratiam, qui nihil fecit?' Primum fecit: bono animo bonum optulit et, quod est amicitiae, ex aequo. Post deinde aliter beneficium, aliter creditum soluitur; non est, quod expectes, ut solutionem tibi ostendam; res inter animos geritur. Quod dico, non uidebitur durum, quamuis primo contra opinionem tuam pugnet, si te commodaueris mihi et cogitaueris plures esse res quam uerba. Ingens copia est rerum sine nomine, quas non propriis

adpellationibus notamus, sed alienis commodatisque: pedem et nostrum dicimus et lecti et ueli et carminis, canem et uenaticum et marinum et sidus; quia non sufficimus, ut singulis singula adsignemus, quotiens opus est, mutuamur. Fortitudo est uirtus pericula iusta contemnens aut scientia periculorum repellendorum, excipiendorum, prouocandorum; dicimus tamen et gladiatorem fortem uirum et seruum nequam, quem in contemptum mortis temeritas inpulit. Parsimonia est scientia uitandi sumptus superuacuos aut ars re familiari moderate utendi; parcissimum tamen hominem uocamus pusilli animi et contracti, cum infinitum intersit inter modum et angustias. Haec alia sunt natura, sed efficit inopia sermonis, ut et hunc et illum parcum uocemus, ut et ille fortis dicatur cum ratione fortuita despiciens et hic sine ratione in pericula excurrens. Sic beneficium est et actio, ut diximus, benefica et ipsum, quod datur per illam actionem, ut pecunia, ut domus, ut praetexta; unum utrique nomen est, uis quidem ac potestas longe alia.

[35] Itaque adtende, iam intellegis nihil me, quod opinio tua refugiat, dicere: illi beneficio, quod actio perficit, relata gratia est, si illud beneuole excipimus; illud alterum, quod re continetur, nondum reddidimus, sed uolumus reddere. Voluntati uoluntate satis fecimus, rei rem debemus. Itaque, quamuis rettulisse illum gratiam dicamus, qui beneficium libenter accipit, iubemus tamen et simile aliquid ei, quod accepit, reddere. A consuetudine quaedam, quae dicimus, abhorrent, deinde alia uia ad consuetudinem redeunt: negamus iniuriam accipere sapientem, tamen, qui illum pugno percusserit, iniuriarum damnabitur; negamus stulti quidquam esse, et tamen eum, qui rem aliquam stulto subripuit, furti condemnabimus; insanire omnes dicimus, nec omnes curamus elleboro; his ipsis, quos uocamus insanos, et suffragium et iuris dictionem committimus. Sic dicimus eum, qui beneficium bono animo accipit, gratiam rettulisse, nihilo minus illum in aere alieno relinquimus gratiam relaturum, etiam cum rettulit. Exhortatio est illa, non infitatio <beneficii, ne> beneficia timeamus, ne ut intolerabili sarcina pressi deficiamus animo. 'Bona mihi donata sunt et fama defensa, detractae sordes, spiritus <seruatus> et libertas spiritu potior: et quomodo referre gratiam potero? quando ille ueniet dies, quo illi animum meum ostendam?' Hic ipse est, quo ille suum ostendit. Excipe beneficium,

amplexare, gaude, non quod accipias, sed quod reddas debiturusque sis; non adibis tam magnae rei periculum, ut casus ingratum facere te possit. Nullas tibi proponam difficultates, ne despondeas animum, ne laborum ac longae seruitutis expectatione deficias; non differo te, de praesentibus fiat. Numquam eris gratus, nisi statim es. Quid ergo facies? non arma sumenda sunt: fortasse erunt; non maria emetienda: fortasse etiam uentis minantibus solues. Vis reddere beneficium? benigne accipe; rettulisti gratiam, non ut soluisse te putes, sed ut securior debeas.

LIBER III

[1] Non referre beneficiis gratiam et est turpe et apud omnes habetur, Aebuti Liberalis; ideo de ingratis etiam ingrati queruntur, cum interim hoc omnibus haeret, quod omnibus displicet, adeoque in contrarium itur, ut quosdam habeamus infestissimos non post beneficia tantum sed propter beneficia. Hoc prauitate naturae accidere quibusdam non negauerim, pluribus, quia memoriam tempus interpositum subducit. Nam quae recentia apud illos uiguerunt, ea interiecto spatio obsolescunt; de quibus fuisse mihi tecum disputationem scio, cum tu illos non ingratos uocares sed oblitos, tamquam ea res ingratum excuset, quae facit, aut, quia hoc accidit alicui, non sit ingratus, cum hoc non accadat nisi ingrato. Multa sunt genera ingratorum, ut furum, ut homicidarum, quorum una culpa est, ceterum in partibus uarietas magna; ingratus <est,> qui beneficium accepisse se negat, quod accepit, ingratus est, qui dissimulat, ingratus, qui non reddit, ingratus omnium, qui oblitus est. Illi enim si non soluunt, tamen debent, et extat apud illos uestigium certe meritorum intra malam conscientiam inclusorum; aliquando ad referendam gratiam conuerti ex aliqua causa possunt, si illos pudor admonuerit, si subita honestae rei cupiditas, qualis solet ad tempus etiam in malis pectoribus exurgere, si inuitauerit facilis occasio; hic numquam fieri gratus potest, cui beneficium totum elapsum est. Et utrum tu peiorem uocas, apud quem gratia beneficii intercidit, an apud quem etiam memoria? Vitiosi oculi sunt, qui lucem reformidant, caeci, qui non uident; et parentes suos non amare impietas est, non agnoscere insania.

[2] Quis tam ingratus est, quam qui, quod in prima parte animi positum esse debuit et semper occurrere, ita seposuit et abiecit, ut in ignorantiam uerteret? adparet illum non saepe de reddendo cogitasse, cui obrepsit obliuio. Denique ad reddendam gratiam et uirtute opus est et tempore et facultate et adspirante fortuna; qui meminit, sine inpendio gratus est. Hoc, quod non operam exigit, non opes, non felicitatem, qui non praestat, nullum habet, quo lateat, patrocinium; numquam enim uoluit gratus esse, qui beneficium tam longe proiecit, ut extra conspectum suum poneret. Quemadmodum, quae in usu sunt

et manum cottidie tactumque patiuntur, numquam periculum situs adeunt, illa, quae ad oculos non reuocantur, sed extra conuersationem ut superuacua iacuerunt, sordes ipsa colligunt uetustate, ita, quidquid frequens cogitatio exercet ac renouat, memoriae numquam subducitur, quae nihil perdit, nisi ad quod non saepe respexit.

[3] Praeter hanc causam aliae quoque sunt, quae nobis merita non numquam maxima euellant. Prima omnium ac potentissima, quod nouis semper cupiditatibus occupati non, quid habeamus, sed quid petamus, <spectamus;> in id, quod adpetitur, intentis, quidquid est domi, uile est. Sequitur autem, ut, ubi quod acceperis leue nouorum cupiditas fecit, auctor quoque eorum non sit in pretio. Amauimus aliquem et suspeximus et fundatum ab illo statum nostrum professi sumus, quamdiu nobis placebant ea, quae consecuti sumus; deinde inrumpit animum aliorum admiratio, et ad ea inpetus factus est, uti mortalibus mos est ex magnis maiora cupiendi: protinus excidit, quidquid ante apud nos beneficium uocabatur, nec ea intuemur, quae nos aliis praeposuerunt, sed ea sola, quae fortuna praecedentium ostendat. Non potest autem quisquam et inuidere et gratias agere, quia inuidere querentis et maesti est, gratias agere gaudentis. Deinde quia nemo nostrum nouit nisi id tempus, quod cum maxime transit, ad praeterita rari animum retorquent; sic fit, ut praeceptores eorumque beneficia intercidant, quia totam pueritiam reliquimus; sic fit, ut in adulescentiam nostram conlata pereant, quia ipsa numquam retractatur. Nemo, quod fuit, tamquam in praeterito sed tamquam in perditio ponit, ideoque caduca memoria est futuro inminentium.

[4] Hoc loco reddendum est Epicuro testimonium, qui adsidue queritur, quod aduersus praeterita simus ingrati, quod, quaecumque percipimus bona, non reducamus nec inter uoluptates numeremus, cum certior nulla sit uoluptas, quam quae iam eripi non potest. Praesentia bona nondum tota in solido sunt, potest illa casus aliquis incidere; futura pendent et incerta sunt; quod praeteriit, inter tuta sepositum est. Quomodo gratus esse quisquam aduersus beneficia potest, qui omnem uitam suam transilit praesentium totus ac futurorum? Memoria gratum facit; memoriae minimum tribuit, quisquis spei plurimum.

[5] Quemadmodum, mi Liberalis, quaedam res semel perceptae haerent, quaedam, ut scias, non est satis didicisse (intercidit enim

eorum scientia, nisi continuetur), geometriam dico et sublimium cursum et si qua alia propter suptilitatem lubrica sunt, ita beneficia quaedam magnitudo non patitur excidere, quaedam minora sed numero plurima et temporibus diuersa effluunt, quia, ut dixi, non subinde illa tractamus nec libenter, quid cuique debeamus, recognoscimus. Audi uoces petentium: nemo non uicturam semper in animo suo memoriam dixit, nemo non deditum se et deuotum professus est, et si quod aliud humiliter uerbum, quo se obpigneraret, inuenit. Post exiguum tempus idem illi uerba priora quasi sordida et parum libera euitant; perueniunt deinde eo, quo, ut ego existimo, pessimus quisque atque ingratissimus peruenit, ut obliuiscantur. Adeo enim ingratus est, qui oblitus est, ut ingratus sit, cui beneficium in mentem uenit.

[6] Hoc tam inuisum uitium an inpunitum esse debeat, quaeritur, et an haec lex, quae in scholis exercetur, etiam in ciuitate ponenda sit, qua ingrati datur actio; quae uidetur aequa omnibus. ‘Quidni? cum urbes quoque urbibus, quae praestitere, exprobrent et <in> maiores conlata a posteris exigant.’ Nostri maiores, maximi scilicet uiri, ab hostibus tantum res repetierunt, beneficia magno animo dabant, magno perdebant; excepta Macedonum gente non est in ulla data aduersus ingratum actio. Magnumque hoc argumentum est dandam non fuisse, quia aduersus maleficio omne consensimus, et homicidii, ueneficii, parricidii, uiolatarum religionum aliubi atque aliubi diuersa poena est, sed ubique aliqua, hoc frequentissimum crimen nusquam punitur, ubique inprobatur; neque absoluimus illud, sed cum difficilis esset incertae rei aestimatio, tantum odio damnauimus et inter ea reliquimus, quae ad iudices deos mittimus.

[7] Rationes autem multae mihi occurrunt, propter quas crimen hoc in legem cadere non debeat. Primum omnium pars optima beneficii periit, si actio sicut certae pecuniae aut ex conducto et locato datur. Hoc enim in illo speciosissimum est, quod dedimus uel perdituri, quod totum permisimus accipientium arbitrio; si adpello, si ad iudicem uoco, incipit non beneficium esse, sed creditum. Deinde cum res honestissima sit referre gratiam, desinit esse honesta, si necessaria est; non magis enim laudabit quisquam gratum hominem, quam eum, qui depositum reddidit aut, quod debebat, citra iudicem soluit. Ita duas res, quibus in uita humana nihil pulchrius est,

corrumpimus, gratum hominem et beneficium; quid enim aut in hoc magnificum est, si beneficium non dat, sed commodat, aut in illo, qui reddit, non quia uult, sed quia necesse est? Non est gloriosa res gratum esse, nisi tutum est ingratum fuisse. Adice nunc, quod huic uni legi omnia fora uix sufficient. Quis erit, qui non agat? quis, cum quo non agatur? omnes sua extollunt, omnes etiam minima, quae in alios contulere, dilatant. Praeterea, quaecumque in cognitionem cadunt, conprendi possunt et non dare infinitam licentiam iudici; ideo melior uidetur condicio causae bonae, si ad iudicem quam si ad arbitrum mittitur, quia illum formula includit et certos, quos non excedat, terminos ponit, huius libera et nullis adstricta uinculis religio et detrahare aliquid potest et adicere et sententiam suam, non prout lex aut iustitia suadet, sed prout humanitas aut misericordia inpulit, regere. Ingrati actio non erat iudicem adligatura sed <in> regno liberrimo positura. Quid sit enim beneficium, non constat, deinde, quantum sit; refert, quam benigne illud interpretetur iudex. Quid sit ingratus, nulla lex monstrat; saepe et qui reddidit, quod accepit, ingratus est, et qui non reddidit, gratus. De quibusdam et inperitus iudex demittere tabellam potest, ubi fecisse aut non fecisse pronuntiandum est, ubi prolatis cautionibus controuersia tollitur, ubi inter disputantes ratio ius dicit; ubi uero animi coniectura capienda est, ubi id, de quo sola sapientia decernit, in controuersiam incidit, non potest sumi ad haec iudex ex turba selectorum, quem census in album et equestris hereditas misit.

[8] Itaque non haec parum idonea res uisa est, quae deduceretur ad iudicem, sed nemo huic rei satis idoneus iudex inuentus est; quod non admiraberis, si excusseris, quid habiturus fuerit difficultatis, quisquis in eiusmodi reum exisset. Donauit aliquis magnam pecuniam, sed diues, sed non sensurus impendium; donauit alius, sed toto patrimonio cessurus; summa eadem est, beneficium idem non est. Etiamnunc adice: hic pecuniam pro addicto dependit, sed cum illam domo protulisset; ille dedit eandem, sed mutuam sumpsit aut rogauit et se obligari ingenti merito passus est; eodem existimas loco esse illum, qui beneficium ex facili largitus est, et hunc, qui accepit, ut daret? Tempore quaedam magna fiunt, non summa: beneficium est donata possessio, cuius fertilitas laxare possit annonam, beneficium est unus in fame panis; beneficium est donare regiones, per quas

magna flumina et nauigabilia decurrant, beneficium est arentibus siti et uix spiritum per siccas fauces ducentibus monstrare fontem. Quis inter se ista comparabit? quis expendet? Difficilis est sententia, quae non rem, sed uim rei quaerit; eadem licet sint, aliter data non idem pendent. Dedit hic mihi beneficium, sed non libenter, sed dedisse se questus est, sed superbius me, quam solebat, adspexit, sed tam tarde dedit, ut plus praestaturus fuerit, si cito negasset: horum quomodo iudex inibit aestimationem, cum sermo et dubitatio et uultus meriti gratiam destruant?

[9] Quid, quod quaedam beneficia uocantur, quia nimis concupiscuntur, quaedam non sunt ex hac uolgari nota sed maiora, etiam si minus adparent? Beneficium uocas dedisse potentis populi ciuitatem, in quatuordecim deduxisse et defendisse capitis reum; quid utilia suasisse? quid retinuisse, ne in scelus rueret? quid gladium excussisse morituro? quid efficacibus remediis lugentem et, quos desiderabat, uolentem sequi ad uitae consilium reduxisse? quid adsedisse aegro et, cum ualetudo eius ac salus momentis constaret, excepisse idonea cibo tempora et cadentes uenas uino refecisse et medicum adduxisse morienti? Haec quis aestimabit? quis dissimilibus beneficiis iubebit beneficia pensari? ‘Donauit tibi domum’; sed ego tuam supra te ruere praedixi. ‘Dedi tibi patrimonium’; sed ego naufrago tabulam. ‘Pugnaui pro te et uolnera excepi’; at ego uitam tibi silentio dedi. Cum aliter beneficium detur, aliter reddatur, paria facere difficile est.

[10] Dies praeterea beneficio reddendo non dicitur, sicut pecuniae creditae; itaque potest, qui nondum reddidit, reddere. Dic enim, intra quod tempus deprendatur ingratus. Maxima beneficia probationem non habent, saepe intra tacitam duorum conscientiam latent; an hoc inducimus, ut non demus beneficia sine teste? Quam deinde poenam ingratum constituimus? unam omnibus, cum disparia sint? inaequalem et pro cuiusque beneficio maiorem, minorem? Age, intra pecuniam uersabitur taxatio: quid, quod quaedam uitae beneficia sunt et maiora uita? His quae pronuntiabitur poena? minor beneficio? iniqua est; par et capitalis? quid inhumanius quam cruentos esse beneficiorum exitus?

[11] ‘Quaedam’ inquit ‘priuilegia parentibus data sunt; quomodo horum extra ordinem habita ratio est, sic aliorum quoque

beneficorum haberi debet.’ Parentium condicionem sacrauimus, quia expediebat liberos tolli; sollicitandi ad hunc laborem erant incertam adituri fortunam. Non poterat illis dici, quod beneficia dantibus dicitur: ‘Cui des, elige; ipse tecum, si deceptus es, querere; dignum adiua.’ In liberis tollendis nihil iudicio tollentium licet, tota res uoti est; itaque, ut aequiore animo adirent aleam, danda aliqua illis potestas fuit. Deinde alia condicio parentum est, qui beneficia, quibus dederunt, dant nihilo minus daturique sunt, nec est periculum, ne dedisse ipsos mentiantur; in ceteris quaeri debet, non tantum an receperint, sed an dederint, horum in confesso merita sunt, et, quia utile est iuuentuti regi, inposuimus illi quasi domesticos magistratus, sub quorum custodia contineretur. Deinde omnium parentum unum erat beneficium, itaque aestimari semel potuit; alia diuersa sunt, dissimilia, infinitis inter se interuallis distantia; itaque sub nullam regulam cadere potuerunt, cum aequius esset omnia relinqui quam omnia aequari.

[12] Quaedam magno dantibus constant, quaedam accipientibus magna sunt, sed gratuita tribuentibus. Quaedam amicis data sunt, quaedam ignotis; plus est, quamuis idem detur, si ei datur, quem nosse a beneficio tuo incipis. Hic auxilia tribuit, ille ornamenta, ille solacia. Inuenies, qui nihil putet esse iocundius, nihil maius quam habere, in quo calamitas adquiescat; inuenies rursus, qui dignitati suae, quam securitati consuli malit; est, qui plus ei debere se iudicet, per quem tutior est, quam ei, per quem honestior. Proinde ista maiora aut minora erunt, prout fuerit iudex aut huc aut illo inclinatus animo. Praeterea creditorem mihi ipse eligo, beneficium saepe ab eo accipio, a quo nolo, et aliquando ignorans obligor: quid facies? ingratum uocabis eum, cui beneficium inscio et, si scisset, non accepturo inpositum est? non uocabis eum, qui utcumque acceptum non reddidit? Aliquis dedit mihi beneficium, sed idem postea fecit iniuriam: utrum uno munere ad patientiam iniuriarum omnium adstringor, an proinde erit, ac si gratiam rettulerim, quia beneficium suum ipse insequenti iniuria rescidit? Quomodo deinde aestimabis, utrum plus sit, quod accepit, an quo laesus est? Dies me deficiet omnes difficultates persequi temptantem.

[13] ‘Tardiores’ inquit ‘ad beneficia danda facimus non uindicando data nec infitiatores eorum adficiendo poena.’ Sed illud quoque tibi e

contrario occurrat multo tardiores futuros ad accipienda beneficia, si periculum causae dicundae adituri erunt et innocentiam sollicitiore habituri loco. Deinde erimus per hoc ipsi quoque ad danda tardiores; nemo enim libenter dat inuitis, sed quicumque ad bene faciendum bonitate inuitatus est et ipsa pulchritudine rei, etiam libentius dabit nihil debitoris nisi quod uolent. Minuitur enim gloria eius officii, cui diligenter cautum est.

[14] Deinde pauciora erunt beneficia, sed ueriora; quid autem mali est inhiberi beneficiorum temeritatem? Hoc enim ipsum secuti sunt, qui nullam legem huic constituerunt, ut circumspectius donaremus, circumspectius eligeremus eos, in quos merita conferuntur. Etiam atque etiam, cui des, considera: nulla actio erit, nulla repetitio. Erras, si existimas succursurum tibi iudicem; nulla lex te in integrum restituet, solam accipientis fidem specta. Hoc modo beneficia auctoritatem suam tenent et magnifica sunt; pollues illa, si materiam litium feceris. Aequissima uox est et ius gentium prae se ferens: ‘Redde, quod debes’; haec turpissima est in beneficio: ‘Redde!’ Quid? reddet uitam, quam debet? dignitatem? securitatem? sanitatem? Reddi maxima quaeque non possunt. ‘At pro iis’ inquit ‘aliquid, quod tanti sit.’ Hoc est, quod dicebam, interituram tantae rei dignitatem, si beneficium mercem facimus. Non est inritandus animus ad auaritiam, ad querellas, ad discordiam; sua sponte in ista fertur. Quantum possumus, resistamus et quaerenti occasiones amputemus.

[15] Utinam quidem persuadere possemus, ut pecunias creditas tantum a uolentibus acciperent! utinam nulla stipulatio emptorem uenditori obligaret nec pacta conuentaque inpressis signis custodirentur, fides potius illa seruaret et aecum colens animus! Sed necessaria optimis praetulerunt et cogere fidem quam expectare malunt. Adhibentur ab utraque parte testes; ille per tabulas plurium nomina interpositis parariis facit; ille non est interrogatione contentus, nisi reum manu sua tenuit. O turpem humani generis fraudis ac nequitiae publicae confessionem! anulis nostris plus quam animis creditur. In quid isti ornati uiri adhibiti sunt? in quid inprimunt signa? nempe ne ille neget accepisse se, quod accepit. Hos incorruptos uiros et uindices ueritatis existimas? at his ipsis non aliter statim pecuniae committentur. Ita non honestius erat a quibusdam

fidem falli, quam ab omnibus perfidiam timeri? Hoc unum deest auaritiae, ut beneficia sine sponsore non demus. Generosi animi est et magnifici iuuare, prodesse; qui dat beneficia, deos imitatur, qui repetit, feneratores. Quid illos, dum uindicamus, in turbam sordidissimam redigimus?

[16] ‘Plures’ inquit ‘ingrati erunt, si nulla aduersus ingratum datur actio.’ Immo pauciores, quia maiore dilectu dabuntur beneficia. Deinde non expedit notum omnibus fieri, quam multi ingrati sint; pudorem enim rei tollet multitudo peccantium, et desinet esse probri loco commune maledictum. Numquid iam ulla repudio erubescit, postquam inlustres quaedam ac nobiles feminae non consulum numero sed maritorum annos suos computant et exeunt matrimonii causa, nubunt repudii? Tamdiu istuc timebatur, quamdiu rarum erat; quia nulla sine diuortio acta sunt, quod saepe audiebant, facere didicerunt. Numquid iam ullus adulterii pudor est, postquam eo uentum est, ut nulla uirum habeat, nisi ut adulterum inritet? Argumentum est deformitatis pudicitia. Quam inuenies tam miseram, tam sordidam, ut illi satis sit unum adulterorum par, nisi singulis diuisit horas? et non sufficit dies omnibus, nisi apud alium gestata est, apud alium mansit. Infrunita et antiqua est, quae nesciat matrimonium uocari unum adulterium. Quemadmodum horum delictorum iam euauit pudor, postquam res latius euagata est, ita ingratos plures efficies et audiores, si numerare se coeperint.

[17] ‘Quid ergo? inpunitus erit ingratus?’ Quid ergo, inpunitus erit inpius? quid malignus? quid auarus? quid inpotens? quid crudelis? Inpunita tu credis esse, quae inuisa sunt, aut ullum supplicium grauius existimas publico odio? Poena est, quod non audet ab ullo beneficium accipere, quod non audet ulli dare, quod omnium designatur oculis aut designari se iudicat, quod intellectum rei optimae ac dulcissimae amisit. An tu infelicem uocas, qui caruit acie, cuius aures morbus obstruxit, non uocas miserum eum, qui sensum beneficiorum amisit? Testes ingratorum omnium deos metuit, urit illum et angit intercepti beneficii conscientia; denique satis haec ipsa poena magna est, quod rei, ut dicebam, iocundissimae fructum non percipit. At quem iuuat acceperisse, aequali perpetuaque uoluptate fruitur et animum eius, a quo accepit, non rem intuens gaudet. Gratum hominem semper beneficium delectat, ingratum semel.

Comparari autem potest utriusque uita, cum alter tristis sit et sollicitus, qualis esse infitiator ac fraudulentus solet, apud quem non parentium, qui debet, honor est, non educatoris, non praeceptorum, alter laetus, hilaris, occasionem referendae gratiae expectans et ex hoc ipso adfectu gaudium grande percipiens nec quaerens, quomodo decoquat, sed quemadmodum plenius uberiusque respondeat non solum parentibus et amicis, sed humilioribus quoque personis? Nam etiam si a seruo suo beneficium accepit, aestimat, non a quo, sed quid acceperit.

[18] Quamquam quaeritur a quibusdam, sicut ab Hecatone, an beneficium dare seruus domino possit. Sunt enim, qui ita distinguant, quaedam beneficia esse, quaedam officia, quaedam ministeria; beneficium esse, quod alienus det (alienus est, qui potuit sine reprehensione cessare); officium esse filii, uxoris, earum personarum, quas necessitudo suscitatur et ferre opem iubet; ministerium esse serui, quem condicio sua eo loco posuit, ut nihil eorum, quae praestat, inputet superiori. [Lacuna?] Praeterea seruus qui negat dare aliquando domino beneficium, ignarus est iuris humani; refert enim, cuius animi sit, qui praestat, non cuius status. Nulli praeclusa uirtus est; omnibus patet, omnes admittit, omnes inuitat, et ingenuos et libertinos et seruos et reges et exules; non eligit domum nec censum, nudo homine contenta est. Quid enim erat tuti aduersus repentina, quid animus magnum promitteret sibi, si certam uirtutem fortuna amitteret? Si non dat beneficium seruus domino, nec regi quisquam suo nec duci suo miles; quid enim interest, quali quis teneatur imperio, si summo tenetur? Nam si seruo, quo minus in nomen meriti perueniat, necessitas obstat et patiendi ultima timor, idem istuc obstat et ei, qui regem habet, et ei, qui ducem, quoniam sub dispari titulo paria in illos licent. Atqui dant regibus suis, dant imperatoribus beneficia: ergo et dominis. Potest seruus iustus esse, potest fortis, potest magni animi: ergo et beneficium dare potest; nam et hoc uirtutis est. Adeo quidem dominis serui beneficia possunt dare, ut ipsos saepe beneficii sui fecerint.

[19] Non est dubium, quin seruus beneficium dare possit cuilibet; quare ergo non et domino suo possit? 'Quia non potest' inquit 'creditor domini sui fieri, si pecuniam illi dederit. Alioqui cottidie dominum suum obligat: peregrinantem sequitur, aegro ministrat, rus

eius labore summo colit; omnia tamen ista, quae alio praestante beneficia dicerentur, praestante seruo ministeria sunt. Beneficium enim id est, quod quis dedit, cum illi liceret et non dare; seruus autem non habet negandi potestatem; ita non praestat, sed paret, nec id se fecisse iactat, quod non facere non potuit.' Iam sub ista ipsa lege uincam et eo perducam seruum, ut in multa liber sit; interim dic mihi, si tibi ostendero aliquem pro salute domini sui sine respectu sui dimicantem et confossum uulneribus reliquias tamen sanguinis ab ipsis uitalibus fundentem et, ut ille effugiendi tempus habeat, moram sua morte quaerentem, hunc tu negabis beneficium dedisse, quia seruus est? Si tibi ostendero aliquem, ut secreta domini prodat, nulla tyranni pollicitatione corruptum, nullis territum minis, nullis cruciatibus uictum auertisse, quantum potuerit, suspiciones quaerentis et inpendisse spiritum fidei, hunc tu negabis beneficium domino dedisse, quia seruus est? Vide, ne eo maius sit, quo rarius est exemplum uirtutis in seruis, eoque gratius, quod, cum fere inuisa imperia sint et omnis necessitas grauis, commune seruitutis odium in aliquo domini caritas uicit. Ita non ideo beneficium non est, quia a seruo profectum est, sed ideo maius, quia detertere ab illo ne seruitus quidem potuit.

[20] Errat, si quis existimat seruitutem in totum hominem descendere. Pars melior eius excepta est: corpora obnoxia sunt et adscripta dominis, mens quidem sui iuris, quae adeo libera et uaga est, ut ne ab hoc quidem carcere, cui inclusa est, teneri queat, quo minus inpetu suo utatur et ingentia agat et in infinitum comes caelestibus exeat. Corpus itaque est, quod domino fortuna tradidit; hoc emit, hoc uendit; interior illa pars mancipio dari non potest. Ab hac quidquid uenit, liberum est; nec enim aut nos omnia iubere possumus aut in omnia serui parere coguntur: contra rem publicam imperata non facient, nulli sceleri manus commodabunt.

[21] Quaedam sunt, quae leges nec iubent nec uetant facere; in iis seruus materiam beneficii habet. Quam diu praestatur, quod a seruo exigere solet, ministerium est; ubi plus, quam quod seruo necesse est, beneficium est; ubi in adfectum amici transit, desinit uocari ministerium. Est aliquid, quod dominus praestare seruo debeat, ut cibaria, ut uestiarius; nemo hoc dixit beneficium; at indulsit, liberalius educauit, artes, quibus erudiuntur ingenui, tradidit:

beneficium est. Idem e contrario fit in persona serui: quidquid est, quod seruili officii formulam excedit, quod non ex imperio, sed ex uoluntate praestatur, beneficium est, si modo tantum est, ut hoc uocari potuerit quolibet alio praestante.

[22] Seruus, ut placet Chrysippo, perpetuus mercennarius est. Quemadmodum ille beneficium dat, ubi plus praestat, quam <in> quod operas locauit, sic seruus, ubi beneuolentia erga dominum fortunae suae modum transit et altius aliquid ausus, quod etiam felicius natis decori esset, spem domini antecessit, beneficium est intra domum inuentum. An aecum uidetur tibi, quibus, si minus debito faciant, irascimur, non haberi gratiam, si plus debito solitoque fecerint? Vis scire, quando non sit beneficium? ubi dici potest: 'Quid, si nolle?' Vbi uero id praestitit, quod nolle licuit, uoluisse laudandum est. Inter se contraria sunt beneficium et iniuria; potest dare beneficium domino, si a domino iniuriam accipere. Atqui de iniuriis dominorum in seruos qui audiat positus est, qui et saeuitiam et libidinem et in praebendis ad uictum necessariis auaritiam conpescat. Quid ergo? beneficium dominus a seruo accipit? immo homo ab homine. Denique, quod in illius potestate fuit, fecit: beneficium domino dedit; ne a seruo acceperis, in tua potestate est. Quis autem tantus est, quem non fortuna indigere etiam infimis cogat?

[23] Multa iam beneficiorum exempla referam et dissimilia et quaedam inter se contraria. Dedit aliquis domino suo uitam, dedit mortem, seruauit peritum et, hoc si parum est, pereundo seruauit; alius mortem domini adiuuit, alius decepit. Claudius Quadrigarius in duodeuicensimo annalium tradit, cum obsideretur Grumentum et iam ad summam desperationem uentum esset, duos seruos ad hostem transfugisse et operae pretium fecisse. Deinde urbe capta passim discurrente uictore illos per nota itinera ad domum, in qua seruierant, praecucurrisse et dominam suam ante egissee; quaerentibus, quaenam esset, dominam et quidem crudelissimam ad supplicium ab ipsis duci professos esse. Eductam deinde extra muros summa cura celasse, donec hostilis ira consideret; deinde, ut satius miles cito ad Romanos mores rediit, illos quoque ad suos redisse et dominam sibi ipsos dedisse. Manu misit utrumque e uestigio illa nec indignata est ab his se uitam accepisse, in quos uitae necisque potestatem

habuisset. Potuit sibi hoc uel magis gratulari; aliter enim seruata munus notae et uolgaris clementiae habuisset, sic seruata nobilis fabula et exemplum duarum urbium fuit. In tanta confusione captae ciuitatis cum sibi quisque consuleret, omnes ab illa praeter transfugas fugerunt; at hi, ut ostenderent, quo animo facta esset prior illa transitio, a uictoribus ad captiuam transfugerunt personam parricidarum ferentes; quod in illo beneficio maximum fuit, tanti iudicauerunt, ne domina occideretur, uideri dominam occidisse. Non est, mihi crede, condicio seruilis animi egregium factum fama sceleris emisse.

Vettius, praetor Marsorum, ducebatur ad Romanum imperatorem; seruus eius gladium militi illi ipsi, a quo trahebatur, eduxit et primum dominum occidit, deinde: 'Tempus est' inquit 'me et mihi consulere! iam dominum manu misi', atque ita traiecit se uno ictu. Da mihi quemquam, qui magnificentius dominum seruauerit.

[24] Corfinium Caesar obsidebat, tenebatur inclusus Domitius; imperauit medico eidemque seruo suo, ut sibi uenenum daret. Cum tergiuersantem uideret: 'Quid cunctaris' inquit, 'tamquam in tua potestate totum istud sit? mortem rogo armatus.' Tum ille promisit et medicamentum innoxium bibendum illi dedit; quo cum sopitus esset, accessit ad filium eius et: 'Iube' inquit 'me adseruari, dum ex euentu intellegas, an uenenum patri tuo dederim.' Vixit Domitius et seruatus a Caesare est; prior tamen illum seruus seruauerat.

[25] Bello ciuili proscriptum dominum seruus abscondit et, cum anulos eius sibi aptasset ac uestem induisset, speculatoribus occurrit nihilque se deprecari, quo minus imperata peragerent, dixit et deinde ceruicem porrexit. Quanti uiri est pro domino eo tempore mori uelle, quo rara erat fides dominum mori nolle! in publica crudelitate mitem inueniri, in publica perfidia fidelem! cum praemia prodicionis ingentia ostendantur, praemium fidei mortem concupiscere!

[26] Nostri saeculi exempla non praeteribo. Sub Tib. Caesare fuit accusandi frequens et paene publica rabies, quae omni ciuili bello grauius togatam ciuitatem confecit; excipiebatur ebriorum sermo, simplicitas iocantium; nihil erat tutum; omnis saeuiendi placebat occasio, nec iam reorum expectabantur euentus, cum esset unus. Cenabat Paulus praetorius in conuiuio quodam imaginem Tib. Caesaris habens ectypa et eminente gemma. Rem ineptissimam

fecero, si nunc uerba quaesiero, quemadmodum dicam illum matellam sumpsisse; quod factum simul et Maro ex notis illius temporis uestigatoribus notauit et seruus eius, quoi nectebantur insidiae, ei ebrio anulum extraxit. Et cum Maro conuiuas testaretur admotam esse imaginem obscenis et iam subscriptionem conponeret, ostendit in manu sua seruus anulum. Si quis hunc seruum uocat, et illum conuiuiam uocabit.

[27] Sub diuo Augusto nondum hominibus uerba sua periculosa erant, iam molesta. Rufus, uir ordinis senatorii, inter cenam optauerat, ne Caesar saluus rediret ex ea peregrinatione, quam parabat; et adiecerat idem omnes et tauros et uitulos optare. Fuerunt, qui illa diligenter audirent. Vt primum diluxit, seruus, qui cenanti ad pedes steterat, narrat, quae inter cenam ebrius dixisset, et hortatur, ut Caesarem occupet atque ipse se deferat. Vsus consilio descendenti Caesari occurrit et, cum malam mentem habuisse se pridie iurasset, id ut in se et in filios suos recideret, optauit et Caesarem, ut ignosceret sibi rediretque in gratiam secum, rogauit. Cum dixisset se Caesar facere: ‘Nemo’ inquit ‘credet te mecum in gratiam redisse, nisi aliquid mihi donaueris’, petitque non fastidiendam etiam a propitio summam et inpetrauit. Caesar ait: ‘Mea causa dabo operam, ne umquam tibi irascar.’ Honestè fecit Caesar, quod ignouit, quod liberalitatem clementiae adiecit; quicumque hoc audierit exemplum, necesse est Caesarem laudet, sed cum seruum ante laudauerit. Non expectas, ut tibi narrem manu missum, qui hoc fecerat; nec tamen gratis: pecuniam pro libertate eius Caesar numerauerat.

[28] Post tot exempla num dubium est, quin beneficium aliquando a seruo dominus accipiat? Quare potius persona rem minuat, quam personam res ipsa cohonestet? Eadem omnibus principia eademque origo; nemo altero nobilior, nisi cui rectius ingenium et artibus bonis aptius. Qui imagines in atrio exponunt et nomina familiae suae longo ordine ac multis stemmatum inligata flexuris in parte prima aedium conlocant, non noti magis quam nobiles sunt? Vnus omnium parens mundus est, siue per splendidos siue per sordidos gradus ad hunc prima cuiusque origo perducitur. Non est, quod te isti decipiant, qui, cum maiores suos recensent, ubicumque nomen inlustre <de>fecit, illo deum <in>fulciunt. Neminem despexeris, etiam si circa illum obsoleta sunt nomina et parum indulgente adiuta fortuna. Siue

libertini ante uos habentur siue serui siue exterarum gentium homines, erigite audacter animos et, quidquid in medio sordidi iacet, transilite; expectat uos in summo magna nobilitas. Quid superbia in tantam uanitatem adtollimur, ut beneficia a seruis indignemur accipere et sortem eorum spectemus obliti meritorum? Seruum tu quemquam uocas, libidinis et gulae seruus et adulterae, immo adulterarum commune mancipium? Seruum uocas quemquam tu? Quo tandem ab istis gerulis raperis cubile istud tuum circumferentibus? quo te penulati in militum quidem non uolgarem cultum subornati, quo, inquam, te isti efferunt? ad ostium alicuius ostiarii, ad hortos alicuius ne ordinarium quidem habentis officium; et deinde negas tibi a seruo tuo beneficium dari posse, cui osculum alieni serui beneficium est? Quae est tanta animi discordia? eodem tempore seruos despicias et colis, imperiosus intra limen atque inpotens, humilis foris et tam contemptus quam contemnens; neque enim ulli magis abiciunt animos, quam qui inprobe tollunt, nullique ad calcandos alios paratiores, quam qui contumelias facere accipiendo didicerunt.

[29] Dicenda haec fuerunt ad contundendam insolentiam hominum ex fortuna pendentium uindicandumque ius beneficii dandi seruis, ut filiis quoque uindicaretur. Quaeritur enim, an aliquando liberi maiora beneficia dare parentibus suis possint, quam acceperint. Illud conceditur multos filios maiores potentioresque extitisse quam parentes suos; aequae et illud meliores fuisse. Quod si constat, potest fieri, ut meliora tribuerint, cum et fortuna illis maior esset et melior uoluntas. ‘Quidquid’ inquit ‘est, quod det patri filius, utique minus est, quia hanc ipsam dandi facultatem patri debet. Ita numquam beneficio uincitur, cuius beneficium est ipsum, quod uincitur.’ Primum quaedam initium ab aliis trahunt et tamen initiis suis maiora sunt; nec ideo aliquid non est maius eo, quo coepit, quia non potuisset in tantum procedere, nisi coepisset. Nulla non res principia sua magno gradu transit. Semina omnium rerum causae sunt et tamen minimae partes sunt eorum, quae gignunt. Adspice Rhenum, adspice Euphraten, omnes denique inclutos amnes: quid sunt, si illos illic, unde effluunt, aestimes? quidquid est, quo timentur, quo nominantur, in processu parauerunt. Adspice trabes, siue proceritatem aestimes, altissimas, siue crassitudinem spatiumque ramorum, latissime fusas:

quantulum est his comparatum illud, quod radix tenui fibra conplectitur? Tolle radicem: nemora non surgent, nec tanti montes uestientur. Innituntur fundamentis suis templa excelsa urbis; tamen, quae in firmamentum totius operis iacta sunt, latent. Idem in ceteris euenit: principia sua semper sequens magnitudo obruet. Non potuissem quicquam consequi, nisi parentum beneficium antecessisset; sed non ideo, quidquid consecutus sum, minus est eo, sine quo consecutus non essem. Nisi me nutrix aluisset infantem, nihil eorum, quae consilio ac manu gero, facere potuissem nec in hanc emergere nominis claritatem, quam ciuili ac militari industria merui; numquid tamen ideo maximis operibus praeferes nutricis officium? Atqui quid interest, cum aequae sine patris beneficio quam sine nutricis non potuerim ad ulteriora procedere? Quod si initio meo, quidquid iam possum, debeo, cogita non esse initium mei patrem, ne auum quidem; semper enim erit ulterius aliquid, ex quo originis proximae origo descendat. Atqui nemo dicet me plus debere ignotis et ultra memoriam positis maioribus quam patri; plus autem debeo, si hoc ipsum, quod genuit me pater meus, maioribus debet.

[30] 'Quidquid praestiti patri, etiam si magnum est, infra aestimationem paterni muneris est, quia non esset, si non genuisset.' Isto modo etiam, si quis patrem meum aegrum ac moriturum sanauerit, nihil praestare ei potero, quod non beneficio eius minus sit; non enim genuisset me pater, nisi sanatus esset. Sed uide, ne illud uerius sit aestimari, an id, quod potui, et id, quod feci, meum sit, mearum uirium, meae uoluntatis. Illud, quod natus sum, per se intueri, quale sit: animaduertis exiguum et incertum et boni malique communem materiam, sine dubio primum ad omnia gradum, sed non ideo maiorem omnibus, quia primus est. Seruaui patrem meum et ad summam prouexi dignitatem et principem urbis suae feci nec tantum rebus a me gestis nobilitaui, sed ipsi quoque gerendarum ingentem ac facilem nec tutam minus quam gloriosam dedi materiam; honores, opes, quidquid humanos ad se animos rapit, congessi, et cum supra omnes starem, infra illum steti. Dic nunc: 'Hoc ipsum, quod ista potuisti, patris munus est'; respondebo tibi: 'Est prorsus, si ad ista facienda nasci satis est; sed si ad bene uiuendum minima portio est uiuere et id tribuisti, quod cum feris mihi et animalibus quibusdam minimis, quibusdam etiam foedissimis commune est, noli tibi

adserere, quod non ex tuis beneficiis, etiam <si non> sine tuis, oritur.'

[31] Puta me uitam pro uita reddidisse: sic quoque munus tuum uici, cum ego dederim sentienti, cum sentiens me dare, cum uitam tibi non uoluptatis meae causa aut certe per uoluptatem dederim, cum tanto maius sit retinere spiritum quam accipere, quanto leuius mori ante mortis metum. Ego uitam dedi statim illa usuro, tu nescituro, an uiueret; ego uitam dedi mortem timenti, tu uitam dedisti, ut mori possem; ego tibi uitam dedi consummatam, perfectam, tu me expertem rationis genuisti, onus alienum. Vis scire, quam non sit magnum beneficium uitam sic dare? exposuisses; nempe iniuria erat genuisse. Quo quid colligo? minimum esse beneficium patris matrisque concubitus, nisi accesserunt alia, quae prosequerentur hoc initium muneris et aliis officiis ratum facerent. Non est bonum uiuere, sed bene uiuere. At bene uiuo. Sed potui et male; ita hoc tantum est tuum, quod uiuo. Si uitam inputas mihi per se, nudam, egentem consilii, et id ut magnum bonum iactas, cogita te mihi inputare muscarum ac uermium bonum. Deinde, ut nihil aliud dicam, quam bonis artibus me studuisse et cursum ad rectum iter uitae derexisse, in ipso beneficio tuo maius, quam quod dederas, recepisti; tu enim me mihi rudem, inperitum dedisti, ego tibi filium, qualem genuisse gauderes.

[32] Aluit me pater. Si idem praesto, plus reddo, quia non tantum ali se, sed a filio ali gaudet et maiorem ex animo meo quam ex ipsa re percipit uoluptatem, illius alimenta ad corpus tantum meum peruenerunt. Quid? si quis in tantum processit, ut aut eloquentia per gentes notesceret aut iustitia aut bellicis rebus et patri quoque ingentem circumfunderet famam tenebrasque natalium suorum clara luce discuteret, non inaestimabile in parentes suos beneficium contulit? An quisquam Aristonem et Gryllum nisi propter Xenophontem ac Platonem filios nosset? Sophroniscum Socrates expirare non patitur. Ceteros enumerare longum est, qui durant ob nullam aliam causam, quam quod illos liberorum eximia uirtus tradidit posteris. Vtrum maius beneficium dedit M. Agrippae pater ne post Agrippam quidem notus, an patri dedit Agrippa nauali corona insignis, unicum adeptus inter dona militaria decus, qui tot in urbe maxima opera excitauit, quae et priorem magnificentiam uincerent et

nulla postea uincerentur? Vtrum Octavius maius beneficium dedit filio an patri diuus Augustus, quamuis illum umbra adoptiui patris abscondit? Quantam cepisset uoluptatem, si illum post debellata arma ciuilia uidisset securae paci praesidentem, non agnoscens bonum suum nec satis credens, quotiens ad se respexisset, potuisse illum uirum in domo sua nasci! Quid nunc ceteros persequar, quos iam consumpsisset obliuio, nisi illos filiorum gloria e tenebris eruisset et adhuc in luce retineret? Deinde, cum quaeramus, non quis filius patri maiora beneficia reddiderit, quam a patre acceperat, sed an aliquis possit maiora reddere, etiam si, quae rettuli, exempla nondum satis faciunt nec beneficia parentum suorum superiaciunt: capit tamen hoc natura, quod nondum ulla aetas tulit. Si singula paternorum meritorum magnitudinem exuperare non possunt, plura in unum congesta superabunt.

[33] Seruauit in proelio patrem Scipio et praetextatus in hostes eum concitauit. Parum est, quod, ut perueniret ad patrem, tot pericula maximos duces cum maxime prementia contempsit, tot obpositas difficultates, quod ad primam pugnam exiturus tiro per ueteranorum corpora cucurrit, quod annos suos transiluit? Adice, ut idem patrem reum defendat et conspirationi inimicorum potentium eripiat, ut alterum illi consulatum ac tertium aliosque honores etiam consularibus concupiscendos congerat, ut pauperi raptas belli iure opes tradat et, quod est militaribus uiris speciosissimum, diuitem illum spoliis etiam hostilibus faciat. Si adhuc parum est, adice, ut prouincias et extraordinaria imperia continuet, adice, ut dirutis maximis urbibus Romani imperii sine aemulo ad ortus occasusque uenturi defensor et conditor maiorem nobilitatem nobili uiro adiciat, dici Scipionis patrem: dubium est, quin generandi uulgare beneficium uicerit eximia pietas et uirtus ipsi urbi nescio utrum maius praesidium adferens an decus? Deinde, si hoc parum est, finge aliquem tormenta patris discussisse, finge in se transtulisse. Licet tibi, in quantum uelis, extendere beneficia filii, cum paternum munus et simplex sit et facile et danti uoluptarium, quod necesse est ille multis dederit, etiam quibus dedisse se nescit, in quo consortem habet, in quo spectauit legem, patriam, praemia patrum, domus ac familiae perpetuitatem, omnia potius quam eum, quo i dabat. Quid? si quis sapientiam consecutus hanc patri tradiderit, etiam nunc

disputabimus, an maius aliquid iam dederit, quam acceperat, cum uitam beatam patri reddiderit, acceperit tantum uitam?

[34] ‘Sed patris’ inquit ‘beneficium est, quidquid facis, quidquid praestare illi potes.’ Et praeceptoris mei, quod institutis liberalibus profeci; ipsos tamen, qui tradiderunt illa, transcendimus, utique eos, qui prima elementa docuerunt, et quamuis sine illis nemo quicquam adsequi posset, non tamen, quantumcumque quis adsecutus est, infra illos est. Multum inter prima ac maxima interest, nec ideo prima maximorum instar sunt, quia sine primis maxima esse non possunt.

[35] Iam tempus est quaedam ex nostra, ut ita dicam, moneta proferre. Qui id beneficium dedit, quo est aliquid melius, potest uinci. Pater dedit filio uitam, est autem aliquid uita melius: ita pater uinci potest, quia dedit beneficium, quo est aliquid melius. Etiamnunc, qui dedit alicui uitam, si et semel et iterum liberatus est mortis periculo, maius accepit beneficium quam dedit; pater autem uitam dedit: potest ergo, si saepius periculo mortis liberatus a filio fuerit, maius beneficium accipere quam dedit. Qui beneficium accipit, maius accipit, quo magis eo indiget; magis autem indiget uita, qui uiuit, quam qui natus non est, ut qui ne indigere quidem omnino possit: maius ergo beneficium accipit pater, si uitam a filio accipit, quam filius a patre, quod natus est. ‘Patris beneficia uinci a filii beneficiis non possunt. Quare? Quia uitam accepit a patre, quam nisi accepisset, nulla dare beneficia potuisset.’ Hoc commune est patri cum omnibus, qui uitam alicui dederunt; non potuissent enim referre gratiam, nisi uitam accepissent. Ergo nec medico gratia in maius referri potest (solet enim et medicus uitam dare), nec nautae, si naufragum sustulit. Atqui et horum et aliorum, qui aliquo modo nobis uitam dederunt, beneficia uinci possunt: ergo et patrum possunt. Si quis mihi beneficium dedit, quod multorum beneficiis adiuuandum esset, ego autem illi beneficium dedi id, quod nullius egeret adiutorio, maius dedi quam accepi; pater filio uitam dedit perituram, nisi multa accessissent, quae illam tuerentur; filius patri si dedit uitam, dedit eam, quae nullius desideraret auxilium in hoc, ut permaneret: ergo maius beneficium accepit a filio pater, qui uitam accepit, quam ipse illi dedit.

[36] Haec non destruunt parentium uenerationem nec deteriores illis liberos faciunt, immo etiam meliores; natura enim gloriosa uirtus

est et anteire priores cupit. Alacrior erit pietas, si ad reddenda beneficia cum uincendi spe uenerit. Ipsis patribus id uolentibus laetisque contigerit, quoniam pleraque sunt, in quibus nostro bono uincimur. Vnde certamen tam optabile? unde tantam felicitatem parentibus, ut fateantur ipsos liberorum beneficiis inpares? Nisi hoc ita iudicamus, excusationem damus liberis et illos segniores ad referendam gratiam facimus, quibus stimulos adicere debemus et dicere:

‘Hoc agite, optimi iuuenes! Proposita est inter parentes ac liberos honesta contentio, dederint maiora an receperint. Non ideo uicerunt, quia occupauerunt; sumite modo animum, qualem decet, et deficere nolite: uincetis optantes. Nec desunt tam pulchro certamini duces, qui ad similia uos cohortentur ac per uestigia sua ire ad uictoriam saepe iam partam ex parentibus iubeant.

[37] Vicit Aeneas patrem, ipse eius <in> infantia leue tutumque gestamen, grauem senio per media hostium agmina et per cadentis circa se urbis ruinas ferens, cum complexus sacra ac penates deos religiosus senex non simplici uadentem sarcina premeret; tulit illum per ignes et (quid non pietas potest?) pertulit colendumque inter conditores Romani imperii posuit. Vicere Siculi iuuenes: cum Aetna maiore ui peragitata in urbes, in agros, in magnam insulae partem effudisset incendium, uexerunt parentes suos; discessisse creditum est ignes et utrimque flamma recedente limitem adapertum, per quem transcurrerent iuuenes dignissimi, qui magna tuto auderent. Vicit Antigonus, qui, cum ingenti proelio superasset hostem, praemium belli ad patrem transtulit et imperium illi Cypri tradidit; hoc est regnum nolle regnare, cum possis. Vicit patrem imperiosum quidem Manlius, qui, cum ante ad tempus relegatus esset a patre ob adulescentiam brutam et hebetem, ad tribunum plebis, qui patri suo diem dixerat, uenit petitoque tempore, quod ille dederat sperans fore proditorem parentis inuisi, (et bene meruisse se de iuvene credebat, cuius exilium pro grauissimo crimine inter alia Manlio obiebat) nanctus adulescens secretum stringit occultatum sinu ferrum et: “Nisi iuras” inquit “te diem patri remissurum, hoc te gladio transfodiam. In tua potestate est, utro modo pater meus accusatorem non habeat.” Iurauit tribunus nec fefellit et causam actionis omissae contioni reddidit. Nulli alii licuit inpune tribunum in ordinem redigere.

[38] Alia ex aliis exempla sunt eorum, qui parentes suos periculis eripuerint, qui ex infimo ad summum protulerint et e plebe aceruoque ignobili numquam tacendos saeculis dederint. Nulla ui uerborum, nulla ingenii facultate exprimi potest, quantum opus sit, quam laudabile quamque numquam memoria hominum exiturum, posse hoc dicere: “Parentibus meis parui, cessi imperio eorum, siue aecum siue inicum ac durum fuit, obsequentem submissumque me praebui; ad hoc unum contumax fui, ne beneficiis uincerer.” Certate, obsecro uos, et fessi quoque restituite aciem. Felices, qui uinent, felices, qui uinentur! Quid eo adulescente praeclarius, qui sibi ipsi dicere poterit (neque enim est fas alteri dicere): “Patrem meum beneficiis uici”? Quid eo fortunatius sene, qui omnibus ubique praedicabit a filio se suo beneficiis uictum? Quid autem est felicius quam ibi cedere?”

LIBER IV

1. Ex omnibus, quae tractavimus, Aebutii Liberalis, potest videri nihil tam necessarium aut magis, ut ait Sallustius, cum cura dicendum, quam quod in manibus est : an beneficium dare et in vicem gratiam referre per se res expetendae sint. [2] Inveniuntur, qui honesta in mercedem colant quibusque non placeat virtus gratuita; quae nihil habet in se magnificum, si quicquam venale. Quid enim est turpius, quam aliquem computare, quanti vir bonus sit, cum virtus nec lucro invitet nec absterreat damno adeoque neminem spe ac pollicitatione corrumpam ut contra impendere in se iubeat et saepius in ultro tributis sit? Calcatis ad illam utilitatibus eundum est; quocumque vocavit, quocumque misit, sine respectu rei familiaris, interdum etiam sine ulla sanguinis sui parsimonia vadendum nec umquam imperium eius detractandum. [3] “ Quid consequar,” inquit, “ si hoc fortiter, si hoc grate fecero? “ Quod feceris; nihil tibi extra promittitur. Si quid commodi forte obvenerit, inter accessiones numerabis. Rerum honestarum pretium in ipsis est. Si honestum per se expetendum est, beneficium autem honestum est, non potest alia eius condicio esse, cum eadem natura sit. Per se autem expetendum esse honestum saepe et abunde probatum est.

2. In hac parte nobis pugna est cum Epicureis, delicata et umbratica turba in convivio suo philosophantium, apud quos virtus voluptatum ministra est, illis paret, illis deservit, illas supra se videt. “ Non est,” inquit, “ voluptas sine virtute.” [2] Sed quare ante virtutem est? De ordine putas disputationem esse? De re tota et de potestate eius ambigitur. Non est virtus, si sequi potest; primae partes eius sunt, ducere debet, imperare, summo loco stare; tu illam iubes signum petere! “ Quid,” inquit, “ tua refert? [3] Et ego sine virtute nego beatam vitam posse constare. Ipsam voluptatem, quam sequor, cui me emancipavi, remota illa improbo et damno. De hoc uno disputatur, utrum virtus summi boni causa sit an ipsa summum bonum.” Ut hoc unum quaeratur, ordinis tantum existimas mutationem? Ista vero confusio est et manifesta caecitas primis postrema praeferre. [4] Non indignor, quod post voluptatem ponitur virtus, sed quod omnino cum voluptate, contemptrix eius et hostis et

longissime ab illa resiliens, labori ac dolori familiarior, virilibus incommodis, quam isti effeminato bono.

3. Inserenda haec, mi Liberalis, fuerunt, quia beneficium, de quo nunc agitur, dare virtutis est et turpissimum id causa ullius alterius rei dare, quam ut datum sit. Nam si recipiendi spe tribueremus, locupletissimo cuique, non dignissimo daremus; nunc vero diviti importuno pauperem praeferimus. Non est beneficium, quod ad fortunam spectat. [2] Praeterea, si, ut prodessemus, sola nos invitaret utilitas, minime beneficia distribuere deberent, qui facillime possent, locupletes et potentes et reges aliena ope non indigentes; di vero tot munera, quae sine intermissione diebus ac noctibus fundunt, non darent; in omnia enim illis natura sua sufficit plenosque et tutos et inviolabiles praestat; nulli ergo beneficium dabunt, si una dandi causa est se intueri ac suum commodum. [3] Istud non beneficium, sed fenus est circumspicere, non ubi optime ponas, sed ubi quaestuosissime habeas, unde facillime tollas. Quod cum longe a dis remotum sit, sequitur, ut inliberales sint; nam si una beneficii dandi causa sit dantis utilitas, nulla autem ex nobis utilitas deo speranda est, nulla deo dandi beneficii causa est.

4. Scio, quid hoc loco respondeatur : “ Itaque non dat deus beneficia, sed securus et neclegens nostri, aversus a mundo aliud agit aut, quae maxima Epicuro felicitas videtur, nihil agit, nec magis illum beneficia quam iniuriae tangunt.” [2] Hoc qui dicit, non exaudit precantium voces et undique sublati in caelum manibus vota facientium privata ac publica; quod profecto non fieret, nec in hunc furorem omnes profecto mortales consensissent adloquendi surda numina et inefficaces deos, nisi nossemus illorum beneficia nunc oblata ultro, nunc orantibus data, magna, tempestiva, ingentes minas interventu suo solventia. [3] Quis est autem tam miser, tam neglectus, quis tam duro fato et in poenam genitus, ut non tantam deorum munificentiam senserit? Ipsos illos complorantes sortem suam et querulos circumspice : invenies non ex toto beneficiorum caelestium expertes, neminem esse, ad quem non aliquid ex illo benignissimo fonte manaverit. Parum est autem id, quod nascentibus ex aequo distribuitur? Ut quae secuntur inaequali dispensata mensura transeamus, parum dedit natura, cum se dedit?

5. “ Non dat deus beneficia.” Unde ergo ista, quae possides, quae

das, quae negas, quae servas, quae rapis? Unde haec innumerabilia oculos, aures, animum mulcentia? Unde illa luxuriam quoque instruens copia (neque enim necessitatibus tantummodo nostris provisum est; usque in delicias amamus)? [2] Tot arbusta non uno modo frugifera, tot herbae salutare, tot varietates ciborum per totum annum digestae, ut inertibus quoque fortuita terrae alimenta praeberent? Iam animalia omnis generis, alia in sicco solidoque, alia in umido nascentia, alia per sublime demissa, ut omnis rerum naturae pars tributum aliquod nobis conferret? [3] Flumina haec amoenissimis flexibus campos cingentia, illa praebitura commercio viam vasto et navigabili cursu vadentia, ex quibus quaedam aestatis diebus mirabile incrementum trahunt, ut arida et ferventi subiecta caelo loca subita vis aestivi torrentis irriget? Quid mercatorum torrentium venae? Quid in ipsis litoribus aquarum calentium exundatio? Te, Lari maxime, teque, fluctibus et fremitu adsurgens, Benace, marino?

6. Si pauca quis tibi donasset iugera, accepisse te diceres beneficium; immensa terrarum late patentium spatia negas esse beneficium? Si pecuniam tibi aliquis donaverit et arcam tuam, quoniam tibi id magnum videtur, impleverit, beneficium vocabis; tot metalla deus defodit, tot flumina emisit terra, super quae decurrunt sola, aurum vehentia; argenti, aeris, ferri immane pondus omnibus locis obrutum, cuius investigandi tibi facultatem dedit, ac latentium divitiarum in summa terra signa disposuit : negas te accepisse beneficium? [2] Si domus tibi donetur, in qua marmoris aliquid resplendeat et tectum nitidi us auro aut coloribus sparsum, non mediocri munus vocabis. Ingens tibi domicilium sine ullo incendii aut ruinae metu struxit, in quo vides non tenues crustas et ipsa, qua secantur, laminae gracili ores, sed integras lapidis pretiosissimi moles, sed totas variae distinctaeque materiae, cuius tu parvula frusta miraris, tectum vero aliter nocte, aliter interdiu fulgens : negas te ullum munus accepisse? [3] Et cum ista, quae habes, magno aestimes, quod est ingrati hominis, nulli debere te iudicas? Unde tibi istum, quem trahis, spiritum? Unde istam, per quam actus vitae tuae disponis atque ordinas, lucem? Unde sanguinem, cuius cursu vitalis continetur calor? Unde ista palatum tuum saporibus exquisitis ultra satietatem lacessentia? Unde haec irritamenta iam lassae voluptatis? Unde ista quies, in qua putrescis ac marces? [4] Nonne, si gratus es,

dices : Deus nobis haec otia fecit, namque erit ille mihi semper deus, illius aram saepe tener nostris ab ovilibus inbuet agnus, ille meas errare boves, ut cernis, et ipsum ludere, quae vellem, calamo permisit agresti. [5] Ille deus est, non qui paucas boves, sed qui per totum orbem armenta dimisit, qui gregibus ubique passim vagantibus pabulum praestat, qui pascua hibernis aestiva substituit, qui non calamo tantum cantare et agreste atque inconditum carmen ad aliquam tamen observationem modulari docuit, sed tot artes, tot vocum varietates, tot sonos alios spiritu nostro, alios externo cantus edituros commentus est. [6] Neque enim nostra ista, quae invenimus, dixeris, non magis, quam quod crescimus, quam quod ad constitutum temporum sua corpori officia respondent : nunc puerilium dentium lapsus, nunc ad surgentem iam aetatem et in robustiorem gradum transeuntem pubertas et ultimus ille dens surgenti iuventae terminum ponens. Insita sunt nobis omnium aetatum, omnium artium semina, magisterque ex occulto deus producit ingenia.

7. “ Natura,” inquit, “ haec mihi praestat.” Non intellegis te, cum hoc dicis, mutare nomen deo? Quid enim aliud est natura quam deus et divina ratio toti mundo partibusque eius inserta? Quotiens voles, tibi licet aliter hunc auctorem rerum nostrarum compellare; et Iovem illum Optimum ac Maximum rite dices et Tonantem et Statorem, qui non, ut historici tradiderunt, ex eo, quod post votum susceptum acies Romanorum fugientium stetit, sed quod stant beneficio eius omnia, stator stabilitorque est. Hunc eundem et Fatum si dixeris, non mentieris; [2] nam cum fatum nihil aliud sit, quam series implexa causarum, ille est prima omnium causa, ex qua ceterae pendent. Quaecumque voles, illi nomina proprie aptabis vim aliquam effectumque caelestium rerum continentia : tot appellationes eius possunt esse, quot munera.

8. Hunc et Liberum patrem et Herculem ac Mercurium nostri putant : Liberum patrem, quia omnium parens sit, cui primum inventa seminum vis est vitae consultura per voluptatem; Herculem, quia vis eius invicta sit quandoque lassata fuerit operibus editis, in ignem recessura; Mercurium, quia ratio penes illum est numerusque et ordo et scientia. Quocumque te flexeris, ibi illum videbis occurrentem tibi; [2] nihil ab illo vacat, opus suum ipse implet. Ergo nihil agis, ingratisse mortalium, qui te negas deo debere, sed

naturae, quia nec natura sine deo est nec deus sine natura, sed idem est utrumque, distat officio. [3] Si, quod a Seneca accepisses, Annaeo te debere diceres vel Lucio, non creditorem mutares, sed nomen, quoniam, sive praenomen eius sive nomen dixisses sive cognomen, idem tamen ille esset. Sic nunc naturam voca, fatum, fortunam; omnia eiusdem dei nomina sunt varie utentis sua potestate. Et iustitia, probitas, prudentia, fortitudo, frugalitas unius animi bona sunt; quidquid horum tibi placuit, animus placet.

9. Sed ne aliam disputationem ex obliquo habeam, plurima beneficia ac maxima in nos deus defert sine spe recipiendi, quoniam nec ille conlato eget nec nos ei quidquam conferre possumus; ergo beneficium per se expetenda res est. Una spectatur in eo accipientis utilitas; ad hanc accedamus sepositis commodis nostris. [2] “Dicitis,” inquit, “diligenter eligendos, quibus beneficia demus, quia ne agricolae quidem semina harenis committant; quod si verum est, nostram utilitatem in beneficiis dandis sequimur, quemadmodum in arando serendoque; neque enim serere per se res expetenda est. Praeterea quaeritis, ubi et quomodo detis beneficium, quod non esset faciendum, si per se beneficium dare expetenda res esset, quoniam, quocumque loco et quocumque modo daretur, beneficium erat.” [3] Honestum propter nullam aliam causam quam propter ipsum sequimur; tamen, etiam si nihil aliud sequendum est, quaerimus, quid faciamus et quando et quemadmodum; per haec enim constat. Itaque, cum eligo, cui dem beneficium, id ago, ut quandoque beneficium sit, quia, si turpi datur, nec honestum esse potest nec beneficium.

10. Depositum reddere per se res expetenda est; non tamen semper reddam nec quolibet loco nec quolibet tempore. Aliquando nihil interest, utrum infitier an palam reddam. Intuebor utilitatem eius, cui redditurus sum, et nociturum illi depositum negabo. Idem in beneficio faciam. [2] Videbo, quando dem, cui dem, quemadmodum, quare. Nihil enim sine ratione faciendum est; non est autem beneficium, nisi quod ratione datur, quoniam ratio omnis honesti comes est. Quam saepe hominum donationem suam inconsultam obiurgantium hanc exaudimus vocem: [3] “Mallem perdidisse quam illi dedisse “! Turpissimum genus damni est inconsulta donatio multoque gravius male dedisse beneficium quam non recepisse; aliena enim culpa est, quod non recipimus; quod, cui daremus, non

elegimus, nostra. [4] In electione nihil minus quam hoc, quod tu existimas, spectabo, a quo recepturus sim; elige enim eum, qui gratus, non qui redditurus sit, saepe autem et non redditurus gratus est et ingratus, qui reddidit. [5] Ad animum tendit aestimatio mea; ideo locupletem sed indignum praeteribo, pauperi viro bono dabo; erit enim in summa inopia gratus et, cum omnia illi deerunt, supererit animus.

11. Non lucrum ex beneficio capto, non voluptatem, non gloriam; uni placere contentus in hoc dabo, ut quod oportet faciam. Quod oportet autem non est sine electione. Quae qualis futura sit, interrogas? Eligam virum integrum, simplicem, memorem, gratum, alieni abstinenter, sui non avare tenacem, benevolum; hunc ego cum elegero, licet nihil illi fortuna tribuat, ex quo referre gratiam possit, ex sententia gesta res erit. [2] Si utilitas me et sordida computatio liberalem facit, si nulli prosum, nisi ut in vicem ille mihi prosit, non dabo beneficium proficiscenti in diversas longinquasque regiones, afuturo semper; non dabo sic adfecto, ut spes ei nulla sit convalescendi; non dabo ipse deficiens, non enim habeo recipiendi tempus. [3] Atqui ut scias rem per se expetendam esse bene facere, advenis modo in nostrum delatis portum, statim abituris, succurrimus; ignoto naufrago navem, qua revehatur, et damus et struimus. Discedit ille vix satis noto salutis auctore et numquam amplius in conspectum nostrum reversurus debitores nobis deos delegat precaturque, illi pro se gratiam referant; interim nos iuvat sterilis beneficii conscientia. Quid? [4] cum in ipso vitae fine constitimus, cum testamentum ordinamus, non beneficia nihil nobis profutura dividimus? Quantum temporis consumitur, quam diu secreto agitur, quantum et quibus demus! Quid enim interest, quibus demus a nullo recepturi? [5] Atqui numquam diligentius damus, numquam magis iudicia nostra torquemus, quam ubi remotis utilitatibus solum ante oculos honestum stetit, tam diu officiorum mali iudices, quam diu illa depravat spes ac metus et inertissimum vitium, voluptas. Ubi mors interclusit omnia et ad ferendam sententiam incorruptum iudicem misit, quaerimus dignissimos, quibus nostra tradamus, nec quicquam cura sanctiore componimus, quam quod ad nos non pertinet. At mehercules tunc magna voluptas subit cogitantem : [6] “ Hunc ego locupletiore faciam, et huius

dignitati adiectis opibus aliquid splendoris adfundam.” Si non damus beneficia nisi recepturi, intestatis moriendum sit!

12. “Dicitis,” inquit, “beneficium creditum insolubile esse; creditum autem non est res per se expetenda.” Cum creditum dicimus, imagine et translatione utimur; sic enim et legem dicimus iusti iniustique regulam esse, et regula non est res per se expetenda. Ad haec verba demonstrandae rei causa descendimus; eum dico creditum, intellegitur tamquam creditum. Vis scire? Adicio insolubile, eum creditum nullum non solvi aut possit aut debeat. [2] Adeo beneficium utilitatis causa dandum non est, ut saepe, quemadmodum dixi, cum damno ac periculo dandum sit. Sic latronibus circumventum defendo, ut tuto transire permittatur; reum gratia laborantem tueor et hominum potentium factionem in me converto, quas illi detraxero sordes, sub accusatoribus isdem fortasse sumpturus, cum abire in partem alteram possim et securus spectare aliena certamina; spondeo pro iudicato et suspensis amici bonis libellum deicio creditoribus eius me obligaturus; ut possim servare proscriptum, ipse proscriptionis periculum adeo. [3] Nemo Tusculanum aut Tiburtinum paraturus salubritatis causa et aestivi secessus, quoto anno empturus sit, disputat; cum erit, tuendum est. [4] Eadem in beneficio ratio est; nam cum interrogaveris, quid reddat, respondebo : bonam conscientiam. Quid reddat beneficium? Dic tu mihi, quid reddat iustitia, quid innocentia, quid magnitudo animi, quid pudicitia, quid temperantia; si quicquam praeter ipsas, ipsas non petis. In quid mundus vices suas solvit? [5] In quid sol diem extendit et contrahit? Omnia ista beneficia sunt, fiunt enim nobis profutura. Quomodo mundi officium est circumagere rerum ordinem, quomodo solis loca mutare, ex quibus oriatur, in quae cadat, et haec salutaria nobis facere sine praemio, ita viri officium est inter alia et beneficium dare. Quare ergo dat? Ne non det, ne occasionem bene faciendi perdat.

13. Vobis voluptas est inertis otii facere corpusculum et securitatem sopitis simillimam appetere et sub densa umbra latitare tenerrimisque cogitationibus, quas tranquillitatem vocatis, animi marcentis obiectare torporem et cibis potionibusque intra hortorum latebram corpora ignavia pallentia saginare; [2] nobis voluptas est dare beneficia vel laboriosa, dum aliorum labores levant, vel

periculosa, dum alios periculis extrahant, vel rationes nostras adgravatura, dum aliorum necessitates et angustias laxent. [3] Quid mea interest, an recipiam beneficia? Etiam cum recepero, danda sunt. Beneficium eius commodum spectat, cui praestatur, non nostrum; alioquin nobis illud damus. Itaque multa, quae summam utilitatem aliis adferunt, pretio gratiam perdunt. Mercator urbibus prodest, medicus aegris, mango venalibus; sed omnes isti, quia ad alienum commodum pro suo veniunt, non obligant eos, quibus prosunt. Non est beneficium, quod in quaestum mittitur. “ Hoc dabo et hoc recipiam “ auctio est.

14. Non dicam pudicam, quae amatorem ut incenderet reppulit, quae aut legem aut virum timuit; ut ait Ovidius : Quae, quia non licuit, non dedit, illa dedit. Non immerito in numerum peccantium refertur, quae pudicitiam timori praestitit, non sibi. Eodem modo, qui beneficium ut reciperet dedit, non dedit. [2] Ergo et nos beneficium damus animalibus, quae aut usui aut alimento futura nutrimus! Beneficium damus arbustis, quae colimus, ne siccitate aut immoti et neglecti soli duritia laborent! [3] Nemo ad agrum colendum ex aequo et bono venit nec ad ullam rem, cuius extra ipsam fructus est; ad beneficium dandum non adducit cogitatio avara nec sordida, sed humana, liberalis, cupiens dare, etiam eum dederit, et augere novis ac recentibus vetera, unum habens propositum, quanto ei, cui praestat, bono futura sit; alioqui humile est, sine laude, sine gloria, prodesse, quia expedit. [4] Quid magnifici est se amare, sibi parcere, sibi acquirere? Ab omnibus istis vera beneficii dandi cupido avocat, ad detrimentum iniecta manu trahit et utilitates relinquit ipso bene faciendi opere laetissima.

15. Numquid dubium est, quin contraria sit beneficio iniuria? Quomodo iniuriam facere per se vitanda ac fugienda res est, sic beneficium dare per se expetenda. Illic turpitudine contra omnia praemia in scelus hortantia valet; ad hoc invitat honesti per se efficax species. [2] Non mentiar, si dixero neminem non amare beneficia sua, neminem non ita compositum animo, ut libentius eum videat, in quem multa congessit, cui non causa sit iterum dandi beneficii semel dedisse. Quod non accideret, nisi ipsa nos delectarent beneficia. Quam saepe dicentem audias : [3] “ Non sustineo illum deserere, cui dedi vitam, quem e periculo eripui. Rogat me, ut causam suam contra

homines gratiosos agam; nolo, sed quid faciam? Iam illi semel, iterum adfui.” Non vides inesse isti rei propriam quandam vim, quae nos dare beneficia cogit, primum quia oportet, deinde quia dedimus?

[4] Cui initio ratio non fuisset praestandi aliquid, ei praestamus ob hoc, quia praestitimus; adeoque ad beneficia nos non impellit utilitas, ut inutilia tueri ac fovere perseveremus sola beneficii caritate, cui etiam infeliciter dato indulgere tam naturale est quam liberis pravis.

16. Idem isti gratiam referre ipsos fatentur, non quia honestum est, sed quia utile. Quod non esse ita minore opera probandum est, quia, quibus argumentis collegimus beneficium dare per se rem expetendam esse, isdem etiam hoc colligimus. [2] Fixum illud est, a quo in cetera probationes nostrae exeunt, honestum ob nullam aliam causam, quam quia honestum sit, coli. Quis ergo controversiam facere audebit, an gratum esse honestum sit? Quis non ingratum detestetur, hominem sibi ipsum inutilem? Quid autem cum tibi narratur, “ Adversus summa beneficia amici sui ingratus est,” quomodo adficeris? Utrum tamquam rem turpem fecerit, an tamquam rem utilem sibi et profuturam omiserit? Puto, nequam hominem existimas, cui poena, non cui curatore opus sit; quod non accideret, nisi gratum esse per se expetendum honestumque esset. [3] Alia fortasse minus dignitatem suam praeferunt et, an sint honesta, interprete egent. Hoc expositum est pulchriusque, quam ut splendor eius dubie ac parum luceat. Quid tam laudabile, quid tam aequaliter in omnium animos receptum quam referre bene meritis gratiam?

17. Ad hoc, dic mihi, quae causa nos perducit? Lucrum? Quod qui non contemnit, ingratus est. Ambitio? Et quae iactatio est solvisse, quod debeas? Metus? Nullus ingrato; huic enim uni rei non posuimus legem, tamquam satis natura cavisset. [2] Quomodo nulla lex amare parentes, indulgere liberis iubet (supervacuum est enim, in quod imus, impelli), quemadmodum nemo in amorem sui cohortandus est, quem adeo, dum nascitur, trahit, ita ne ad hoc quidem, ut honesta per se petat; placent suapte natura, adeoque gratiosa virtus est, ut insitum sit etiam malis probare meliora. Quis est, qui non beneficus videri velit, qui non inter scelera et iniurias opinionem bonitatis adfectet, qui non ipsis, quae impotentissime fecit, speciem aliquam induat recti velitque etiam his videri beneficium dedisse, quos laesit? [3] Gratias itaque agi sibi ab iis, quos adflixere, patiuntur bonosque se ac

liberales fingunt, quia praestare non possunt. Quod non facerent, nisi illos honesti et per se expetendi amor cogeret moribus suis opinionem contrariam quaerere et nequitiam abdere, cuius fructus concupiscitur, ipsa vero odio pudorque est; nec quisquam tantum a naturae lege descivit et hominem exuit, ut animi causa malus sit. [4] Dic enim cuilibet ex istis, qui rapto vivunt, an ad illa, quae latrociniiis et furtis consecuntur, malint ratione bona pervenire : optabit ille, cui grassari et transeuntes percutere quaestus est, potius illa invenire quam eripere; neminem reperies, qui non nequitiae praemiis sine nequitia frui malit. Maximum hoc habemus naturae meritum, quod virtus lumen suum in omnium animos permittit; etiam, qui non secuntur illam, vident.

18. Ut scias per se expetendam esse grati animi adfectionem, per se fugienda res est ingratum esse, quoniam nihil aequae concordiam humani generis dissociat ac distrahit quam hoc vitium. Nam quo alio tuti sumus, quam quod mutuis iuvamur officiis? Hoc uno instructor vita contraque incursiones subitas munitior est, beneficiorum commercio. [2] Fac nos singulos, quid sumus? Praeda animalium et victimae ac bellissimus et facillimus sanguis. Quoniam ceteris animalibus in tutelam sui satis virium est, quaecumque vaga nascebantur et actura vitam segregem, armata sunt, hominem imbecilla cutis cingit; non unguium vis, non dentium terribilem ceteris fecit, nudum et infirmum societas munit. Duas deus res dedit, quae illum obnoxium validissimum facerent, rationem et societatem; itaque, qui par esse nulli posset, si seduceretur, rerum potitur. [3] Societas illi dominium omnium animalium dedit; societas terris genitum in alienae naturae transmisit imperium et dominari etiam in mari iussit; hoc morborum impetus arcuit, senectuti adminicula prospexit, solacia contra dolores dedit; hoc fortes nos facit, quod licet contra fortunam advocare. [4] Hanc societatem tolle, et unitatem generis humani, qua vita sustinetur, scindes; tolletur autem, si efficis, ut ingratus animus non per se vitandus sit, sed quia aliquid illi timendum est; quam multi enim sunt, quibus ingratissimum esse tuto licet! Denique ingratum voco, quisquis metu gratus est.

19. Deos nemo sanus timet; furor est enim metuere salutaria, nec quisquam amat, quos timet. Tu denique. Epicure, deum inermem facis, omnia illi tela, omnem detraxisti potentiam et, ne cuiquam

metuendus esset, proiecisti illum extra metum. [2] Hunc igitur insaeptum ingenti quidem et inexplicabili muro divisumque a contactu et a conspectu mortalium non habes quare verearis; nulla illi nec tribuendi nec nocendi materia est; in medio intervallo huius et alterius caeli desertus sine animali, sine homine, sine re ruinas mundorum supra se circaque se cadentium evitat non exaudiens vota nec nostri curiosus. [3] Atqui hunc vis videri colere non aliter quam parentem grato, ut opinor, animo; aut, si non vis gratus videri, quia nullum habes illius beneficium, sed te atomi et istae micae tuae forte ac temere conglobaverunt, cur colis? [4] “ Propter maiestatem,” inquis, “ eius eximiam ac singularem naturam.” Ut concedam tibi, nempe hoc facis nullo pretio inductus, nulla spe; est ergo aliquid per se expetendum, cuius te ipsa dignitas ducit, id est honestum. Quid est autem honestius, quam gratum esse? Huius virtutis materia tam late patet quam vita.

20. “ Sed inest,” inquit, “ huic bono etiam utilitas aliqua.” Cui enim virtuti non inest? Sed id propter se expeti dicitur, quod, quamvis habeat aliqua extra commoda, sepositis quoque illis ac remotis placet. Prodest gratum esse; ero tamen gratus, etiam si nocet. Gratus quid sequitur? [2] Ut haec res illi alios amicos, alia beneficia conciliet? Quid ergo? Si quis sibi offensas concitaturus est, si quis intellegit adeo per hoc se nihil consecuturum, ut multa etiam ex reposito adquisitoque perdenda sint, non libens in detrimenta descendit? [3] Ingratus est, qui in referenda gratia secundum datum videt, qui sperat, cum reddit. Ingratum voco, qui aegro adsidit, quia testamentum facturus est, cui de hereditate aut de legato vacat cogitare. Faciat licet omnia, quae facere bonus amicus et memor officii debet : si animo eius obversatur spes lucri, captator est et hamum iacit. Ut aves, quae laceratione corporum aluntur, lassa morbo pecora et casura ex proximo speculantur, ita hic imminet morti et circa cadaver volat.

21. Gratus animus ipsa virtute propositi sui capitur. Vis scire hoc ita esse nec illum utilitate corrumpi? Duo genera sunt grati hominis. Dicitur gratus, qui aliquid pro eo, quod acceperat, reddidit; hic fortasse ostentare se potest, habet, quod iacet, quod proferat. Dicitur gratus, qui bono animo accepit beneficium, bono debet; hic intra conscientiam elusus est. [2] Quae illi contingere potest utilitas ex

adfectu latenti? Atqui hic, etiam si ultra facere nil potest, gratus est. Amat, debet, referre gratiam cupit; quidquid ultra desideras, non ipse deest. [3] Artifex est etiam, cui ad exercendam artem instrumenta non suppetunt, nec minus canendi peritus, cuius vocem exaudiri fremitus obstrepentium non sinit. Volo referre gratiam : post hoc aliquid superest mihi, non ut gratus, sed ut solutus sim; saepe enim et qui gratiam rettulit, ingratus est, et qui non rettulit, gratus. Nam ut omnium aliarum virtutum, ita huius ad animum tota aestimatio redit; hic si in officio est, quidquid defuit, fortuna peccat. [4] Quomodo est disertus etiam qui tacet, fortis etiam qui compressis manibus vel etiam adligatis, quomodo gubernator etiam, qui in sicco est, quia consummatae scientiae nihil deest, etiam si quid obstat, quominus se utatur, ita gratus est etiam, qui vult tantum nec habet huius voluntatis suae ullum alium quam se testem. Immo amplius adiciam : [5] est aliquando gratus etiam qui ingratus videtur, quem mala interpretes opinio contrarium tradidit. Hic quid aliud sequitur quam ipsam conscientiam? Quae etiam obruta delectat, quae contioni ac famae reclamationis et in se omnia reponit et, cum ingentem ex altera parte turbam contra sentientium adspexit, non numerat suffragia, sed una sententia vincit. [6] Si vero bonam fidem perfidiae suppliciiis adfici videt, non descendit e fastigio et supra poenam suam consistit. “Habeo,” inquit, “ quod volui, quod petii; nec paenitet nec paenitebit nec ulla iniquitate me eo fortuna perducet, ut hanc vocem audiat : ‘ Quid mihi volui? Quid nunc mihi prodest bona voluntas? ‘ “ Prodest et in eculeo, prodest et in igne; qui si singulis membris admoveatur et paulatim vivum corpus circumeat, licet ipsum cor plenum bona conscientia stillet : placebit illi ignis, per quem bona fides conlucebit.

22. Nunc illud quoque argumentum quamvis dictum iam reducatur : quid est, quare grati velimus esse, cum morimur, quare singulorum perpendamus officia, quare id agamus in omnem vitam nostram memoria decernente, ne cuius officii videamur oblitus? Nihil iam superest, quo spes porrigatur; in illo tamen cardine positi abire e rebus humanis quam gratissimi volumus. [2] Est videlicet magna in ipso opere merces rei et ad adliciendas mentes hominum ingens honesti potentia, cuius pulchritudo animos circumfundit et delenitos admiratione luminis ac fulgoris sui rapit. [3] At multa hoc commoda oriuntur, et tutior est vita melioribus amorque et secundum bonorum

iudicium aetasque securior, quam innocentia, quam grata mens prosequitur. Fuisset enim iniquissima rerum natura, si hoc tantum bonum miserum et anceps et sterile fecisset. Sed illud intuere, an ad istam virtutem, quae saepe tuta ac facili aditur via, etiam per saxa et rupes et feris ac serpentibus obsessum iter fueris iturus. [4] Non ideo per se non est expetendum, cui aliquid extra quoque emolumenti adhaeret; fere enim pulcherrima quaeque multis et adventiciis comitata sunt dotibus, sed illas trahunt, ipsa praecedunt.

23. Num dubium est, quin hoc humani generis domicilium circumitus solis ac lunae vicibus suis temperet? Quin alterius calore alantur corpora, terrae relaxentur, immodici umores comprimantur, adligantis omnia hiemis tristitia frangatur, alterius tepore efficaci et penetrabili regatur maturitas frugum? Quin ad huius cursum fecunditas humana respondeat? Quin ille annum observabilem fecerit circumactu suo, haec mensem minoribus se spatiis flectens? [2] Ut tamen detrahas ista, non erat ipse sol idoneum oculis spectaculum dignusque adorari, si tantum praeteriret? Non erat digna suspectu luna, etiam si otiosum sidus transcurreret? Ipse mundus, quotiens per noctem ignes suos fudit et tantum stellarum innumerabilium refulsit, quem non intentum in se tenet? Quis sibi illa tunc, cum miratur, prodesse cogitat? [3] Adspice ista tanto superne coetu labentia, quemadmodum velocitatem suam sub specie stantis atque immoti operis abscondant. Quantum ista nocte, quam tu in numerum ac discrimen dierum observas, agitur! Quanta rerum turba sub hoc silentio evolvitur! [4] Quantam factorum seriem certus limes educit! Ista, quae tu non aliter, quam in decorem sparsa consideras, singula in opere sunt. Nec enim est, quod existimes septem sola discurrere, cetera haerere; paucorum motus comprehendimus, innumerabiles vero longiusque a conspectu seducti di eunt redeuntque, et ex his, qui oculos nostros patiuntur, plerique obscuro gradu pergunt et per occultum aguntur.

24. Quid ergo? Non caperis tantae molis adspectu, etiam si te non tegat, non custodiat, non foveat generetque ac spiritu suo riget? Quemadmodum haec cum primum usum habeant et necessaria vitaliaque sint, maiestas tamen eorum totam mentem occupat, ita omnis illa virtus et in primis grati animi multum quidem praestat, sed non vult ob hoc diligi; amplius quiddam in se habet nec satis ab eo

intellegitur a quo inter utilia numeratur. [2] Gratus est, quia expedit? Ergo et quantum expedit? Non recipit sordidum virtus amatorem; soluto ad illam sinu veniendum est. Ingratus hoc cogitat: “ Volebam gratiam referre, sed timeo impensam, timeo periculum, vereor offensam; faciam potius, quod expedit.” Non potest eadem ratio et gratum facere et ingratum; ut diversa illorum opera, ita diversa inter se proposita sunt. Ille ingratus est, quamvis non oporteat, quia expedit; hic gratus est, quamvis non expediat, quia oportet.

25. Propositum est nobis secundum rerum naturam vivere et deorum exemplum sequi. Di autem, quodcumque faciunt, in eo quid praeter ipsam faciendi rationem secuntur? Nisi forte illos existimas fructum operum suorum ex fumo extorum et turis odore percipere! [2] Vide, quanta cotidie moliantur, quanta distribuant; quantis terras fructibus impleant, quam opportunis et in omnes oras ferentibus ventis maria permoveant, quantis imbribus repente deiectis solum molliant venasque fontium arentes redintegrent et infuso per occulta nutrimento novent. Omnia ista sine mercede, sine ullo ad ipsos perveniente commodo faciunt. [3] Hoc nostra quoque ratio, si ab exemplari suo non aberrat, servet, ne ad res honestas conducta veniat. Pudeat ullum venale esse beneficium: gratuitos habemus deos!

26. “ Si deos,” inquit, “ imitaris, da et ingratis beneficia; nam et sceleratis sol oritur et piratis patent maria.” Hoc loco interrogant, an vir bonus daturus sit beneficium ingrato sciens ingratum esse. Permite mihi aliquid interloqui, ne interrogatione insidiosa capiamur. [2] Duos ex constitutione Stoica accipe ingratos. Alter est ingratus, quia stultus est; stultus etiam malus est; quia malus est, nullo vitio caret : ergo et ingratus est. Sic omnes malos intemperantes dicimus, avaros, luxuriosos, malignos, non quia omnia ista singulis magna et nota vitia sunt, sed quia esse possunt; et sunt, etiam si latent. Alter est ingratus, qui volgo dicitur, in hoc vitium natura propensus. [3] Illi ingrato, qui sic hac culpa non caret, quomodo nulla caret, dabit beneficium vir bonus; nulli enim dare poterit, si tales homines submoverit. Huic ingrato, qui beneficiorum fraudator est et in hanc partem procubuit animo, non magis dabit beneficium, quam decoctori pecuniam credet aut depositum committet ei, qui iam pluribus abnegavit.

27. Timidus dicitur aliquis, quia stultus est: et hoc malos sequitur,

quos indiscreta et universa vitia circumstant; dicitur timidus proprie natura etiam ad inanes sonos pavidus. Stultus omnia vitia habet, sed non in omnia natura pronus est; alius in avaritiam, alius in luxuriam, alius in petulantiam inclinatur. [2] Itaque errant illi, qui interrogant Stoicos : “ Quid ergo? Achilles timidus est? Quid ergo? Aristides, cui iustitia nomen dedit, iniustus est? Quid ergo? Et Fabius, qui ‘ cunctando restituit rem,’ temerarius est? Quid ergo? Decius mortem timet? Mucius proditor est? Camillus desertor? “ Non hoc dicimus sic omnia vitia esse in omnibus, quomodo in quibusdam singula eminent, sed malum ac stultum nullo vitio vacare; ne audacem quidem timoris absol- vimus, ne prodigum quidem avaritia liberamus. [3] Quomodo homo omnes sensus habet nec ideo tamen omnes homines aciem habent Lynceo similem, sic, qui stultus est, non tam acria et concitata habet omnia, quam quidam quaedam. Omnia in omnibus vitia sunt, sed non omnia in singulis extant. Hunc natura ad avaritiam impellit; hic vino, hic libidini deditus est aut, si nondum deditus, ita formatus, ut in hoc illum mores sui ferant. Itaque, ut ad propositum revertar, nemo non ingratus est, qui malus : [4] habet enim omnia nequitiae semina; tamen proprie ingratus appellatur, qui ad hoc vitium vergit. Huic ergo beneficium non dabo. [5] Quomodo male filiae suae consulet, qui illam contumeliose et saepe repudiate collocavit, malus pater familiae habebitur, qui negotiorum gestorum damnato patrimonii sui curam mandaverit, quomodo dementissime testabitur, qui tutorem filio reliquerit pupillorum spoliatorem, sic pessime beneficia dare dicetur, quicumque ingratos eligit, in quos peritura conferat.

28. “ Di quoque,” inquit, “ multa ingratissimis tribuunt.” Sed illa bonis paraverunt; contingunt autem etiam malis, quia separari non possunt. Sati- us est autem prodesse etiam malis propter bonos, quam bonis deesse propter malos. Ita, quae refert, diem, solem, hiemis aestatisque cursus et media veris autumnique temperamento imbres et fontium haustus, ventorum statos flatus pro universis in- venerunt; excerpere singulos non potuerunt. [2] Rex honores dignis dat, congiarium et indignis; frumentum publicum tam fur quam periurus et adulter accipiunt et sine dilectu morum, quisquis incisus est; quidquid aliud est, quod tamquam civi, non tamquam bono datur, ex aequo boni ac mali ferunt. [3] Deus quoque quaedam munera universo

humano generi dedit, a quibus excluditur nemo. Nec enim poterat fieri, ut ventus bonis viris secundus esset, contrarius malis, communi autem bono erat patere commercium maris et regnum humani generis relaxari; nec poterat lex casuris imbribus dici, ne in malorum improborum- que rura defluerent. Quaedam in medio ponuntur. [4] Tam bonis quam malis conduntur urbes; monumenta ingeniorum et ad indignos perventura publicavit editio; medicina etiam sceleratis opem monstrat; compositiones remediorum salutarium nemo suppressit, ne sanarentur indigni. [5] In iis exige censuram et personarum aestimationem, quae separatim tamquam digno dantur, non in his, quae promiscue turbam admittunt. Multum enim refert, utrum aliquem non excludas an eligas. Ius et furi dicitur; pace et homicidae fruuntur; sua repetunt etiam, qui aliena rapuerunt; percussores et domi ferrum exercentes murus ab hoste defendit; legum praesidio, qui pluri- mum in illas peccaverunt, protegentur. [6] Quaedam non poterant ceteris contingere, nisi universis darentur; non est itaque, quod de istis disputes, ad quae publice invitati sumus. Illud, quod iudicio meo ad aliquem pervenire debebit, ei, quem esse ingratum sciam, non dabo.

29. “Ergo,” inquit, “nec consilium deliberanti dabis ingrato nec aquam haurire permittes nec viam monstrabis erranti? An haec quidem facies, sed nihil donabis?” Distinguae istud, certe temptabo distinguere. [2] Beneficium est opera utilis, sed non omnis opera utilis beneficium est; quaedam enim tam exigua sunt, ut beneficii nomen non occupent. Duae res coire debent, quae beneficium efficiant. Primum rei magnitudo; quaedam enim sunt infra huius nominis mensuram. Quis beneficium dixit quadram panis aut stipem aeris abiecti aut ignis accendendi factam potestatem? Et interdum ista plus prosunt, quam maxima; sed tamen vilitas sua illis, etiam ubi temporis necessitate facta sunt neces- saria, detrahit pretium. [3] Deinde hoc, quod potentissimum est, oportet accedat, ut eius causa faciam, ad quem volam pervenire beneficium, dignumque eum iudicem et libens id tribuam percipiensque ex munere meo gaudium, quorum nihil est in istis, de quibus loquebamur; non enim tamquam dignis illa tribuimus, sed neclegenter tamquam parva, et non homini damus, sed humanitati.

30. Aliquando daturum me etiam indignis quaedam non negaverim

in honorem aliorum, sicut in petendis honoribus quosdam turpissimos nobilitas industriis sed novis praetulit non sine ratione. Sacra est magnarum virtutum memoria, et esse plures bonos iuvat, si gratia bonorum non cum ipsis cadit. Ciceronem filium quae res consulem fecit nisi pater? [2] Cinnam nuper quae res ad consulatum recepit ex hostium castris, quae Sex. Pompeium aliosque Pompeios, nisi unius viri magnitudo tanta quondam, ut satis alte omnes suos etiam ruina eius attolleret? Quid nuper Fabium Persicum, cuius osculum etiam impudici denotabant, sacerdotem non in uno collegio fecit nisi Verrucosi et Allobrogici et illi trecenti, qui hostium incursioni pro re publica unam domum obiecerant? [3] Hoc debemus virtutibus, ut non praesentes solum illas, sed etiam ablatas e conspectu colamus; quomodo illae id egerunt, ut non in unam aetatem prodessent, sed beneficia sua etiam post ipsas relinquerent, ita nos non una aetate grati simus. Hic magnos viros genuit : dignus est beneficiis, qualis- cumque est; dignos dedit. [4] Hic egregiis maioribus ortus est : qualiscumque est, sub umbra suorum lateat. Ut loca sordida repercussu solis illustrantur, ita inertes maiorum suorum luce resplendeant.

31. Excusare hoc loco tibi, mi Liberalis, deos volo. Interdum enim solemus dicere : “ Quid sibi voluit providentia, quae Arrhidaeum regno imposuit?” [2] Illi putas hoc datum? Patri eius datum est et fratri. “ Quare C12 Caesarem orbi terrarum praefecit, hominem sanguinis humani avidissimum, quem non aliter fluere in conspectu suo iubebat, quam si ore excepturus esset? “ Quid ergo? Tu hoc illi datum existimas? Patri eius Germanico datum, avo pro- avoque et ante hos aliis non minus claris viris, etiam si privati paresque aliis vitam exegerunt. Quid? [3] Tu, cum Mamercum Scaurum consulem faceres, ignorabas ancillarum illum suarum menstruum ore hiantes exceptare? Numquid enim ipse dissimulabat? Numquid purus videri volebat? Referam tibi dictum eius in se, quod circumferri memini et ipso praesente laudari. [4] Pollioni Annio iacenti obsceno verbo usus dixerat se facturum id, quod pati malebat; et eum Pollionis adtractionem vidisset frontem : “ Quidquid,” inquit, “ mali dixi, mihi et capiti meo! “ Hoc dictum suum ipse narrabat. Hominem tam palam obscenum ad fascies et ad tribunal admisisti? [5] Nempe dum veterem illum Scaurum senatus principem cogitas et indigne fers

subolem eius iacere.

32. Idem facere deos veri simile est, ut alios indulgentius tractent propter parentes avosque, alios propter futuram nepotum pronepotumque ac longe sequentium posterorum indolem; nota enim illis est operis sui series, omniumque illis rerum per manus suas iturarum scientia in aperto semper est; nobis ex abdito subit, et, quae repentina putamus, illis provisa veniunt ac familiaria. [2] “Sint hi reges, quia maiores eorum non fuerunt, quia pro summo imperio habuerunt iustitiam, abstinentiam, quia non rem publicam sibi, sed se rei publicae dicaverunt. Regnent hi, quia vir bonus quidam ante proavus eorum fuit, qui animum supra fortunam gessit, qui in dissensione civili, quoniam ita expediebat rei publicae, vinci quam vincere maluit; referri gratia illi tam longo spatio non potuit; in illius respectum iste populo praesideat, non quia scit aut potest, sed quia alius pro illo meruit. [3] Hic corpore deformis est, adspectu foedus et ornamenta sua traducturus; iam me homines accusabunt, caecum ac temerarium dicent, nescientem, quo loco, quae summis atque excelsissimis debentur, ponam; at ego scio alii me istud dare, alii olim debitum solvere. [4] Unde isti norunt illum quondam gloriae sequentis fugacissimum, eo vultu ad pericula euntem, quo alii e periculo redeunt, numquam bonum suum a publico distinguentem? ‘Ubi,’ inquis, ‘iste aut quis est? ‘Unde vos scitis? Apud me istae expensorum acceptorumque rationes dispunguntur, ego, quid cui debeam, scio. Aliis post longam diem repono, aliis in antecessum ae prout occasio et rei publicae meae facultas tulit.” Ingrato ergo aliquando quaedam, sed non propter ipsum dabo.

33. “Quid? Si,” inquit, “nescis, utrum ingratus sit an gratus, expectabis, donec scias, an dandi beneficii tempus non amittes? Expectare longum est (nam, ut ait Platon, difficilis humani animi coniectura est), non expectare temerarium est.” [2] Huic respondebimus numquam expectare nos certissimam rerum comprehensionem, quoniam in arduo est veri exploratio, sed ea ire, qua ducit veri similitudo. Omne hac via procedit officium. Sic serimus, sic navigamus, sic militamus, sic uxores ducimus, sic liberos tollimus; cum omnium horum incertus sit eventus, ad ea accedimus, de quibus bene sperandum esse credidimus. Quis enim pollicetur serenti proventum, naviganti portum, militanti victoriam,

marito pudicam uxorem, patri pios liberos? Sequimur, qua ratio, non qua veritas traxit. [3] Expecta, ut nisi bene cessura non facias et nisi comperta veritate nil noveris : relicto omni actu vita consistit. Cum veri similia me in hoc aut in illud impellant, non vera, ei beneficium dabo, quem veri simile erit gratum esse.

34. “ Multa,” inquit, “ intervenient, propter quae et malus pro bono surrepat et bonus pro malo displiceat; fallaces enim sunt rerum species, quibus credidimus.” Quis negat? Sed nihil aliud invenio, per quod cogitationem regam. His veritas mihi vestigiis sequenda est, certiora non habeo; haec ut quam diligentissime aestimem, operam dabo nec cito illis adsentiar. [2] Sic enim in proelio potest accidere, ut telum meum in commilitonem manus dirigat aliquo errore decepta et hosti tamquam meo parcam; sed hoc et raro accidet et non vitio meo, cuius propositum est hostem ferire, civem defendere. Si sciam ingratum esse, non dabo beneficium. At obrepsit, at imposuit : nulla hic culpa tribuentis est, quia tamquam grato dedi. [3] “Si promiseris,” inquit, “ te daturum beneficium et postea ingratum esse scieris, dabis an non? Si facis sciens, peccas, das enim, cui non debes dare; si negas, et hoc modo peccas : non das ei, cui promisisti. Conscientia vestra hoc loco titubat et illud superbum promissum numquam sapientem facti sui paenitere nec umquam emendare, quod fecerit, nec mutare consilium,” [4] Non mutat sapiens consilium omnibus his manentibus, quae erant, cum sumeret; ideo numquam illum paenitentia subit, quia nihil melius illo tempore fieri potuit, quam quod factum est, nihil melius constitui, quam constitutum est; ceterum ad omnia cum exceptione venit : “Si nihil inciderit, quod impediat.” Ideo omnia illi succedere dicimus et nihil contra opinionem accidere, quia praesumit animo posse aliquid intervenire, quod destinata pro- hibeat. [5] Imprudentium ista fiducia est fortunam sibi spondere; sapiens utramque partem eius cogitat; scit, quantum liceat errori, quam incerta sint humana, quam multa consiliis obstant; ancipitem rerum ac lubricam sortem suspensus sequitur, consiliis certis incertos eventus expendit. Exceptio autem, sine qua nihil destinat, nihil ingreditur, et hic illum tuetur.

35. Promisi beneficium, nisi si quid incidisset, quare non deberem dare. Quid enim, si, quod illi pollicitus sum, patria sibi dare iusserit? Si lex lata erit, ne id quisquam faciat, quod ego me amico meo

facturum promiseram? Promisi tibi in matrimonium filiam; postea peregrinus apparuisti; non est mihi cum externo conubium; eadem res me defendit, quae vetat. [2] Tunc fidem fallam, tunc inconstantiae crimen audiam, si, cum eadem omnia sint, quae erant promittente me, non praestitero promissum; alioquin, quidquid mutatur, libertatem facit de integro consulendi et me fide liberat. Promisi advocacy : postea apparuit per illam causam praeiudicium in patrem meum quaeri; promisi me peregre exiturum : sed iter infestari latrociniiis nuntiatur; in rem praesentem venturus fui : sed aeger filius, sed puerpera uxor tenet. [3] Omnia esse debent eadem, quae fuerunt, eum promitterem, ut promittentis fidem teneas; quae autem maior fieri mutatio potest, quam si te malum virum et ingratum comperi? Quod tamquam digno dabam, indigno negabo et nascendi quoque causam habebō deceptus.

36. Inspiciam tamen et, quantum sit, de quo agitur; dabit mihi consilium promissae rei modus. Si exiguum est, dabo, non quia dignus es, sed quia promisi, nec tamquam munus dabo, sed verba mea redimam et aurem mihi pervellam. Damno castigabo promittentis temeritatem : “ Ecce, ut doleat tibi, ut postea consideratius loquaris! “ Quod dicere sole- mus, linguarium dabo. [2] Si maius erit, non committam, quemadmodum Maecenas ait, ut sestertio centies obiurgatus sim. Inter se enim utrumque comparabo. Est aliquid in eo, quod promiseris, perseverare; est rursus multum in eo, ne indigno beneficium des; hoc tamen quantum est? Si leve, coniveamus; si vero magno mihi aut detrimento aut rubori futurum, malo semel excusare, quare negaverim, quam semper, quare dederim. Totum, inquam, in eo est, quanti promissi mei verba taxentur. [3] Non tantum, quod temere promisi, retinebo, sed, quod non recte dedi, repetam; demens est, qui fidem praestat errori.

37. Philippus Macedonum rex habebat militem manu fortem, cuius in multis expeditionibus utilem expertus operam subinde ex praeda aliquid illi virtutis causa donaverat et hominem venalis animae crebris auctoramentis accendebat. Hic naufragus in possessiones cuiusdam Macedonis expulsus est; quod ut nuntiatum est, accucurrit, spiritum eius recollegit, in villam illum suam transtulit, lectulo suo cessit, adfectum semianimemque recreavit, diebus triginta sua impensa curavit, refecit, viatico instruxit subinde dicentem : “

Gratiam tibi referam, videre tantum mihi imperatorem meum contingat.” [2] Narravit Philippo naufragium suum, auxilium tacuit et protinus petit, ut sibi cuiusdam praedia donaret. Ille quidam erat hospes eius, is ipse, a quo receptus erat, a quo sanatus. Multa interim reges in bello praesertim opertis oculis donant. “ Non sufficit homo iustus tot armatis cupiditatibus, non potest quisquam eodem tempore et bonum virum et bonum ducem agere. Quomodo tot milia hominum insatiabilia satiabuntur? Quid habebunt, si suum quisque habuerit? [3] “ Haec Philippus sibi dixit, cum illum induci in bona, quae petebat, iussit. Expulsus bonis suis ille non ut rusticus iniuriam tacitus tulit contentus, quod non et ipse donatus esset, sed Philippo epistulam strictam ac liberam scripsit; qua accepta ita exarsit, ut statim Pausaniae mandaret, bona priori domino restitueret, ceterum improbissimo militi, ingratisimo hospiti, avidissimo naufrago stigmata inscriberet ingratum hominem testantia. [4] Dignus quidem fuit, cui non inscriberentur illae litterae, sed insculperentur, qui hospitem suum nudo et naufrago similem in id, in 15 quo iacuerat ipse, litus expulerat. Sed videbimus, quis modus poenae servandus fuerit; auferendum utique fuit, quod summo scelere invaserat. Quis autem poena eius moveretur? Id commiserat, propter quod nemo misereri misericors posset.

38. Dabit tibi Philippus, quia promisit, etiam si non debet, etiam si iniuriam facturus est, etiam si scelus facturus est, etiam si uno facto praeclusurus est naufragis litora? Non est levitas a cognito et damnato errore discedere, et ingenue fatendum est : “ Aliud putavi, deceptus sum.” Haec vero superbae stultitiae perseverantia est: “ Quod semel dixi, quaecumque est, fixum ratumque sit.” [2] Non est turpe cum re mutare consilium. Age, si Philippus possessorem illum eorum litorum reliquisset, quae naufragio ceperat, non omnibus miseris aqua et igni interdixerat? “ Potius,” inquit, “ intra fines regni mei tu litteras istas oculis inscribendas durissima fronte circumfer. I, ostende, quam sacra res sit mensa hospitalis; praebe in facie tua legendum istuc decretum, quo cavetur, ne miseros tecto iuvare capital sit. Magis ista constitutio sic rata erit, quam si illam in aes incidissem.”

39. “ Quare ergo,” inquit, “ Zeno vester, cum quingentos denarios cuidam mutuos promisisset et ipse illum parum idoneum

comperisset, amicis suadentibus, ne daret, perseveravit credere, quia pro- miserat? [2] “ Primum alia condicio est in credito, alia in beneficio. Pecuniae etiam male creditae exactio est; et appellare debitorem ad diem possum et, si foro cesserit, portionem feram; beneficium et totum perit et statim. Praeterea hoc mali viri est, illud mali patris familiae. Deinde ne Zeno quidem, si maior fuisset summa, credere perseverasset. Quingenti denarii sunt : illud quod dici solet, “ in morbo consumat “; fuit tanti non revocare promissum suum. [3] Ad cenam, quia promisi, ibo, etiam si frigus erit; non quidem, si nives cadent. Surgam ad sponsalia, quia promisi, quamvis non concoxerim; sed non, si febricitavero. Sponsum descendam, quia promisi; sed non, si spondere me in incertum iube- bis, si fisco obligabis. Subest, inquam, tacita exceptio : “Si potero, si debebo, si haec ita erunt.” [4] Effice, ut idem status sit, cum exigis, qui fuit, cum promitterem; destituere levitas erit. Si aliquid intervenit novi, quid miraris, cum condicio promittentis mutata sit, mutatum esse consilium? Eadem mihi omnia praesta, et idem sum. Vadimonium promittimus, tamen deserti non in omnes datur actio : deserentem vis maior excusat.

40. Idem etiam in illa quaestione responsum existima, an omni modo referenda sit gratia, et an beneficium utique reddendum sit. Animum praestare gratum debeo, ceterum aliquando me referre gratiam non patitur mea infelicitas, aliquando felicitas eius, cui debeo. [2] Quid enim regi, quid pauper diviti reddam, utique cum quidam recipere beneficium iniuriam iudicent et beneficia subinde aliis beneficiis onerent? Quid amplius in horum persona possum quam velle? Nec enim ideo beneficium novum reicere debeo, quia nondum prius reddidi. Accipiam tam libenter, quam dabitur, et praebebo me amico meo exercendae boni- tatis suae capacem materiam. Qui nova accipere non vult, acceptis offenditur. Non refero gratiam: [3] quid ad rem? Non est per me mora, si aut occasio mihi deest aut facultas. Ille praestitit mihi, nempe cum occasionem haberet, cum facultatem. Utrum bonus vir est an malus? Apud bonum virum bonam causam habeo, apud malum non ago. [4] Ne illud quidem existimo faciendum, ut referre gratiam etiam invitis his, quibus refertur, properemus et instemus recedentibus. Non est referre gratiam, quod volens acceperis, nolenti reddere. Quidam, cum

aliquod illis missum est munusculum, subinde aliud intempestive remittunt et nihil se debere testantur; reiciendi genus est protinus aliud in vicem mittere et munus munere expungere. [5] Aliquando et non reddam beneficium, cum possim. Quando? Si plus mihi detractus ero quam illi conlaturus, si ille non erit sensurus ullam accessionem recepto eo, quo reddito mihi multum abscissurum erit. Qui festinat utique reddere, non habet animum grati hominis, sed debitoris; et, ut breviter, qui nimis cupit solvere, invitatus debet; qui invitatus debet, ingratus est.

LIBER V

1. In prioribus libris videbar consummasse propositum, cum tractassem, quemadmodum dandum esset beneficium, quemadmodum accipiendum; hi enim sunt huius officii fines. Quidquid ultra moror, non servio materiae, sed indulgeo, quae, quo ducit, sequenda est, non quo invitat; subinde enim nascetur, quo lacesat aliqua dulcedine animum, magis non supervacuum quam necessarium. [2] Verum, quia ita vis, perseveremus peractis, quae rem continebant, scrutari etiam ea, quae, si vis verum, conexa sunt, non cohaerentia; quae quisquis diligenter inspicit, nec facit operae pretium nec tamen perdit operam. [3] Tibi autem, homini natura optimo et ad beneficia propenso, Liberalis Aebutii, nulla eorum laudatio satis facit. Neminem umquam vidi tam benignum etiam levissimorum officiorum aestimatorem; iam bonitas tua eo usque prolapsa est, ut tibi dari putes beneficium, quod ulli datur; paratus es, ne quem beneficii paeniteat, pro ingratis dependere. [4] Ipse usque eo abes ab omni iactatione, usque eo statim vis exonerare, quos obligas, ut, quidquid in aliquem confers, velis videri non praestare, sed reddere, ideoque plenius ad te sic data revertentur. Nam fere secuntur beneficia non reposcentem et, ut gloria fugientes magis sequitur, ita fructus beneficiorum gratius respondet, per quos esse etiam ingratis licet. [5] Per te vero non est mora, quominus beneficia, qui acceperunt, ultro repetant, nec recusabis conferre alia et suppressis dissimulatisque plura ac maiora adicere : propositum optimi viri et ingentis animi tam diu ferre ingratum, donec feceris gratum. Nec te ista ratio decipiet; succumbunt vitia virtutibus, si illa non cito odisse properaveris.

2. Illud utique unice tibi placet velut magnifice dictum turpe esse beneficiis vinci. Quod an sit verum, non immerito quaeri solet, longeque aliud est, quam mente concipis. Numquam enim in rerum honestarum certamine superari turpe est, dummodo arma non proicias et victus quoque velis vincere. [2] Non omnes ad bonum propositum easdem adferunt vires, easdem facultates, eandem fortunam, quae optimorum quoque consiliorum dumtaxat exitus temperat; voluntas ipsa rectum petens laudanda est, etiam si illam

alius gradu velociori antecessit. Non ut in certaminibus ad spectaculum editis meliorem palma declarat, quamquam in illis quoque saepe deteriore praetulit casus. [3] Ubi de officio agitur, quod uterque a sua parte esse quam plenissimum cupit, si alter plus potuit et ad manum habuit materiam sufficientem animo suo, si illi, quantum conatus est, fortuna permisit, alter autem voluntate par est, etiam si minora, quam accepit, reddidit aut omnia non reddidit, sed vult reddere et toto in hoc intentus est animo, non magis victus est, quam qui in armis moritur, quem occidere facilius hostis potuit quam avertere. [4] Quod turpe existimas, id accidere viro bono non potest, ut vincatur. Numquam enim succumbet, numquam renuntiabit; ad ultimum usque vitae diem stabit paratus et in hac statione morietur magna se accepisse prae se ferens, paria voluisse.

3. Lacedaemonii vetant suos pancratio aut caestu decernere, ubi inferiorem ostendit victi confessio. Cursor cretam prior contigit; velocitate illum, non animo antecessit. Luctator ter abiectus perdidit palmam, non tradidit. Cum invictos esse Lacedaemonii cives suos magno aestimarent, ab iis certaminibus removerunt, in quibus victorem facit non iudex nec per se ipse exitus, sed vox cedentis et tradere iubentis. [2] Hoc, quod illi in suis civibus custodiunt, virtus ac bona voluntas omnibus praestat, ne umquam vincantur, quoniam quidem etiam inter superantia animus invictus est. Ideo nemo trecentos Fabios victos dicit, sed occisos; et Regulus captus est a Poenis, non victus, et quisquis alius saevientis fortunae vi ac pondere oppressus non submittit animum. In beneficiis idem est. [3] Plura aliquis accepit, maiora, frequentiora; non tamen victus est. Beneficia fortasse beneficiis victa sunt, si inter se data et accepta computes; si dantem et accipientem comparaveris, quorum animi et per se aestimandi sunt, penes neutrum erit palma. Solet enim fieri, ut, etiam cum alter multis vulneribus confossus est, alter leviter quidem saucius pares exisse dicantur, quamvis alter videatur inferior.

4. Ergo nemo vinci potest beneficiis, si scit debere, si vult referre : si, quem rebus non potest, animo aequat. Hic quam diu in hoc permanet, quam diu tenet voluntatem gratum animum signis approbandi, quid interest, ab utra parte munuscula plura numerentur? Tu multa dare potes, et ego tantum accipere possum; tecum stat fortuna, mecum bona voluntas; tamen tam par tibi sum, quam multis

armatissimis nudi aut leviter armati. [2] Nemo itaque beneficiis vincitur, quia tam gratus est quisque, quam voluit. Nam si turpe est beneficiis vinci, non oportet a praepotentibus viris accipere beneficium, quibus gratiam referre non possis, a principibus dico, a regibus, quos eo loco fortuna posuit, ex quo largiri multa possent pauca admodum et imparia datis recepturi. [3] Reges et principes dixi, quibus tamen potest opera navari et quorum illa excellens potentia per minorum consensum ministeriumque constat. At sunt quidam extra omnem subducti cupiditatem, qui vix ullis humanis desideriis continguntur; quibus nihil potest praestare ipsa fortuna. Necesse est a Socrate beneficiis vincar, necesse est a Diogene, qui per medias Macedonum gazas nudus incessit calcatis regis opibus. [4] O! ne ille tunc merito et sibi et ceteris, quibus ad dispiciendam veritatem non erat obfusa caligo, supra eum eminere visus est, infra quem omnia iacebant. Multo potentior, multo locupletior fuit omnia tunc possidente Alexandro; plus enim erat, quod hic nollet accipere, quam quod ille posset dare.

5. Non est turpe ab his vinci; neque enim minus fortis sum, si cum invulnerabili me hoste committis, nec ideo minus ignis urere potest, si in materiam incidit inviolabilem flammis, nec ideo ferrum secandi vim perdidit, si non recipiens ictum lapis solidusque et invictae adversus dura naturae dividendus est. Idem tibi de homine grato respondeo. Non turpiter vincitur beneficiis, si ab his obligatus est, ad quos aut fortunae magnitudo aut eximia virtus aditum reddituris ad se beneficiis clusit. [2] A parentibus fere vincimur. Nam tam diu illos habemus, quam diu iudicamus graves et quam diu beneficia illorum non intellegimus. Cum iam aetas aliquid prudentiae collegit et apparere coepit propter illa ipsa eos amari a nobis debere, propter quae non amabantur, admonitiones, severitatem et inconsultae adulescentiae diligentem custodiam, rapiuntur nobis. Paucos usque ad verum fructum a liberis percipiendum perduxit aetas; ceteri filios onere senserunt. [3] Non est tamen turpe vinci beneficiis a parente; quidni non sit turpe, eum a nullo sit? Quibusdam enim et pares et impares sumus, pares animo, quem solum illi exigunt, quem nos solum promittimus, impares fortuna, quae si cui obstitit, quominus referret gratiam, non ideo illi tamquam victo erubescendum est. Non est turpe non consequi, dummodo sequaris. [4] Saepe necesse est ante

alia beneficia petamus, quam priora reddidimus, nec ideo non petimus aut turpiter, quia non reddituri debebimus, quia non per nos erit mora, quominus gratissimi simus, sed interveniet aliquid extrinsecus, quod prohibeat. Nos tamen nec vincemur animo nec turpiter his rebus superabimur, quae non sunt in nostra potestate.

6. Alexander Macedonum rex gloriari solebat a nullo se beneficiis victum. Non est, quod nimius animi Macedonas et Graecos et Caras et Persas et nationes discriptas in exercitum suspiciat, nec hoc sibi praestitisse regnum a Thraciae angulo porrectum usque ad litus incogniti maris iudicet. Eadem re gloriari Socrates potuit, eadem Diogenes, a quo utique victus est, Quidni victus sit illo die, quo homo super mensuram iam humanae superbiae tumens vidit aliquem, cui nec dare quicquam posset nec eripere? [2] Archelaus rex Socratem rogavit, ut ad se veniret; dixisse Socrates traditur nolle se ad eum venire, a quo acciperet beneficia, cum reddere illi paria non posset. Primum in ipsius potestate erat non accipere; deinde ipse dare beneficium prior incipiebat, veniebat enim rogatus et id dabat, quod utique ille non erat Socrati redditurus. Etiamnunc Archelaus daturus erat aurum et argentum recepturus contemptum auri et argenti: non poterat referre Archelao Socrates gratias? [3] Et quid tantum erat accepturus, quantum dabat, si ostendisset hominem vitae ac mortis peritum utriusque fines tenentem? Si regem in luce media errantem ad rerum naturam admisisset usque eo eius ignarum, ut, quo die solis defectio fuit, regiam eluderet et filium, quod in luctu ac rebus adversis moris est, tenderet? [4] Quantum fuisset beneficium, si timentem e latebris suis extraxisset et bonum animum habere iussisset dicens : “ Non est ista solis defectio, sed duorum siderum coitus, cum luna humiliore currens via infra ipsum solem orbem suum posuit et illum obiectu sui abscondit; quae modo partes eius exiguas, si in transcurso strinxit, obducit, modo plus tegit, si maiorem partem sui obiecit, modo excludit totius adspectum, si recto libramento inter solem terrasque media successit. [5] Sed iam ista sidera hoc et illo diducet velocitas sua; iam recipient diem terrae, et hic ibit ordo per saecula dispositosque ac praedictos dies habet, quibus sol intercurso lunae vetetur omnes radios effundere. Paulum expecta; iam emerget, iam istam velut nubem relinquet, iam exsolutus impeditum lucem suam libere mittet.” [6] Socrates parem gratiam Archelao referre non

posset, si illum regnare vetuisset? Parum scilicet magnum beneficium a Socrate accipiebat, si ullum dare Socrati potuisset. Quare ergo hoc Socrates dixit? Vir facetus et cuius per figuras sermo procederet, derisor omnium, maxime potentium, maluit illi nasute negare quam contumaciter aut superbe; dixit se nolle beneficia ab eo accipere, cui non posset paria reddere. Timuit fortasse, ne cogeretur accipere, quae nollet, timuit, ne quid indignum Socrate accipere. Dicet aliquis : “ Negasset, si vellet. [7] “ Sed instigasset in se regem insolentem et omnia sua magno aestimari volentem. Nihil ad rem pertinet, utrum dare aliquid regi nolis an accipere a rege; in aequo utramque ponit repulsam, et superbo fastidiri acerbius est quam non timeri. Vis scire, quid vere voluerit? Noluit ire ad voluntariam servitutem is, cuius libertatem civitas libera ferre non potuit!

7. Satis, ut existimo, hanc partem tractavimus, an turpe esset beneficiis vinci. Quod qui quaerit, scit non solere homines sibi ipsos dare beneficium; mani- festum enim fuisset non esse turpe a se ipsum vinci. [2] Atqui apud quosdam Stoicos et de hoc ambigitur, an possit aliquis sibi beneficium dare, an debeat referre sibi gratiam. Quod ut videretur quaerendum, illa fecerunt : solemus dicere; “ gratias mihi ago “ et “ de nullo queri possum alio quam de me ” et “ ego mihi irascor “ et “ ego a me poenas exigam “ et “ odi me, ” multa praeterea eiusmodi, per quae unusquisque de se tamquam de altero loquitur. [3] “ Si nocere, ” inquit, “ mihi possum, quare non et beneficium mihi dare possim? Praeterea quae, si in alium contulissem, beneficia vocarentur, quare, si in me contuli, non sint? Quod, si ab altero accepissem, deberem, quare, si mihi ipse dedi, non debeam? Quare sim adversus me ingratus, quod non minus turpe est quam in se sordidum esse et in se durum ac saevum et sui negligenter? [4] Tam alieni corporis leno male audit quam sui. Nempe reprehenditur adsentator et aliena subsequens verba, paratus ad falsa laudator; non minus placens sibi et se suspiciens, ut ita dicam, adsentator suus. Vitia non tantum, cum foris pec- eant, invisae sunt, sed cum in se retorquentur. [5] Quem magis admiraberis, quam qui imperat sibi, quam qui se habet in potestate? Gentes facilius est barbaras impatientesque arbitrii alieni regere, quam animum suum continere et tradere sibi. Platon, inquit, agit Socrati gratias, quod ab illo didicit; quare Socrates sibi non agat, quod ipse se docuit? M. Cato ait

: ‘ Quod tibi deerit, a te ipso mutuare.’ Quare donare mihi non possim, si commodare possum? Innumerabilia sunt, in quibus consuetudo nos dividit; [6] dicere solemus : ‘ Sine, loquar tecum ‘ et ‘ Ego mihi aurem pervellam.’ Quae si vera sunt, quemadmodum aliquis sibi irasci debet, sic et gratias agere; quomodo obiurgare se, sic et laudare se; quomodo damno sibi esse, sic et lucro potest. Iniuria et beneficium contraria sunt; si de aliquo dicimus : ‘ Iniuriam sibi fecit,’ poterimus dicere et : ‘ Beneficium sibi dedit.’ “

8. Natura prius est, ut quis debeat, deinde, ut gratiam referat; debitor non est sine creditore, non magis quam maritus sine uxore aut sine filio pater; aliquis dare debet, ut aliquis accipiat. Non est dare nec accipere in dexteram manum ex sinistra trans- ferre. [2] Quomodo nemo se portat, quamvis corpus suum moveat et transferat, quomodo nemo, quamvis pro se dixerit, adfuisse sibi dicitur nec statuam sibi tamquam patrono suo ponit, quomodo aeger, cum cura sua convaluit, mercedem a se non exigit, sic in omni negotio, etiam cum aliquid, quod prodesset sibi, fecerit, non tamen debebit referre gratiam sibi, quia non habebit, cui referat. [3] Ut concedam aliquem dare sibi beneficium, dum dat, et recipit; ut concedam aliquem a se accipere beneficium, dum accipit, reddit. Domi, quod aiunt, versura fit et velut lusorium nomen statim transit; neque enim alius dat quam accipit, sed unus atque idem. Hoc verbum “ debere “ non habet nisi inter duos locum; quomodo ergo in uno consistet, qui se obligando liberat? [4] Ut in orbe ac pila nihil inum est, nihil summum, nihil extremum, nihil primum, quia motu ordo mutatur et quae sequebantur praecedunt et quae occidebant oriuntur, omnia, quomodocumque ierunt, in idem revertuntur, ita in homine existima fieri; cum illum in multa mutaveris, unus est. Cecidit se : iniuriarum cum quo agat, non habet; adligavit et clusit : de vi non tenetur; beneficium sibi dedit : danti protinus reddidit. [5] Rerum natura nihil dicitur perdere, quia, quidquid illi avellitur, ad illam redit, nec perire quicquam potest, quod, quo excidat, non habet, sed eodem revolvitur, unde discedit. “ Quid simile,” inquis, “ hoc exemplum habet huic propositae quaestioni? “ [6] Dicam. Puta te ingratum esse : non perit bene- ficium, habet illud, qui dedit. Puta te recipere nolle : apud te est, antequam redditur. Non potes quicquam amittere, quia, quod detrahitur, nihilo minus tibi acquiritur. Intra te ipsum orbis agitur;

accipiendo das, dando accipis.

9. “Beneficium,” inquit, “sibi dare oportet; ergo et referre gratiam oportet.” Primum illud falsum est, ex quo pendent sequentia; nemo enim sibi beneficium dat, sed naturae suae paret, a qua ad caritatem sui compositus est, unde summa illi cura est nocitura vitandi, profutura appetendi. [2] Itaque nec liberalis est, qui sibi donat, nec clemens, qui sibi ignoscit, nec misericors, qui malis suis tangitur. Quod aliis praestare liberalitas est, clementia, misericordia, sibi praestare natura est. Beneficium res voluntaria est, at prodesse sibi necessarium est. Quo quis plura beneficia dedit, beneficentior est; quis umquam laudatus est, quod sibi ipse fuisset auxilio? Quod se eripuisset latronibus? Nemo sibi beneficium dat, non magis quam hospitium; nemo sibi donat, non magis quam credit. [3] Si dat sibi quisque beneficium, semper dat, sine intermissione dat, inire beneficiorum suorum non potest numerum. Quando ergo gratiam referet, cum per hoc ipsum, quo gratiam refert, beneficium det? Quomodo enim discernere poteris, utrum det sibi beneficium an reddat, cum intra eundem hominem res geratur? Liberavi me periculo : beneficium mihi dedi. Iterum me periculo libero : utrum do beneficium an reddo? [4] Deinde, ut primum illud concedam dare nos nobis beneficium, quod sequitur, non concedam; nam etiam si damus, non debemus. Quare? Quia statim recipimus. Accipere beneficium me oportet, deinde debere, deinde referre; debendi locus non est, quia sine ulla mora recipimus. Dat nemo nisi alteri, debet nemo nisi alteri, reddit nemo nisi alteri. Id intra unum non potest fieri, quod totiens duos exigit.

10. Beneficium est praestitisse aliquid utiliter; verbum autem “praestitisse” ad alios spectat. Numquid non demens videbitur, qui aliquid sibi vendidisse se dicet? Quia venditio alienatio est et rei suae iurisque in ea sui ad alium translatio. Atqui, quemadmodum vendere, sic dare aliquid a se dimittere est et id, quod tenueris, habendum alteri tradere. Quod si est, beneficium nemo sibi dedit, quia nemo dat sibi; alioqui duo contraria in uno coeunt, ut sit idem dare et accipere. [2] Etiamnunc multum interest inter dare et accipere; quidni? eum ex diverso ista verba posita sint. Atqui si quis sibi beneficium dat, nihil interest inter dare et accipere. Paulo ante dicebam quaedam ad alios pertinere et sic esse formata, ut tota significatio illorum discedat a

nobis : frater sum, alterius, nemo est enim suus frater; par sum, sed alicui, quis enim par est sibi? Quod comparatur, sine altero non intellegitur; quod iungitur, sine altero non est; sic et, quod datur, sine altero non est, et beneficium sine altero non est. [3] Idem ipso vocabulo apparet, in quo hoc continetur, “ bene fecisse “; nemo autem sibi bene facit, non magis quam sibi favet, quam suarum partium est. Diutius hoc et pluribus exemplis licet proseguere. [4] Quidni? cum inter ea sit habendum beneficium, quae secundam personam desiderant. Quaedam, cum sint honesta, pulcherrima, summae virtutis, nisi in altero non habent locum. Laudatur et inter maxima humani generis bona fides colitur; num quis ergo dicitur sibi fidem praestitisse?

11. Venio nunc ad ultimam partem. Qui gratiam refert, aliquid debet impendere, sicut, qui solvit, pecuniam; nihil autem impendit, qui gratiam sibi refert, non magis quam consequitur, qui beneficium a se accepit. Beneficium et gratiae relatio ultro citro ire debent; intra unum hominem non est vicissitudo. Qui gratiam refert, invicem prodest ei, a quo consecutus est aliquid. Qui sibi gratiam refert, cui prodest? Sibi. Et quis non alio loco relationem gratiae, alio beneficium cogitat? Qui gratiam refert sibi, sibi prodest. Et quis umquam ingratus hoc noluit facere? Immo quis non ingratus fuit, ut hoc faceret? [2] “Si gratias,” inquit, “nobis agere debemus, et gratiam referre debemus; dicimus autem : ‘ Ago gratias mihi, quod illam uxorem nolui ducere ‘ et ‘ quod cum illo non contraxi societatem.’ “ Cum hoc dicimus, laudamus nos et, ut factum nostrum comprobemus, gratias agentium verbis abutimur. [3] Beneficium est, quod potest, cum datum est, et non reddi; qui sibi beneficium dat, non potest non recipere, quod dedit; ergo non est beneficium. Alio tempore beneficium accipitur, alio redditur. In [4] beneficio et hoc est probabile, hoc suspiciendum, quod aliquis, ut alteri prodesset, utilitatis interim suae oblitus est, quod alteri dedit ablaturus sibi. Hoc non facit, qui beneficium sibi dat. [5] Beneficium dare socialis res est, aliquem conciliat, aliquem obligat, sibi dare non est socialis res, neminem conciliat, neminem obligat, neminem in spem inducit, ut dicat : “ Hic homo colendus est; illi beneficium dedit, dabit et mihi. [6] “ Beneficium est, quod quis non sua causa dat, sed eius, cui dat; is autem, qui sibi beneficium dat, sua causa dat; non est ergo

beneficium.

12. Videor tibi iam illud, quod in principio dixeram, mentitus. Dicis me abesse ab eo, qui operae pretium facit, immo totam operam bona fide perdere. Expecta, et iam hoc verius dices, simul te ad has latebras perduxero, ex quibus cum evaseris, nihil amplius eris adsecutus, quam ut eas difficultates effugeris, in quas licuit non descendere. [2] Quid enim boni est nodos operose solvere, quos ipse, ut solveres, feceris? Sed quemadmodum quaedam in oblectamentum ac iocum sic inligantur, ut eorum solutio imperito difficilis sit, quae illi, qui implicuit, sine ullo negotio paret, quia commissuras eorum et moras novit, nihilo minus illa habent aliquam voluptatem (temptant enim acumen animorum et intentionem excitant), ita haec, quae videntur callida et insidiosa, securitatem ac segnitiam ingeniis auferunt, quibus modo campus, in quo vagentur, sternendus est, modo creperi aliquid et confragosi obiciendum, per quod erepant et sollicite vestigium faciant. [3] Dicitur nemo ingratus esse; id sic colligitur: “ Beneficium est, quod prodest; prodesse autem nemo homini malo potest, ut dicitis Stoici; ergo beneficium non accipit malus, ... ingratus est. “ Etiamnunc beneficium honesta et probabilis res est; apud malum nulli honestae rei aut probabili locus est, ergo nec beneficium; quod si accipere non potest, ne reddere quidem debet, et ideo non fit ingratus. [4] “ Etiamnunc, ut dicitis, bonus vir omnia recte facit; si omnia recte facit, ingratus esse non potest. Malo viro beneficium nemo dare potest. Bonus beneficium reddit, malus non accipit; quod si est, nec bonus quisquam ingratus est nec malus. Ita ingratus in rerum natura est nemo, et hoc inane nomen.”4 [5] Unum est apud nos bonum, honestum. Id pervenire ad malum non potest; desinet enim malus esse, si ad illum virtus intraverit; quam diu autem malus est, nemo illi dare beneficium potest, quia mala bonaque dissentiant nec in unum eunt. Ideo nemo illi prodest, quia, quidquid ad illum pervenit, id pravo usu corrumpitur. [6] Quemadmodum stomachus morbo vitatus et colligens bilem, quoscumque accepit cibos, mutat et omne alimentum in causam doloris trahit, ita animus scaevus, quidquid illi commiseris, id onus suum et perniciem et occasionem miseriae facit. Felieissimis itaque opulentissimisque plurimum aestus subest minusque se inveniunt, quo in maiorem materiam inciderunt, qua fluctuantur. [7] Ergo nihil potest ad malos

pervenire, quod prosit, immo nihil, quod non noceat. Quaecumque enim illis con- tigerunt, in naturam suam vertunt et extra speciosa profuturaque, si meliori darentur, illis pestifera sunt. Ideo nec beneficium dare possunt, quoniam nemo potest, quod non habet, dare; hic bene faciendi voluntate caret.

13. Sed quamvis haec ita sint, accipere etiam malus tamen quaedam potest, quae beneficiis similia sint, quibus non redditis ingratus erit. Sunt animi bona, sunt corporis, sunt fortunae. Illa animi bona a stulto ac malo submoventur; ad haec admittitur, quae et accipere potest et debet reddere, et, si non reddit, ingratus est. Nec hoc ex nostra tantum constitutione. Peripatetici quoque, qui felicitatis humanae longe lateque terminos ponunt, aiunt minuta beneficia perventura ad malos; haec qui non reddit, in- gratus est. [2] Nobis itaque beneficia esse non placet, quae non sunt animum factura meliorem; commoda tamen illa esse et expetenda non negamus. Haec et viro bono dare malus potest et accipere a bono, ut pecuniam et vestem et honores et vitam; quae si non reddit, in ingrati nomen incidet. [3] “At quomodo ingratum vocas eo non reddito, quod negas esse beneficium?” Quaedam, etiam si vera non sunt, propter similitudinem eodem vocabulo comprehensa sunt. Sic pyxidem et argenteam et auream dicimus; sic inlitteratum non ex toto rudem, sed ad litteras altiores non perductum; sic, qui male vestitum et pannosum vidit, nudum vidisse se dicit. Beneficia ista non sunt, habent tamen beneficii speciem. [4] “Quomodo ista sunt tamquam beneficia, sic et ille tamquam ingratus est, non ingratus.” Falsum est, quia illa beneficia et qui dat appellat et qui accipit. Ita, qui veri beneficii speciem fefellit, tam ingratus est quam veneficus, qui soporem, cum venenum esse crederet, miscuit.

14. Cleanthes vehementius agit. “Licet,” inquit, “beneficium non sit, quod accepit, ipse tamen ingratus est, quia non fuit redditurus, etiam si ac- cepisset. [2] “Sic latro est etiam antequam manus inquinet, quia ad occidendum iam armatus est et habet spoliandi atque interficiendi voluntatem; exercetur et aperitur opere nequitia, non incipit. Sacrilegi dant poenas, quamvis nemo usque ad deos manus porrigat. [3] “Quomodo,” inquit, “adversus malum ingratus est quisquam, cum a malo dari beneficium non possit?” Ea scilicet ratione, quia ipsum, quod accepit, beneficium non erat, sed

vocabatur; qui accipiet ab illo aliquid ex his, quae apud imperitos sunt, quorum et malis copia est, ipse quoque in simili materia gratus esse debet et illa, qualiacumque sunt, cum pro bonis acceperit, pro bonis reddere. [4] Aes alienum habere dicitur et qui aureos debet et qui corium forma publica percussus, quale apud Lacedaemonios fuit, quod usum numeratae pecuniae praestat. Quo genere obligatus es, hoc fidem ex- solve. [5] Quid sint beneficia, an et in hanc sordidam humilemque materiam deduci magnitudo nominis clari debeat, ad vos non pertinet; in alios quaeritur verum. Vos ad speciem veri componite animum et, dum honestum discitis, quidquid est, in quo nomen honesti iactatur, id colite.

15. “ Quomodo,” inquit, “ nemo per vos ingratus est, sic rursus omnes ingrati sunt.” Nam, ut dicimus, omnes stulti mali sunt; qui unum autem habet vitium, omnia habet; omnes autem stulti et mali sunt; omnes ergo ingrati sunt. [2] Quid ergo? Non sunt? Non undique humano generi convicium fit? Non publica querella est perisse beneficia et paucissimos esse, qui de bene merentibus non invicem pessime mereantur? Nec est, quod hanc nostram tantum murmurationem putes pro pessimo pravoque numerantium, quidquid citra recti formulam cecidit. [3] Ecce nescioqui non ex philosophorum domo clamat, ex medio conventu populos gentesque damnatum vox mittitur : Hoc iam amplius est : [4] beneficia in scelus versa sunt, et sanguini eorum non parcitur, pro quibus sanguis fundendus est; gladio ac venenis beneficia sequimur. Ipsi patriae manus adferre et fascibus illam suis premere potentia ac dignitas est; humili se ac depresso loco putat stare, quisquis non supra rem publicam stetit; accepti ab illa exercitus in ipsam convertuntur, et imperatoria contio est : [5] “ Pugmate contra coniuges, pugmate contra liberos! Aras, focos, penates armis incessite! “ Qui ne triumphatum quidem inire urbem iniussu senatus deberetis quibusque victorem exercitum reducentibus curia extra muros praeberetur, nunc civibus caesis perfusi cruore cognato urbem subrectis intrate vexillis. [6] Obmutescat inter militaria signa libertas, et ille victor pacatorque gentium populus remotis procul bellis, omni terrore compresso, intra muros obsessus aquilas suas horreat.

16. Ingratus est Coriolanus, sero et post sceleris paenitentiam pius; posuit arma, sed in medio parricidio posuit. Ingratus Catilina; parum

est illi capere patriam, nisi verterit, nisi Allobrogum in illam cohortes immiserit et trans Alpes accitus hostis vetera et ingenita odia satiaverit ac diu debitas inferias Gallicis bustis duces Romanos persolverit. [2] Ingratus C. Marius ad consulatus a caliga perductus, qui, nisi Cimbricis caedibus Romana funera aequaverit, nisi civilis exitii et trucidationis non tantum dederit signum, sed ipse signum fuerit, parum mutata ac reposita in priorem locum fortunam suam sentiet. [3] Ingratus L. Sulla, qui patriam duri oribus remediis, quam pericula erant, sanavit, qui, cum a Praenestina arce usque ad Collinam portam per sanguinem humanum incessisset, alia edidit in urbe proelia, alias caedes : legiones duas, quod crudele est, post victoriam, quod nefas, post fidem in angulo congestas contrucidavit et proscriptionem commentus est, di magni, ut, qui civem Romanum occidisset, impunitatem, pecuniam, tantum non civicam acciperet! [4] Ingratus Cn. Pompeius, qui pro tribus consulatibus, pro triumphis tribus, pro tot honoribus, quos ex maxima parte immaturus invaserat, hanc gratiam rei publicae reddidit, ut in possessionem eius alios quoque induceret quasi potentiae suae detracturus invidiam, si, quod nulli licere debebat, pluribus licuisset; dum extraordinaria concupiscit imperia, dum provincias, ut eligat, distribuit, dum ita cum tertio rem publicam dividit, ut tamen in sua domo duae partes essent, eo redegit populum Romanum, ut salvus esse non posset nisi beneficio servitutis. [5] Ingratus ipse Pompei hostis ac victor; a Gallia Germaniaeque bellum in urbem circumegit, et ille plebicola, ille popularis castra in circo Flaminio posuit propius, quam Porsinae fuerant. Temperavit quidem ius crudelitatemque victoriae; quod dicere solebat, praestitit: neminem occidit nisi armatum. Quid ergo est? Ceteri arma cruentius exercuerunt, satiata tamen aliquando abiecerunt; hic gladium cito condidit, numquam posuit. [6] Ingratus Antonius in dictatorem suum, quem iure caesum pronuntiavit, interfectores eius in provincias et imperia dimisit; patriam vero proscriptionibus, incursionibus, bellis laceratam post tot mala destinavit ne Romanis quidem regibus, ut, quae Achaeis, Rhodiis, plerisque urbibus claris ius integrum libertatemque cum immunitate reddiderat, ipsa tributum spadonibus penderet!

17. Deficiet dies enumerantem ingratos usque in ultima patriae exitia. Aequè immensum erit, si percurrere coepero, ipsa res publica

quam ingrata in optimos ac devotissimos sibi fuerit quamque non minus saepe peccaverit, quam in ipsam peccatum est. [2] Camillum in exilium misit, Scipionem dimisit; exsulavit post Catilinam Cicero, diruti eius penates, bona direpta, factum, quidquid victor Catilina fecisset; Rutilius innocentiae pretium tulit in Asia latere; Catoni populus Romanus praeturam negavit, consulatum pernegavit. [3] Ingrati publice sumus. Se quisque interroget: nemo non aliquem queritur ingratum. Atqui non potest fieri, ut omnes querantur, nisi querendum est de omnibus : omnes ergo ingrati sunt. Ingrati sunt tantum? Et cupidi omnes et maligni omnes et timidi omnes, illi in primis, qui videntur audaces. Adice : et ambitiosi omnes sunt et impii omnes. Sed non est, quod irascaris; ignosce illis, omnes insaniunt. [4] Nolo te ad incerta revocare, ut dicam : “ Vide, quam ingrata sit iuventus! Quis non patris sui supremum diem, ut innocens sit, optat? Ut moderatus sit, expectat? Ut pius, cogitat? Quotus quisque uxoris optimae mortem timet, ut non et computet? Cui, rogo, litigatori defenso tam magni beneficii ultra res proximas memoria duravit? “ [5] Illud in confesso est : quis sine querella moritur? Quis extremo die dicere audet :

Vixi et quem dederat cursum fortuna peregi?

Quis non recusans, quis non gemens exit? Atqui hoc ingrati est non esse contentum praeterito tempore. Semper pauci dies erunt, si illos numeraveris. [6] Cogita non esse summum bonum in tempore; quantumcumque est, boni consules. Ut prorogetur tibi dies mortis, nihil proficitur ad felicitatem, quoniam mora non fit beatior vita sed longior. [7] Quanto satius est gratum adversus perceptas voluptates non aliorum annos computare, sed suos benigne aestimare et in lucro ponere! “ Hoc me dignum iudicavit deus, hoc satis est; potuit plus, sed hoc quoque beneficium est.” Grati simus adversus deos, grati adversus homines, grati adversus eos, qui aliquid nobis praestiterunt, grati etiam adversus eos, qui nostris praestiterunt.

18. “ In infinitum ius,” inquit, “ me obligas, cum dicis : ‘ et nostris ‘; itaque pone aliquem finem. Qui filio beneficium dat, ut dicis, et patri eius dat: primum, de quo quaero. Deinde illud utique mihi determinari volo : si et patri beneficium datur, numquid et fratri?

Numquid et patruo? Numquid et avo? Numquid et uxori et socero? Dic mihi, ubi debeam desinere, quousque personarum senem sequar.” [2] Si agrum tuum coluero, tibi beneficium dederō; si domum tuam ardentem restinxero aut, ne concidat, excepero, tibi beneficium dabo; si servum tuum sanavero, tibi imputabo; si filium tuum servavero, non habebis beneficium meum?

19. “ Dissimilia ponis exempla, quia, qui agrum meum colit, agro beneficium non dat sed mihi; et qui domum meam, quo minus ruat, fulcit, praestat mihi, ipsa enim domus sine sensu est; debitorem me habet, quia nullum habet; et qui agrum meum colit, non illum, sed me demereri vult. Idem de servo dicam : mei mancipii res est, mihi servatur; ideo ego pro illo debeo. Filius ipse beneficii capax est; itaque ille accipit, ego beneficio laetor et contingor, non obligor.” [2] Velim tamen, tu, qui debere te non putas, respondeas mihi. Filii bona valetudo, felicitas, patrimonium pertinet ad patrem; felicior futurus est, si salvum filium habuerit, infelicior, si amiserit. Quid ergo? Qui et felicior fit a me et infelicitatis maximae periculo liberatur, non accipit beneficium? [3] “ Non,” inquit; “ quaedam enim in alios conferuntur, sed ad nos usque permanant; ab eo autem exigī quidque debet, in quem confertur, sicut pecunia ab eo petitur, cui credita est, quamvis ad me illa aliquo modo venerit. Nullum beneficium est, cuius non commodum et proximos tangat, non numquam etiam longius positos; [4] non quaeritur, quo beneficium ab eo, cui datum est, transierit, sed ubi primo collocetur; a reo tibi ipso et a capite repetitio est.” Quid ergo? Oro te, non dicis : “ Filium mihi donasti, et, si hic perisset, victurus non fui “? Pro eius vita beneficium non debes, cuius vitam tuae praeferas? Etiamnunc, cum filium tuum servavi, ad genua procumbis, dis vota solvis tamquam ipse servatus; illae voces exeunt tibi : [5] “ Nihil mea interest, an me servaveris; duos servasti, immo me magis.” Quare ista dicis, si non accipis beneficium? “ Quia et, si filius meus pecuniam mutuam sumpserit, creditori numerabo, non tamen ideo ego debuero; quia et, si filius meus in adulterio deprensus erit, erubescam, non ideo ego ero adulter. [6] Dico me tibi obligatum pro filio, non quia sum, sed quia volo me offerre tibi debitorem voluntarium. At pervenit ad me summa ex incolumitate eius voluptas, summa utilitas, et orbitatis gravissimum vulnus effugi. Non quaeritur nunc, an profueris mihi,

sed an beneficium dederis; prodest enim et animal et lapis et herba, nec tamen beneficium dant, quod numquam datur nisi a volente. [7] Tu autem non vis patri, sed filio dare, et interim ne nosti quidem patrem. Itaque cum dixeris: ‘ Patri ergo beneficium non dedi filium eius servando? ‘ contra oppone : ‘ Patri ergo beneficium dedi, quem non novi, quem non cogitavi? ‘ Et quid quod aliquando eveniet, ut patrem oderis, filium serves? Beneficium ei videberis dedisse, cui tunc inimicissimus eras, cum dares? “ [8] Sed ut dialogorum altercatione seposita tamquam iuris consultus respondeam, mens spectanda est dantis; beneficium ei dedit, cui datum voluit. Si in patris honorem fecit, pater accepit beneficium; si filii in usum, pater beneficio in filium conlato non obligatur, etiam si fruitur. Si tamen occasionem habuerit, volet et ipse praestare aliquid, non tamquam solvendi necessitatem habeat, sed tamquam incipiendi causam. Repeti a patre beneficium non debet; si quid pro hoc benigne facit, iustus, non gratus est. [9] Nam illud finire non potest : si patri do beneficium, et matri et avo et avunculo et liberis et adfinibus et amicis et servis et patriae. Ubi ergo beneficium incipit stare? Sontes enim ille inexplicabilis subit, cui difficile est modum imponere, quia paulatim surrepit et non desinit serpere.

20. Illud solet quaeri: “ Fratres duo dissident; si alterum servo, an dem beneficium ei, qui fratrem invisum non perisse moleste laturus est.” Non est dubium, quin beneficium sit etiam invito prodesse, sicut non dedit beneficium, qui invitatus profuit. [2] “ Beneficium,” inquit, “ vocas, quo ille offenditur, quo torquetur? “ Multa beneficia tristem frontem et asperam habent, quemadmodum secare et urere, ut sanes, et vinclis coercere. Non est spectandum, an doleat aliquis beneficio accepto, sed an gaudere debeat; non est malus denarius, quem barbarus et ignarus formae publicae reiecit. Beneficium et odit et accepit, si modo id prodest, si is, qui dabat, ut prodesset, dedit. Nihil refert, an bonam rem malo animo quis accipiat. [3] Agedum, hoc in contrarium verte. Odit fratrem suum, quem illi habere expedit; hunc ego occidi: non est beneficium, quamvis ille dicat esse et gaudeat. Insidiosissime nocet, cui gratiae aguntur pro iniuria! [4] “ Video : prodest aliqua res et ideo beneficium est; nocet et ideo non est beneficium. Ecce, quod nec prosit nec noceat, dabo, et tamen beneficium erit. Patrem alicuius in solitudine exanimem inveni,

corpus eius sepelivi. Nec ipsi profui (quid enim illius intererat, quo genere dilaberetur?) nec filio (quid enim illi per hoc commodi accessit?).” Dicam, quid consecutus sit : officio sollemni et necessario per me functus est; [5] praestiti patri eius, quod ipse praestare voluisset nec non et debuisset. Hoc tamen ita beneficium est, si non misericordiae et humanitati dedi, ut quodlibet cadaver absconderem, sed si corpus adgnovi, si filio tunc hoc praestare me cogitavi. At si terram ignoto mortuo inieci, nullum in hoc habeo huius officii debitorem in publicum humanus. [6] Dicet aliquis : “ Quid tanto opere quaeris, cui dederis beneficium, tamquam repetiturus aliquando? Sunt, qui numquam iudicent esse repetendum, et has causas adferunt. Indignus etiam repetenti non reddet, dignus ipse per se referet. Praeterea, si bono viro dedisti, expecta, ne iniuriam illi facias appellando, tamquam sua sponte redditurus non fuisset. Si malo viro dedisti, plectere; beneficium vero ne corruperis creditum faciendo. Praeterea lex, quod non iussit repeti, vetuit.” [7] Verba sunt ista. Quam diu me nihil urguet, quam diu fortuna nihil cogit, perdam potius beneficium quam repetam. Sed si de salute liberorum agitur, si in periculum uxor deducitur, si patriae salus ac libertas mittit me etiam, quo ire nollem, imperabo pudori meo et testabor omnia me fecisse, ne opus esset mihi auxilio hominis ingrati; novissime recipiendi beneficii necessitas repetendi verecundiam vincet. Deinde, eum bono viro beneficium do, sic do tamquam numquam repetiturus, nisi fuerit necesse.

21. “ Sed lex,” inquit, “ non permittendo exigere vetuit.” Multa legem non habent nec actionem, ad quae consuetudo vitae humanae omni lege valentior dat aditum. Nulla lex iubet amicorum secreta non eloqui; nulla lex iubet fidem etiam inimico praestare; quae lex ad id praestandum nos, quod alicui promisimus, adligat? Nulla. Querar tamen cum eo, qui arcanum sermonem non continuerit, et fidem datam nec servatam indignabor. [2] “ Sed ex beneficio,” inquit, “ creditum facis.” Minime; non enim exigo, sed repeto, et ne repeto quidem, sed admoneo. Num ultima quoque me necessitas in hoc aget, ut ad eum veniam, cum quo mihi diu luctandum sit? Si quis tam ingratus est, ut illi non sit satis admoneri, eum transibo nec dignum iudicabo, qui gratus esse cogatur. [3] Quomodo fenerator quosdam debitores non appellat, quos scit decoxisse et in quorum pudorem

nihil superest, nisi quod pereat, sic ego quosdam ingratos palam ac pertinaciter praeteribo nec ab ullo beneficium repetam, nisi a quo non ablaturus ero, sed recepturus.

22. Multi sunt, qui nec negare sciant, quod acceperunt, nec referre, qui nec tam boni sunt quam grati nec tam mali quam ingrati, segnes et tardi, lenta nomina, non mala. Hos ego non appellabo, sed commonefaciam et ad officium aliud agentes re- ducam. Qui statim mihi sic respondebunt : “ Ignosce; non mehercules scivi hoc te desiderare, alioqui ultro obtulissem; rogo, ne me ingratum existimes; memini, quid mihi praestiteris.” Hos ego quare dubitem et sibi meliores et mihi facere? Quemcumque potuero, peccare prohibebo; [2] multo magis amicum, et ne peccet et ne in me potissimum peccet. Alterum illi beneficium do, si illum ingratum esse non patior; nec dure illi exprobrabo, quod praestiti, sed quam potuero mollissime. Ut potestatem referendae gratiae faciam, renovabo memoriam eius et petam beneficium; ipse me intelletget repetere. [3] Aliquando utar verbis durioribus, si emendari illum posse speravero; nam deploratum propter hoc quoque non exagitabo, ne ex ingrato inimicum faciam. [4] Quod si admonitionis quoque sugillationem ingratis remittimus, segniore ad reddenda beneficia faciemus; quosdam vero sanabiles et qui fieri boni possint, si quid illos momorderit, perire patiemur admonitione sublata, qua et pater filium aliquando correxit et uxor maritum aberrantem ad se reduxit et amicus languentem amici fidem erexit.

23. Quidam, ut expergiscantur, non feriendi, sed commovendi sunt; eodem modo quorundam ad referendam gratiam fides non cessat, sed languet. Hanc pervellamus. “ Noli munus tuum in iniuriam vertere; iniuria est enim, si in hoc non repetis, ut ingratus sim. Quid, si ignoro, quid desideres? Quid, si occupationibus districtus et in aha vocatus occasionem non observavi? Ostende mihi, quid possim, quid velis. Quare desperes, antequam temptes? [2] Quare properas et beneficium et amicum perdere? Unde scis, nolim an ignorem, animus an facultas desit mihi? Experire.” Admonebo ergo non amare, non palam, sine convicio, sic, ut se redisse in memoriam, non reduci putet.

24. Causam dicebat apud divum Iulium ex veteranis quidam paulo violentior adversus vicinos suos et causa premebatur. “ Meministi,”

inquit, “imperator, in Hispania, talum extorsisse te circa Sucronem?” Cum Caesar meminisse se dixisset : “Meministi quidem sub quadam arbore minimum umbrae spargente cum velles residere ferventissimo sole et esset asperrimus locus, in quo ex rupibus acutis unica illa arbor eruperat, quendam ex commilitonibus paenulam suam substravisse?” [2] Cum dixisset Caesar : “Quidni meminerim? Et quidem siti confectus, quia impeditus ire ad fontem proximum non poteram, repere manibus volebam, nisi commilito, homo fortis ac strenuus, aquam mihi in galea sua adtulisset” — , “Potes ergo,” inquit, “imperator, agnoscere illum hominem aut illam galeam?” Caesar ait se non posse galeam agnoscere, hominem pulchre posse, et adiecit, puto obiratus, quod se a cognitione media ad veterem fabulam abduceret : [3] “Tu utique ille non es.” “Merito!” inquit, “Caesar, me non agnoscis; nam cum hoc factum est, integer eram; postea ad Mundam in acie oculus mihi effossus est et in capite lecta ossa. Nec galeam illam, si videris, agnosces; machaera enim Hispana divisa est.” Vetuit illi exhiberi negotium Caesar et agellos, in quibus vicinalis via causa rixae ac litium fuerat, militi suo donavit.

25. Quid ergo? Non repeteret beneficium ab imperatore, cuius memoriam multitudo rerum confuderat, quem fortuna ingentes exercitus disponentem non patiebatur singulis militibus occurrere? Non est hoc repetere beneficium, sed resumere bono loco positum et paratum, ad quod tamen, ut sumatur, manus porrigenda est. Repetam itaque, quia hoc aut ex magna necessitate facturus ero aut illius causa, a quo repetam. [2] Ti. Caesar inter initia dicenti cuidam: “Meministi—” antequam plures notas familiaritatis veteris proferret : “Non memini,” inquit, “quid fuerim.” Ab hoc quidni non esset repetendum beneficium? Optanda erat oblivio; aversabatur omnium amicorum et aequalium notitiam et illam solam praesentem fortunam suam adspici, illam solam cogitari ac narrari volebat. Inquisitorem habebat veterem amicum! [3] Magis tempestive repetendum est beneficium quam petendum. Adhibenda verborum moderatio, ut nec gratus possit offendi nec ingratus dissimulare. Tacendum erat et expectandum, si inter sapientes viveremus; et tamen sapientibus quoque indicare melius fuisset, quid rerum nostrarum status posceret. [4] Deos, quorum notitiam nulla res effugit, rogamus, et illos vota non exorant, sed admonent. Dis quoque,

inquam, Homericus ille sacerdos adlegat officia et aras religiose cultas. Moneri velle ac posse secunda virtus est. [5] Equus obsequens facile et parens huc illuc frenis leniter motis flectendus est. Paucis animus sui rector optimus; proximi sunt, qui admoniti in viam redeunt; his non est dux detrahendus. [6] Opertis oculis inest acies, sed sine usu; quam lumen diei iis immissum ad ministeria sua evocat. Instrumenta cessant, nisi illa in opus suum artifex movit. Inest interim animis voluntas bona, sed torpet modo deliciis ac situ, modo officii inscitia. Hanc utilem facere debemus nec irati relinquere in vitio, sed ut magistri patienter ferre offensationes puerorum discentium memoriae labentis; quae quemadmodum saepe subiecto uno aut altero verbo ad contextum reddendae orationis adducta est, sic ad referendam gratiam admonitione revocanda est.

LIBER VI

1. Quaedam, Liberalis, virorum optime, exercendi tantum ingenii causa quaeruntur et semper extra vitam iacent; quaedam et, dum quaeruntur, oblectamento sunt et quaesita usui. Omnium tibi copiam faciam; tu illa, utcumque tibi visum erit, aut peragi iubeto aut ad explicandum ludorum ordinem induci. Quin his quoque, si abire protinus iusseris, non nihil actum erit; nam etiam quae discere supervacuum est, prodest cognoscere. Ex vultu igitur tuo pendebo; prout ille suaserit mihi, alia detinebo diutius, alia expellam et capite agam.

2. An beneficium eripi posset, quaesitum est. Quidam negant posse; non enim res est, sed actio. Quomodo aliud est munus, aliud ipsa donatio, aliud qui navigat, aliud navigatio, et, quamvis in morbo aeger sit, non tamen idem est aeger et morbus, ita aliud est beneficium ipsum, aliud quod ad unum- quemque nostrum beneficio pervenit. Illud incorporale est, irritum non fit; [2] materia vero eius huc et illuc iactatur et dominum mutat. Itaque eum eripis, ipsa rerum natura revocare, quod dedit, non potest. Beneficia sua interrumpit, non rescindit : qui moritur, tamen vixit; qui amisit oculos, tamen vidit. Quae ad nos pervenerunt, ne sint, effici potest, ne fuerint, non potest; pars autem beneficii et quidem certissima est, quae fuit. [3] Non numquam usu beneficii longiore prohibemur, beneficium quidem ipsum non eraditur. Licet omnes in hoc vires suas natura advocet, retro illi agere se non licet. Potest eripi domus et pecunia et mancipium et quidquid est, in quo haesit beneficii nomen; ipsum vero stabile et immotum est; nulla vis efficiet, ne hic dederit, ne ille acceperit.

3. Egrege mihi videtur M. Antonius apud Rabirium poetam, cum fortunam suam transeuntem alio videat et sibi nihil relictum praeter ius mortis, id quoque, si cito occupaverit, exclamare : Hoc habeo, quodcumque dedi. O! quantum habere potuit, si voluisset! Hae sunt divitiae certae in quacumque sortis humanae levitate uno loco permansurae; quae cum maiores fuerint, hoc minorem habebunt invidiam. Quid tamquam tuo parcis? Procurator es. [2] Omnia ista, quae vos tumidos et supra humana elatos oblivisci cogunt vestrae

fragilitatis, quae ferreis claustris custoditis armati, quae ex alieno sanguine rapta vestro defenditis, propter quae classes cruentaturas maria deducitis, propter quae quassatis urbes ignari, quantum telorum in aversos fortuna comparet, propter quae ruptis totiens adfinitatis, amicitiae, collegii foederibus inter contententes duos terrarum orbis elisus est, non sunt vestra. In depositi causa sunt iam iamque ad alium dominum spectantia; aut hostis illa aut hostilis animi successor invadet. [3] Quaeris, quomodo illa tua facias? Dona dando. Consule igitur rebus tuis et certam tibi earum atque inexpugnabilem possessionem para honestiores illas, non solum tutiores facturus. [4] Istud, quod suspicis, quo te divitem ac potentem putas, quam diu possides, sub nomine sordido iacet. Domus est, servus est, nummi sunt; cum donasti, beneficium est.

4. Pateris,” inquit, “ nos aliquando beneficium non debere ei, a quo accepimus; ergo ereptum est.” Multa sunt, propter quae beneficium debere desinimus, non quia ablatum sed quia corruptum est. Aliquis reum me defendit, sed uxorem meam per vim stupro violavit; non abstulit beneficium, sed opponendo illi parem iniuriam solvit me debito, et, si plus laesit, quam ante profuerat, non tantum gratia extinguitur, sed ulciscendi querendique libertas fit, ubi in comparatione beneficii praeponderavit iniuria; ita non aufertur beneficium, sed vincitur. Quid? [2] non tam duri quidam et tam scelerati patres sunt, ut illos aversari et eiurare ius fasque sit? Numquid ergo illi abstulerunt, quae dederant? Minime, sed impietas sequentium temporum commendationem omnis prioris officii sustulit. Non beneficium tollitur, sed beneficii gratia, et efficitur, non ne habeam, sed ne debeam. Tamquam pecuniam aliquis mihi credidit, sed domum meam incendit. Pensatum est creditum damno; nec reddidi illi, nec tamen debeo. [3] Eodem modo et hic, qui aliquid benigne adversus me fecit, aliquid liberaliter, sed postea multa superbe, contumeliose, crudeliter, eo me loco posuit, ut proinde liber adversus eum essem, ac si nihil accepissem; vim beneficiis suis attulit. [4] Colonum suum non tenet quamvis tabellis manentibus, qui segetem eius proculcavit, qui succidit arbusta, non quia recepit, quod pepigerat, sed quia, ne reciperet, effecit. Sic debitori suo creditor saepe damnatur, ubi plus ex alia causa abstulit, quam ex crediti petit. [5] Non tantum inter creditorem et debitorem iudex sedet, qui dicat: “

Pecuniam credidisti. Quid ergo est? Pecus abegisti, servum eius occidisti, argentum, quod non emeris, possides; aestimatione facta debitor discede, qui creditor veneras “; inter beneficia quoque et iniurias ratio confertur. [6] Saepe, inquam, beneficium manet nec debetur; si secuta est dantem paenitentia, si miserum se dixit, quod dedisset, si, cum daret, suspiravit, vultum adduxit, perdere se credidit, non donare, si sua causa aut certe non mea dedit, si non desiit insultare, gloriari, ubique iactare et acerbum munus suum facere, manet beneficium, quamvis non debeatur, sicuti quaedam pecuniae, de quibus ius creditori non dicitur, debentur, sed non exiguntur.

5. Dedisti beneficium, iniuriam postea fecisti; et beneficio gratia debebatur et iniuriae ultio; nec ego illi gratiam debeo nec ille mihi poenam : alter ab altero absolvitur. Cum dicimus : [2] “ Beneficium illi reddidi,” non hoc dicimus illud nos, quod acceperamus, reddidisse, sed aliud pro illo. Reddere est enim rem pro re dare; quidni? cum omnis solutio non idem reddat, sed tantundem. Nam et pecuniam dicimur reddidisse, quamvis numeraverimus pro argenteis aureos, quamvis non intervenerint nummi, sed delegatione et verbis perfecta solutio sit. [3] Videris mihi dicere : “ Perdis operam; quorsus enim pertinet scire me, an maneat, quod non debetur? Iuris consultorum istae acutae ineptiae sunt, qui hereditatem negant usu capi posse sed ea, quae in hereditate sunt, tamquam quicquam aliud sit here- ditas, quam ea, quae in hereditate sunt. [4] Illud potius mihi distingue, quod potest ad rem pertinere, cum idem homo beneficium mihi dedit et postea fecit iniuriam, utrum et beneficium illi reddere debeam et me ab illo nihilo minus vindicare ac veluti duobus nominibus separatim respondere an alterum alteri contribuere et nihil negotii habere, ut beneficium iniuria tollatur, beneficio iniuria. Illud enim video in hoc foro fieri; quid in vestra schola iuris sit, vos sciatis. [5] Separantur actiones nec de eo, quod agimus, et de eo, quod nobiscum agitur, confunditur formula. Si quis apud me pecuniam deposuerit, idem postea furtum mihi fecerit, et ego cum illo furti agam et ille mecum depositi.”

6. Quae proposuisti, mi Liberalis, exempla certis legibus continentur, quas necesse est sequi. Lex legi non miscetur, utraque sua via it. Depositum habet actionem propriam tam mehercules quam

furtum. Beneficium nulli legi subiectum est, me arbitro utitur; licet mihi inter se comparare, quantum profuerit mihi quisque aut quantum nocuerit, tum pronuntiare, utrum plus debeatur mihi an debeam. [2] In illis nihil est nostrae potestatis, eundem est, qua ducimur; in beneficio tota potestas mea est, ego iudico. Itaque non separo illa nec diduco, sed iniurias et beneficia ad eundem iudicem mitto. Alioqui iubet me eodem tempore et amare et odire et queri et gratias agere, quod natura non recipit. Potius comparatione facta inter se beneficii et iniuriae videbo, an mihi etiam ultro debeatur. [3] Quomodo, si quis scriptis nostris alios superne imprimit versus, priores litteras non tollit, sed abscondit, sic beneficium superveniens iniuria apparere non patitur.

7. Vultus tuus, cui regendum me tradidi, colligit rugas et trahit frontem, quasi longius exeam. Videris mihi dicere : Quo tantum mihi dexter abis? Huc derige cursum, litus ama. Non possum magis. Itaque, si huic satis factum existimas, illo transeamus, an ei debeatur aliquid, qui nobis invitatus profuit. Hoc apertius potui dicere, nisi propositio deberet esse confusior, ut distinctio statim subsequuta ostenderet utrumque quaeri, et an ei deberemus, qui nobis, dum non vult, profuit, et an ei, qui, dum nescit. Nam si quis coactus aliquid boni fecit; [2] quin nos non obliget, manifestius est, quam ut ulla in hoc verba impendenda sint. Et haec quaestio facile expeditur et si qua similis huic moveri potest, si totiens illo cogitationem nostram converterimus beneficium nullum esse, nisi quod ad nos primum aliqua cogitatio defert, deinde amica et benigna. [3] Itaque nec fluminibus gratias agimus, quamvis aut magna navigia patiantur et ad subvehendas copias largo ac perenni alveo currant aut piscosa et amoena pinguibus arvis interfluant; nec quisquam Nilo beneficium debere se iudicat, non magis quam odium, si immodicus superfluit tardeque decessit; nec ventus beneficium dat, licet lenis et secundus adspiret, nec utilis et salubris cibus. Nam qui beneficium mihi daturus est, debet non tantum prodesse, sed velle. Ideo nec mutis animalibus quicquam debetur : et quam multos e periculo velocitas equi rapuit! nec arboribus : et quam multos aestu laborantes ramorum opacitas texit! [4] Quid autem interest, utrum mihi, qui nescit, profuerit, an qui scire non potuit, cum utrique velle defuerit? Quid interest, utrum me iubeas navi aut vehiculo aut lanceae debere

beneficium an ei, qui aequae quam ista propositum bene faciendi nullum habuit, sed profuit casu?

8. Beneficium aliquis nesciens accipit, nemo a nesciente. Quomodo multos fortuita sanant nec ideo remedia sunt, et in flumen alicui cecidisse frigore magno causa sanitatis fuit, quomodo quorundam flagellis quartana discussa est et metus repentinus animum in aliam curam avertendo suspectas horas fefellit nec ideo quicquam horum, etiam si saluti fuit, salutare est, sic quidam nobis prosunt, dum nolunt, immo quia nolunt; non tamen ideo illis beneficium debemus, quod perniciose illorum consilia fortuna deflexit in melius. [2] An existimas me debere ei quicquam, cuius manus, cum me peteret, percussit hostem meum, qui nocuisset, nisi errasset? Saepe testis, dum aperte peierat, etiam veris testibus abrogavit fidem et reum velut factione circumventum miserabilem reddidit. [3] Quosdam ipsa, quae premebat, potentia eripuit, et iudices, quem damnaturi erant causae, damnare gratiae noluerunt. Non tamen hi beneficium reo dederunt, quamvis profuerint, quia, quo missum sit telum, non quo pervenerit, quaeritur, et beneficium ab iniuria distinguit non eventus sed animus. [4] Adversarius meus, dum contraria dicit et iudicem superbia offendit et in unum testem temere rem demittit, causam meam erexit; non quaero, an pro me erraverit : contra me voluit.

9. Nempe, ut gratus sim, velle debeo idem facere, quod ille, ut beneficium daret, debuit. Num quid est iniquius homine, qui eum odit, a quo in turba calcatus aut respersus aut, quo nollet, impulsus est? Atqui quid est aliud, quod illum querellae eximat, cum in re sit iniuria, quam nescisse, quid faceret? [2] Eadem res efficit, ne hic beneficium dederit, ne ille iniuriam fecerit; et amicum et inimicum voluntas facit. Quam multos militiae morbus eripuit! Quosdam, ne ad ruinam domus suae occurrerent, inimicus vadimonio tenuit; ne in piratarum manus pervenirent, quidam naufragio consecuti sunt; nec his tamen beneficium debemus, quia extra sensum officii casus est, nec inimico, cuius nos lis servavit, dum vexat ac detinet. [3] Non est beneficium, nisi quod a bona voluntate proficiscitur, nisi illud ad cognoscit, qui dedit. Profuit aliquis mihi, dum nescit: nihil illi debeo. Profuit, cum vellet nocere : imitabor ipsum.

10. Ad primum illum revertamur. Ut gratiam referam, aliquid

facere me vis? Ipse, ut beneficium mihi daret, nihil fecit! Ut ad alterum transeamus, vis me huic gratiam referre, ut, quod a nolente accepi, volens reddam? Nam quid de tertio loquar, qui ab iniuria in beneficium delapsus est? [2] Ut beneficium tibi debeam, parum est voluisse te dare; ut non debeam, satis est noluisse. Beneficium enim voluntas nuda non efficit, sed, quod beneficium non esset, si optimae ac plenissimae voluntati fortuna defuisset, id aequae beneficium non est, nisi fortunam voluntas antecessit. Non enim profuisse te mihi oportet, ut ob hoc tibi obliger, sed ex destinato profuisse.

11. Cleanthes exemplo eiusmodi utitur : “ Ad quaerendum,” inquit, “ et accersendum ex Academia Platonem duos pueros misi. Alter totam porticum perscrutatus est, alia quoque loca, in quibus illum inveniri posse sperabat, percucurrit et domum non minus lassus quam irritus redit; [2] alter apud proximum circulatorem resedit et, dum vagus atque erro vernaculis congregatur et ludit, transeuntem Platonem, quem non quaesierat, invenit. Illum, inquit, laudabimus puerum, qui, quantum in se erat, quod iussus est, fecit; hunc feliciter inertem castigabimus.” [3] Voluntas est, quae apud nos ponit officium; cuius vide quae condicio sit, ut me debito obstringat. Parum est illi velle, nisi profuit; parum est profuisse, nisi voluit. Puta enim aliquem donare voluisse nec donasse; animum quidem eius habeo, sed beneficium non habeo, quod consummat et res et animus. [4] Quemadmodum ei, qui voluit mihi quidem pecuniam credere, sed non dedit, nihil debeo, ita ei, qui voluit mihi beneficium dare, sed non potuit, amicus quidem ero sed non obligatus; et volam illi aliquid praestare (nam et ille voluit mihi), ceterum, si benigniore usus fortuna praestitero, beneficium dederò, non gratiam rettulero. Ille mihi gratiam referre debebit; hinc initium fiet, a me numerabitur.

12. Intellego iam, quid velis quaerere; non opus est te dicere; vultus tuus loquitur. “ Si quis sua nobis causa profuit, eine,” inquis, “ debetur aliquid? Hoc enim saepe te conquerentem audio, quod quaedam homines sibi praestant, aliis imputant.” Dicam, mi Liberalis; sed prius istam quaestiunculam dividam et rem aequam ab iniqua separabo. [2] Multum enim interest, utrum aliquis beneficium nobis det sua causa an et sua. Ille, qui totus ad se spectat et nobis prodest, quia aliter prodesse sibi non potest, eo mihi loco est, quo, qui pecori suo hibernum et aestivum pabulum prospicit; eo loco est,

quo, qui captivos suos, ut commodius veneant, pascit et ut opimos boves saginat ac defricat, quo lanista, qui familiam summa cura exercet atque ornat. Multum, ut ait Cleanthes, a beneficio distat negotiatio.

13. Rursus non sum tam iniquus, ut ei nihil debeam, qui, cum mihi utilis esset, fuit et sibi; non enim exigo, ut mihi sine respectu sui consulat, immo etiam opto, ut beneficium mihi datum vel magis danti profuerit, dum modo id, qui dabat duos intuens dederit et inter me seque dividerit. [2] Licet id ipse ex maiore parte possideat, si modo me in consortium admisit, si duos cogitavit, ingratus sum, non solum iniustus, nisi gaudeo hoc illi profuisse, quod proderat mihi. Summae malignitatis est non vocare beneficium, nisi quod dantem aliquo incommodo adfecit. [3] Alteri illi, qui beneficium dat sua causa, respondebo : “ Usus me quare potius te mihi profuisse dicas quam me tibi? “ “ Puta,” inquit, “ aliter fieri non posse me magistratum, quam si decem captos cives ex magno captivorum numero redemero; nihil debebis mihi, cum te servitute ac vinculis liberavero? Atqui mea id causa faciam.” Adversus hoc respon- deo : “ Aliquid istic tua causa facis, aliquid mea : [4] tua, quod redimis, mea, quod me redimis; tibi enim ad utilitatem tuam satis est quoslibet redemisse. Itaque debeo, non quod redimis me, sed quod eligis; poteris enim et alterius redemptione idem consequi, quod mea. Utilitatem rei partiris mecum et me in beneficium recipis duobus profuturum. Praefers me aliis; hoc totum mea causa facis. [5] Itaque, si praetorem te factura esset decem captivorum redemptio, decem autem soli captivi essemus, nemo quicquam tibi deberet ex nobis, quia nihil haberes, quod cuiquam imputares, a tua utilitate seductum. Non sum invidus beneficii interpret nec desidero illud mihi tantum dari, sed et mihi.”

14. “ Quid ergo? “ inquit; “ si in sortem nomina vestra coici iussissem, et tuum nomen inter redimen- dos exisset, nihil deberes mihi? [2] “ Immo deberem, sed exiguum; quid sit hoc, dicam. Aliquid istic mea causa facis, quod me ad fortunam redemptionis admittis; quod nomen meum exit, sorti debeo, quod exire potuit, tibi. Aditum mihi ad beneficium tuum dedisti, cuius maiorem partem fortunae debeo, sed hoc ipsum tibi, quod fortunae debere potui. [3] Illos ex toto praeteribo, quorum mercennarium beneficium est, quod qui dat, non computat, cui sed quanti daturus sit, quod undique in se conversum

est. Vendit mihi aliquis frumentum; vivere non possum, nisi emero; sed non debeo vitam, quia emi. [4] Nec, quam necessarium fuerit, aestimo, sine quo victurus non fui, sed quam ingratum, quod non habuissem, nisi emissem, in quo invehendo mercator non cogitavit, quantum auxilii adlaturus esset mihi, sed quantum lucri sibi. Quod emi, non debeo.

15. “Isto modo,” inquit, “nec medico quicquam debere te nisi mercedulam dicis nec praeceptori, quia aliquid numeraveris. Atqui omnium horum apud nos magna caritas, magna reverentia est.” Adversus hoc respondetur quaedam pluris esse, quam emuntur. [2] Emis a medico rem inaestimabilem, vitam ac bonam valetudinem, a bonarum artium praeceptore studia liberalia et animi cultum; itaque his non rei pretium, sed operae solvitur, quod deserviunt, quod a rebus suis avvocati nobis vacant; mercedem non meriti, sed occupationis suae ferunt. [3] Aliud tamen dici potest verius, quod statim ponam, si prius, quomodo istud refelli possit, ostendero. “Quaedam,” inquit, “pluris sunt, quam venierunt, et ob hoc aliquid mihi extra pro illis quamvis empta sunt, debes.” [4] Primum quid interest, quanti sint, cum de pretio inter ementem vendentemque convenerit? Deinde non emi illud suo pretio, sed tuo. “Pluris est,” inquis, “quam venit”; sed pluris venire non potuit. Pretium autem rei cuiusque pro tempore est; eum bene ista laudaveris, tanti sunt, quanto pluris venire non possunt; propterea nihil venditori debet, qui bene emit. [5] Deinde, etiam si pluris ista sunt, non tamen ullum istic tuum munus est, ut non ex usu effectuve, sed ex consuetudine et annona aestimetur. [6] Quod tu pretium ponis traicienti maria et per medios fluctus, cum terra e conspectu recessit, certam secanti viam et prospiciens futuras tempestates et securis omnibus subito iubenti vela substringi, armamenta demitti, paratos ad incursum procellae et repentinum impetum stare? Huic tamen tantae rei praemium vectura persolvit! [7] Quanti aestimas in solitudine hospitium, in imbre tectum, in frigore balneum aut ignem? Scio tamen, quanti ista consecuturus deversorium subeam! Quantum nobis praestat, qui labentem domum suscipit et agentem ex imo rimas insulam incredibili arte suspendit! Certo tamen et levi pretio fultura conducitur. [8] Murus nos ab hostibus tutos et a subitis latronum incursionibus praestat; notum est tamen, illas turres pro securitate

publica propugnacula habituras excitaturus faber quid in diem mereat.

16. Infinitum erit, si latius exempla conquiram, quibus appareat parvo magna constare. Quid ergo? Quare et medico et praeceptori plus quiddam debeo nec adversus illos mercede defungor? Quia ex medico et praeceptore in amicum transeunt et nos non arte, quam vendunt, obligant, sed benigna et familiari voluntate. [2] Itaque medico, si nihil amplius quam manum tangit et me inter eos, quos perambulat, ponit sine ullo adfectu facienda aut vitanda praeciens, nihil amplius debeo, quia me non tamquam amicum videt, sed tamquam imperatorem. [3] Ne praeceptorem quidem habeo cur venerer, si me in grege discipulorum habuit, si non putavit dignum propria et peculiari cura, si numquam in me derexit animum, et, cum in medium effunderet, quae sciebat, non didici, sed excepi. Quid ergo est, quare istis multum debeamus? [4] Non quia pluris est, quod vendiderunt, quam emimus, sed quia nobis ipsis aliquid praestiterunt. Ille magis pependit, quam medico necesse est; pro me, non pro fama artis extimuit; non fuit contentus remedia monstrare : et admovit; inter sollicitos adsedit, ad suspecta tempora occurrit; nullum ministerium illi oneri, nullum fastidio fuit; [5] gemitus meos non securus audivit; in turba multorum invocantem ego illi potissima curatio fui; tantum aliis vacavit, quantum mea valetudo permiserat : huic ego non tamquam medico sed tamquam amico obligatus sum. [6] Alter rursus docendo et laborem et taedium tulit; praeter illa, quae a praecipientibus in commune dicuntur, aliqua instillavit ac tradidit, hortando bonam indolem erexit et modo laudibus fecit animum, modo admonitionibus discussit desidia; [7] tum ingenium latens et pigrum iniecta, ut ita dicam, manu extraxit; nec, quae sciebat, maligne dispensavit, quo diutius esset necessarius, sed cupit, si posset, universa transfundere : ingratus sum, nisi illum inter gratissimas necessitudines diligo.

17. Sordidissimorum quoque artificiorum institoribus supra constitutum aliquid adiecimus, si nobis illorum opera enixior visa est; et gubernatori et opifici vilissimae mercis et in diem locanti manus suas corollarium adpersimus. In optimis vero artibus, quae vitam aut conservant aut excolunt, qui nihil se plus existimat debere, quam pepigit, ingratus est. [2] Adice, quod talium studiorum traditio

miscet animos; hoc cum factum est, tam medico quam praeceptori pretium operae solvitur, animi debetur.

18. Platon cum flumen nave transisset nec ab illo quicquam portitor exegisset, honori hoc suo datum credens dixit positum illi esse apud Platonem officium; deinde paulo post, cum alium atque alium gratis eadem sedulitate transveheret, negavit illi iam apud Platonem positum officium. [2] Nam ut tibi debeam aliquid pro eo, quod praestas, debes non tantum mihi praestare, sed tamquam mihi; non potes ob id quemquam appellare, quod spargis in populum. Quid ergo? Nihil tibi debebitur pro hoc? Tamquam ab uno nihil; cum omnibus solvam, quod cum omnibus debeo.

19. “Negas,” inquit, “ullum dare beneficium eum, qui me gratuita nave per flumen Padum tulit? “Nego. Aliquid boni facit, beneficium non dat; facit enim aut sua causa aut utique non mea; ad summam ne ipse quidem se mihi beneficium iudicat dare, sed aut rei publicae aut viciniae aut ambitioni suae praestat et pro hoc aliud quoddam commodum expectat, quam quod a singulis recepturus est. “Quid ergo? [2] “inquit, “si princeps civitatem dederit omnibus Gallis, si immunitatem Hispanis, nihil hoc nomine singuli debebunt? “Quidni debeant? debebunt autem non tamquam proprium beneficium, sed tamquam publici partem. “Nullam,” inquit, “habuit cogitationem illo tempore mei, quo universis proderat; [3] noluit mihi civitatem proprie dare nec in me direxit animum; ita quare ei debeam, qui me sibi non substituit, cum facturus esset, quod fecit? [4] “Primum, cum cogitavit Gallis omnibus prodesse, et mihi cogitavit prodesse; eram enim Gallus et me etiam si non mea, publica tamen nota comprehendit. Deinde ego quoque illi non tamquam proprium debebo, sed tamquam commune munus; unus ex populo non tamquam pro me solvam, sed tamquam pro patria conferam. [5] Si quis patriae meae pecuniam credat, non dicam me illius debitorem nec hoc aes alienum profitebor aut candidatus aut reus; ad exsolvendum tamen hoc dabo portionem meam. Sic istius muneris, quod universis datur, debitorem me nego, quia mihi quidem dedit sed non propter me, et mihi quidem, sed nesciens, an mihi daret; nihilo minus aliquid mihi dependendum sciam, quia ad me quoque circumitu longo pervenit. Propter me debet factum esse, quod me obliget.

20. “Isto,” inquit, “modo nec lunae nec soli quicquam debes; non

enim propter te moventur.” Sed cum in hoc moveantur, ut universa conservent, et pro me moventur; universorum enim pars sum. Adice nunc, quod nostra et horum condicio dissimilis est; [2] nam qui mihi prodest, ut per me prosit sibi, non dedit beneficium, quia me instrumentum utilitatis suae fecit; sol autem et luna, etiam si nobis prosunt sua causa, non in hoc tamen prosunt, ut per nos prosint sibi; quid enim nos conferre illis possumus?

21. “ Sciam,” inquit, “ solem ac lunam nobis velle prodesse, si nolle potuerint; illis autem non licet non moveri. Ad summam consistant et opus suum intermittant.” Hoc vide quot modis refellatur. Non ideo minus vult, qui non potest nolle; [2] immo maximum argumentum est firmae voluntatis ne mutari quidem posse. Vir bonus non potest non facere, quod facit; non enim erit bonus, nisi fecerit; ergo nec bonus vir beneficium dat, quia facit, quod debet, non potest autem non facere, quod debet. Praeterea multum interest, utrum dicas : [3] “ Non potest hoc non facere,” quia cogitur, an : “ Non potest nolle.” Nam si necesse est illi facere, non debeo ipsi beneficium, sed cogenti; si necesse est illi velle ob hoc, quia nihil habet melius, quod velit, ipse se cogit; ita, quod tamquam coacto non deberem, tamquam cogenti debeo. [4] “ Desinant,” inquit, “ velle.” Hoc loco tibi illud occurrat : Quis tam demens est, ut eam neget voluntatem esse, cui non est periculum desinendi vertendique se in contrarium, cum ex diverso nemo aequè videri debeat velle, quam cuius voluntas usque eo certa est, ut aeterna sit? An, si is quoque vult, qui potest statim nolle, is non videbitur velle, in cuius naturam non cadit nolle?

22. “ Agedum,” inquit, “ si possunt, resistant.” Hoc dicis : “ Omnia ista ingentibus intervallis diducta et in custodiam universi disposita stationes suas deserant; subita confusione rerum sidera sideribus incurrant, et rupta rerum concordia in ruinam divina labantur, contextusque velocitatis citatissimae in tot saecula promissas vices in medio itinere destituat, et, quae nunc alternis eunt redeuntque opportunis libramentis mundum ex aequo temperantia, repentino concrementur incendio, et ex tanta varietate solvantur atque eant in unum omnia; ignis cuncta possideat, quem deinde pigra nox occupet, et profunda vorago tot deos sorbeat.” Est tanti, ut tu coarguaris, ista concidere? Prosunt tibi etiam invito euntque ista tua causa, etiam si

maior illis alia ac prior causa est.

23. Adice nunc, quod non externa cogunt deos, sed sua illis in lege aeterna voluntas est. Statuerunt, quae non mutarent; itaque non possunt videri facturi aliquid, quamvis nolint, quia, quidquid desinere non possunt, perseverare voluerunt, nec umquam primi consilii deos paenitet. [2] Sine dubio stare illis et desciscere in contrarium non licet, sed non ob aliud, quam quia vis sua illos in proposito tenet; nec imbecillitate permanent, sed quia non libet ab optimis aberrare et sic ire decretum est. [3] In prima autem illa constitutione, cum universa disponent, etiam nostra videntur rationemque hominis habuerunt; itaque non possunt videri sua tantum causa decurrere et explicare opus suum, quia pars operis et nos sumus. Debemus ergo et soli et lunae et ceteris caelestibus beneficium, quia, etiam si potiora illis sunt, in quae oriuntur, nos tamen in maiora ituri iuvant. [4] Adice, quod ex destinato iuvant, ideoque obligati sumus, quia non in beneficium ignorantium incidimus, sed haec, quae accipimus, accepturos scierunt; et quamquam maius illis propositum sit maiorque actus sui fructus, quam servare mortalia, tamen in nostras quoque utilitates a principio rerum praemissa mens est et is ordo mundo datus, ut appareat curam nostri non inter ultima habitam. [5] Debemus parentibus nostris pietatem, et multi non, ut gignerent, coierant. Di non possunt videri nescisse, quid effecturi essent, eum omnibus alimenta protinus et auxilia providerint, nec eos per neglegentiam genuere, quibus tam multa generabant. Cogitavit nos ante natura, quam fecit, nec tam leve opus sumus, ut illi potuerimus excidere. [6] Vide, quantum nobis permiserit, quam non intra homines humani imperii condicio sit; vide, in quantum corporibus vagari liceat, quae non coercuit fine terrarum, sed in omnem partem sui misit; vide, animi quantum audeant, quemadmodum soli aut noverint deos aut quaerant et mente in altum elata divina comitentur : scies non esse hominem tumultuarium et incogitatum opus. [7] Inter maxima rerum suarum natura nihil habet, quo magis gloriatur, aut certe, cui gloriatur. Quantus iste furor est controversiam dis muneris sui facere! Quomodo adversus eos hic erit gratus, quibus gratia referri sine impendio non potest, qui negat se ab iis accepisse, a quibus cum maxime accepit, qui et semper daturi sunt et numquam recepturi? [8]

Quanta autem perversitas ob hoc alicui non debere, quia etiam infitianti benignus est, et continuationem ipsam sedemque beneficiorum argumentum vocare necessario dantis! “Nolo! Sibi habeat! Quis illum rogat?” et omnes alias impudentis animi voces his adstrue. Non ideo de te minus meretur is, cuius liberalitas ad te etiam, dum negas, pervenit, cuiusque beneficiorum vel hoc maximum est, quod etiam querenti daturus est.

24. Non vides, quemadmodum teneram liberorum infantiam parentes ad salubrium rerum patientiam cogant? Flentium corpora ac repugnandum diligens cura fovant et, ne membra libertas immatura detorqueat, in rectum exitura constringunt et mox liberalia studia inculcant adhibito timore nolentibus; ad ultimum audacem iuventam frugalitati, pudori, moribus bonis, si parum sequitur, coactam applicant. [2] Adulescentibus quoque ac iam potentibus sui, si remedia metu aut intemperantia reiciunt, vis adhibetur ac severitas. Itaque beneficiorum maxima sunt, quae a parentibus accepimus, dum aut nescimus aut nolumus.

25. His ingratis et repudiantibus beneficia, non quia nolunt, sed ne debeant, similes sunt ex diverso nimis grati, qui aliquid incommodi precari solent iis, quibus obligati sunt, aliquid adversi, in quo adfectum me- morem accepti beneficii approbent. [2] An hoc recte faciant et pia voluntate, quaeritur; quorum animus simillimus est pravo amore flagrantibus, qui amicae suae optant exilium, ut desertam fugientemque comi- tentur, optant inopiam, ut magis desiderant donent, optant morbum, ut adsideant, et, quidquid inimicus optaret, amantes vovent. Fere idem itaque exitus est odii et amoris insani. [3] Tale quiddam et his accidit, qui amicis incommoda optant, quae detrahant, et ad beneficium iniuria veniunt, cum satius sit vel cessare, quam per scelus officio locum quaerere. [4] Quid, si gubernator a dis tempestates infestissimas et procellas petat, ut gravior ars sua periculo fiat? Quid, si imperator deos oret, ut magna vis hostium circumfusa castris fossas subito impetu compleat et vallum trepidante exercitu vellat et in ipsis portis infesta signa constituat, quo maiore cum gloria rebus lassis pro- fligatisque succurrat? [5] Omnes isti beneficia sua detestabili via ducunt, qui deos contra eum advocant, cui ipsi adfuturi sunt, et ante illos sterni quam erigi volunt. Inhumana ista perverse grati animi natura est contra eum

optare, cui honeste deesse non possis.

26. “Non nocet,” inquit, “illi votum meum, quia simul opto et periculum et remedium.” Hoc dicis non nihil te peccare sed minus, quam si sine remedio periculum optares. Nequitia est ut extrahas mer- gere, evertere ut suscites, ut emittas includere. Non est beneficium iniuriae finis, nec umquam id detraxisse meritum est, quod ipse, qui detraxit, intulerat. [2] Non vulneres me malo quam sanes. Potes inire gratiam, si, quia vulneratus sum, sanas, non, si vulneras, ut sanandus sim. Numquam cicatrix nisi conlata vulnere placuit, quod ita coisse gaudemus, ut non fuisse malletus. Si hoc ei optares, cuius nullum beneficium haberes, inhumanum erat votum; quanto inhumanius ei optas, cui beneficium debes!

27. Simul,” inquit, “ut possim ferre illi opem, precor.” Primum, ut te in media parte voti tui occupem, iam ingratus es; nondum audio, quid illi velis praestare, scio, quid illum velis pati. Sollicitudinem illi et metum et maius aliquod imprecaris malum. Optas, ut ope indigeat : hoc contra illum est; optas, ut ope tua indigeat : hoc pro te est. Non succurrere vis illi, sed solvere : qui sic properat, solvi vult, non solvere. [2] Ita, quod unum in voto tuo honestum videri poterat, ipsum turpe et ingratum est, nolle debere; optas enim, non ut tu facultatem habeas referendae gratiae, sed ut ille necessitatem implorandae. Superiorem te facis et, quod nefas est, bene meritum ad pedes tuos mittis. Quanto satius est honesta voluntate debere, quam rationem per malam solvere! [3] Si infitiareris, quod acceperas, minus peccares; nihil enim, nisi quod dederat, amitteret. Nunc vis illum subici tibi, iactura rerum suarum et status mutatione in id devocari, ut infra beneficia sua iaceat. Gratum te putabo? Coram eo, cui prodesse vis, opta! Votum tu istud vocas, quod inter gratum et inimicum potest dividi, quod non dubites adversarium et hostem fecisse, si extrema taceantur? [4] Hostes quoque optaverunt capere quasdam urbes, ut servarent, et vincere quosdam, ut ignoscerent, nec ideo non hostilia vota, in quibus, quod mitissimum est, post crudelitatem venit. [5] Denique qualia esse iudicas vota, quae nemo minus tibi volet, quam is, pro quo fiunt, succedere? Pessime cum eo agis, cui vis a dis noceri, a te succurri, inique cum ipsis dis; illis enim durissimas partes imponis, tibi humanas; ut tu prosis, di nocebunt. [6] Si accusatorem submitteres, quem deinde removeres, si aliqua illum lite implicares,

quam subinde discuteret, nemo de tuo scelere dubitaret. Quid interest, utrum istuc fraude temptetur an voto, nisi quod potentiores illi adversarios quaeris? Non est, quod dicas : “ Quam enim illi iniuriam facio? [7] “ Votum tuum aut supervacuum est aut iniuriosum, immo iniuriosum, etiam si irritum. Quidquid non efficis, dei munus est, iniuria vero, quidquid optas. Sat est; tibi non aliter debemus irasci, quam si profeceris.

28. “ Si vota,” inquit, “ valuissent, et in hoc valuissent, ut tutus esses.” Primum certum mihi optas periculum sub incerto auxilio. Deinde utrumque certum puta : quod nocet, prius est. [2] Praeterea tu condicionem voti tui nosti, me tempestas occupavit portus ac praesidii dubium. Quantum tormentum existimas, etiam si accepero, eguisse? Etiam si servatus fuero, trepidasse? Etiam si absolutus fuero, causam dixisse? Nullius metus tam gratus est finis, ut non gravior sit solida et inconcussa securitas. [3] Opta, ut reddere mihi beneficium possis, cum opus erit, non, ut opus sit. Si esset in tua potestate, quod optas, ipse fecisses.

29. Quanto hoc honestius votum est : “ Opto, in eo statu sit, quo semper beneficia distribuat, numquam desideret; sequatur illum materia, qua tam benigne utitur, largiendi iuvandique; numquam illi sit dandorum beneficiorum inopia, datorum paenitentia; naturam per se pronam ad misericordiam, humanitatem, clementiam irritet ac provocet turba gratorum, quos illi et habere contingat nec experiri necesse sit; ipse nulli implacabilis sit, ipsi nemo placandus; tam aequali in eum fortuna indulgentia perseveret, ut nemo in illum possit esse nisi conscientia gratus.” [2] Quanto haec iustiora vota sunt, quae te in nullam occasionem differunt, sed gratum statim faciunt! Quid enim prohibet referre gratiam prosperis rebus? Quam multa sunt, per quae, quidquid debemus, reddere etiam felicibus possumus! Fidele consilium, adsidua conversatio, sermo comis et sine adulatione iucundus, aures, si deliberari velit, diligentes, tutae, si credere, convictus familiaritas. Neminem tam alte secunda posuerunt, ut non illi eo magis amicus desit, quia nihil absit.

30. Ista tristis et omni voto submovenda occasio ac procul repellenda. Ut gratus esse possis, iratis dis opus est? Ne ex hoc quidem peccare te intellegis, quod melius cum eo agitur, cui ingratus es? Propone animo tuo carcerem, vincula, sordes, servitutem, bellum,

egestatem; haec sunt occasiones voti tui. Si quis tecum contraxit, per ista dimittitur! [2] Quin potius eum potentem esse vis, cui plurimum debes, et beatum? Quid enim, ut dixi, vetat te referre etiam summa felicitate praeditis gratiam? Cuius plena tibi occurreret et varia materia. Quid? tu nescis debitum etiam locupletibus solvi? [3] Nec te invitum distringam. Omnia sane excluserit opulenta felicitas, monstrabo tibi, cuius rei inopia laborent magna fastigia, quid omnia possidentibus desit : scilicet ille, qui verum dicat et hominem inter mentientes stupentem ipsaque consuetudine pro rectis blanda audiendi ad ignorantiam veri perductum vindicet a consensu concentuque falsorum. [4] Non vides, quemadmodum illos in praeceps agat extincta libertas et fides in obsequium servile submissa? [5] Dum nemo ex animi sui sententia suadet dissuadetque, sed adulandi certamen est et unum amicorum omnium officium, una contentio, quis blandissime fallat, ignoravere vires suas, et, dum se tam magnos, quam audiunt, credunt, attraxere supervacua et in discrimen rerum omnium perventura bella, utilem et necessariam rupere concordiam, secuti iram, quam nemo revocabat, multorum sanguinem hauserunt fusuri novissime suum; [6] dum vindicant inexplorata pro certis flectique non minus existimant turpe quam vinci et perpetua credunt, quae in summum perducta maxime nutant, ingentia super se ac suos regna fregerunt; nec intellexerunt in illa scena vanis et cito diffluentibus bonis refulgente ex eo tempore ipsos nihil non adversi expectare debuisse, ex quo nihil veri audire potuerunt.

31. Cum bellum Graeciae indiceret Xerxes, animum tumentem oblitumque, quam caducis confideret, nemo non impulit. Alius aiebat non laturos nuntium belli et ad primam adventus famam terga versuros; [2] alius nihil esse dubii, quin illa mole non vinci solum Graecia, sed obrui posset; magis verendum, ne vacuas desertasque urbes invenirent et profugis hostibus vastae solitudines relinquerentur non habituris, ubi tantas vires exercere possent; [3] alius vix illi rerum naturam sufficere, angusta esse classibus maria, militi castra, explicandis equestribus copiis campestria, vix patere caelum satis ad emittenda omni manu tela. [4] Cum in hunc modum multa undique iactarentur, quae hominem nimia aestimatione sui furentem concitarent, Demaratus Lacedaemonius solus dixit ipsam

illam, qua sibi placeret, multitudinem indigestam et gravem metuendam esse ducenti; non enim vires habere, sed pondus; immodica numquam regi posse, nec diu durare, quidquid regi non potest. [5] “In primo,” inquit, “statim monte Lacones obiecti dabunt sui experimentum. Tot ista gentium milia trecenti morabuntur; haerebunt in vestigio fixi et commissas sibi angustias armis tuebuntur, corporibus obstruent; tota illos Asia non movebit loco; tantas minas belli et paene totius generis humani ruentis impetum paucissimi sistent. [6] Cum te mutatis legibus suis natura transmiserit, in semita haerebis et aestimans futura damna, cum computaveris, quanti Thermopylarum angusta constiterint; scies te fugari posse, cum sciens posse retineri. [7] Cedent quidem tibi pluribus locis velut torrentis modo ablati, cuius cum magno terrore prima vis defluit; deinde hinc atque illinc coorientur et tuis te viribus prement. [8] Verum est, quod dicitur, maiorem belli apparatus esse, quam qui recipi ab his regionibus possit, quas oppugnare constituis, sed haec res contra nos est. Ob hoc ipsum te Graecia vincet, quia non capit; uti toto te non potes. [9] Praeterea, quae una rebus salus est, occurrere ad primos rerum impetus et inclinatis opem ferre non poteris nec fulcire ac firmare labentia; multo ante vincens, quam victum esse te sentias. [10] Ceterum non est, quod exercitum tuum ob hoc sustineri non putes posse, quia numerus eius duci quoque ignotus est; nihil tam magnum est, quod perire non possit, cui nascitur in perniciem, ut alia quiescant, ex ipsa magnitudine sua causa.” [11] Acciderunt, quae Demaratus praedixerat. Divina atque humana impellentem et mutantem, quidquid obstiterat, trecenti stare iusserunt, stratusque passim per totam Graeciam Perses intellexit, quantum ab exercitu turba distaret. Itaque Xerxes pudore quam damno miserior Demarato gratias egit, quod solus sibi verum dixisset, et permisit petere, quod vellet. [12] Petit ille, ut Sardis, maximam Asiae civitatem, curru vectus intraret rectam capite tiaram gerens; id solis datum regibus. Dignus fuerat praemio, ante quam peteret; sed quam miserabilis gens, in qua nemo fuit, qui verum diceret regi, nisi qui non dicebat sibi!

32. Divus Augustus filiam ultra impudicitiae male- dictum impudicam relegavit et flagitia principalis domus in publicum emisit : admissos gregatim adulteros, pererratam nocturnis comissionibus civitatem, forum ipsum ac rostra, ex quibus pater legem de adulteriis

tulerat, filiae in stupra placuisse, cotidianum ad Marsyam concursum, cum ex adultera in quae-
stuariam versa ius omnis licentiae sub ignoto adultero peteret. [2] Haec tam vindicanda principi quam tacenda, quia quarundam rerum turpitudine etiam ad vindicantem redit, parum potens irae publicaverat. Deinde, cum interposito tempore in locum irae subisset verecundia, gemens, quod non illa silentio pressisset, quae tam diu nescierat, donec loqui turpe esset, saepe exclamavit : “ Horum mihi nihil accidisset, si aut Agrippa aut Maecenas vixisset! “ Adeo tot habenti milia hominum duos reparare difficile est. [3] Caesae sunt legiones et protinus scriptae; fracta classis et intra paucos dies natavit nova; saevitum est in opera publica ignibus, surrexerunt meliora consumptis. Tota vita Agrippae et Maecenatis vacavit locus. Quid? Putem defuisse similes, qui adsumerentur, an ipsius vitium fuisse, quia maluit queri quam quaerere? [4] Non est, quod existimemus Agrippam et Maecenatem solitos illi vera dicere; qui si vixissent, inter dissimulantes fuissent. Regalis ingenii mos est in praesentium contumeliam amissa laudare et his virtutem dare vera dicendi, a quibus iam audiendi periculum non est.

33. Sed ut me ad propositum reducam, vides, quam facile sit gratiam referre felicibus et in summo humanarum opum positis. Dic illis, non quod volunt audire, sed quod audisse semper volunt; plenas aures adulationibus aliquando vera vox intret; da consilium utile. Quaeris, quid felici praestare possis? [2] Effice, ne felicitati suae credat, ut sciat illam multis et fidis manibus continendam. Parum in illum contuleris, si illi stultam fiduciam permansurae semper potentiae excusseris docuerisque mobilia esse, quae dedit casus, et maiore cursu fugere, quam veniunt, nec iis portionibus, quibus ad summa perventum est, retro iri, sed saepe inter maximam fortunam et ultimam nihil interesse? [3] Nescis, quantum sit pretium amicitiae, si non intellegis multum te ei daturum, cui dederis amicum, rem non domibus tantum, sed saeculis raram, quae non aliubi magis deest, quam ubi creditur abundare. Quid? [4] Istos tu libros, quos vix nomenclatorum complectitur aut memoria aut manus, amicorum existimas esse? Non sunt isti amici, qui agmine magno ianuam pulsant, qui in primas et secundas admissiones digeruntur.

34. Consuetudo ista vetus est regibus regesque simulantibus

populum amicorum describere, et proprium superbiae magno aestimare introitum ac tactum sui liminis et pro honore dare, ut ostio suo propius adsideas, ut gradum prior intra domum ponas, in qua deinceps multa sunt ostia, quae receptos quoque excludant. [2] Apud nos primi omnium C.3 Gracchus et mox Livius Drusus instituerunt segregare turbam suam et alios in secretum recipere, alios cum pluribus, alios universos. Habuerunt itaque isti amicos primos, habuerunt secundos, numquam veros. [3] Amicum vocas, cuius disponitur salutatio? Aut potest huius tibi fides patere, qui per fores maligne apertas non intrat, sed illabitur? Huic pervenire usque ad libertatem destringendam licet, cuius vulgare et publicum verbum et promiscuum ignotis “ Have! “ non nisi suo ordine emittitur? [4] Ad quemcumque itaque istorum veneris, quorum salutatio urbem concutit, scito, etiam si animadverteris obsessos ingenti frequentia vicis et commeantium in utramque partem catervis itinera compressa, tamen venire te in locum hominibus plenum, amicis vacuum. [5] In pectore amicus, non in atrio quaeritur; illo recipiendus, illic retinendus est et in sensus recondendus. Hoc doce : gratus es.

35. Male de te existimas, si inutilis es nisi adflicto, si rebus bonis supervacuum es. Quemadmodum te et in dubiis et in adversis et in laetis sapienter geris, ut dubia prudenter tractes, adversa fortiter, laeta moderate, ita in omnia utilem te exhibere amico potes. Adversa eius nec deserueris nec optaveris; multa nihilo minus, ut non optes, in tanta varietate, quae tibi materiam exercendae fidei praebeant, incident. [2] Quemadmodum, qui optat divitias alicui in hoc, ut illarum ipse partem ferat, quamvis pro illo videatur optare, sibi prospicit, sic, qui optat amico aliquam necessitatem, quam adiutorio suo fideque discutiatur, quod est ingrati, se illi praefert et tanti existimat illum miserum esse, ut ipse gratus sit, ob hoc ipsum ingratus; exonerare enim se vult et gravi sarcina liberare. [3] Multum interest, utrum properes referre gratiam, ut reddas beneficium, an ne debeas. Qui reddere vult, illius se commodo aptabit et idoneum illi venire tempus volet; qui nihil aliud quam ipse liberari vult, quomodocumque ad hoc cupiet pervenire, quod est pessimae voluntatis. [4] “ Ista,” inquit, “ festinatio nimium grati est! “ Id apertius exprimere non possum, quam si repetivero, quod dixi. Non vis reddere acceptum beneficium, sed effugere. Hoc dicere videris : “

Quando isto carebo? Quocumque modo mihi laborandum est, ne isti obligatus sim.” Si optares, ut illi de suo solveres, multum abesse videreris a grato. Hoc, quod optas, iniquius est; execraris enim illum et caput sanctum tibi dira precatatione defigis. [5] Nemo, ut existimo, de immanitate animi tui dubitaret, si aperte illi paupertatem, si captivitatem, si famem ac metum imprecareris; at quid interest, utrum vox ista sit voti tui an vis? Aliquid enim horum optas. I nunc et hoc esse grati puta, quod ne ingratus quidem faceret, qui modo non usque in odium, sed tantum usque ad infitiationem beneficii perveniret!

36. Quis pium dicet Aenean, si patriam capi voluerit, ut captivitati patrem eripiat? Quis Siculos iuvenes ut bona liberis exempla monstrabit, si optaverint, ut Aetna immensam ignium vim super solitum ardens et incensa praecipitet datura ipsis occasionem exhibendae pietatis ex medio parentibus incendio raptis? [2] Nihil debet Scipioni Roma, si Punicum bellum, ut finiret, aluit; nihil Deciis, quod morte patriam servaverunt, si prius optaverant, ut devotioni fortissimae locum ultima rerum necessitas faceret. Gravissima infamia est medici opus quaerere; multi, quos auxerant morbos et irritaverant, ut gloria maiore sanarent, non potuerunt discutere aut cum magna miserorum vexatione vicerunt.

37. Callistratum aiunt (ita certe Hecaton auctor est), cum in exilium iret, in quod multos cum illo simul seditiosa civitas et intemperanter libera expulerat, optante quodam, ut Atheniensibus necessitas restituendi exules esset, abominatum talem reditum. [2] Rutilius noster animosius, cum quidam illum consolaretur et diceret instare arma civilia, brevi futurum, ut omnes exules reverterentur : “ Quid tibi,” inquit, “ mali feci, ut mihi peiorem reditum quam exitum optares? Ut malo, patria exilio meo erubescat, quam reditu maereat! “ Non est istud exilium, cuius neminem non magis quam damnatum pudet. [3] Quemadmodum illi servaverunt bonorum civium officium, qui reddi sibi penates suos noluerunt clade communi, quia satius erat duos iniquo malo adfici quam omnes publico, ita non servat grati hominis adfectum, qui bene de se merentem difficultatibus vult opprimi, quas ipse submoveat, quia, etiam si bene cogitat, male precatur. Ne in patrocinium quidem, nedum in gloriam est incendium extinxisse, quod feceris.

38. In quibusdam civitatibus impium votum sceleris vicem tenuit. Demades certe Athenis eum, qui necessaria funeribus venditabat, damnavit, cum probasset magnum lucrum optasse, quod contingere illi sine multorum morte non poterat. Quaeri tamen solet, an merito damnatus sit. Fortasse optavit, non ut multis venderet, sed ut care, ut parvo sibi constarent, quae venditurus esset. [2] Cum constet negotiatio eius ex empto et vendito, quare votum eius in unam partem trahis, cum lucrum ex utraque sit? Praeterea omnes licet, qui in ista negotiatione sunt, damnes; omnes enim idem volunt, id est, intra se optant. Magnam partem hominum damnabis; cui enim non ex alieno incommodo lucrum? [3] Miles bellum optat, si gloriam; agricolam annonae caritas erigit; eloquentiae pretium excitat litium numerus; medicis gravis annus in quaestu est; institores delicatarum mercium iuventus corrupta locupletat; nulla tempestate tecta, nullo igne laedantur : iacebit opera fabrilis. Unius votum deprensus est, omnium simile est. [4] An tu Arruntium et Haterium et ceteros, qui captandorum testamentorum artem professi sunt, non putas eadem habere quae dissignatores et libitinarios vota? Illi tamen, quorum mortes optent, nesciunt, hi familiarissimum quemque, ex quo propter amicitiam spei plurimum est, mori cupiunt. Illorum damno nemo vivit, hos, quisquis differt, exhaurit; optant ergo non tantum, ut accipiant, quod turpi servitute meruerunt, sed etiam, ut tributo gravi liberentur. [5] Non est itaque dubium, quin hi magis, quod damnatum est in uno, optent, quibus, quisquis morte profuturus est, vita nocet. Omnium tamen istorum tam nota sunt vota quam impunita. Denique se quisque consulat et in secretum pectoris sui redeat et inspiciat, quid tacitus optaverit. Quam multa sunt vota, quae etiam sibi fateri pudet! Quam pauca, quae facere coram teste possimus!

39. Sed non, quidquid reprehendendum, etiam damnandum est, sicut hoc votum amici, quod in manibus est, male utentis bona voluntate et in id vitium incidentis, quod devitat; nam dum gratum animum festinat ostendere, ingratus est. Hoc ait : [2] “ In potestatem meam recidat, gratiam meam desideret, sine me salvus, honestus, tutus esse non possit, tam miser sit, ut illi beneficii loco sit, quidquid redditur.” Haec dis audientibus : “ Circumveniant illum domesticae insidiae, quas ego possim solus opprimere, instet potens inimicus et

gravis, infesta turba nec inermis, creditor urgeat, accusator.”

40. Vide, quam sis aecus! Horum optares nihil, si tibi beneficium non dedisset. Ut alia taceam, quae graviora committis pessima pro optimis referendo, hoc certe delinquis, quod non expectas suum cuiusque rei tempus, quod aequè peccat, qui non sequitur, quam qui antecedit. Quomodo beneficium non semper recipiendum est, sic non utique reddendum. [2] Si mihi non desideranti redderes, ingratus esses; quanto ingrator es, qui desiderare me cogis! Expecta! Quare subsidere apud te munus meum non vis? Quare obligatum moleste te fers? Quare quasi cum acerbo feneratore signare rationem parem properas? Quid mihi negotium quaeris? Quid in me deos immittis? Quomodo exigeres, qui sic reddis?

41. Ante omnia ergo, Liberalis, hoc discamus, beneficia debere secure et occasiones reddendorum observare, non manu facere. Ipsam hanc cupiditatem primo quoque tempore liberandi se meminerimus ingrati esse; nemo enim libenter reddit, quod invitus debet, et, quod apud se esse non vult, onus iudicat esse, non munus. [2] Quanto melius ac iustius in promptu habere merita amicorum et offerre, non ingerere, nec obaeratum se iudicare, quoniam beneficium commune vinculum est et inter se duos adligat! Dic : “ Nihil moror, quominus tuum revertatur; opto, hilaris accipias. Si necessitas alterutri nostrum imminet fatoque quodam datum est, ut aut tu cogaris beneficium recipere aut ego alterum accipere, det potius, qui solet. Ego paratus sum : Nulla mora in Turno est; ostendam hunc animum, cum primum tempus advenerit; interim di testes sunt.”

42. Soleo, mi Liberalis, notare hunc in te adfectum et quasi manu prendere verentis et aestuantis, ne in ullo officio sis tardior. Non decet gratum animum sollicitudo, contra summa fiducia sui et ex conscientia veri amoris dimissa omnis anxietas. Tam convicium est : “ Recipe “ quam : “ Debes.” Hoc primum beneficii dati sit ius, ut recipiendi tempus eligat, qui dedit. “ At vereor, ne homines de me sequius loquantur.” Male agit, qui famae, non conscientiae gratus est. Duos istius rei iudices habes, illum, quem non debes timere, et te, quem non potes. “ Quid ergo? Si nulla intervenerit occasio, semper debebo? “ Debebis; sed palam debebis, sed libenter debebis, sed cum magna voluptate apud te depositum intueberis. Paenitet accepti beneficii, quem nondum redditi piget. Quare, qui tibi dignus visus

est, a quo acciperes, indignus videatur, cui diu debeas?

43. In magnis erroribus sunt, qui ingentis animi credunt proferre, donare, plurium sinum ac domum implere, cum ista interdum non magnus animus faciat, sed magna fortuna; nesciunt, quanto interim maius ac difficilius sit capere, quam fundere. Nam, ut nihil alteri detrahā, quoniam utrumque, ubi virtute fit, par est, non minoris est animi beneficium debere quam dare; eo quidem operosius hoc quam illud, quo maiore diligentia custodiuntur accepta, quam dantur. [2] Itaque non est trepidandum, quam cito reponamus, nec procurrendum intempestive, quia aeque delinquit, qui ad referendam gratiam suo tempore cessat, quam qui alieno properat. Positum est illi apud me; nec illius nomine nec meo timeo. Bene illi cautum est; non potest hoc beneficium perdere nisi mecum, immo ne mecum quidem. Egi illi gratias, id est, rettuli. [3] Qui nimis de reddendo beneficio cogitat, nimis cogitare alterum de recipiendo putat. Praestet se in utrumque facilem. Si vult recipere beneficium, referamus reddamusque laeti; si illud apud nos custodiri mavult, quid thesaurum eius eruimus? Quid custodiam recusamus? Dignus est cui, utrum volet, liceat. Opinionem quidem et famam eo loco habeamus, tamquam non ducere sed sequi debeat.

LIBER VII

1. Bonum, mi Liberalis, habeas animum volo : In manibus terrae; non hic te carmine longo atque per ambages et longa exorsa tenebo. Reliqua hic liber cogit, et exhausta materia circumspicio, non quid dicam, sed quid non dixerim; boni tamen consules, quidquid ibi superest, cum tibi superfuerit. [2] Si voluissem lenocinari mihi, debuit paulatim opus crescere et ea pars in finem reservari, quam quilibet etiam satiatus appeteret. Sed quidquid maxime necessarium erat, in primum conguessi; nunc, si quid effugit, recolligo. Nec mehercules, si me interroges, nimis ad rem existimo pertinere, ubi dicta sunt, quae Tegunt mores, prosequi cetera non in remedium animi, sed in exercitationem ingenii inventa. [3] Egregie enim hoc dicere Demetrius Cynicus, vir meo iudicio magnus, etiam si maximis comparetur, solet plus prodesse, si pauca praecepta sapientiae teneas, sed illa in promptu tibi et in usu sint, quam si multa quidem didiceris, sed illa non habeas ad manum. [4] “ Quemadmodum,” inquit, “ magnus luctator est, non qui omnes numeros nexusque perdidicit, quorum usus sub adversario rarus est, sed qui in uno se aut altero bene ac diligenter exercuit et eorum occasiones intentus expectat (neque enim refert, quam multa sciat, si scit, quantum victoriae satis est), sic in hoc studio multa delectant, pauca vincunt. [5] Licet nescias, quae ratio oceanum effundat ac revocet, quare septimus quisque annus aetati signum imprimat, quare latitudo porticus ex remoto sperantibus non servet portionem suam, sed ultima in angustiis coeant et columnarum novissime intervalla iungantur, quid sit, quod geminorum conceptum separet, partum iungat, utrum unus concubitus spargatur in duos an totiens concepti sint, cur pariter natis fata diversa sint maximisque rerum spatiis distent, quorum inter ortus minimum interest : non multum tibi nocebit transisse, quae nec licet scire nec prodest. Involuta veritas in alto latet. [6] Nec de malignitate naturae queri possumus, quia nullius rei difficilis inventio est, nisi cuius hic unus inventae fructus est invenisse; quidquid nos meliores beatosque facturum est, aut in aperto aut in proximo posuit. [7] Si animus fortuita contempsit, si se supra metus sustulit nec avida spe infinita complectitur, sed didicit a se petere divitias; si deorum

hominumque formidinem eiecit et scit non multum esse ab homine timendum, a deo nihil; si contemptor omnium, quibus torquetur vita, dum ornatur, eo perductus est, ut illi liqueat mortem nullius mali materiam esse, multorum finem; si animum virtuti consecravit et, quacumque vocat illa, planum putat; si sociale animal et in commune genitus mundum ut unam omnium domum spectat et conscientiam suam dis aperuit semperque tamquam in publico vivit se magis veritus quam alios : subductus ille tempestatibus in solido ac sereno stetit consummavitque scientiam utilem ac necessariam. Reliqua oblectamenta otii sunt; licet enim iam in tutum retracto animo ad haec quoque excurrere cultum, non robur, ingeniis adferentia.”

2. Haec Demetrius noster utraque manu tenere pro fidentem iubet, haec nusquam dimittere, immo adfigere et partem sui facere eoque cotidiana meditatione perducere, ut sua sponte occurrant salutaria et ubique ac statim desiderata praesto sint et sine ulla mora veniat illa turpis honestique distinctio. [2] Sciat nec malum esse ullum nisi turpe nec bonum nisi honestum. Hac regula vitae opera distribuat; ad hanc legem et agat cuncta et exigat miserrimosque mortalium iudicet, in quantiscumque opibus refulgebunt, ventri ac libidini deditos quorumque animus inertis otio torpet. Dicat sibi ipse : “ Voluptas fragilis est, brevis, fastidio obiecta, quo avidius hausta est citius in contrarium recidens, cuius subinde necesse est aut paeniteat aut pudeat, in qua nihil est magnificum aut quod naturam hominis dis proximi deceat, res humilis, membrorum turpium aut vilium ministerio veniens, exitu foeda. [3] Illa est voluptas et homine et viro digna non implere corpus nec saginare nec cupiditates irritare, quarum tutissima est quies, sed perturbatione carere et ea, quam hominum inter se rixantium ambitus concutit, et ea, quae intolerabilis ex alto venit, ubi de dis famae creditum est vitiisque illos nostris aestimavimus.” [4] Hanc voluptatem aequalem, intrepidam, numquam sensuram sui taedium percipit hic, quem deformamus cum maxime, ut ita dicam, divini iuris atque humani peritus. Hic praesentibus gaudet, ex futuro non pendet; nihil enim firmi habet, qui in incerta propensus est. Magnis itaque curis exemptus et distortis mentem nihil sperat aut cupit nec se mittit in dubium suo contentus. [5] Et ne illum existimes parvo esse contentum, omnia illius sunt, non sic, quemadmodum Alexandri fuerunt, cui, quamquam in litore rubri

maris steterat, plus de- erat, quam qua venerat. Illius ne ea quidem erant, quae tenebat aut vicerat, cum in oceano Onesicritus praemissus explorator erraret et bella in ignoto mari quaereret. [6] Non satis apparebat inopem esse, qui extra naturae terminos arma proferret, qui se in profundum inexploratum et immensum aviditate caeca prosus immitteret? Quid interest, quot eripuerit regna, quot dederit, quantum terrarum tributo premat? Tantum illi deest, quantum cupit.

3. Nec hoc Alexandri tantum vitium fuit, quem per Liberi Herculisque vestigia felix temeritas egit, sed omnium, quos fortuna irritavit implendo. Cyrum et Cambysen et totum regni Persici stemma percense. Quem invenies, cui modum imperii satietas fecerit, qui non vitam in aliqua ulterius procedendi cogitatione finierit? Nec id mirum est; quidquid cupiditati contingit, penitus hauritur et conditur, nec interest, quantum eo, quod inexplebile est, congeras. [2] Unus est sapiens, cuius omnia sunt nec ex difficili tuenda. Non habet mittendos trans maria legatos nec metanda in ripis hostilibus castra, non opportunis castellis disponenda praesidia; non opus est legione nec equestribus turmis. Quemadmodum di immortales regnum inermes regunt et illis rerum suarum ex edito tranquilloque tutela est, ita hic officia sua, quamvis latissime pateant, sine tumultu obit et omne humanum genus potentissimus eius optimusque infra se videt. Derideas licet : [3] ingentis spiritus res est, cum Orientem Occidentemque lustraveris animo, quo etiam remota et solitudinibus interclusa penetrantur, cum tot animalia, tantam copiam rerum, quas natura beatissime fundit, adspexeris, emittere hanc dei vocem : “ Haec omnia mea sunt! “ Sic fit, ut nihil cupiat, quia nihil est extra omnia.

4. “ Hoc ipsum,” inquis, “ volui! teneo te! Volo videre, quomodo ex his laqueis, in quos tua sponte decidisti, expliceris. Dic mihi. Quemadmodum potest aliquis donare sapienti, si omnia sapientis sunt? Nam id quoque, quod illi donat, ipsius est. Itaque non potest beneficium dari sapienti, cui, quidquid datur, de suo datur; atqui dicitis sapienti posse donari. Idem autem me scito et de amicis interrogare. Omnia dicitis illis esse communia; ergo nemo quicquam donare amico potest; donat enim illi communia.” [2] Nihil prohibet aliquid et sapientis esse et etiam eius, qui possidet, cui datum et adsignatum est. Iure civili omnia regis sunt, et tamen illa, quorum ad

regem pertinet universa possessio, in singulos dominos discripta sunt, et unaquaeque res habet possessorem suum. Itaque dare regi et domum et mancipium et pecuniam possumus nec donare illi de suo dicimur; ad regem enim potestas omnium pertinet, ad singulos proprietates. [3] Fines Atheniensium aut Campanorum vocamus, quos deinde inter se vicini privata terminatione distinguunt; et totus ager utique ullius rei publicae est, pars deinde suo domino quaeque censetur; ideoque donare agros nostros rei publicae possumus, quamvis illius esse dicantur, quia aliter illius sunt, aliter mei. [4] Numquid dubium est, quin servus cum peculio domini sit? Dat tamen domino suo munus. Non enim ideo nihil habet servus, quia non est habiturus, si dominus illum habere noluerit; nec ideo non est munus, cum volens dedit, quia potuit eripi, etiam si noluisset. [5] Quemadmodum probemus omnia? Nunc enim omnia sapientis esse inter duos convenit; illud, quod quaeritur, colligendum est, quomodo liberalitatis materia adversus eum supersit, cuius universa esse concessimus. [6] Omnia patris sunt, quae in liberorum manu sunt; quis tamen nescit donare aliquid et filium patri? Omnia deorum sunt; tamen et dis donum posuimus et stipem iecimus. Non ideo, quod habeo, meum non est, si meum tuum est; potest enim idem meum esse et tuum. [7] “Is,” inquit, “cuius prostitutae sunt, leno est; omnia autem sapientis sunt; inter omnia et prostitutae sunt; ergo prostitutae sapientis sunt. Leno autem est, cuius prostitutae sunt; ergo sapiens leno est,” Sic illum vetant emere, dicunt enim : [8] “Nemo rem suam emit; omnia autem sapientis sunt; ergo sapiens nihil emit.” Sic vetant mutuum sumere, quia nemo usuram pro pecunia sua pendat. Innumerabilia sunt, per quae cavillantur, cum pulcherrime, quid a nobis dicatur, intellegant.

5. Etenim sic omnia sapientis esse dico, ut nihilo minus proprium quisque in rebus suis dominium habeat, quemadmodum sub optimo rege omnia rex imperio possidet, singuli dominio. Tempus istius probandae rei veniet; interim hoc huic quaestioni sat est me id, quod aliter sapientis est, aliter meum est, posse donare sapienti. [2] Nec mirum est aliquid ei, cuius est totum, posse donari. Conduxi domum a te; in hac aliquid tuum est, aliquid meum : res tua est, usus rei tuae meus est. Itaque nec fructus tanges colono tuo prohibente, quamvis in tua pos- sessione nascentur, et, si annona carior fuerit aut fames.

Heu! frustra magnum alterius spectabis acervum in tuo natum, in tuo positum, in horrea iturum tua. [3] Nec conductum meum, quamquam sis dominus, intrabis nec servum tuum, mercennarium meum, abduces et, cum a te raedam conduxero, beneficium accipies, si tibi in vehiculo tuo sedere permisero. Vides ergo posse fieri, ut aliquis accipiendo, quod suum est, munus accipiat.

6. In omnibus istis, quae modo rettuli, uterque eiusdem rei dominus est. Quo modo? Quia alter rei dominus est, alter usus. Libros dicimus esse Ciceronis; eosdem Dorus librarius suos vocat, et utrumque verum est. Alter illos tamquam auctor sibi, alter tamquam emptor adserit; ac recte utriusque dicuntur esse, utriusque enim sunt, sed non eodem modo. Sic potest Titus Livius a Doro accipere aut emere libros suos. [2] Possum donare sapienti, quod viritim meum est, licet illius sint omnia; nam cum regio more cuncta conscientia possideat, singularum autem rerum in unumquemque proprietas sit sparsa, et accipere munus et debere et emere et conducere potest. [3] Caesar omnia habet, fiscus eius privata tantum ac sua; et universa in imperio eius sunt, in patrimonio propria. Quid eius sit, quid non sit, sine diminutione imperii quaeritur; nam id quoque, quod tamquam alienum abiudicatur, aliter illius est. Sic sapiens animo universa possidet, iure ac dominio sua.

7. Bion modo omnes sacrilegos esse argumentis colligit, modo neminem. Cum omnes de saxo deiecturus est, dicit : “ Quisquis id, quod deorum est, sustulit et consumpsit atque in usum suum vertit, sacrilegus est; omnia autem deorum sunt; quod quisque ergo tollit, deorum tollit, quorum omnia sunt; ergo, quisquis tollit aliquid, sacrilegus est. [2] “ Deinde, cum effringi templa et expilari impune Capitolium iubet, dicit nullum sacrilegum esse, quia, quidquid sublatum est, ex eo loco, qui deorum erat, in eum transfertur locus, qui deorum est. [3] Hic respondetur omnia quidem deorum esse, sed non omnia dis dedicata; in iis observari sacrilegium, quae religio numini adscripsit. Sic et totum mundum deorum esse immortalium templum, solum quidem amplitudine illorum ac magnificentia dignum : tamen a sacris profana discerni; non omnia licere in angulo, cui fani nomen impositum est, quae sub caelo et conspectu siderum licent. Iniuriam sacrilegus deo quidem non potest facere, quem extra ictum sua divinitas posuit, sed punitur, quia tamquam deo

fecit : opinio illum nostra ac sua obligat poenae. [4] Quomodo ergo sacrilegus videtur, qui aliquid aufert sacri, etiam si, quocumque transtulit, quod surripuerat, intra terminos mundi est, sic et sapienti furtum potest fieri; auferetur enim illi non ex iis, quae universa habet, sed ex iis, quibus dominus inscriptus est, quae viritim ei serviunt. [5] Illam alteram possessionem adgnoscat, hanc nolet habere, si poterit, emittetque illam vocem, quam Romanus imperator emisit, cum illi ob virtutem et bene gestam rem publicam tantum agri decerneretur, quantum arando uno die circumire potuisset : “ Non opus est,” inquit, “ vobis eo cive, cui plus opus sit quam uni civi.” Quanto maioris viri putas respuisse hoc munus, quam meruisse! Multi enim fines aliis abstulerunt, sibi nemo constituit!

8. Ergo cum animum sapientis intuemur potentem omnium et per universa dimissum, omnia illius esse dicimus, cum ad hoc ius cotidianum, si ita res tulerit, capite censebitur. Multum interest, possessio eius animo ac magnitudine aestimetur an censu. [2] Haec universa habere, de quibus loqueris, abominabitur. Non referam tibi Socraten, Chrysippum, Zenonem et ceteros magnos quidem viros, maiores quidem, quia in laudem vetustorum invidia non obstat. Paulo ante Demetrium rettuli, quem mihi videtur rerum natura nostris tulisse temporibus, ut ostenderet nec illum a nobis corrumpi nec nos ab illo corripiri posse, virum exactae, licet neget ipse, sapientiae firmaeque in iis, quae proposuit, constantiae, eloquentiae vero eius, quae res fortissimas deceat, non concinnatae nec in verba sollicitae, sed ingenti animo, prout impetus tulit, res suas prosequentis. [3] Huic non dubito quin providentia et talem vitam et talem dicendi facultatem dederit, ne aut exemplum saeculo nostro aut convicium deesset. Demetrio si res nostras aliquis deorum possidendas velit tradere sub lege certa, ne liceat donare, adfirmaverim repudiaturum dicturumque :

9. “ Ego vero me ad istud inextricabile pondus non adligo nec in altam faecem rerum hunc expeditum hominem demitto. Quid ad me defers populorum omnium mala? Quae ne daturus quidem acciperem, quoniam multa video, quae me donare non deceat. Volo sub conspectu meo ponere, quae gentium oculos regumque praestringunt, volo intueri pretia sanguinis animarumque vestrarum.

[2] Prima mihi luxuriae spolia propone, sive illa Vis per ordinem

expandere sive, ut est melius, in unum acervum dare. Video elaboratam scrupulosa distinctione testudinem et foedissimorum pigerrimorumque animalium testas ingentibus pretiis emptas, in quibus ipsa illa, quae placet, varietas subditis medicamentis in similitudinem veri Coloratur. Video istic mensas et aestimatum lignum senatorio censu, eo pretiosius, quo illud in plures nodos arboris infelicitas torsit. [3] Video istic crystallina, quorum accendit fragilitas pretium; omnium enim rerum voluptas apud imperitos ipso, quo fugari debet, periculo crescit. Video murrea pocula; parum scilicet luxuria magno fuerit, nisi, quod vomant, capacibus gemmis inter se propinaverint. [4] Video uniones non singulos singulis auribus comparatos; iam enim exercitatae aures oneri ferundo sunt; iunguntur inter se et insuper alii binis superponuntur. Non satis muliebris insania viros superiecerat, nisi bina ac terna patrimonia auribus singulis pependissent. [5] Video sericas vestes, si vestes vocandae sunt, in quibus nihil est, quo defendi aut corpus aut denique pudor possit, quibus sumptis parum liquido nudam se non esse iurabit. Hae ingenti summa ab ignotis etiam ad commercium gentibus accersuntur, ut matronae nostrae ne adulteris quidem plus sui in cubiculo, quam in publico ostendant.

10. “ Quid agis, avaritia? Quot rerum caritate aurum tuum victum est! Omnia ista, quae rettuli, in maiore honore pretioque sunt. Nunc volo tuas opes recognoscere, lamnas utriusque materiae, ad quam cupiditas nostra caligat. [2] At mehercules terra, quae, quidquid utile futurum nobis erat, protulit, ista defodit et mersit et ut noxiosis rebus ac malo gentium in medium prodituris toto pondere incubuit. Video ferrum ex isdem tenebris esse prolatum, quibus aurum et argentum, ne aut instrumentum in caedes mutuas deesset aut pretium. [3] Et tamen adhuc ista aliquam materiam habent; est, in quo errorem oculorum animus subsequi possit. Video istic diplomata et syngraphas et cautiones, vacua habendi simulacra, umbracula avaritiae quaedam laborantis, per quae decipiat animum inanium opinione gaudentem. Quid enim ista sunt, quid fenus et calendarium et usura, nisi humanae cupiditatis extra naturam quaesita nomina? [4] “Possum de rerum natura queri, quod aurum argentumque non interius absconderit, quod non illis maius, quam quod detrahi posset, pondus iniecerit : quid sunt istae tabellae, quid computationes et

venale tempus et sanguinolentae centesimae? Voluntaria mala ex constitutione nostra pendentia, in quibus nihil est, quod subici oculis, quod teneri manu possit, inanis avaritiae somnia. [5] O miserum, si quem delectat patrimonii sui liber magnus et vasta spatia terrarum colenda per vinctos et immensi greges pecorum per provincias ac regna pascendi et familia bellicosus nationibus maior et aedificia privata laxitatem urbium magnarum vincentia! [6] Cum bene ista, per quae divitias suas disposuit ac fudit, circumspexerit superbumque se fecerit, quidquid habet, ei, quod cupit, comparet : pauper est. Dimitte me et illis divitiis meis redde. Ego regnum sapientiae novi, magnum, securum; ego sic omnia habeo, ut omnium sint.”

11. Itaque cum C.1 Caesar illi ducenta donaret, ridens reiecit ne dignam quidem summam iudicans, qua non accepta gloriaretur. Di deaque, quam pusillo animo illum aut honorare voluit aut corrumpere! Reddendum egregio viro testimonium est; [2] ingentem rem ab illo diei audivi, cum miraretur Gai dementiam, quod se putasset tanti posse mutari. “ Si temptare,” inquit, “ me constituerat, toto illi fui experiendus imperio.”

12. Sapienti ergo donari aliquid potest, etiam si sapientis omnia sunt. Aequae nihil prohibet, cum omnia amicis dicamus esse communia, aliquid amico donari. Non enim illi sic cum amico communia omnia sunt, quomodo cum socio, ut pars mea sit, pars illius, sed quomodo patri matrique communes liberi sunt, quibus cum duo sunt, non singuli singulos habent, sed singuli binos. [2] Primum omnium iam efficiam, ut, quisquis est iste, qui me in societatem vocat, sciat se nihil mecum habere commune. Quare? Quia hoc inter sapientes solum consortium est, inter quos amicitia est; ceteri non magis amici sunt quam socii. [3] Deinde pluribus modis communia sunt. Equestria omnium equitum Romanorum sunt; in illis tamen meus fit proprius locus, quem occupavi; hoc si cui cessi, quamvis illi communi re cesserim, tamen aliquid dedisse videor. Quaedam quorundam sub certa condicione sunt. [4] Habeo in equestribus locum, non ut vendam, non ut locem, non ut habitem, in hoc tantum, ut spectem; propterea non mentior, si dico habere me in equestribus locum. Sed cum in theatrum veni, si plena sunt equestria, et iure habeo locum illic, quia sedere mihi licet, et non habeo, quia ab his, cum quibus mihi ius loci commune est, occupatus est. [5] Idem

inter amicos puta fieri. Quidquid habet amicus, commune est nobis, sed illius proprium est, qui tenet; uti iis illo nolente non possum. “ Derides me,” inquis; “ si, quod amici est, meum est, liceat mihi vendere.” Non licet; nam nec equestria, et tamen communia tibi cum ceteris equitibus sunt. [6] Non est argumentum ideo aliquid tuum non esse, quia vendere non potes, quia consumere, quia mutare in deterius aut melius; tuum enim est etiam, quod sub lege certa tuum est.

13. ... accepi, sed certe non minus. Ne traham longius, beneficium maius esse non potest; ea, per quae beneficium datur, possunt esse maiora et plura, in quae se denique benevolentia effundat et sic sibi indulgeat, quemadmodum amantes solent, quorum plura oscula et complexus artiores non augent amorem, sed exercent.

14. Haec quoque, quae venit, quaestio profligata est in prioribus; itaque breviter perstringetur; possunt enim in hanc, quae aliis data sunt, argumenta transferri. Quaeritur, an, qui omnia fecit, ut beneficium redderet, reddiderit. [2] “ Ut scias,” inquit, “ illum non reddidisse, omnia fecit, ut redderet; apparet ergo non esse id factum, cuius faciendi occasionem non habuit. Et creditori suo pecuniam non solvit is, qui, ut solveret, ubique quaesivit nec in- venit.” [3] Quaedam eius condicionis sunt, ut effectum praestare debeant; quibusdam pro effectum est omnia temptasse, ut efficerent. Si omnia fecit, ut sanaret, peregit partes suas medicus; etiam damnato reo oratori constat eloquentiae officium, si omni vi usus est; laus imperatoria etiam victo duci redditur, si et prudentia et industria et fortitudo muneribus suis functa est. [4] Omnia fecit, ut beneficium redderet, obstitit illi felicitas tua; nihil incidit durius, quod veram amicitiam experiretur; locupleti donare non potuit, sano adsidere, felici succurrere : gratiam rettulit, etiam si tu beneficium non recepisti. Praeterea huic intentus semper et huius rei tempus opperiens, qui in hoc multum curae, multum sedulitatis impendit, plus laboravit, quam cui cito referre gratiam contigit. [5] Debitoris exemplum dissimile est, cui parum est pecuniam quaesisse, nisi solvit; illic enim stat acerbis super caput creditor, qui nullum diem gratis occidere patiatur; hic benignissimus, qui, te cum viderit concursantem et sollicitum atque anxium, dicat : “ Mitte hanc de pectore curam; desine tibi molestus instare. Omnia a te habeo; iniuriam mihi facis, si me quicquam desiderare amplius

iudicas; plenissime ad me pervenit animus tuus.” 2 “ Dic,” inquit, “ mihi : si reddidisset beneficium, diceres illum gratiam rettulisse; eodem ergo loco est, qui reddidit et qui non reddidit? “ Contra nunc illud pone : si oblitus esset accepti beneficii, si ne temptasset quidem gratus esse, negares illum gratiam rettulisse; at hic se diebus noctibusque lassavit et omnibus aliis renuntiavit officiis huic uni imminens et operatus, ne qua se fugeret occasio; eodem ergo loco erunt ille, qui curam referendae gratiae abiecit, et hic, qui numquam ab illa recessit? Iniquus es, si rem a me exigis, cum videas animum non defuisse.

15. Ad summam puta, cum captus esses, me pecuniam mutuatum rebus meis in securitatem creditoris oppositis navigasse hieme tam saeva per infesta latrociniiis litora, emensum, quidquid periculorum adferre potest etiam pacatum mare; peragratis omnibus solitudinibus, cum, quos nemo non fugiebat, ego quaererem, tandem ad piratas perveni; iam te alius redemerat : negabis me gratiam rettulisse? Etiamne, si in illa navigatione pecuniam, quam saluti tuae contraxeram, naufragus perdidisti, etiamne, si in vincula, quae detrahare tibi volui, ipse incidi, negabis me rettulisse gratiam? [2] At mehercules Athenienses Harmodium et Aristogitonem tyrannicidas vocant, et Mucio manus in hostili ara relictas instar occisi Porsinae fuit, et semper contra fortunam luctata virtus etiam citra effectum propositi operis enituit. Plus praestitit, qui fugientes occasiones secutus est et alia atque alia captavit, per quae referre gratiam posset, quam quem sine ullo sudore gratum prima fecit occasio. [3] “ Duas,” inquit, “ res ille tibi praestitit, voluntatem et rem; tu quoque illi duas debes.” Merito istud diceres ei, qui tibi reddidit voluntatem otiosam, huic vero, qui et vult et conatur et nihil intemptatum relinquit, id non potes dicere; utrumque enim praestat, quantum in se est. [4] Deinde non semper numero numerus aequandus est, aliquando una res pro duabus valet; itaque in locum rei succedit tam propensa voluntas et cupida reddendi. Quod si animus sine re ad referendam gratiam non valet, nemo adversus deos gratus est, in quos voluntas sola confertur. 5 “ Dis,” inquit, “ nihil aliud praestare possumus.” Sed si huic quoque, cui referre gratiam debeo, nihil aliud praestare possum, quid est, quare non eo adversus hominem gratus sim, quo nihil amplius in deos confero?

16. Si tamen quaeris, quid sentiam, et vis signare responsum, hic beneficium recepisse se iudicet, ille se sciat non reddidisse; hic illum dimittat, ille se teneat; hic dicat : “ Habeo,” ille respondeat : “ Debeo. [2] “ In omni quaestione propositum sit nobis bonum publicum; praeccludendae sunt excusationes ingratis, ad quas refugere non possint et sub quibus infitiationem suam tegere. “ Omnia feci.” Fac etiamnunc. Quid? [3] tu tam imprudentes iudicas maiores nostros fuisse, ut non intellexerent iniquissimum esse eodem loco haberi eum, qui pecuniam, quam a creditore acceperat, libidini aut aleae adsumpsit, et eum, qui incendio aut latrocinio aut aliquo casu tristiore aliena cum suis perdidit? Nullam excusationem receperunt, ut homines scirent fidem utique praestandam; satius enim erat a paucis etiam iustam excusationem non accipi quam ab omnibus aliquam temptari. Omnia fecisti, ut redderes; [4] hoc illi satis sit, tibi parum. Nam quemadmodum ille, si enixam et sedulam operam transire pro irrita patitur, cui gratia referatur, indignus est, ita tu ingratus es, nisi ei, qui voluntatem bonam in solutum accipit, eo libentius debes, quia dimittens. Non rapias hoc nec testeris; occasiones reddendi nihilo minus quaeras. Redde illi, quia repetit, huic, quia remittit; illi, quia bonus est, huic, quia malus. [5] Ideoque hanc quaestionem non est quod ad te iudices pertinere, an, quod beneficium quis a sapiente accipit, reddere debeat, si ille desiit esse sapiens et in malum versus est. Redderes enim et depositum, quod a sapiente accepisses, etiam malo, redderes creditum. Quid est, cur non et beneficium? Quia mutatus est, ille te mutet? Quid? [6] Si quid a sano accepisses, aegro non redderes, cum plus semper imbecillo amico debeamus? Et hic aeger est animo; adiuvetur, feratur. Stultitia morbus est animi.

17. Drstinguendum hoc, quo magis intellegatur, existimo. Duo sunt beneficia : unum, quod dare nisi sapiens sapienti non potest; hoc est absolutum et verum beneficium; alterum vulgare, plebeium, cuius inter nos imperitos commercium est. [2] De hoc non est dubium, quin illi, qualiscumque est, debeam reddere, sive homicida sive fur sive adulter evasit. Habent scelera leges suas; melius istos iudex quam ingratus emendat. Nemo te malum, quia est, faciat. Malo beneficium proiciam, bono reddam, huic, quia debeo, illi, ne debeam.

18. De altero beneficii genere dubitatur, quod si accipere non potui

nisi sapiens, ne reddere quidem nisi sapienti possum. “ Puta enim me reddere : ille non potest recipere, non est iam huius rei capax, scientiam utendi perdidit. Quid, si me remittere maneo pilam iubeas? Stultum est dare alicui, quod accipere non possit.” 6 Ut respondere ab ultimo incipiam : non dabo ulli, quod accipere non poterit; reddam, etiam si recipere non poterit. Obligare enim non possum nisi accipientem; liberari tantum, si reddidi, possum. Ille uti illo non poterit? Viderit; penes illum erit culpa, non penes me.

19. “ Reddere est,” inquit, “ accepturo tradidisse. Quid enim? si cui vinum debeas et hoc ille te infundere reticulo iubeat aut cribro, reddidisse te dices? Aut reddere voles, quod, dum redditur, inter duos pereat? “ [2] Reddere est id, quod debeas, ei, cuius est, volenti dare. Hoc unum mihi praestandum est. Ut quidem habeat, quod a me accepit, iam ulterioris est curae; non tutelam illi, sed fidem debeo, multoque satius est illum non habere, quam me non reddere. [3] Et creditori statim in macellum laturo, quod acceperit, reddam; etiam si mihi adulteram, cui monerem, delegaverit, solvam; et, si nummos, quos accipiet, in sinum suum discinctus infundet, dabo. Reddendum enim mihi est, non servandum, cum reddidero, ac tuendum; beneficii accepti, non reddit, custodiam debeo. Dum apud me est, salvum sit; ceterum, licet accipientis manibus effluat, dandum est reposcenti. Reddam bono, cum expediet, malo, cum petet. [4] “ Tale,” inquit, “ illi beneficium, quale accepisti, non potes reddere; accepisti enim a sapiente, stulto reddis.” Non; reddo illi, quale nunc potest recipere, nec per me fit, quod deterius id, quod accepi, reddam, sed per illum, cui, si ad sapientiam redierit, reddam, quale accepi; dum in malis est, reddam, quale ab illo potest accipi. [5] “ Quid? si,” inquit, “ non tantum malus factus est, sed ferus, sed immanis, qualis Apollodorus aut Phalaris, et huic beneficium, quod acceperas, reddes?” Mutationem sapientis tantam natura non patitur. Non in pessima ab optimis lapsus; necesse est etiam in malo vestigia boni teneat; numquam tantum virtus exstinguitur, ut non certiores animo notas imprimat, quam ut illas eradat ulla mutatio. [6] Ferae inter nos educatae si in silvas eruperunt, aliquid mansuetudinis pristinae retinent tantumque a placidissimis absunt, quantum a veris feris et numquam humanam manum passis. Nemo in summam nequitiam incidit, qui umquam haesit sapientiae; altius infectus est, quam ut ex toto elui et transire

in colorem malum possit. [7] Deinde interrogo, utrum iste ferus sit animo tantum, an et in perniciem publicam excurrat? Proposuisti enim mihi Phalarim et alterum tyrannum, quorum si naturam habet intra se malus, quidni ego isti beneficium suum reddam, ne quid mihi cum illo iuris sit amplius? [8] Si vero sanguine humano non tantum gaudet, sed pascitur, sed et suppliciis omnium aetatum crudelitatem insatiabilem exercet nec ira sed aviditate quadam saeviendi furit, si in ore parentium liberos iugulat, si non contentus simplici morte distorquet nec urit solum perituros, sed excoquit, si arx eius cruore semper recenti madet, parum est huic beneficium non reddere! Quidquid erat, quo mihi cohaereret, intercisa iuris humani societas abscidit. [9] Si praestitisset quidem aliquid mihi, sed arma patriae meae inferret, quidquid meruerat, perdidisset, et referre illi gratiam scelus haberetur. Si non patriam meam impugnat, sed suae gravis est et sepositus a mea gente suam exagitat, abscindit, nihilo minus illum tanta pravitas animi, etiam si non inimicum, invisum mihi efficit, priorque mihi ac potior eius officii ratio est, quod humano generi, quam quod uni homini debeo.

20. Sed quamvis hoc ita sit et ex eo tempore omnia mihi in illum libera sint, ex quo corrumpendo fas omne, ut nihil in eum nefas esset, effecerit, illum mihi servandum modum credam, ut, si beneficium illi meum neque vires maiores daturum est in exitium commune nec confirmaturum, quas habet, id autem erit, quod illi reddi sine pernicie publica possit, red- dam. Servabo filium eius infantem; [2] quid hoc beneficium obest cuiquam eorum, quos crudelitas eius lacerat? Pecuniam, quae satellitem stipendio teneat, non subministrabo. Si marmora et vestes desideraverit, nihil oberit cuiquam id, quo luxuria eius in- struitur; militem et arma non suggeram. [3] Si pro magno petet munere artifices scenae et scorta et quae feritatem eius emolliant, libens offeram. Cui triremes et aeratas non mitterem, lusorias et cubiculatas et alia ludibria regum in mari lascivientium mittam. Et si ex toto desperata eius sanitas fuerit, eadem manu beneficium omnibus dabo, illi reddam; quoniam ingeniis talibus exitus remedium est optimumque est abire ei, qui ad se numquam rediturus est. [4] Sed haec rara nequitia est semper portentis loco habita, sicut hiatus terrae et e cavernis maris ignium eruptio; itaque ab illa recedamus, de iis loquamur vitiis, quae detestamur sine

horrore. [5] Huic homini malo, quem invenire in quolibet foro possum, quem singuli timent, reddam beneficium, quod accepi. Non oportet mihi nequitiam eius prodesse; quod meum non est, redeat ad dominum. Bonus sit an malus, quid differt? Diligenter istud excuterem, si non redderem, sed darem.

21. Hic locus fabulam poscit. Pythagoricus quidam emerat a sutore phaecasia, rem magnam, non praesentibus nummis. Post aliquot dies venit ad tabernam redditurus et, cum elusam diu pulsaret, fuit, qui diceret : “ Quid perdis operam? Sutor ille, quem quaeris, elatus, combustus est; quod nobis fortasse molestum est, qui in aeternum nostros amittimus, tibi minime, qui scis futurum, ut renascatur,” 10 iocatus in Pythagoricum. At philosophus noster tres aut quattuor denarios non invita manu domum rettulit subinde concutiens; deinde, cum reprehendisset hanc suam non reddendi tacitam voluptatem, intellegens arrisisse illud lucellum sibi redit ad eandem tabernam et ait : “ Ille tibi vivit; redde, quod debes.” Deinde per clostrum, qua se commissura laxaverat, quattuor denarios in tabernam inseruit ac misit poenas a se exigens improbae cupiditatis, ne alieno adsuesceret.

22. Quod debes, quaere, cui reddas, et, si nemo poscet, ipse te appella. Malus an bonus, ad te non pertinet; redde et accusa. Oblitus es, quem- admodum inter vos officia divisa sint : illi oblivio imperata est, tibi meminisse mandavimus. Errat tamen, si quis existimat, cum dicimus eum, qui beneficium dedit, oblivisci oportere, excutere nos illi memoriam rei praesertim honestissimae; quaedam praecipimus ultra modum, ut ad verum et suum redeant. Cum dicimus : [2] “ Meminisse non debet,” hoc volumus intellegi : “ Praedicare non debet nec iactare nec gravis esse.” Quidam enim beneficium, quod dederunt, omnibus circulis narrant; hoc sobrii locuntur, hoc ebrii non continent, hoc ignotis ingerunt, hoc amicis committunt; ut haec nimia et exprobratrix memoria subsideret, oblivisci eum, qui dedit, iussimus et plus imperando, quam praestari poterat, silentium suasimus.

23. Quotiens parum fiducia est in iis, quibus imperes, amplius exigendum est, quam sat est, ut praestetur, quantum sat est. In hoc omnis hyperbole extenditur, ut ad verum mendacio veniat. Itaque ille, cum dixit : Qui candore nives anteirent, cursibus auras, quod non poterat fieri, dixit, ut crederetur, quantum plurimum posset. Et qui

dixit : His immobilior scopulis, violentior amne, ne hoc quidem se persuasurum putavit aliquem tam immobilem esse quam scopulum.

[2] Numquam tantum sperat hyperbole, quantum audet, sed incredibilia adfirmat, ut ad credibilia perveniat. Cum dicimus : “ Qui beneficium dedit, obliviscatur,” hoc dicimus : “ Similis sit oblito; memoria eius non appareat nec incurrat.” Cum dicimus beneficium repeti non oportere, non ex toto repetitionem tollimus; [3] saepe enim opus est malis exactore, etiam bonis admonitione. Quid ergo? Occasionem ignoranti non ostendam? Necessitates illi meas non detegam? Quare nescisse se aut mentiatum aut doleat? Interveniat aliquando admonitio, sed verecunda, quae non poscat nec in ius vocet.

24. Socrates amicis audientibus : “ Emissum,” inquit, “ pallium, si nummos haberem.” Neminem poposcit, omnes admonuit. A quo acciperet, ambitus fuit; quidni esset? Quantulum enim erat, quod Socrates accipiebat! At multum erat eum fuisse, a quo Socrates acciperet. Num illos castigare mollius potuit? [2] “ Emissum,” inquit, “ pallium, si nummos haberem.” Post hoc quisquis properaverit, sero dat; iam Socrati defuit. Propter acerbos exactores repetere prohibemus, non, ut numquam fiat, sed ut parce.

25. Aristippus aliquando delectatus unguento : “ Male,” inquit, “ istis effeminatis eveniat, qui rem tam bellam infamaverunt.” Item dicendum est : “ Male istis improbis et importunis beneficiorum suorum quadriplatoribus eveniat, qui tam bellam rem, admonitionem inter amicos, sustulerunt! “ Ego tamen utar hoc iure amicitiae et beneficium ab eo repetam, a quo petissem, qui alterius beneficii loco accepturus est potuisse reddere. [2] Numquam ne querens quidem dicam : eiectum litore, egentem excepi et regni demens in parte locavi. Non est ista admonitio, convicium est; hoc est in odium beneficia perducere, hoc est efficere, ut ingratum esse aut liceat aut iuvet. Satis abundeque est submissis et familiaribus verbis memoriam revocare : si bene quid de te merui, fuit aut tibi quicquam dulce meum. Ille in vicem dicat : “ Quidni merueris? Eiectum litore, egentem excepisti.”

26. “Sed nihil,” inquit, “ proficimus; dissimulat, oblitus est : quid facere debeam? “ Quaeris rem maxime necessariam et in qua hanc materiam consummati decet, quemadmodum ingrati ferendi sint. [2]

Placido animo, mansueto, magno. Numquam te tam inhumanus et immemor et ingratus offendat, ut non tamen dedisse delectet; numquam in has voces iniuria impellat : “ Vellem, non fecissem.” Beneficii tui tibi etiam infelicitas placeat; semper illum pae- nitebit, si te ne nunc quidem paenitet. Non est, quod indigneris, tamquam aliquid novi acciderit; magis mirari deberes, si non accidisset. [3] Alium labor, alium impensa deterret, alium periculum, alium turpis verecundia, ne, dum reddit, fateatur accepisse, alium ignorantia officii, alium pigritia, alium occupatio. Adspice, quemadmodum immensae hominum cupiditates hient semper et poscant; non miraberis ibi neminem reddere, ubi nemo satis accepit. [4] Quis est istorum tam firmæ mentis ac solidæ, ut tuto apud eum beneficia deponas? Alius libidine insanit, alius abdomini servit; alius lucri totus est, cuius summam, non vias, spectat; alius invidia laborat, alius caeca ambitione et in gladios irruente. Adice torporem mentis ac senium et contraria huic inquieti pectoris agitationem tumultusque perpetuos; adice aestimationem sui nimiam et tumorem, ob quæ contemnendus est, insolentem. Quid contumaciam dicam in perversa nitentium, quid levitatem semper aliquo transilientem? [5] Hoc accedat temeritas praeceps et numquam fidele consilium daturus timor et mille errores, quibus volvimur : audacia timidissimorum, discordia familiarissimorum et, publicum malum, incertissimis fidere, fastidire possessa, quæ consequi posse spes non fuit. Inter adfectus inquietissimos rem quietissimam, fidem, quaeris?

27. Si tibi vitae nostræ vera imago succurret, videre videberis tibi captæ cum maxime civitatis faciem, in qua omisso pudoris rectique respectu vires in concilio sunt velut signo ad permiscenda omnia dato. Non igni, non ferro abstinetur; soluta legibus scelera sunt; ne religio quidem, quæ inter arma hostilia supplices textit, ullum impedimentum est ruentium in prædam. [2] Hic ex privato, hic ex publico, hic ex profano, hic ex sacro rapit; hic effringit, hic transilit; hic non contentus angusto itinere ipsa, quibus arcetur, evertit et in lucrum ruina venit; hic sine caede populatur, hic spolia cruenta manu gestat; nemo non fert aliquid ex altero. In hæc aviditate generis humani o ne tu nimis fortunæ communis oblitus es, qui quaeris inter rapientes referentem! [3] Si indignans ingratos esse, indignare luxuriosos, indignare avaros, indignare impudicos, indignare aegros

deformes, senes pallidos! Est istuc grave vitium, est intolerabile et quod dissociet homines, quod concordiam, qua imbecillitas nostra fulcitur, scindat ac dissipet, sed usque eo vulgare est, ut illud ne qui queritur quidem effugerit.

28. Cogita tecum, an, quibuscumque debuisti, gratiam rettuleris, an nullum umquam apud te perierit officium, an omnium te beneficiorum memoria comitetur. Videbis, quae puero data sunt, ante adulescentiam elapsa, quae in iuvenem conlata sunt, non perdurasse in senectutem. Quaedam perdidimus, quaedam proiecimus, quaedam e conspectu nostro paulatim exierunt, a quibusdam oculos avertimus. [2] Ut excusem tibi imbecillitatem, imprimis vas fragile est memoria et rerum turbae non sufficit; necesse est, quantum recipit, emittat et antiquissima recentissimis obruat. Sic factum est, ut minima apud te nutricis esset auctoritas, quia beneficium eius longius aetas sequens posuit; sic factum est, ut praeceptoris tibi non esset ulla veneratio; sic evenit, ut circa consularia occupato comitia aut sacerdotiorum candidato quaesturae suffragator excideret. Fortasse vitium, de quo querens, si te diligenter excusseris, in sinu invenies. Inique publico crimini irasceris, stulte tuo; ut absolvaris, ignosce. [3] Meliorem illum facies ferendo, utique peiorem exprobrando. Non est, quod frontem eius indures; sine, si quid est pudoris residui, servet. Saepe dubiam verecundiam vox conviciantis clarior rupit. Nemo id esse, quod iam videtur, timet; deprenso pudor demitur.

29. “ Perdidisti beneficium.” Numquid, quae consecravimus, perdidisse nos dicimus? Inter consecrata beneficium est, etiam si male respondit, bene conlatum. Non est ille, qualem speravimus; simus nos, quales fuimus, ei dissimiles. Damnum non tunc factum : apparuit. Ingratus non sine nostro pudore protrahitur, quoniam quidem querella amissi beneficii non bene dati signum est. [2] Quantum possumus, causam eius apud nos agamus : “ Fortasse non potuit, fortasse ignoravit, fortasse facturus est.” Quaedam nomina bona lentus et sapiens creditor fecit, qui sustinuit ac mora fovit. Idem nobis faciendum est; nutriamus fidem languidam.

30. “ Perdidisti beneficium.” Stulte non nosti detrimenti tui tempora! Perdidisti, sed cum dares; nunc palam factum est. Etiam in his, quae videntur in perditio, moderatio plurimum profuit , ut corporum ita animorum molliter vitia tractanda sunt. Saepe, quod explicari

pertinacia potuit, violentia trahentis abruptum est. Quid opus est maledictis? Quid querellis? Quid insectatione? Quare illum liberas? Quare dimittis? Si ingratus est, iam nihil debet. [2] Quae ratio est exacerbare eum, in quem magna contuleris, ut ex amico dubio fiat non dubius inimicus et patrociniū sibi nostra infamia quaerat, nec desit vox: “ Nescio quid est, quod eum, cui tantum debuit, ferre non potuit; subest aliquid “? Nemo non superioris dignitatem querendo, etiam si non inquinavit, adpersit; nec quisquam fingere contentus est levia, cum magnitudine mendacii fidem quaerat.

31. Quanto illa melior via, qua servatur illi species amicitiae et, si reverti ad sanitatem velit, etiam amicitia! Vincit malos pertinax bonitas, nec quisquam tam duri infestique adversus diligenda animi est, ut etiam in iniuria bonos non amet, quibus hoc quoque coepit debere, quod impune non solvit. Ad illa itaque cogitationes tuas flecte : [2] “Non est relata mihi gratia; quid faciam? Quod di, omnium rerum optimi auctores, qui beneficia ignorantī dare incipiunt, ingratīs perseverant. [3] Alius illis obicit neclegentiam nostri, alius iniquitatem; alius illos extra mundum suum proicit et ignavos hebetesque sine luce, sine ullo opere destituit; alius solem, cui debemus, quod inter laborem quietemque tempus divisimus, quod non tenebris mersi confusionem aeternae noctis effugimus, qui annum cursu suo temperat et corpora alit, sata evocat, percoquit fructus, saxum aliquod aut fortuitorum ignium globum et quidvis potius quam deum appellat. [4] Nihilo minus tamen more optimorum parentium, qui maledictis suorum infantium arrident, non cessant di beneficia congerere de beneficiorum auctore dubitantibus, sed aequali tenore bona sua per gentes populosque distribuunt; unam potentiam, prodesse, sortiti spargunt opportunis imbribus terras, maria flatu movent, siderum cursu notant tempora, hiemes aestatesque intervētu lenioris spiritus molliunt, errorem labentium animarum placidi ac propitii ferunt. Imitemur illos; [5] demus, etiam si multa in irritum data sunt; demus nihilo minus aliis, demus ipsis, apud quos facta iactura est. Neminem ad excitandas domos ruina deterruit, et, eum penates ignis absumpsit, fundamenta tepente adhuc area ponimus et urbes haustas saepius eidem solo credimus; adeo ad bonas spes pertinax animus est. Terra marique humana opera cessarent, nisi male temptata retemptare libuisset.

32. Ingratus est: non mihi fecit iniuriam, sed sibi; ego beneficio meo, cum darem, usus sum. Nec ideo pignus dabo, sed diligentius; quod in hoc perdidit, ab aliis recipiam. Sed huic ipsi beneficium dabo iterum et tamquam bonus agricola cura cultuque sterilitatem soli vincam; perit mihi beneficium, iste hominibus. Non est magni animi beneficium dare et perdere; hoc est magni animi perdere et dare.

ON TRANQUILLITY OF MIND — De Tranquillitate Animi

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I.

1 Inquirenti mihi in me quaedam uitia apparebant, Seneca, in aperto posita, quae manu prehenderem, quaedam obscuriora et in recessu, quaedam non continua, sed ex interuallis redeuntia, quae uel molestissima dixerim, ut hostes uagos et ex occasionibus assilientes, per quos neutrum licet, nec tamquam in bello paratum esse nec tamquam in pace securum.

2 Illum tamen habitum in me maxime deprehendo (quare enim non uerum ut medico fatear?), nec bona fide liberatum me iis quae timebam et oderam, nec rursus obnoxium. In statu ut non pessimo, ita maxime querulo et moroso positus sum nec aegroto nec ualeo. 3 Non est quod dicas omnium uirtutum tenera esse principia, tempore illis duramentum et robur accedere. Non ignoro etiam quae in speciem laborant, dignitatem dico et eloquentiae famam et quicquid ad alienum suffragium uenit, mora conualescere: et quae ueras uires parant et quae ad placendum fuco quodam subornantur exspectant annos donec paulatim colorem diuturnitas ducat. Sed ego uereor ne consuetudo, quae rebus affert constantiam, hoc uitium mihi altius figat: tam malorum quam bonorum longa conuersatio amorem induit.

4 Haec animi inter utrumque dubii, nec ad recta fortiter nec ad praua uergentis, infirmitas qualis sit, non tam semel tibi possum quam per partes ostendere. Dicam quae accidant mihi; tu morbo nomen inuenies. 5 Tenet me summus amor parsimoniae, fateor: placet non in ambitionem cubile compositum, non ex arcula prolata uestis, non ponderibus ac mille tormentis splendere cogentibus expressa, sed domestica et uilis, nec seruata nec sumenda sollicite; 6 placet cibus quem nec parent familiae nec spectent, non ante multos imperatus dies nec multorum manibus ministratus, sed parabilis facilisque, nihil habens arcessiti pretiosiue, ubilibet non defuturus, nec patrimonio nec corpori grauis, non rediturus qua intrauerit; 7 placet minister incultus et rudis uernula, argentum graue rustici patris sine ullo nomine artificis, et mensa non uarietate macularum conspicua nec per multas dominorum elegantium successiones ciuitati nota, sed in usum posita, quae nullius conuiuiae oculos nec uoluptate moretur nec accendat inuidia. 8 Cum bene ista placuerunt,

praestringit animum apparatus alicuius paedagogii, diligentius quam in tralatu uestita et auro culta mancipia et agmen seruorum nitentium, iam domus etiam qua calcatur pretiosa et, diuitiis per omnes angulos dissipatis, tecta ipsa fulgentia, et assectator comesque patrimoniorum pereuntium populus. Quid perlucentes ad imum aquas et circumfluentes ipsa conuiuia, quid epulas loquar scaena sua dignas? 9 Circumfudit me ex longo frugalitatis situ uenientem multo splendore luxuria et undique circumsonuit: paulum titubat acies, facilius aduersus illam animum quam oculos attollo; recedo itaque non peior, sed tristior, nec inter illa friuola mea tam altus incedo, tacitusque morsus subit et dubitatio numquid illa meliora sint. Nihil horum me mutat, nihil tamen non concutit.

10 Placet imperia praeceptorum sequi et in mediam ire rem publicam; placet honores fascisque non scilicet purpura aut uirgis abductum capessere, sed ut amicis propinquisque et omnibus ciuibus, omnibus deinde mortalibus paratior utiliorque sim: promptus, imperitus, sequor Zenona, Cleanthen, Chrysippum, quorum tamen nemo ad rem publicam accessit, et nemo non misit. 11 Vbi aliquid animum insolitum arietari percussit, ubi aliquid occurrit aut indignum, ut in omni uita humana multa sunt, aut parum ex facili flens, aut multum temporis res non magno aestimandae poposcerunt, ad otium conuertor, et, quemadmodum pecoribus, fatigatis quoque, uelocior domum gradus est. 12 Placet intra parietes rursus uitam coercere: nemo ullum auferat diem, nihil dignum tanto impendio redditurus; sibi ipse animus haereat, se colat, nihil alieni agat, nihil quod ad iudicem spectet; ametur expers publicae priuataeque curae tranquillitas. 13 Sed, ubi lectio fortior erexit animum et aculeos subdiderunt exempla nobilia, prosilire libet in forum, commodare alteri uocem, alteri operam, etiam si nihil profuturam, tamen conaturam prodesse, aliculus coercere in foro superbiain male secundis rebus elati.

14 In studiis puto mehercules melius esse res ipsas intueri et harum causa loqui, ceterum uerba rebus permittere, ut qua duxerint, hac inelaborata sequatur oratio. Quid opus est saeculis duratura componere? Vis tu non id agere, ne te posterius taceant! Morti natus es: minus molestiarum habet funus tacitum. Itaque occupandi temporis causa in usum tuum, non in praeconium, aliquid simplici stilo scribe:

minore labore opus est studentibus in diem. 15 Rursus, ubi se animus cogitationum magnitudine leuauit, ambitiosus in uerba est altiasque ut spirare, ita eloqui gestit, et ad dignitatem rerum exit oratio. Oblitus tum legis pressiorisque iudicii, sublimius feror et ore iam non meo.

16 Ne singula diutius persequar, in omnibus rebus haec me sequitur bonae mentis infirmitas, cui ne paulatim defluam uereor, aut, quod est sollicitius, ne semper casuro similis pendeam et plus fortasse sit quam quod ipse peruideo. Familiariter enim domestica aspiciamus, et semper iudicio fauor officit. 17 Puto multos potuisse ad sapientiam peruenire, nisi putassent se peruenisse, nisi quaedam in se dissimulassent, quaedam opertis oculis transiluissent. Non est enim quod magis aliena iudices adulatione nos perire quam nostra. Quis sibi uerum dicere ausus est? quis non, inter laudantium blandientiumque positus greges, plurimum tamen sibi ipse assentatus est? 18 Rogo itaque, si quod habes remedium quo hanc fluctuationem meam sistas, dignum me putes qui tibi tranquillitatem debeam. Non esse periculosos hos motus animi nec quicquam tumultuosi afferentes scio; ut uera tibi similitudine id de quo queror cxprimam, non tempestate uexor, sed nausea: detrahe ergo quicquid hoc est mali, et succurre in conspectu terrarum laboranti.

II.

1 Quaero mehercules iamdudum, Serene, ipse tacitus, cui talem affectum animi similem putem, nec ulli propius admouerim exemplo quam eorum qui, ex longa et graui uoletudine expliciti, motiunculis leuibusque interim offensis perstringuntur et, cum reliquias effugerunt, suspicionibus tamen inquietantur medicisque iam sani manum porrigunt et omnem calorem corporis sui calumniantur. Horum, Serene, non parum sanum est corpus, sed sanitati parum assueuit, sicut est quidam tremor etiam tranquillī maris motusque, cum ex tempestate requieuit. 2 Opus est itaque non illis durioribus, quae iam transcucurrimus, ut alicubi obstes tibi, alicubi irascaris, alicubi instes grauis, sed illo quod ultimum uenit, ut fidem tibi habeas et recta ire te uia credas, nihil auocatus transuersis multorum uestigiis passim discurrentium, quorundam circa ipsam errantium uiam. 3 Quod desideras autem magnum et summum est deoque uicinum, non concuti.

Hanc stabilem animi sedem Graeci euthymian uocant, de qua Democriti uolumen egregium est, ego tranquillitatem uoco: nec enim imitari et transferre uerba ad illorum formam necesse est; res ipsa de qua agitur aliquo signanda nomine est, quod appellationis graecae uim debet habere, non faciem. 4 Ergo quaerimus quomodo animus semper aequali secundoque cursu eat propitiusque sibi sit et sua laetus aspiciat et hoc gaudium non interrumpat, sed placido statu maneat, nec attollens se umquam nec deprimens. Id tranquillitas erit. Quomodo ad hanc perueniri possit in uniuersum quaeramus; sumes tu ex publico remedio quantum uoles. 5 Totum interim uitium in medium protrahendum est, ex quo agnoscet quisque partem suam. Simul tu intelleges quanto minus negotii habeas cum fastidio tui quam ii quos, ad professionem speciosam alligatos et sub ingenti titulo laborantes, in sua simulatione pudor magis quam uoluntas tenet.

6 Omnes in eadem causa sunt, et hi qui leuitate uexantur ac taedio assiduaeque mutatione propositi, quibus semper magis placet quod reliquerunt, et illi qui marcent et oscitantur. Adice eos qui non aliter quam quibus difficilis somnus est uersant se et hoc atque illo modo

componunt, donec quietem lassitudine inueniant: statum uitae suae reformando subinde, in eo nouissime manent, in quo illos non mutandi odium, sed senectus ad nouandum pigra deprehendit. Adice et illos, qui non constantiae uitio parum lenes sunt, sed inertiae, et uiuunt non quomodo uolunt, sed quomodo coeperunt. 7 Innumerabiles deinceps proprietates sunt, sed unus effectus uitii, sibi displicere. Hoc oritur ab intemperie animi et cupiditatibus timidis aut parum prosperis, ubi aut non audent quantum concupiscunt aut non consequuntur, et in spem toti prominent. Semper instabiles mobilesque sunt, quod necesse est accidere pendentibus. Ad uota sua omni uia tendunt et inhonesta se ac difficilia docent coguntque, et, ubi sine praemio labor est, torquet illos irritum dedecus, nec dolent praua, sed frustra uoluisse. 8 Tunc illos et paenitentia coepti tenet et incipiendi timor, subrepique illa animi iactatio non inuenientis exitum, quia nec imperare cupiditatibus suis nec obsequi possunt, et cunctatio uitae parum se explicantis et inter destituta uota torpentis animi situs. 9 Quae omnia grauiora sunt ubi odjo infelicitatis operosae ad otium perfugerunt ac secreta studia, quae pati non potest animus ad ciuilia erectus agendique cupidus et natura inquires, parum scilicet in se solaciorum habens. Ideo, detractis oblectationibus quas ipsae occupationes discurrentibus praebent, domum, solitudinem, parietes non fert; inuitus aspicit se sibi relictum.

10 Hinc illud est taedium et displicentia sui et nusquam residentis animi uolutatio et otii sui tristes atque aegra patientia, utique ubi causas fateri pudet et tormenta introrsus egit uerecundia, in angusto inclusae cupiditates sine exitu se ipsae strangulant; inde maeror marcorque et mille fluctus mentis incertae, quam spes inchoatae suspensam habent, deploratae tristem; inde ille affectus otium suum detestantium querentiumque nihil ipsos habere quod agant, et alienis incrementis inimicissima inuidia (aliter enim liuorem infelix inertia et omnes destrui cupiunt, quia se non potuere prouehere); 11 ex hac deinde auersatione alienorum processuum et suorum desperatione obirascens fortunae animus et de saeculo querens et in angulos se retrahens et poenae incubans suae, dum illum taedet sui pigetque. Natura enim humanus animus agilis est et pronus ad motus. Grata omnis illi excitandi se abstrahendique materia est, gratior pessimis quibusque ingeniis, quae occupationibus libenter deteruntur: ut

ulcera quaedam nocituras manus appetunt et tactu gaudent et foedam corporum scabiem delectat quicquid exasperat, non aliter dixerim his mentibus, in quas cupiditates uelut mala ulcera eruperunt, uoluptati esse laborem uexationemque. 12 Sunt enim quaedam quae corpus quoque nostrum cum quodam dolore delectent, ut uersare se et mutare nondum fessum latus et alio atque alio positu umentari: qualis ille homericus Achilles est, modo pronus, modo supinus, in uarios habitus se ipse componens, quod proprium aegri est, nihil diu pati et mutationibus ut remediis uti.

13 Inde peregrinationes suscipiuntur uagae et litora pererrantur et modo mari se, modo terra experitur semper praesentibus infesta leuitas: “Nunc Campaniam petamus.” Iam delicata fastidio sunt: “Inculca uideantur, Bruttios et Lucaniae saltus persequamur.” Aliquid tamen inter deserta amoeni requiritur, in quo luxuriosi oculi longo locorum horrentium squalore releuentur: “Tarentum petatur laudatusque portus et hiberna caeli mitioris et regio uel antiquae satis opulenta turbae.... Iam flectamus cursum ad Urbem: nimis diu a plausu et fragore aures uacauerunt, iuuat iam et humano sanguine frui.” 14 Aliud ex alio iter suscipitur et spectacula spectaculis mutantur. Vt ait Lucretius:

Hoc se quisque modo semper fugit.

Sed quid prodest, si non effugit? Sequitur se ipse et urget grauissimus comes. 15 Itaque scire debemus non locorum uitium esse quo laboramus, sed nostrum: infirmi sumus ad omne tolerandum, nec laboris patientes nec uoluptatis nec nostri nec ullius rei diutius. Hoc quosdam egit ad mortem: quod proposita saepe mutando in eadem reuoluebantur et non reliquerant nouitati locum, fastidio esse illis coepit uita et ipse mundus, et subiit illud tabidarum deliciarum: “Quousque eadem?”

III.

1 Aduersus hoc taedium quo auxillo putem utendum quaeris. Optimum erat, ut ait Athenodorus, actione rerum et rei publicae tractatione et officiis ciuilibus se detinere. Nam, ut quidam sole atque exercitatione et cura corporis diem educunt athleticque longe utilissimum est lacertos suos roburque, cui se uni dicauerunt, maiore temporis parte nutrire, ita nobis, animum ad rerum ciuiliu certamen parantibus, in opere esse nostro longe pulcherrimum est: nam, cum utilem se efficere ciuibz mortalibusque propositum habeat, simul et exercetur et proficit qui in mediis se officiis posuit, communia priuataque pro facultate administrans. 2 “Sed, quia in hac, inquit, tam insana hominum ambitione, tot calumniatoribus in deterius recta torquentibus, parum tuta simplicitas est et plus futurum semper est quod obstet quam quod succedat, a foro quidem et publico recedendum est. Sed habet ubi se etiam in priuato laxè explicet magnus animus, nec, ut leonum animaliumque impetus caueis coercetur, sic hominum, quorum maximae in seducto actiones sunt. 3 Ita tamen delituerit, ut, ubicumque otium suum absconderit, prodesse uelit singulis uniuersisque ingenio, uoce, consilio. Nec enim is solus rei publicae prodest, qui candidatos extrahit et tuetur reos et de pace belloque censet; sed qui iuuentutem exhortatur, qui in tanta bonorum praeceptorum inopia uirtutem insinuat animis, qui ad pecuniam luxuriamque cursu ruentes prensat ac retrahit et, si nihil aliud, certe moratur, in priuato publicum negotium agit. 4 An ille plus praestat, qui inter peregrinos et ciues aut urbanus praetor adeuntibus assessoris uerba pronuntiat, quam qui quid sit iustitia, quid pietas, quid patientia, quid fortitudo, quid mortis contemptus, quid deorum intellectus, quam gratuitum bonum sit bona conscientia? 5 Ergo, si tempus in studia conferas quod subduxeris officiis, non deserueris nec munus detractaueris: neque enim ille solus militat qui in acie stat et cornu dextrum laeuumque defendit, sed et qui portas tuetur et statione minus periculosa, non otiosa tamen fungitur uigiliasque seruat et armamentario praeest quae ministeria, quamuis incruenta sint, in numerum stipendiorum ueniunt. 6 Si te ad studia reuocaueris, omne uitae fastidium effugeris, nec noctem fieri optabis taedio lucis,

nec tibi grauis eris nec aliis superuacuus; multos in amicitiam attrahes affluetque ad te optimus quisque. Numquam enim, quamuis obscura, uirtus latet, sed mittit sui signa: quisquis dignus fuerit uestigiis illam colliget. 7 Nam, si omnem conuersionem tollimus et generi humano renuntiamus uiuimusque in nos tantum conuersi, sequetur hanc solitudinem omni studio carentem inopia rerum agendarum: incipiemus aedificia alia ponere, alia subuertere, et mare summouere et aquas contra difficultatem locorum educere, et male dispensare tempus quod nobis natura consumendum dedit. 8 Alii parce illo utimur, alii prodige; alii sic impendimus ut possimus rationem reddere, alii ut nullas habeamus reliquias, qua re nihil turpius est. Saepe grandis natus senex nullum aliud habet argumentum quo se probet diu uixisse, praeter aetatem.”

IV.

1 Mihi, carissime Serene, nimis uidetur summisisse temporibus se Athenodorus, nimis cito refugisse. Nec ego negauerim aliquando cedendum, sed sensim relato gradu et saluis signis, salua militari dignitate: sanctiores tutioresque sunt hostibus suis qui in fidem cum armis ueniunt. 2 Hoc puto uirtuti faciendum studiosoque uirtutis: si praeualebit fortuna et praecidet agendi facultatem, non statim auersus inermisque fugiat, latebras quaerens, quasi ullus locus sit quo non possit fortuna persequi, sed parcius se inferat officiis et cum dilectu inueniat aliquid in quo utilis ciuitati sit. 3 Militare non licet: honores petat. Priuato uiuendum est: sit orator. Silentium indictum est: tacita aduocatione ciues iuuat. Periculosum etiam ingressu forum est: in domibus, in spectaculis, in conuiujs bonum contubernalem, fidelem amicum, temperantem conuiuiam agat. Officia ciuis amisit: hominis exerceat. 4 Ideo magno animo nos non unius urbis moenibus clusimus, sed in totius orbis commercium emisimus patriamque nobis mundum professi sumus, ut liceret latiore uirtuti campum dare. Praeclusum tibi tribunal est et rostris prohiberis aut comitiis: respice post te quantum latissimarum regionum pateat, quantum populorum. Numquam ita tibi magna pars obstruetur, ut non maior relinquatur. 5 Sed uide ne totum istud tuum uitium sit. Non uis enim nisi consul aut prytanis aut ceryx aut sufes administrare rem publicam. Quid si militare nolis nisi imperator aut tribunus? Etiam si alii primam frontem tenebunt, te sors inter triarios posuerit, inde uoce, adhortatione, exemplo, animo milita: praecisis quoque manibus, ille in proelio inuenit quod partibus conferat, qui stat tamen et clamore iuuat. 6 Tale quiddam facias: si a prima te rei publicae parte fortuna summouerit, stes tamen et clamore iuues, et, si quis fauces oppresserit, stes tamen et silentio iuues. Numquam inutilis est opera ciuis boni: auditus est uisusque. Vultu, nutu, obstinatione tacita incessuque ipso prodest. 7 Vt salutaria quaedam citra gustum tactumque odore proficiunt, ita uirtus utilitatem etiam ex longinquo et latens fundit: siue spatiatur et se utitur suo iure, siue precarios habet excessus cogiturque uela contrahere, siue otiosa muta est et anguste circumsaepa, siue adaperata, in quocumque habitu est,

proficit. Quid tu parum utile putas exemplum bene quiescentis? 8
Longe itaque optimum est miscere otium rebus, quotiens actiuosa uita
impedimentis fortuitis aut ciuitatis condicione prohibebitur;
numquam enim usque eo interclusa sunt omnia, ut nulli actioni locus
honestae sit.

V.

1 Numquid potes inuenire urbem miseriorem quam Atheniensium fuit, cum illam triginta tyranni diuellerent? Mille trecentos ciues, optimum quemque, occiderant, nec finem ideo faciebant, sed irritabat se ipsa saeuitia. In qua ciuitate erat Areos pagos, religiosissimum iudicium, in qua senatus populusque senatui similis, coibat cotidie carnificum triste collegium et infelix curia tyrannis augusta. Poteratne illa ciuitas conquiescere, in qua tot tyranni erant quot satellites essent? Ne spes quidem ulla recipiendae libertatis animis poterat offerri, nec ulli remedio locus apparebat contra tantam uim malorum: unde enim miserae ciuitati tot Harmodios? 2 Socrates tamen in medio erat, et lugentes patres consolabatur, et desperantes de re publica exhortabatur, et diuitibus opes suas metuentibus exprobrabat seram periculosae auaritiae paenitentiam, et imitari uolentibus magnum circumferebat exemplar, cum inter triginta dominos liber incederet. 3 Hunc tamen Athenae ipsae in carcere occiderunt, et qui tuto insultauerat agmini tyrannorum, eius libertatem libertas non tulit: ut scias et in afflicta re publica esse occasionem sapienti uiro ad se proferendum, et in florenti ae beata petulantium, inuidiam, mille alia inertia uitia regnare. 4 Vtcumque ergo se res publica dabit, utcumque fortuna permittet, ita aut explicabimus nos aut contrahemus, utique mouebimus nec alligati metu torpebimus. Immo ille uir fuerit, qui, periculis undique imminentibus, armis circa et catenis frementibus, non alliserit uirtutem nec absconderit: non est enim seruare se obruere. 5 Vt opinor, Curius Dentatus aiebat malle esse se mortuum quam uiuere: ultimum malorum est e uiuorum numero exire antequam moriaris. Sed faciendum erit, si in rei publicae tempus minus tractabile incideris, ut plus otio ac litteris uindices, nec aliter quam in periculosa nauigatione subinde portum petas, nec exspectes donec res te dimittant, sed ab illis te ipse diiungas.

VI.

1 Inspicere autem debemus primum nosmet ipsos, deinde ea quae aggrediemur negotia, deinde eos quorum causa aut cum quibus. 2 Ante omnia necesse est se ipsum aestimare, quia fere plus nobis uidemur posse quam possumus: alius eloquentiae fiducia prolabitur, alius patrimonio suo plus imperauit quam ferre posset, alius infirmum corpus laborioso pressit officio. 3 Quorundam parum idonea est uerecundia rebus ciuilibus, quae firmam frontem desiderant; quorundam contumacia non facit ad aulam; quidam non habent iram in potestate, et illos ad temeraria uerba quaelibet indignatio effert; quidam urbanitatem nesciunt continere nec periculosis abstinere salibus: omnibus his utilior negotio quies est. Ferox impatiensque natura irritamenta nociturae libertatis euitet. 4 Considerandum est utrum natura tua agendis rebus an otioso studio contemplationique aptior sit, et eo inclinandum quo te uis ingenii feret: Isocrates Ephorum iniecta manu a foro subduxit, utiliorem componendis monumentis historiarum ratus. Male enim respondent coacta ingenia; reluctante natura, irritus labor est.

5 Aestimanda sunt deinde ipsa quae aggredimur, et uires nostrae cum rebus quas tentaturi sumus comparandae. Debet enim semper plus esse uirium in actore quam in opere: necesse est opprimant onera quae ferente maiora sunt. 6 Quaedam praeterea non tam magna sunt quam fecunda multumque negotiorum ferunt: et haec refugienda sunt, ex quibus noua occupatio multiplexque nascetur. Nec accedendum eo unde liber regressus non sit: iis admouenda manus est, quorum finem aut facere aut certe sperare possis relinquenda, quae latius actu procedunt nec ubi proposueris desinunt. 7 Hominum utique dilectus habendus est, an digni sint quibus partern uitae nostrae impendamus, an ad illos temporis nostri iactura perueniat: quidam enim ultro officia nobis nostra imputant. 8 Athenodorus ait ne ad cenam quidem se iturum ad eum qui sibi nihil pro hoc debiturus sit. Puto, intellegis multo minus ad eos iturum qui cum amicorum officiis paria mensa faciunt, qui fericula pro congiariis numerant, quasi in alienum honorem intemperantes sint. Deme illis testes spectatoresque, non delectabit popina secreta....

VII.

1 Nihil tamen aequè oblectauit animum quam amicitia fidelis et dulcis. Quantum bonum est, ubi praeparata sunt pectora in quae tuto secretum omne descendat, quorum conscientiam minus quam tuam timeas, quorum sermo sollicitudinem leniat, sententia consilium expediat, hilaritas tristitiam dissipet, conspectus ipse delectet! Quos scilicet uacuos, quantum fieri poterit, a cupiditatibus eligemus: serpunt enim uitia et in proximum quemque transiliunt et contactu nocent. 2 Itaque, ut in pestilentia curandum est ne correptis iam corporibus et morbo flagrantibus assideamus, quia pericula trahemus afflatuque ipso laborabimus, ita in amicorum legendis ingeniis dabimus operam ut quam minime inquinatos assumamus: initium morbi est aegris sana miscere. Nec hoc praeceperim tibi, ut neminem nisi sapientem sequaris aut attrahas: ubi enim istum inuenies, quem tot saeculis quaerimus? Pro optimo est minime malus. 3 Vix tibi esset facultas dilectus felicioris, si inter Platonas et Xenophontas et illum Socratici fetus prouentum bonos quaereres, aut si tibi potestas Catonianae fieret actatis, quae plerosque dignos tulit qui Catonis saeculo nascerentur (sicut multos peiores quam umquam alias maximorumque molitores scelerum; utraque enim turba opus erat, ut Cato posset intellegi: habere debuit et bonos, quibus se approbaret, et malos, in quibus uim suam experiretur). Nunc uero, in tanta bonorum egestate, minus fastidiosa fiat electio. 4 Praecipue tamen uidentur tristes et omnia deplorantes, quibus nulla non causa in querellas placet. Constet illi licet fides et beneuolentia, tranquillitati tamen inimicus est comes perturbatus et omnia gemens.

VIII.

1 Transeamus ad patrimonia, maximam humanarum aerumnarum materiam. Nam, si omnia alia quibus angimur compares, mortes, aegrotationes, metus, desideria, dolorum laborumque patientiam, cum iis quae nobis mala pecunia nostra exhibet, haec pars multum praeagrauabit. 2 Itaque cogitandum est quanto leuior dolor sit non habere quam perdere, et intellegemus paupertati eo minorem tormentorum quo minorem damnorum esse materiam. Erras enim si putas animosius detrimenta diuites ferre: maximis minimisque corporibus par est dolor uulneris. 3 Bion eleganter ait non minus molestum esse caluis quam comatis pilos uelli. Idem scias licet de pauperibus locupletibusque, par illis esse tormentum: utrique enim pecunia sua obhaesit nec sine sensu reuelli potest. Tolerabilius autem est, ut dixi, faciliusque non acquirere quam amittere, ideoque laetiores uidebis quos numquam fortuna respexit quam quos deseruit. 4 Vidit hoc Diogenes, uir ingentis animi, et effecit ne quid sibi eripi posset. Tu istud paupertatem, inopiam, egestatem uoca, quod uoles ignominiosum securitati nomen impone: putabo hunc non esse felicem, si quem mihi alium inueneris cui nihil pereat. Aut ego fallor, aut regnum est inter auaros, circumscriptores, latrones, plagiarios unum esse cui noceri non possit. 5 Si quis de felicitate Diogenis dubitat, potest idem dubitare et de deorum immortalium statu, an parum beate degant quod nec praedia nec horti sint nec alieno colono rura pretiosa nec grande in foro faenus. Non te pudet, quisquis diuitiis astupes? Respice aedem mundum: nudos uidebis deos, omnia dantes, nihil habentes. Hunc tu pauperem putas an diis immortalibus similem, qui se fortuitis omnibus exuit? 6 Feliciorem tu Demetrium Pompeianum uocas, quem non puduit locupletiore esse Pompeio? Numerus illi cotidie seruorum uelut imperatori exercitus referebatur, cui iamdudum diuitiae esse debuerant duo uicarii et cella laxior. 7 At Diogeni seruus unicus fugit nec eum reducere, cum monstraretur, tanti putauit: "Turpe est, inquit, Manen sine Diogene posse uiuere, Diogenem sine Mane non posse." Videtur mihi dixisse: "Age tuum negotium, Fortuna, nihil apud Diogenem iam tui est: fugit mihi seruus, immo liber abii." 8 Familia petit uestiarium uictumque;

tot uentres audissimorum animalium tuendi sunt, emenda uestis et custodiendae rapacissimae manus et flentium detestantiumque ministeriis utendum. Quanto ille felicior, qui nihil ulli debet nisi cui facillime negat, sibi! 9 Sed, quoniam non est nobis tantum roboris, angustanda certe sunt patrimonia, ut minus ad iniurias fortunae simus expositi. Habiliora sunt corpora in bello quae in arma sua contrahi possunt quam quae superfunduntur et undique magnitudo sua uulneribus obicit; optimus pecuniae modus est, qui nec in paupertatem cadit lice procul a paupertate discedit.

IX.

1 Placebit autem haec nobis mensura si prius parsimonia placuerit, sine qua nec ullae opes sufficiunt nec ullae non satis patent, praesertim cum in uicino remedium sit et possit ipsa paupertas in diuitias se, aduocata frugalitate, conuertere. 2 Assuescamus a nobis remouere pompam et usus rerum, non ornamenta metiri. Cibus famem domet, potio sitim, libido qua necesse est fluat. Discamus membris nostris inniti, cultum uictumque non ad noua exempla componere, sed ut maiorum mores suadent. Discamus continentiam augere, luxuriam coercere, gloriam temperare, iracundiam lenire, paupertatem aequis oculis aspicere, frugalitatem colere, etiam si multos pudebit rei eius, desideriis naturalibus paruo parata remedia adhibere, spes effrenatas et animum in futura imminensem uelut sub uinculis habere, id agere, ut diuitias a nobis potius quam a fortuna petamus. 3 Non potest umquam tanta uarietas et iniquitas casuum ita depelli, ut non multum procellarum irruat magna armamenta pendentibus. Cogendae in artum res sunt, ut tela in uanum cadant, ideoque exsilia interim calamitatesque in remedium cessare et leuioribus incommodis grauiora sanata sunt. Vbi parum audit praecepta animus nec curari mollius potest, quidni consulatur, si et paupertas et ignominia et rerum euersio adhibetur? Malo malum opponitur. Assuescamus ergo cenare posse sine populo et seruis paucioribus seruire et uestes parare in quod inuentae sunt et habitare contractius. Non in cursu tantum circique certamine, sed in his spatiis uitae interius flectendum est. 4 Studiorum quoque, quae liberalissima impensa est, tamdiu rationem habet quamdiu modum. Quo innumerabiles libros et bibliothecas, quarum dominus uix tota uita indices perlegit? Onerat discentem turba, non instruit, multoque satius est paucis te auctoribus tradere quam errare per multos. 5 Quadraginta milia librorum Alexandriae arserunt. Pulcherrimum regiae opulentiae monumentum alius laudauerit, sicut et Liuius, qui elegantiae regum curaeque egregium id opus ait fuisse. Non fuit elegantia illud aut cura, sed studiosa luxuria, immo ne studiosa quidem, quoniam non in studium, sed in spectaculum comparauerant, sicut plerisque ignaris etiam puerilium litterarum libri non studiorum

instrumenta, sed cenationum ornamenta sunt. Paretur itaque librorum quantum satis sit, nihil in apparatus. 6 (Honestius, inquis, huc se impensae quam in Corinthia pictasque tabulas effuderint.) Vitiosum est ubique quod nimium est. Quid habes cur ignoscas homini armaria e citro atque ebore captanti, corpora conquiriti aut ignotorum auctorum aut improbatorum et inter tot milia librorum oscitanti, cui uoluminum suorum frontes maxime placent titulique? 7 Apud desidiosissimos ergo uidebis quicquid orationum historiarumque est, tecto tenus exstructa loculamenta: iam enim, inter balnearia et thermas, bibliotheca quoque ut necessarium domus ornamentum expolitur. Ignoscerem plane, si studiorum nimia cupidine erraretur; nunc ista conquisita, cum imaginibus suis discripta, sacrorum opera ingeniorum in speciem et cultum parietum comparantur.

X.

1 At in aliquod genus uitae difficile incidisti et tibi ignoranti uel publica fortuna uel priuata laqueum impegit, quem nec soluere possis nec rumpere. Cogita compeditos primo aegre ferre onera et impedimenta crurum; deinde, ubi non indignari illa, sed pati proposuerunt, necessitas fortiter ferre docet, consuetudo facile. Inuenies in quolibet genere uitae oblectamenta et remissiones et uoluptates, si uolueris mala putare leuia potius quam inuidiosa facere. 2 Nullo melius nomine de nobis natura meruit, quae, cum sciret quibus aerumnis nasceremur, calamitatum mollimentum consuetudinem inuenit, cito in familiaritatem grauissima adducens. Nemo duraret, si rerum aduersarum eandem uim assiduitas haberet quam primus ictus. 3 Omnes cum fortuna copulati sumus: aliorum aurea catena est ac laxa, aliorum arta et sordida, sed quid refert? Eadem custodia uniuersos circumdedit alligatique sunt etiam qui alligauerunt, nisi forte tu leuiorem in sinistra catenam putas. Alium honores, alium opes uinciunt; quosdam nobilitas, quosdam humilitas premit; quibusdam aliena supra caput imperia sunt, quibusdam sua; quosdam exsilia uno loco tenent, quosdam sacerdotia. Omnis uita seruitium est. 4 Assuescendum est itaque condicioni suae et quam minimum de illa querendum et quicquid habet circa se commodi apprehendendum: nihil tam acerbum est, in quo non aequus animus solacium inueniat. Exiguæ saepe areae in multos usus describentis arte patuerunt, et quamuis angustum pedem dispositio fecit habitabilem. Adhibe rationem difficultatibus: possunt et dura molliri et angusta laxari et grauia scite ferentes minus premere.

5 Non sunt praeterea cupiditates in longinquum mittendae, sed in uicinum illis egredi permittamus, quoniam includi ex toto non patiuntur. Relictis iis quae aut non possunt fieri aut difficulter possunt, prope posita speique nostrae alludentia sequamur, sed sciamus omnia aequè leuia esse, extrinsecus diuersas facies habentia, introrsus pariter uana. Nec inuideamus altius stantibus: quae excelsa uidebantur praecepta sunt.

6 Illi rursus quos sors iniqua in ancipiti posuit tutiores erunt superbiam detrahendo rebus per se superbis et fortunam suam quam

maxime poterunt in planum deferendo. Multi quidem sunt quibus necessario haerendum sit in fastigio suo, ex quo non possunt nisi cadendo descendere; sed hoc ipsum testentur maximum onus suum esse, quod aliis graues esse cogantur, nec subleuatos se, sed suffixos. Iustitia, mansuetudine, humanitate, larga et benigna manu praeparent multa ad secundos casus praesidia, quorum spe securius pendeant. 7 Nihil tamen aequè nos ab his animi fluctibus uindicauerit quam semper aliquem incrementis terminum figere, nec fortunae arbitrium desinendi dare, sed ipsos multo quidem citra consistere. Sic et aliquae cupiditates animum acuent et finitae non in immensum incertumque producent.

XI.

1 Ad imperfectos et mediocres et male sanos hic meus sermo pertinet, non ad sapientem. Huic non timide nec pedetentim ambulandum est: tanta enim fiducia sui est, ut obuiam fortunae ire non dubitet nec umquam loco illi cessurus sit. Nec habet ubi illam timeat, quia non mancipia tantum possessionesque et dignitatem, sed corpus quoque suum et oculos et manum et quicquid cariorem uitam facit seque ipsum inter precaria numerat, uiuitque ut commodatus sibi et reposcentibus sine tristitia redditurus. 2 Nec ideo uilis est sibi, quia scit se suum non esse; sed omnia tam diligenter faciet, tam circumspecte, quam religiosus homo sanctusque solet tueri fidei commissa. 3 Quandoque autem reddere iubebitur, non queretur cum fortuna, sed dicet: “Gratias ago pro eo quod possedi habuique. Magna quidem res tuas mercede colui, sed, quia ita imperas, do, cedo gratus libensque. Si quid habere me tui uolueris etiamnunc, seruabo; si aliud placet, ego uero factum signatumque argentum, domum familiamque meam reddo, restituo.” Appellauerit natura, quae prior nobis creditit, et huic dicemus: “Recipe animum meliorem quam dedisti; non tergiuersor nec refugio. Paratum habes a uolente quod non sentienti dedisti: aufer.” 4 Reuerti unde ueneris quid graue est? Male uiuet quisquis nesciet bene mori. Huic itaque primum rei pretium detrahendum est et spiritus inter uilia numerandus. Gladiatores, ut ait Cicero, inuisos habemus, si omni modo uitam impetrare cupiunt; fauemus, si contemptum eius prae se ferunt. Idem euenire nobis scias: saepe enim causa moriendi est timide mori. 5 Fortuna illa, quae ludos sibi facit: “Quo, inquit, te reseruem, malum et trepidum animal? Eo magis conuulneraberis et confodieris, quia nescis praebere iugulum. At tu et uiues diutius et morieris expeditius, qui ferrum non subducta ceruice nec manibus oppositis, sed animose recipis.” 6 Qui mortem timebit, nihil umquam pro homine uiuo faciet; at qui sciet hoc sibi cum conciperetur statim condictum, uiuet ad formulam et simul illud quoque eodem animi robore praestabit, ne quid ex iis quae eueniunt subitum sit. Quicquid enim fieri potest quasi futurum sit prospiciendo malorum omnium impetus molliet, qui ad praeparatos exspectantesque nihil afferunt noui, securis et

beata tantum spectantibus graues ueniunt. 7 Morbus est, captiuitas, ruina, ignis: nihil horum repentinum est. Sciebam in quam tumultuosum me contubernium natura clusisset. Totiens in uicinia mea conclamatatum est; totiens praeter limen immaturas exsequias fax cereusque praecessit; saepe a latere ruentis aedificii fragor sonuit; multos ex iis quos forum, curia, sermo mecum contraxerat, nox abstulit et iunctas sodalium manus copuatas interscidit: mirer ad me aliquando pericula accessisse, quae circa me semper errauerint? 8 Magna pars hominum est quae nauigatura de tempestate non cogitat. Numquam me in re bona mali pudebit auctoris: Publilius, tragicis comicisque uehementior ingeniis quotiens mimicas ineptias et uerba ad summam caueam spectantia reliquit, Inter multa alia cothurno, non tantum sipario fortiora et hoc ait:

Cuius potest accidere quod cuiquam potest.

Hoc si quis in medullas demiserit et omnia aliena mala, quorum ingens cotidie copia est, sic aspexerit tamquam liberum illis et ad se iter sit, multo ante se armabit quam petatur. Sero animus ad periculorum patientiam post pericula instruitur. 9 “Non putaui hoc futurum” et: “Vnquam tu hoc euentum credidisses?” Quare autem non? Quae sunt diuitiae quas non egestas et fames et mendicitas a tergo sequatur? quae dignitas, cuius non praetextam et augurale et lora patricia sordes comitentur et exprobratio notae et mille maculae et extrema contemptio? quod regnum est, cui non parata sit ruina et proculcatio et dominus et carnifex? nec magnis ista interuallis diuisa, sed horae momentum interest inter solium et aliena genua. 10 Scito ergo omnem condicionem uersabilem esse et quicquid in ullum incurrit posse in te quoque incurrere. Locuples es: numquid diuitior Pompeio? Cui cum Gaius, uetus cognatus, hopes nouus, aperuisset Caesaris domum ut suam cluderet, defuit panis, aqua. Cum tot flumina possideret in suo orientia, in suo cadentia, mendicauit stillicidia; fame ac siti periit in palatio cognati, dum illi heres publicum funus esurienti locat. 11 Honoribus summis functus es: numquid aut tam magnis aut tam insperatis aut tam uniuersis quam Seianus? Quo die illum senatus deduxerat, populus in frusta diuisit. In quem quicquid congeri poterat dii hominesque contulerant, ex eo nihil superfuit quod carnifex traheret. 12 Rex es: non ad Croesum te mittam, qui rogam suum et escendit iussus et exstingui uidit, factus

non regno tantum, etiam morti suae superstes; non ad Iugurtham, quem populus romanus intra annum quam timuerat spectauit: Ptolemaeum Africae regem, Armeniae Mithridaten inter Gaianas custodias uidimus; alter in exilium missus est, alter ut meliore fide mitteretur optabat. In tanta rerum sursum ac deorsum euntium uersatione, si non quicquid fieri potest pro futuro habes, das in te uires rebus aduersis, quas infregit quisquis prior uidit.

XII.

1 Proximum ab his erit ne aut in superuacuis aut ex superuacuo laboremus, id est ne quae aut non possumus consequi concupiscamus aut adepti uanitatem cupiditatum nostrarum sero post multum sudorem intellegamus, id est ne aut labor irritus sit sine effectum aut effectus labore indignus. Fere enim ex his tristitia sequitur, si aut non successit aut successus pudet. 2 Circumcidenda concursatio, qualis est magnae parti hominum domos et theatra et fora pererrantium: alienis se negotiis offerunt, semper aliquid agentibus similes. Horum si aliquem exeuntem e domo interrogaueris: “Quo tu? quid cogitas?” respondebit tibi: “Non mehercules scio, sed aliquos uidebo, aliquid agam.” 3 Sine proposito uagantur, quaerentes negotia, nec quae destinauerunt agunt, sed in quae incucurrerunt. Inconsultus illis uanusque cursus est, qualis formicis per arbusta repentibus, quae in summum cacumen et inde in imum inanes aguntur. His plerique similem uitam agunt, quorum non immerito quis inquietam inertiam dixerit. 4 Quorundam quasi ad incendium currentium misereberis: usque eo impellunt obuios et se aliosque praecipitant, cum interim cucurrerunt aut salutaturi aliquem non resalutaturum aut funus ignoti hominis prosecuturi, aut ad iudicium saepe litigantis, aut ad sponsalia saepe nubentis, et lecticam assectati quibusdam locis etiam tulerunt. Dein, domum cum superuacua redeuntes lassitudine, iurant nescire se ipsos quare exierint, ubi fuerint, postero die erraturi per eadem illa uestigia. 5 Omnis itaque labor aliquo referatur, aliquo respiciat. Non industria inquietos, ut insanos falsae rerum imagines agitant: nam ne illi quidem sine aliqua spe mouentur; proritat illos alicuius rei species, cuius uanitatem capta mens non coarguit. 6 Eodem modo unumquemque ex his qui ad augendam turbam exeunt inanes et leues causae per urbem circumducunt, nihilque habentem in quod laboret lux orta expellit, et cum, multorum frustra liminibus illisus, nomenclatores persalutauit, a multis exclusus, neminem ex omnibus difficilius domi quam se conuenit. 7 Ex hoc malo dependet illud taeterrimum uitium, auscultatio et publicorum secretorumque inquisitio, et multarum rerum scientia quae nec tuto narrantur nec tuto audiuntur.

XIII.

1 Hoc secutum puto Democritum ita coepisse: “Qui tranquille uolet uiuere nec priuatim agat multa nec publice”, ad superuacua scilicet referentem: nam, si necessaria sunt, et priuatim et publice non tantum multa, sed innumerabilia agenda sunt, ubi uero nullum officium sollemne nos citat, inhibendae actiones. 2 Nam qui multa agit saepe fortunae potestatem sui facit; quam tutissimum est raro experiri, ceterum semper de illa cogitare et nihil sibi de fide eius promittere: “Nauigabo, nisi si quid inciderit” et: “Praetor fiam, nisi si quid obstiterit” et: “Negotiatio mihi respondebit, nisi si quid interuenerit.” 3 Hoc est quare sapienti nihil contra opinionem dicamus accidere: non illum casibus hominum excerpimus, sed erroribus, nec illi omnia ut uoluit cedunt, sed ut cogitauit. Imprimis autem cogitauit aliquid posse propositis suis resistere. Necesse est autem leuius ad animum peruenire destitutae cupiditatis dolorem, cui successum non utique promiseris.

XIV.

1 Faciles etiam nos facere debemus, ne nimis destinatis rebus indulgeamus, transeamusque in ea in quae nos casus deduxerit, nec mutationem aut consilii aut status pertimescamus, dummodo nos leuitas, inimicissimum quieti uitium, non excipiat. Nam et pertinacia necesse est anxia et misera sit, cui fortuna saepe aliquid extorquet, et leuitas multo grauior, nusquam se continens. Vtrumque infestum est tranquillitati, et nihil mutare posse et nihil pati. 2 Vtique animus ab omnibus externis in se reuocandus est: sibi confidat, se gaudeat, sua suspiciat, recedat quantum potest ab alienis, et se sibi applicet; damna non sentiat, etiam aduersa benigne interpretetur. 3 Nuntiato naufragio, Zenon noster, cum omnia sua audiret submersa: “Iubet, inquit, me fortuna expeditius philosophari.” Minabatur Theodoro philosopho tyrannus mortem, et quidem insepultam: “Habes, inquit, cur tibi placeas, hemina sanguinis in tua potestate est; nam quod ad sepulturam pertinet, o te ineptum, si putas mea interesse supra terram an infra putrescam.” 4 Canus Iulius, uir in primis magnus, cuius admirationi ne hoc quidem obstat quod nostro saeculo natus est, cum Gaio diu altercatus, postquam abeunti Phalaris ille dixit: “Ne forte inepta spe tibi blandiaris, duci te iussi. Gratias, inquit, ago, optime princeps.” 5 Quid senserit dubito; multa enim mihi occurrunt. Contumeliosus esse uoluit et ostendere quanta crudelitas esset, in qua mors beneficium erat? An exprobrauit illi cotidianam dementia? Agebant enim gratias et quorum liberi occisi et quorum bona ablata erant. An tamquam libertatem libenter accepit? Quicquid est, magno animo respondit. 6 Dicet aliquis: potuit post hoc iubere illum Gaius uiuere. Non timuit hoc Canus: nota erat Gaii in talibus imperiis fides. Credisne illum decem medios usque ad supplicium dies sine ulla sollicitudine exegisse? Verisimile non est quae uir ille dixerit, quae fecerit, quam in tranquillo fuerit. 7 Ludebat latrunculis. Cum centurio, agmen periturorum trahens, illum quoque excitari iuberet, uocatus numerauit calculos et sodali suo: “Vide, inquit, ne post mortem meam mentiaris te uicisse.” Tum, annuens centurioni: “Testis, inquit, eris uno me antecedere.” Lussisse tu Canum illa tabula putas? Illusit. 8 Tristes erant amici, talem amissuri uirum: “Quid

maesti, inquit, estis? Vos quaeritis an immortales animae sint; ego iam sciam.” Nec desiit ueritatem in ipso fine scrutari et ex morte sua quaestionem habere. 9 Prosequebatur illum philosophus suus, nec iam procul erat tumultus in quo Caesari deo nostro fiebat cotidianum sacrum. Is: “Quid, inquit, Cane, nunc cogitas? aut quae tibi mens est? - Obseruare, inquit Canus, proposui illo uelocissimo momento an sensurus sit animus exire se.” Promisitque, si quid explorasset, circumitutum amicos et indicaturum quis esset animarum status. 10 Ecce in media tempestate tranquillitas, ecce animus aeternitate dignus, qui fatum suum in argumentum ueri uocat, qui, in ultimo illo gradu positus, exeuntem animam percontatur, nec usque ad mortem tantum, sed aliquid etiam ex ipsa morte discit: nemo diutius philosophatus est. Non raptim relinquetur magnus uir et cum cura dicendus: dabimus te in omnem memoriam, clarissimum caput, Gaianae cladis magna portio!

XV.

1 Sed nihil prodest priuatae tristitiae causas abiecisse: occupat enim nonnumquam odium generis humani, et occurrit tot scelerum feliciū turba. Cum cogitaueris quam sit rara simplicitas et quam ignota innocentia et uix umquam, nisi cum expedit, fides, et libidinis lucra damnaque pariter inuisa, et ambitio usque eo iam se suis non continens terminis ut per turpitudinem splendeat, agitur animus in noctem et, uelut euersis uirtutibus, quas nec sperare licet nec habere prodest, tenebrae oboriuntur. 2 In hoc itaque flectendi sumus, ut omnia uulgi uitia non inuisa nobis, sed ridicula uideantur, et Democritum potius imitemur quam Heraclitum: hic enim, quotiens in publicum processerat, flebat, ille ridebat; huic omnia quae agimus miseriae, illi ineptiae uidebantur. Eleuanda ergo omnia et facili animo ferenda: humanius est deridere uitam quam deplorare. 3 Adice quod de humano quoque genere melius meretur qui ridet illud quam qui luget: ille et spei bonae aliquid relinquit, hic autem stulte deflet quae corrigi posse desperat; et uniuersa contemplanti maioris animi est qui risum non tenet quam qui lacrimas, quando leuissimum affectum animi mouet et nihil magnum, nihil seuerum, ne miserum quidem ex tanto paratu putat. 4 Singula propter quae laeti ac tristes sumus sibi quisque proponat, et sciet uerum esse quod Bion dixit, omnia hominum negotia simillima initiis esse nec uitam illorum magis sanctam aut seueram esse quam conceptum. 5 Sed satius est publicos mores et humana uitia placide accipere, nec in risum nec in lacrimas excidentem; nam alienis malis torqueri aeterna miseria est, alienis delectari malis uoluptas inhumana. 6 Sicut est illa inutilis humanitas, flere, quia aliquis filium efferat, et frontem suam fingere, in suis quoque malis ita gerere se oportet, ut dolori tantum des quantum natura poscit, non quantum consuetudo. Plerique cum lacrimas fundunt ut ostendant, et totiens siccos oculos habent quotiens spectator defuit, turpe iudicantes non fieri cum omnes faciant: adeo penitus hoc se malum fixit, ex aliena opinione pendere, ut in simulationem etiam res simplicissima, dolor, ueniat.

XVI.

1 Sequetur pars quae solet non immerito contristare et in sollicitudinem adducere. Vbi bonorum exitus mali sunt, ubi Socrates cogitur in carcere mori, Rutilius in exilio uiuere, Pompeius et Cicero clientibus suis praebere ceruicem, Cato ille, uirtutum uiua imago, incumbens gladio, simul de se ac de re publica palam facere, necesse est torqueri tam iniqua praemia fortunam persoluere. Et quid sibi quisque tunc speret, cum uideat pessima optimos pati? 2 Quid ergo est? Vide quomodo quisque illorum tulerit et, si fortes fuerunt, ipsorum illos animo desidera, si muliebriter et ignaue perierunt, nihil periit. Aut digni sunt quorum uirtus tibi placeat, aut indigni quorum desideretur ignauia. Quid enim est turpius quam si maximi uiri timidos fortiter moriendo faciunt? 3 Laudemus totiens dignum laudibus et dicamus: “Tanto fortior! tanto felicior! Omnes effugisti casus, liuorem, morbum; existi ex custodia; non tu dignus mala fortuna diis nisus es, sed indignus in quem iam aliquid fortuna posset.” Subducentibus uero se et in ipsa morte ad uitam respectantibus manus iniciendae sunt. 4 Neminem flebo laetum, neminem flentem: ille lacrimas meas ipse abstersit, hic suis lacrimis effecit ne ullis dignus sit. Ego Herculem fleam quod uiuus uritur, aut Regulum quod tot clauis configitur, aut Catonem quod uulnera iterat sua? Omnes isti leui temporis impensa inuenerunt quomodo aeterni fierent, et ad immortalitatem moriendo uenerunt.

XVII.

1 Est et illa sollicitudinum non mediocris materia, si te anxie componas nec ullis simpliciter ostendas, qualis multorum uita est, ficta, ostentationi parata: torquet enim assidua obseruatio sui et deprehendi aliter ac solet metuit. Nec umquam cura soluimur, ubi totiens nos aestimari putamus quotiens aspici. Nam et multa incidunt quae inuitos denudant, et, ut bene cedat tanta sui diligentia, non tamen iucunda uita aut secura est semper sub persona uiuentium. 2 At illa quantum habet uoluptatis sincera et per se inornata simplicitas, nihil obtendens moribus suis! Subit tamen et haec uita contemptus periculum, si omnia omnibus patent: sunt enim qui fastidiant quicquid propius adierunt. Sed nec uirtuti periculum est ne admota oculis reuilescat, et satius est simplicitate contemni quam perpetua simulatione torqueri. Modum tamen rei adhibeamus: multum interest, simpliciter uiuas an neglegenter.

3 Multum et in se recedendum est: conuersatio enim dissimilium bene composita disturbat et renouat affectus et quicquid imbecillum in animo nec percuratum est exulcerat. Miscenda tamen ista et alternanda sunt, solitudo et frequentia. Illa nobis faciet hominum desiderium, haec nostri, et erit altera alterius remedium: odium turbae sanabit solitudo, taedium solitudinis turba.

4 Nec in eadem intentione aequaliter retinenda mens est, sed ad iocos deuocanda. Cum puerulis Socrates ludere non erubescibat, et Cato uiuo laxabat animum curis publicis fatigatum, et Scipio triumphale illud ac militare corpus mouebat ad numeros, non molliter se infringens, ut nunc mos est etiam incessu ipso ultra muliebrem mollitiam fluentibus, sed ut antiqui illi uiri solebant inter lusum ac festa tempora uirilem in modum tripudiare, non facturi detrimentum etiam si ab hostibus suis spectarentur. 5 Danda est animis remissio: meliores acrioresque requieti surgent. Vt fertilibus agris non est imperandum (cito enim illos exhauriet numquam intermissa fecunditas), ita animorum impetus assiduus labor franget; uires recipient paulum resoluti et remissi. Nascitur ex assiduitate laborum animorum hebetatio quaedam et languor.

6 Nec ad hoc tanta hominum cupiditas tenderet, nisi naturalem

quandam uoluptatem haberet lusus iocusque. Quorum frequens usus omne animis pondus omnemque uim eripiet: nam et somnus refectioni necessarius est, hunc tamen si per diem noctemque continues, mors erit. Multum interest, remittas aliquid an soluas. 7 Legum conditores festos instituerunt dies ut ad hilaritatem homines publice cogere, tamquam necessarium laboribus interponentes temperamentum, et magni iudicii uiri quidam sibi menstruas certis diebus ferias dabant, quiddam nullum non diem inter otium et curas diuidebant. Qualem Pollionem Asinium oratorem magnum meminimus, quem nulla res ultra decumam detinuit: ne epistulas quidem post eam horam legebat, ne quid nouae curae nasceretur, sed totius diei lassitudinem duabus illis horis ponebat. Quidam medio die interiunxerunt et in postmeridianas horas aliquid leuioris operae distulerunt. Maiores quoque nostri nouam relationem post horam decumam in senatu fieri uetabant. Miles uigilias diuidit, et nox immunis est ab expeditione redeuntium. 8 Indulgendum est animo dandumque subinde otium, quod alimenti ac uirium loco sit.

Et in ambulationibus apertis uagandum, ut caelo libero et multo spiritu augeat attollatque se animus; aliquando uectatio iterque et mutata regio uigorem dabunt, conuictusque et liberalior potio. Nonnumquam et usque ad ebrietatem ueniendum, non ut mergat nos, sed ut deprimat: eluit enim curas et ab imo animum mouet et, ut morbis quibusdam, ita tristitiae medetur, Liberque non ob licentiam linguae dictus est inuentor uini, sed quia liberat seruitio curarum animum et asserit uegetatque et audacior in omnes conatus facit. 9 Sed, ut libertatis, ita uini salubris moderatio est. Solonem Arcesilanke indulsisse uino eredunt; Catoni ebrietas obiecta est: facilius efficient crimen honestum quam turpem Catonem. Sed nec saepe faciendum est, ne animus malam consuetudinem ducat, et aliquando tamen in exultationem libertatemque extrahendus tristisque sobrietas remouenda paulisper. 10 Nam, siue graeco poetae credimus, “aliquando et insanire iucundum est”; siue Platoni, “frustra poeticas fores compos sui pepulit”; siue Aristoteli, “nullum magnum ingenium sine mixtura dementiae fuit”. 11 Non potest grande aliquid et super ceteros loqui nisi mota mens. Cum uulgaria et solita contempsit instinctuque sacro surrexit excelsior, tunc demum aliquid cecinit grandius ore mortali. Non potest sublime quicquam et in

arduo positum contingere, quamdiu apud se est: desciscat oportet a solito et efferatur et mordeat frenos et rectorem rapiat suum, eoque ferat quo per se timuisset escendere.

12 Habes, Serene carissime, quae possint tranquillitatem tueri, quae restituere, quae subrepentibus uitiiis resistant. Illud tamen scito, nihil horum satis esse ualidum rem imbecillam seruantibus, nisi intenta et assidua cura circumit animum labentem.

ON PROVIDENCE — De Providentia

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I.

1. Quaesisti a me, Lucili, quid ita, si prouidentia mundus ageretur, multa bonis uiris mala acciderent. Hoc commodius in contextu operis redderetur, cum praeesse uniuersis prouidentiam probaremus et interesse nobis deum; sed quoniam a toto particulam reuelli placet et unam contradictionem manente lite integra soluere, faciam rem non difficilem, causam deorum agam. 2. Superuacuum est in praesentia ostendere non sine aliquo custode tantum opus stare nec hunc siderum coetum discursumque fortuiti impetus esse, et quae casus incitat saepe turbari et cito arietare, hanc inoffensam uelocita tem procedere aeternae legis imperio tantum rerum terra marique gestantem, tantum clarissimorum luminum et ex disposito relucantium; non esse materiae errantis hunc ordinem nec quae temere coierunt tanta arte pendere ut terrarum grauissimum pondus sedeat inmotum et circa se properantis caeli fugam spectet, ut infusa uallibus maria molliant terras nec ullum incrementum fluminum sentiant, ut ex minimis seminibus nascantur ingentia. 3. Ne illa quidem quae uidentur confusa et incerta, pluuias dico nubesque et elisorum fulminum iactus et incendia ruptis montium uerticibus effusa, tremores labantis soli aliaque quae tumultuosa pars rerum circa terras mouet, sine ratione, quamuis subita sint, accidunt, sed suas et illa causas habent non minus quam quae alienis locis conspecta miraculo sunt, ut in mediis fluctibus calentes aquae et noua insularum in uasto exilientium mari spatia. 4. Iam uero si quis obseruauerit nudari litora pelago in se recedente eademque intra exiguum tempus operiri, credet caeca quadam uolutione modo contrahi undas et introrsum agi, modo erumpere et magno cursu repetere sedem suam, cum interim illae portionibus crescunt et ad horam ac diem subeunt ampliores minoresque, prout illas lunare sidus elicit, ad cuius arbitrium oceanus exundat. Suo ista tempori reseruentur, eo quidem magis quod tu non dubitas de prouidentia sed quereris. 5. In gratiam te reducam cum dis aduersus optimos optimis. Neque enim rerum natura patitur ut umquam bona bonis noceant; inter bonos uiros ac deos amicitia est conciliante uirtute. Amicitiam dico? immo etiam necessitudo et similitudo, quoniam quidem bonus

tempore tantum a deo differt, discipulus eius aemulatorque et uera progenies, quam parens ille magnificus, uirtutum non lenis exactor, sicut seueri patres, durius educat. 6. Itaque cum uideris bonos uiros acceptosque dis laborare sudare, per arduum escendere, malos autem lasciuires et uoluptatibus fluere, cogita filiorum nos modestia delectari, uernularum licentia, illos disciplina tristiori contineri, horum alii audaciam. Idem tibi de deo liqueat: bonum uirum in deliciis non habet, experitur indurat, sibi illum parat.

II.

1. 'Quare multa bonis uiris aduersa eueniunt?' Nihil accidere bono uiro mali potest: non miscentur contraria. Quemadmodum tot amnes, tantum superne deiectionum imbrium, tanta medicamentorum uis fontium non mutant saporem maris, ne remittunt quidem, ita aduersarum impetus rerum uiri fortis non uertit animum: manet in statu et quidquid euenit in suum colorem trahit; est enim omnibus externis potentior. 2. Nec hoc dico, non sentit illa, sed uincit, et alioqui quietus placidusque contra incurrentia attollitur. Omnia aduersa exercitationes putat. Quis autem, uir modo et erectus ad honesta, non est laboris adpetens iusti et ad officia cum periculo promptus? Cui non industrio otium poena est? 3. Athletas uidemus, quibus uirum cura est, cum fortissimis quibusque configere et exigere ab iis per quos certamini praeparantur ut totis contra ipsos uiribus utantur; caedi se uexarique patiuntur et, si non inueniunt singulos pares, pluribus simul obiciuntur. 4. Marcet sine aduersario uirtus: tunc apparet quanta sit quantumque polleat, cum quid possit patientia ostendit. Scias licet idem uiris bonis esse faciendum, ut dura ac difficilia non reformident nec de fato querantur, quidquid accidit boni consulant, in bonum uertant; non quid sed quemadmodum feras interest. 5. Non uides quanto aliter patres, aliter matres indulgeant? illi excitari iubent liberos ad studia obeunda mature, feriatis quoque diebus non patiuntur esse otiosos, et sudorem illis et interdum lacrimas excutiunt; at matres fouere in sinu, continere in umbra uolunt, numquam contristari, numquam flere, numquam laborare. 6. Patrium deus habet aduersus bonos uiros animum et illos fortiter amat et 'operibus' inquit 'doloribus damnis exagitantur, ut uerum colligant robur.' Languent per inertiam saginata nec labore tantum sed motu et ipso sui onere deficiunt. Non fert ullum ictum inlaesa felicitas; at cui adsidua fuit cum incommodis suis rixa, callum per iniurias duxit nec ulli malo cedit, sed etiam si cecidit de genu pugnat. 7. Miraris tu, si deus ille bonorum amantissimus, qui illos quam optimos esse atque excellentissimos uult, fortunam illis cum qua exerceantur adsignat? Ego uero non miror, si aliquando impetum capiunt spectandi magnos uiros conluctantis cum aliqua calamitate.

8. Nobis interdum uoluptati est, si adulescens constantis animi inruentem feram uenabulo excepit, si leonis incursum interritus pertulit, tantoque hoc spectaculum est gratius quanto id honestior fecit. Non sunt ista quae possint deorum in se uultum conuertere, puerilia et humanae oblectamenta leuitatis: 9. ecce spectaculum dignum ad quod respiciat intentus operi suo deus, ecce par deo dignum, uir fortis cum fortuna mala compositus, utique si et prouocauit. Non uideo, inquam, quid habeat in terris Iuppiter pulchrius, si <eo> conuertere animum uelit, quam ut spectet Catonem iam partibus non semel fractis stantem nihilo minus inter ruinas publicas rectum. 10. 'Licet' inquit 'omnia in unius dicionem concesserint, custodiantur legionibus terrae, classibus maria, Caesarianus portas miles obsideat, Cato qua exeat habet: una manu latam libertati uiam faciet. Ferrum istud, etiam ciuili bello purum et innoxium, bonas tandem ac nobiles edet operas: libertatem quam patriae non potuit Catoni dabit. Aggredere, anime, diu meditatam opus, eripe te rebus humanis. Iam Petreius et Iuba concucurrerunt iacentque alter alterius manu caesi, fortis et egregia fati conuentio, sed quae non deceat magnitudinem nostram: tam turpe est Catoni mortem ab ullo petere quam uitam.' 11. Liqueat mihi cum magno spectasse gaudio deos, dum ille uir, acerrimus sui uindex, alienae saluti consulit et instruit discedentium fugam, dum studia etiam nocte ultima tractat, dum gladium sacro pectori infigit, dum uiscera spargit et illam sanctissimam animam indignamque quae ferro contaminaretur manu educit. 12. Inde crediderim fuisse parum certum et efficax uulnus: non fuit dis immortalibus satis spectare Catonem semel; retenta ac reuocata uirtus est ut in difficiliore parte se ostenderet; non enim tam magno animo mors initur quam repetitur. Quidni libenter spectarent alumnum suum tam claro ac memorabili exitu euadentem? mors illos consecrat quorum exitum et qui timent laudant.

III.

1. Sed iam procedente oratione ostendam quam non sint quae uidentur mala: nunc illud dico, ista quae tu uocas aspera, quae aduersa et abominanda, primum pro ipsis esse quibus accidunt, deinde pro uniuersis, quorum maior dis cura quam singulorum est, post hoc uolentibus accidere ac dignos malo esse si nolint. His adiciam fato ista sic ire et eadem lege bonis euenire qua sunt boni. Persuadebo deinde tibi ne umquam boni uiri miserearis; potest enim miser dici, non potest esse. 2. Difficillimum ex omnibus quae proposui uidetur quod primum dixi, pro ipsis esse quibus eueniunt ista quae horremus ac tremimus. ‘Pro ipsis est’ inquis ‘in exilium proici, in egestatem deduci, liberos coniugem ecferre, ignominia adfici, debilitari?’ Si miraris haec pro aliquo esse, miraberis quosdam ferro et igne curari, nec minus fame ac siti. Sed si cogitaueris tecum remedii causa quibusdam et radi ossa et legi et extrahi uenas et quaedam amputari membra quae sine totius perniciie corporis haerere non poterant, hoc quoque patieris probari tibi, quaedam incommoda pro iis esse quibus accidunt, tam mehercules quam quaedam quae laudantur atque adpetuntur contra eos esse quos delectauerunt, simillima cruditatibus ebrietatibusque et ceteris quae necant per uoluptatem. 3. Inter multa magnifica Demetri nostri et haec uox est, a qua recens sum; sonat adhuc et uibrat in auribus meis: ‘nihil’ inquit ‘mihi uidetur infelicius eo cui nihil umquam euenit aduersi.’ Non licuit enim illi se experiri. Vt ex uoto illi fluxerint omnia, ut ante uotum, male tamen de illo di iudicauerunt: indignus uisus est a quo uinceretur aliquando fortuna, quae ignauissimum quemque refugit, quasi dicat: ‘quid ergo? istum mihi aduersarium adsumam? Statim arma summittet; non opus est in illum tota potentia mea, leui comminatione pelletur, non potest sustinere uultum meum. Alius circumspiciatur cum quo conferre possimus manum: pudet congredi cum homine uinci parato. 4. ‘ Ignominiam iudicat gladiator cum inferiore componi et scit eum sine gloria uinci qui sine periculo uincitur. Idem facit fortuna: fortissimos sibi pares quaerit, quosdam fastidio transit. Contumacissimum quemque et rectissimum adgreditur, aduersus quem uim suam intendat: ignem experitur in

Mucio, paupertatem in Fabricio, exilium in Rutilio, tormenta in Regulo, uenenum in Socrate, mortem in Catone. Magnum exemplum nisi mala fortuna non inuenit. 5. Infelix est Mucius quod dextra ignes hostium premit et ipse a se exigit erroris sui poenas, quod regem quem armata manu non potuit exusta fugat? Quid ergo? felicior esset, si in sinu amicae foueret manum? 6. Infelix est Fabricius quod rus suum, quantum a re publica uacauit, fodit? quod bellum tam cum Pyrrho quam cum diuitiis gerit? quod ad focum cenat illas ipsas radices et herbas quas in repurgando agro triumphalis senex uulsit? Quid ergo? felicior esset, si in uentrem suum longinqui litoris pisces et peregrina aucupia congereret, si conchyliis superi atque inferi maris pigritiam stomachi nausiantis erigeret, si ingenti pomorum strue cingeret primae formae feras, captas multa caede uenantium? 7. Infelix est Rutilius quod qui illum damnauerunt cau sam dicent omnibus saeculis? quod aequiore animo passus est se patriae eripi quam sibi exilium? quod Sullae dictatori solus aliquid negauit et reuocatus tantum non retro cessit et longius fugit? ‘Viderint’ inquit ‘isti quos Romae deprehendit felicitas tua: uideant largum in foro sanguinem et supra Seruilianum lacum (id enim proscriptionis Sullanae spoliarium est) senatorum capita et passim uagantis per urbem percussorum greges et multa milia ciuium Romanorum uno loco post fidem, immo per ipsam fidem trucidata; uideant ista qui exulare non possunt.’ 8. Quid ergo? felix est L. Sulla quod illi descendenti ad forum gladio summouetur, quod capita sibi consularium uirorum patitur ostendi et pretium caedis per quaestorem ac tabulas publicas numerat? Et haec omnia facit ille, ille qui legem Corneliam tulit. 9. Veniamus ad Regulum: quid illi fortuna nocuit quod illum documentum fidei, documentum patientiae fecit? Figunt cutem clauis et quocumque fatigatum corpus reclinauit, uulneri incumbit; in perpetuam uigiliam suspensa sunt lumina: quanto plus tormenti tanto plus erit gloriae. Vis scire quam non paeniteat hoc pretio aestimasse uirtutem? refige illum et mitte in senatum: eandem sententiam dicet. 10. Felicior ergo tu Maecenatem putas, cui amoribus anxio et morosae uxoris cotidiana repudia deflenti somnus per symphoniarum cantum ex longinquo lene resonantium quaeritur? Mero se licet sopiat et aquarum fragoribus auocet et mille uoluptatibus mentem anxiam fallat, tam uigilabit in pluma quam ille

in cruce; sed illi solacium est pro honesto dura tolerare et ad causam a patientia respicit, hunc uoluptatibus marcidum et felicitate nimia laborantem magis iis quae patitur uexat causa patiendi. 11. Non usque eo in possessionem generis humani uitia uenerunt ut dubium sit an electione fati data plures nasci Reguli quam Maecenates uelint; aut si quis fuerit qui audeat dicere Maecenatem se quam Regulum nasci maluisse, idem iste, taceat licet, nasci se Terentiam maluit. 12. Male tractatum Socratem iudicas quod illam potionem publice mixtam non aliter quam medicamentum immortalitatis obduxit et de morte disputauit usque ad ipsam? Male cum illo actum est quod gelatus est sanguis ac paulatim frigore inducto uenarum uigor constitit? 13. Quanto magis huic inuidendum est quam illis quibus gemma ministratur, quibus exoletus omnia pati doctus exsectae uirilitalis aut dubiae suspensam auro niuem diluit! Hi quidquid biberunt uomitu remetientur tristes et bilem suam regustantes, at ille uenenum laetus et libens hauriet. 14. Quod ad Catonem pertinet, satis dictum est, summamque illi felicitatem contigisse consensus hominum fatebitur, quem sibi rerum natura delegit cum quo metuenda conlideret. 'Inimicitiae potentium graues sunt: opponatur simul Pompeio, Caesari, Crasso. Graue est a deterioribus honore anteiri: Vatinio postferatur. Graue est ciuilibus bellis interesse: toto terrarum orbe pro causa bona tam infeliciter quam pertinaciter militet. Graue est manus sibi adferre: faciat. Quid per haec consequar? ut omnes sciant non esse haec mala quibus ego dignum Catonem putauit.'

IV.

1. Prosperae res et in plebem ac uilia ingenia deueniunt; at calamitates terroresque mortalium sub iugum mittere proprium magni uiri est. Semper uero esse felicem et sine morsu animi transire uitam ignorare est rerum naturae alteram partem. 2. Magnus uir es: sed unde scio, si tibi fortuna non dat facultatem exhibendae uirtutis? Descendisti ad Olympia, sed nemo praeter te: coronam habes, uictoriam non habes; non gratulor tamquam uiro forti, sed tamquam consulatum praeturamue adepto: honore auctus es. 3. Idem dicere et bono uiro possum, si illi nullam occasionem difficilius casus dedit in qua [una] uim animi sui ostenderet: ‘miserum te iudico, quod numquam fuisti miser. Transisti sine aduersario uitam; nemo sciet quid potueris, ne tu quidem ipse.’ Opus est enim ad notitiam sui experimento; quid quisque posset nisi temptando non didicit. Itaque quidam ipsi ultro se cessantibus malis optulerunt et uirtuti iturae in obscurum occasionem per quam enitesceret quaesierunt. 4. Gaudent, inquam, magni uiri aliquando rebus aduersis, non aliter quam fortes milites bello; Triumphum ego murmillonem sub Ti. Caesare de raritate munerum audiui querentem: ‘quam bella’ inquit ‘aetas perit!’ Auida est periculi uirtus et quo tendat, non quid passura sit cogitat, quoniam etiam quod passura est gloriae pars est. Militares uiri gloriantur uulneribus, laeti fluentem meliori casu sanguinem ostentant: idem licet fecerint qui integri reuertuntur ex acie, magis spectatur qui saucius redit. 5. Ipsi, inquam, deus consulit quos esse quam honestissimos cupit, quotiens illis materiam praebet aliquid animose fortiterque faciendi, ad quam rem opus est aliqua rerum difficultate: gubernatorem in tempestate, in acie militem intellegas. Vnde possum scire quantum aduersus paupertatem tibi animi sit, si diuitiis diffuis? Vnde possum scire quantum aduersus ignominiam et infamiam odiumque populare constantiae habeas, si inter plausus senescis, si te inexpugnabilis et inclinatione quadam mentium pronus fauor sequitur? Vnde scio quam aequo animo laturus sis orbitatem, si quoscumque sustulisti uides? Audiui te, cum alios consolareris: tunc conspexissem, si te ipse consolatus esses, si te ipse dolere uetuisses. 6. Nolite, obsecro uos, expauescere ista quae di immortales uelut

stimulos admouent animis: calamitas uirtutis occasio est. Illos merito quis dixerit miseros qui nimia felicitate torpescunt, quos uelut in mari lento tranquillitas iners detinet: quidquid illis inciderit, nouum ueniet. 7. Magis urgent saeua inexpertos, graue est tenerae ceruici iugum; ad suspicionem uulneris tiro pallescit, audacter ueteranus cruorem suum spectat, qui scit se saepe uicisse post sanguinem. Hos itaque deus quos probat, quos amat, indurat recognoscit exercet; eos autem quibus indulgere uidetur, quibus parcere, molles uenturis malis seruat. Erratis enim si quem iudicatis exceptum: ueniet <et> ad illum diu felicem sua portio; quisquis uidetur dimissus esse dilatus est. 8. Quare deus optimum quemque aut mala ualetudine aut luctu aut aliis incommodis adficit? quia in castris quoque periculosa fortissimis imperantur: dux lectissimos mittit qui nocturnis hostes adgrediantur insidiis aut explorent iter aut praesidium loco deiciant. Nemo eorum qui exeunt dicit 'male de me imperator meruit', sed 'bene iudicauit'. Idem dicant quicumque iubentur pati timidis ignauisque flebilis: 'digni uisi sumus deo in quibus experiretur quantum humana natura posset pati.' 9. Fugite delicias, fugite eneruantem felicitatem qua animi permadescunt et, nisi aliquid interuenit quod humanae sortis admoneat, <marcent> uelut perpetua ebrietate sopiti. Quem specularia semper ab adflatu uindicauerunt, cuius pedes inter fomenta subinde mutata tepuerunt, cuius cenationes subditus et parietibus circumfusus calor temperauit, hunc leuis aura non sine periculo stringet. 10. Cum omnia quae excesserunt modum noceant, periculosissima felicitatis intemperantia est: mouet cerebrum, in uanas mentem imagines euocat, multum inter falsum ac uerum mediae caliginis fundit. Quidni satius sit perpetuam infelicitatem aduocata uirtute sustinere quam infinitis atque inmodicis bonis rumpi? lenior ieiunio mors est, cruditate dissiliunt. 11. Hanc itaque rationem di sequuntur in bonis uiris quam in discipulis suis praeceptores, qui plus laboris ab iis exigunt in quibus certior spes est. Numquid tu inuisos esse Lacedaemoniis liberos suos credis, quorum experiuntur indolem publice uerberibus admotis? Ipsi illos patres adhortantur ut ictus flagellorum fortiter perferant, et laceros ac semianimes rogant, perseuerent uulnera praebere uulneribus. 12. Quid mirum, si dure generosos spiritus deus temptat? numquam uirtutis molle documentum est. Verberat nos et lacerat

fortuna: patiamur. Non est saeuitia, certamen est, quod <quo> saepius adierimus, fortiores erimus: solidissima corporis pars est quam frequens usus agitauit. Praebendi fortunae sumus, ut contra illam ab ipsa duremur: paulatim nos sibi pares faciet, contemptum periculorum adsiduitas periclitandi dabit. 13. Sic sunt nauticis corpora ferendo mari dura, agricolis manus tritae, ad excutienda tela militares lacerti ualent, agilia sunt membra cursoribus: id in quoque solidissimum est quod exercuit. Ad contemnendam patientiam malorum animus patientia peruenit; quae quid in nobis efficere possit scies, si aspexeris quantum nationibus nudis et inopia fortioribus labor praestet. 14. Omnes considera gentes in quibus Romana pax desinit, Germanos dico et quidquid circa Histrum uagarum gentium occurrat: perpetua illos hiemps, triste caelum premit, maligne solum sterile sustentat; imbrem culmo aut fronde defendunt, super durata glacie stagna persultant, in alimentum feras captant. 15. Miseri tibi uidentur? nihil miserum est quod in naturam consuetudo perduxit; paulatim enim uoluptati sunt quae necessitate coeperunt. Nulla illis domicilia nullaeque sedes sunt nisi quas lassitudo in diem posuit; uilis et hic quaerendus manu uictus, horrenda iniquitas caeli, intacta corpora: hoc quod tibi calamitas uidetur tot gentium uita est. 16. Quid miraris bonos uiros, ut confirmentur, concuti? non est arbor solida nec fortis nisi in quam frequens uentus incursat; ipsa enim uexatione constringitur et radices certius figit: fragiles sunt quae in aprica ualle creuerunt. Pro ipsis ergo bonis uiris est, ut esse interriti possint, multum inter formidolosa uersari et aequo animo ferre quae non sunt mala nisi male sustinenti.

V.

1. Adice nunc quod pro omnibus est optimum quemque, ut ita dicam, militare et edere operas. Hoc est propositum deo quod sapienti uiro, ostendere haec quae uulgus adpetit, quae reformidat, nec bona esse nec mala; apparebit autem bona esse, si illa non nisi bonis uiris tribuerit, et mala esse, si tantum malis inrogauerit. 2. Detestabilis erit caecitas, si nemo oculos perdiderit nisi cui eruendi sunt; itaque careant luce Appius et Metellus. Non sunt diuitiae bonum; itaque habeat illas et Elius leno, ut homines pecuniam, cum in templis consecrauerint, uideant et in fornice. Nullo modo magis potest deus concupita traducere quam si illa ad turpissimos defert, ab optimis abigit. 3. 'At iniquum est uirum bonum debilitari aut configi aut alligari, malos integris corporibus solutos ac delicatos incedere.' Quid porro? non est iniquum fortes uiros arma sumere et in castris pernoctare et pro uallo obligatis stare uulneribus, interim in urbe securos esse praecisos et professos inpudicitiam? Quid porro? non est iniquum nobilissimas uirgines ad sacra facienda noctibus excitari, altissimo somno inquinatas frui? 4. Labor optimos citat: senatus per totum diem saepe consulitur, cum illo tempore uilissimus quisque aut in campo otium suum oblectet aut in popina lateat aut tempus in aliquo circulo terat. Idem in hac magna re publica fit: boni uiri laborant, inpendunt, inpenduntur, et uolentes quidem; non trahuntur a fortuna, sequuntur illam et aequant gradus; si scissent, antecessissent. 5. Hanc quoque animosam Demetri fortissimi uiri uocem audisse me memini: 'hoc unum' inquit 'de uobis, di immortales, queri possum, quod non ante mihi notam uoluntatem uestram fecistis; prior enim ad ista uenissem ad quae nunc uocatus adsum. Vultis liberos sumere? uobisillos sustuli. Vultis aliquam partem corporis? sumite: non magnam rem promitto, cito totum relinquam. Vultis spiritum? quidni nullam moram faciam quo minus recipiatis quod dedisti? A uolente feretis quidquid petieritis. Quid ergo est? maluissem offerre quam tradere. Quid opus fuit auferre? accipere potuistis; sed ne nunc quidem auferetis, quia nihil eripitur nisi retinenti.' 6. Nihil cogor, nihil patior inuitus, nec seruio deo sed assentior, eo quidem magis quod scio omnia certa et in aeternum dicta lege decurrere. 7. Fata nos

ducunt et quantum cuique temporis restat prima nascentium hora disposuit. Causa pendet ex causa, priuata ac publica longus ordo rerum trahit: ideo fortiter omne patiendum est quia non, ut putamus, incidunt cuncta sed ueniunt. Olim constitutum est quid gaudeas, quid fleas, et quamuis magna uideatur uarietate singulorum uita distingui, summa in unum uenit: accipimus peritura perituri. 8. Quid itaque indignamur? quid querimus? ad hoc parati sumus. Utatur ut uult suis natura corporibus: nos laeti ad omnia et fortes cogitemus nihil perire de nostro. Quid est boni uiri? praebere se fato. Grande solacium est cum uniuerso rapi; quidquid est quod nos sic uiuere, sic mori iussit, eadem necessitate et deos alligat. Inreuocabilis humana pariter ac diuina cursus uehit: ille ipse omnium conditor et rector scripsit quidem fata, sed sequitur; semper paret, semel iussit. 9. 'Quare tamen deus tam iniquus in distributione fati fuit ut bonis uiris paupertatem et uulnera et acerba funera adscriberet?' Non potest artifex mutare materiam: ~hoc passa est~. Quaedam separari a quibusdam non possunt, cohaerent, indiuidua sunt. Languida ingenia et in somnum itura aut in uigiliam somno simillimam inertibus nectuntur elementis: ut efficiatur uir cum cura dicendus, fortiore fato opus est. Non erit illi planum iter: sursum oportet ac deorsum eat, fluctuetur ac nauigium in turbido regat. Contra fortunam illi tenendus est cursus; multa accident dura, aspera, sed quae molliat et conplanet ipse. Ignis aurum probat, miseria fortes uiros. 10. Vide quam alte escendere debeat uirtus: scies illi non per segura uadendum.

Ardua prima uia est et quam uix mane recentes
enituntur equi; medio est altissima caelo,
unde mare et terras ipsi mihi saepe uidere
sit timor et pauida trepidet formidine pectus.
ultima prona uia est et eget moderamine certo;
tunc etiam quae me subiectis excipit undis,
ne ferar in praeceps, Tethys solet ima uereri.

11. Haec cum audisset ille generosus adulescens, 'placet' inquit 'uia, escendo; est tanti per ista ire casuro.' Non desinit acrem animum metu territare:

utque uiam teneas nulloque errore traharis,
per tamen aduersi gradieris cornua tauri
Haemoniosque arcus uiolentique ora leonis.

Post haec ait: 'iunge datos currus: his quibus deterreri me putas
incitor; libet illic stare ubi ipse Sol trepidat.' Humilis et inertis est
tuta sectari: per alta uirtus it.

VI.

1. ‘Quare tamen bonis uiris patitur aliquid mali deus fieri?’ Ille uero non patitur. Omnia mala ab illis remouit, scelera et flagitia et cogitationes improbas et auida consilia et libidinem caecam et alieno imminentem auaritiam; ipsos tuetur ac uindicat: numquid hoc quoque aliquis a deo exigit, ut bonorum uirorum etiam sarcinas seruet? Remittunt ipsi hanc deo curam: externa contemnunt. 2. Democritus diuitias proiecit, onus illas bonae mentis existimans: quid ergo miraris, si id deus bono uiro accidere patitur quod uir bonus aliquando uult sibi accidere? Filios amittunt uiri boni: quidni, cum aliquando et occidant? In exilium mittuntur: quidni, cum aliquando ipsi patriam non repetituri relinquant? Occiduntur: quidni, cum aliquando ipsi sibi manus adferant? 3. Quare quaedam dura patiuntur? ut alios pati doceant; nati sunt in exemplar. Puta itaque deum dicere: ‘quid habetis quod de me queri possitis, uos quibus recta placuerunt? Aliis bona falsa circumdedi et animos inanes uelut longo fallacique somnio lusi: auro illos et argento et ebore adornaui, intus boni nihil est. 4. Isti quos pro felicibus aspicias, si non qua occurrunt sed qua latent uideris, miseri sunt, sordidi turpes, ad similitudinem parietum suorum extrinsecus culti; non est ista solida et sincera felicitas: crusta est et quidem tenuis. Itaque dum illis licet stare et ad arbitrium suum ostendi, nitent et inponunt; cum aliquid incidit quod disturbet ac detegat, tunc apparet quantum altae ac uerae foeditatis alienus splendor absconderit. 5. Vobis dedi bona certa mansura, quanto magis uersauerit aliquis et undique inspexerit, meliora maioraque; permisi uobis metuenda contemnere, cupiditates fastidire; non fulgetis extrinsecus, bona uestra introrsus obuersa sunt. Sic mundus exteriora contempsit spectaculo sui laetus. Intus omne posui bonum; non egere felicitate felicitas uestra est. 6. “At multa incidunt tristia horrenda, dura toleratu.” Quia non poteram uos istis subducere, animos uestros aduersus omnia armaui: ferte fortiter. Hoc est quo deum antecedatis: ille extra patientiam malorum est, uos supra patientiam. Contemnite paupertatem: nemo tam pauper uiuit quam natus est. Contemnite dolorem: aut soluetur aut soluet. Contemnite mortem: quae uos aut finit aut transfert. Contemnite

fortunam: nullum illi telum quo feriret animum dedi. 7. Ante omnia caui ne quis uos teneret inuitos; patet exitus: si pugnare non uultis, licet fugere. Ideo ex omnibus rebus quas esse uobis necessarias uolui nihil feci facilius quam mori. Prono animam loco posui: ~trahitur~ adtendite modo et uidebitis quam breuis ad libertatem et quam expedita ducat uia. Non tam longas in exitu uobis quam intransitibus moras posui; alioqui magnum in uos regnum fortuna tenuisset, si homo tam tarde moreretur quam nascitur. 8. Omne tempus, omnis uos locus doceat quam facile sit renuntiare naturae et munus illi suum inpingere; inter ipsa altaria et sollemnes sacrificantium ritus, dum optatur uita, mortem condiscite. Corpora opima taurorum exiguo concidunt uulnere et magnarum uirium animalia humanae manus ictus inpellit; tenui ferro commissura ceruicis abrumpitur, et cum articulus ille qui caput collumque committit incisus est, tanta illa moles corrui. 9. Non in alto latet spiritus nec utique ferro eruendus est; non sunt uulnere penitus inpresso scrutanda praecordia: in proximo mors est. Non certum ad hos ictus destinaui locum: quacumque uis peruium est. Ipsum illud quod uocatur mori, quo anima discedit a corpore, breuius est quam ut sentiri tanta uelocitas possit: siue fauces nodus elisit, siue spiramentum aqua praecluserit, siue in caput lapsos subiacentis soli duritia comminuit, siue haustus ignis cursum animae remeantis interscidit, quidquid est, properat. Ecquid erubescitis? quod tam cito fit timetis diu!’

The Biography



The Death of Seneca by Luca Giordano, 1684. In 65 AD, Seneca was caught up in the aftermath of the Pisonian conspiracy, a plot to kill Nero. Although it is unlikely that he was guilty, he was ordered by Nero to kill himself. He followed tradition by severing several veins in order to bleed to death, and his wife Pompeia Paulina attempted to share his fate.

Ein ander lät in dem leben zebhalten/hät erlittē: dar-
 um sie billich in ewige dächtnuſſ iſt zezeten.



Von pompeja paulina ſenece ge-
 mahel das. lxxxix. Capitel.

A mediaeval woodcut of Seneca's suicide and the attempted suicide of his wife Pompeia Paulina, c. 1541

INTRODUCTION TO SENECA by John W. Basore



SPRUNG from the rich and talented Spanish family of the *Annaei*, Lucius Annaeus Seneca, second son of Seneca the rhetorician, became the most important public and literary figure at Rome in the age of Nero. His mother was Helvia, a lady of native intelligence, some culture, and many virtues. An elder brother, Novatus, known after his adoption as Gallio, was governor of Achaia under Claudius, and survives in Christian annals (Acts xviii. 12-17) with undeserved odium as the Roman official before whom the apostle Paul was arraigned. Mela, the younger brother, of more retiring disposition, but rated by his father as the ablest of the three, lives only as the father of a famous son — the epic poet Lucan, whose precocious and flamboyant powers marked him out as the prodigy of his distinguished, but ill-fated, family, of which no chief member survived the catastrophe of the Pisonian conspiracy. Lucan, his father, and both his uncles were all objects of Nero's vengeance.

The career of Seneca himself was marked by spectacular shifts of fortune, amid which he appears a puzzling and at times a pathetic figure — the victim alike of imperial hostility and favour. Born at Corduba about 4 B.C., he was brought to Rome while still a child in arms. There, carefully nurtured and broadly trained in rhetoric and philosophy, he entered upon the senatorial career and gained the quaestorship probably under Tiberius. By his eloquence in the Senate, he is said to have aroused the jealousy of Caligula and to have escaped death only because, it was averred, he was already doomed by ill-health to die. Of his ill-health we hear much in his writings, but he outlived Caligula and missed no opportunity to take pitiless revenge upon him with his pen. Under Claudius he fell upon actual disaster. Through the agency of the empress Messalina, Seneca, now established as a man of letters and, apparently, of fashion, was accused of an intrigue with the notorious Julia Livilla,

sister of Caligula, whom her uncle promptly upon his accession had recalled from exile, and both were banished. After he had spent eight weary and fretful years in dismal Corsica, during which, however, he found some solace in writing and study, Agrippina, now the wife of Claudius, seemed his recall in A.D. 49, and raised him to the post of tutor to her young son, the future emperor Nero. A year later he was praetor. From this time Seneca's fortunes were linked with those of Nero. He grew in honour, wealth, and power, and for five years after Nero's accession was, along with Burrus, the virtuous old praetorian, the emperor's acknowledged confidant and guide. But gradually his influence weakened, and after the death of Burrus in A.D. 62 he sought unavailingly for obscurity in retirement. Three years later, charged with complicity in the conspiracy of Piso, he was forced to commit suicide, and met death with dignity and Stoic fortitude.

The special significance of Seneca is, in brief, that he revived the subject of philosophy in Latin literature, spiritualized and humanized Stoicism, and became the exponent of a new style, that exploited the short sentence, rhetoric, and declamation. The artificialities of his pointed style have found many critics, both early and late. Caligula called his speeches — not now extant — “prize declamations, sand without lime,” the archaist Gellius condemns his influence, and Fronto censures his literary affectations. Quintilian with truer discernment indicts more severely his taste than his methods, for it is in the excesses of rhetoric that he most often offends. That he was the most brilliant writer, as well as the most independent thinker, of his day few will now deny.

In philosophy Seneca's interests were purely ethical. He was a bold, but inconsistent, moralist — a preacher rather than an exemplar of Stoic virtue. His discourses are, in the end, Stoic sermons, informal in structure, lacking too often the marks of ordered presentation, but usually effective in the quickness of their appeal. While ostensibly an adherent of Stoic materialism, he shows the independence of an eclectic and becomes particularly noteworthy in his conception of deity and the kindred doctrine of the brotherhood of man, in both of which he went far beyond his times. Although, utilizing the Stoic doctrine of a Unity out of a plurality of gods (as, while there are many virtues, Virtue is one), he causes confusion by

his terminology, yet he verges constantly toward the representation of God as a moral and spiritual being, a beneficent Providence, instinct with fatherly regard for the human race. Closely linked with this conception is a bitter condemnation of gladiatorial contests, slavery, and any form of cruelty of man to fellow man.

Seneca was a voluminous writer of both prose and poetry. Besides some epigrams, ten extant tragedies are associated with his name, though one, the *Octavia*, appears from internal evidence to be unmistakably the work of a later poet. The other nine plays are unique and notable specimens of Roman tragedy adapted from Greek originals, of which, however, they appear to be little more than rhetorical travesties. But their influence upon the dramatic literature of Italy, France, and England, though distorting, was profound. His extant prose works comprise a significant group of writings that are moral in purpose, a quasi-scientific treatise — the *Naturales Quaestiones* in seven books — and the *Apocolocyntosis*, a satirical skit on the apotheosis of the emperor Claudius. To the group of moral writings belong the twenty books of the *Epistulae Morales*, a unit by reason of their form, and a series of more formal compositions, which, developed with vague consciousness of an argumentative second person, are likewise united by a similarity of form. These quasi-dialogues are the twelve treatises grouped together in the Ambrosian manuscript under the title *Dialogia* and traditionally known as *Dialogues*, the *De Clementia*, originally in three books, and the seven books of the *De Beneficiis*, all of which it has been convenient for the purpose in hand to combine under the comprehensive title of *Moral Essays*.

The chronology of Seneca's writings is in most cases doubtful. Of the essays included in this volume, the *De Providentia* and the *De Constantia* are associated by Waltz with the early years of the exile (A.D. 41-42), but equally wise conjecture will place them later. When Seneca wrote the *De Ira*, Caligula was undoubtedly dead, and Novatus, to whom it was dedicated, had not yet been adopted by Junius Gallio. It shows bitter hostility to Caligula, and may well have been written when the memory of his excesses was fresh. By reason of the allusion to the age of Nero (i. 9.1), the *De Clementia* may be definitely assigned to the year A.D. 55 or 56.

Concerning Lucilius, to whom the *De Providentia*, the *Naturales Quaestiones*, and the *Epistulae* are addressed, Seneca himself supplies incidental information. A native, probably, of Naples or Pompeii, by his own energy he attained equestrian rank and was appointed procurator of Sicily. He was a student of philosophy, with a leaning toward Epicureanism, and a writer of both prose and poetry. His name has gained some importance in literary history as the conjectural author of the *Aetna*, a philosophical poem ascribed in the manuscripts to Virgil. Younger than Seneca, he seems to have maintained with him a long friendship of peculiar loyalty. If, as Waltz supposes, the *De Providentia* belongs to the early years of the exile, Seneca's own fortunes may well have called forth the questioning of Lucilius concerning the ways of Providence which gave excuse for the essay. In treating his subject Seneca elaborates the thesis that no evils can befall the good man, by interpreting adversities, not as evils, but as wholesome opportunities provided by a beneficent deity for the testing of virtue. The discourse closes with a passage of restrained rhetoric, giving Stoic approval of suicide as a reasonable departure from trials too great.

Annaeus Serenus, the young friend, or relative, of Seneca to whom are addressed the *De Constantia* and two other treatises, is said to have been prefect of Nero's nightwatchmen (*praefectus Neronis vigilum*). He is mentioned by Tacitus as an intimate friend of Seneca, who with a show of loyalty screened the indiscretions of Nero in his affair with Acte. Seneca had for him the deepest affection and counselled him in philosophy with fatherly solicitude. He apparently was an Epicurean. Though much younger than Seneca, he died first, probably in A.D. 62. Seneca descants upon his premature death in one of his *Letters* (lxiii. 14), and refers feelingly to the bitterness of his grief.

The essay itself is exceptional in its orderly arrangement. After affirming the superiority of the Stoics over other schools of philosophy, the author takes as his text the Stoic paradox that the wise man can receive no injury. This he proceeds to relieve by an exposition of the true inwardness of the wise man's fortunes. Setting up a distinction between "injury" and "insult," he shows *seriatim* the invulnerability of the wise man to both, and after conditioned praise

of Epicurus's view, closes the discussion with a justification of the Stoic position.

Of Seneca's brother Novatus, to whom the *De Ira* is addressed, something has already been said. He was much beloved for his amiability, was an eminent declaimer, if we are to trust Jerome, and at an unknown date was adopted by the rhetorician Junius Gallio. He reached the consulship, was governor of Achaia in A.D. 52, and died by his own hand in 66.

Seneca used authorities assiduously, and for the elaborate disquisition *On Anger* had several available; Sotion, his master in philosophy, had written *περί ὀργῆς*, and may well have been one. Though the arrangement of the essay is noticeably faulty, and its style is fervid with rhetoric, the wealth of its illustrative matter gives it unusual interest. Book I. deals with the outward aspects, the harm, and the various definitions of anger; Book II. discusses its origin, its nature, and its remedies; Book III. repeats much that has been said before, and continues with the new topic of how to check the anger of others.

The *De Clementia*, addressed to the emperor Nero, was written just after the young prince had finished his eighteenth year, and was intended to guide him toward the ideal of a merciful and popular ruler. It gives interesting evidence of Seneca's own public wisdom, of his tendency to flattery, and of his method in dealing with his difficult pupil. Unfortunately, more than half of the work has been lost.

The most important manuscript of the *Dialogues* is the *Codex Ambrosianus*, at Milan, belonging to the tenth or the eleventh century. This has been designated A, and the readings of its later correctors, A -. An additional manuscript available for the *De Ira* is the *Codex Laurentianus* (designated L) of the twelfth or thirteenth century. The best manuscript of the *De Clementia* is the *Codex Nazarianus* (designated N) in the Palatine collection of the Vatican. This belongs to the eighth or ninth century. Two others of the twelfth century are the *Codex Amplonianus* at Erfurt (designated A), which is not complete, and the *Codex Parisinus* 8542 (designated T). In the critical notes O is used to designate a consensus of N, A, and other principal manuscripts. For the complete apparatus the editions of

Hermes and Hosius may be consulted.

The texts adopted for translation are, for the *Dialogues*, that of Hermes, Leipzig, 1905, for the *De Clementia*, that of Hosius, Leipzig, 1900. Except minor changes in punctuation and orthography, divergencies from these have been duly recorded in the critical notes.

J. W. B.

PRINCETON, N.J.



Rome — where Seneca died in 65 AD